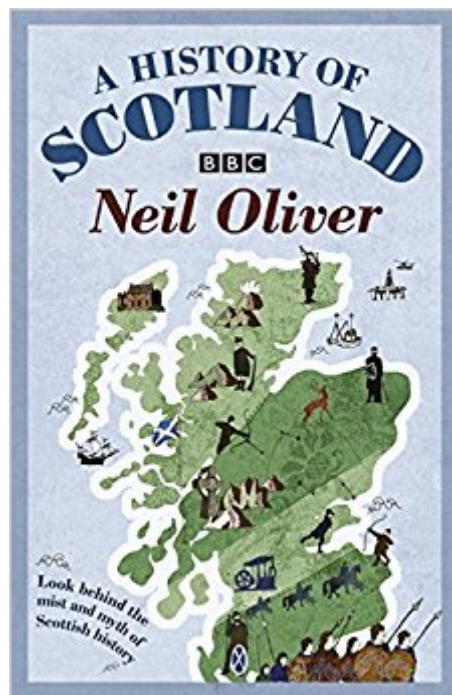




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# A History Of Scotland: Look Behind The Mist And Myth Of Scottish History



## Synopsis

Scotland's history gets a rewrite by archaeologist and historian Neil Oliver. How accurate are the accounts of Mary Queen of Scots's tragic demise or Bonnie Prince Charlie's forlorn cause? Oliver reveals a Scotland that forged its own identity with success, despite its union with England in 1707.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Archaeologist Oliver has become a BBC star hosting such history programs as *Two Men in a Trench*. This volume accompanies his latest series, about his homeland. Scotland is wedded, for better or worse, to England, and it's often been the latter for Scotland. Periods when Highlanders and Lowlanders stood independent of the English live on, however, in historical memory. It is to such popularly recollected names as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce that Oliver accordingly pegs his narrative, which unrolls from Celtic times to Roman times to Stuart times, which expired with Bonnie Prince Charlie's defeat in 1745. Like characters in a dramatic play, the historical figures are pithily characterized (Mary Queen of Scots: 'dynastic dynamite') and then sent into action. While populist in style, Oliver's presentation never caricatures its actors. He imparts impressions of them as real people with passions, convictions, and choices. Including such great Scottish cultural icons as poet Robert Burns, Oliver's warmhearted yet illusion-free survey of Scottish history piques interest in the auld country. --Gilbert Taylor

It's an affectionate portrait by an author who, for all its flaws and magnificence, clearly loves his country. --[IRISH NEWS](#)

A gripping and enlightening work of history. One could read all of these facts countless times and yet miss the larger picture, but Neil Oliver has a writer's gift of drawing the forces, natural, military, religious, political and artistic, that created Scotland. We witness the ruthless passions which shape history; the unbridled fanaticism which shatters lives and yet becomes integrated into a larger dialog, which (sometimes) turns to the good. In 435 pages, Neil Oliver covers centuries without ever seeming to rush. His unsparing devotion to truth approaches a force of righteous judgment; in his Scotland, I saw a mirror of the patterns which have shaped America, and my own psyche. I recommend A History of Scotland without reserve.

Neil Oliver on screen comes across as sincere, informed and passionate about his love of history and archaeology. This book reveals just as clearly those traits. From the evocative geological start, we feel grounded in a holistic understanding of the flow of time. I cut my historical teeth on John Prebbles "Lion in the North". I think that Neil Oliver has more than surpassed that work, and for me there can be no higher praise. He has drawn clear paths through the different movements, made clear those murky areas, is precise in defining just where conjecture starts and historical fact stops. I was not only educated, but also greatly entertained by his writing style, the sheer love of the topic - which shines through the pages, and gained an appreciation of the forces moving through time. My Scotland is now more clearly understood. When I visit those places and castles, I will now see and hear the events which occurred there long ago. Do buy this book

Since I'm going to Scotland this summer, I wanted to read up on the history so to enhance the touring. Wow, Scotland has a rich yet brutal history! Ups and downs with the Brits, thousands of lives lost in battles, kings and queens at odds, a struggle for independence from British rule for centuries. Lots of small interesting bits of info on now historic sites are sure to make the trip a great experience!

If Mr. Oliver ever writes a history of the world, I'm getting it...His conversational style of writing makes historical characters and events come alive, so that complicated events follow logically.

I had no particular interest in Scotland until I saw a TV series hosted by Oliver. He has his own classic semi-hippy style, with the long hair and shoulder bag along with some tartan touches. He is an archaeologist and knows his subject really well, but also his enthusiasm is catching. This is why I

bought the book of the series and it absolutely took over every spare minute of my life until I'd finished it. I've given this five stars for excellent research, writing and ambience. It is a book I could read again and again, which is pretty remarkable. Anyone with a bit of British heritage would find this work fascinating.

Neil Oliver is an archaeologist and a historian. More, he is passionate about both, and especially is he passionate in his love for Scotland, the land of his birth. I've enjoyed his documentaries. And now this book fills in loads of details that make his presentation even more rich and fascinating. Beginning with the formation of the land itself, from geological discoveries, Oliver traces the development of an environment that would spawn and encourage the human beings who would not be daunted by the "wind-swept rock," but who would become as tough, hardy, and independent as they needed to be in order to survive and endure. It's a myth-dispelling book, one in which the author deals as honestly as he can, given historical and archaeological evidence, with the strengths and weaknesses of a fascinating people. The book is beautiful and highly readable. I recommend it with all my heart.

I decided to read this book because I've been interested in the history of Scotland. Before reading it, I thought that maybe it was going to be a boring tale, like most histories are (at least, for me). First, I was surprised that the writer was not a historian, and I liked that. I loved how it started: from the very beginning of how the isle was formed, geologically; the author mentions the Pangea. And from there, he goes to the several peoples that lived there, and ends in what Scotland is nowadays. I couldn't stop reading it; it never bored me. There were some periods of this story, in which I felt distressed, sometimes sad, and sometimes happy for what happened to the Scots. Throughout all the story, I realized that the author is very well documented; he knows the history of Scotland, and he loves his country. Excellent!

This is a gripping, easy to read history book. I would have liked a map of Scotland and a side by side geneology chart/time line of the thrones of Scotland, England, and France. If I set the book down for a couple of days, I would have to reread a bit to remember which James, Charles, etc was being discussed.

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