

People of Medieval Scotland ('PoMS') Database

Tutorial

This worksheet is designed to introduce you to the People of Medieval Scotland database (www.poms.ac.uk) by walking you through some activities.

'PoMS' is a free, online database containing information from roughly 8600 contemporary Scottish documents from 1093 to 1314. These documents are broadly called 'charters' (see the Glossary below). As a research tool, the primary function of PoMS is to make all of Scotland's charter material easily available and searchable, whether it is a place, a person, an institution, a type of document, or a particular clause in the charter.

Here is a list of the activities, and what aspect of the database they are practicing:

1. People, Document & Transaction profiles

Basic searches / Viewing profile pages

2. Titles & Occupations in PoMS

Browsing by 'People and Institutions'

3. Types of Document in PoMS

Browsing by 'Source'

4. Women in PoMS

Browsing by 'People and Institutions' | Refining a search

5. Renders in PoMS

Browsing by 'Factoid' | Refining a search | Mapping results

Glossary

There are lots of technical terms used in the database. This worksheet points you to exact pieces of information in the database for you to extract and so does not require that you understand all of the terminology that you will come across. However, below are a few terms you will need to get started. There is a full glossary on the PoMS website under the 'Help' tab.

Charter	The term 'charter' has two meanings in the database. Firstly it can be used as a broad term for all of the documents in the database, thus PoMS comprises many different types of 'charter'. Secondly, it can also have a specific meaning as a document which acts as a record of a particular legal transaction (such as a grant of land) and notifies people in the present and the future of what has happened, and records who the witnesses were. The charter would be authenticated by the donor's wax seal which was attached to the parchment. The beneficiary would normally keep the charter in their archives as evidence of the transaction.
Transaction	Any interaction between two parties (people or institutions), for example an instruction to do something, a grant of land, an agreement. Every document text has at least one transaction in it, but it can have multiple transactions depending on how much information is given in the document.
Factoid	Any statement taken from a document's text. Using the term 'factoid' is a way of pointing out that what is written is not necessarily a 'fact', rather it has been asserted by someone at a particular time.
Floruits	The earliest and latest dates when something is mentioned in the documents, for example a person or an institution or a document itself. The dates are separated by a cross (1153×1165) as opposed to a dash (1153–1165) which shows something continuous with a known beginning and end (like a king's reign).
Date-range	The earliest and latest date that a charter could have been created. Only a few charters include the date when they were produced, so this usually has to be worked out from information in the text (for example, by when witnesses are known to have died or attained an office, such as bishop). As with floruits, the dates are separated by a cross (1153×1165). In the case of documents, this means that the text was drawn up sometime <i>after</i> 1153, but <i>before</i> 1165.
Place-date	The place where a charter was issued, which usually appears in the dating clause.

Kings of Scots during the period covered by PoMS (1093–1314)

Mael Coluim (Malcolm) III	1058–1093
Domnall (Donald) III	1093–4, 1094–7
Donnchad (Duncan) II	1094
Edgar	1097–1107
Alexander I	1107–1124
David I	1124–1153
Mael Coluim (Malcolm) IV	1153–1165
William the Lion	1165–1214
Alexander II	1214–1249
Alexander III	1249–1286
Guardians ¹	1286–1291
John	1292–1304
Robert I	1306–1329

¹ Between 1286 and 1291, Scotland was governed by Guardians (originally seven) elected in parliament. Alexander III's granddaughter, Margaret the Maid of Norway, died in 1290 before reaching Scotland from Norway.

1. People, Document & Transaction profiles

These activities will show you how to find information about a particular person, institution, document, or 'transaction' in the database. This information is presented in 'profile' pages.

Activity 1: People profiles

- Go to the '**Basic Search**' in PoMS. In the blue 'Enter search terms' box, make sure 'People and Institutions' is selected.
- Type into the search-box: '**King William**' and press '**Go**'. You should then see various results: click on 'William I, king of Scots (d.1214)' to see a preview box, and then '**click to show the full record**'.
- You are now looking at the profile of King William the Lion (1165–1214). Answer the questions below.

King William

- The map at the top relates to William's witnessing. Green dots are the 'place-dates' of documents he witnessed (note that not many contained a place-date in this period); red dots are the lands which are the subject of the documents which William witnessed. What impression does this map give of the geographical spread of his interests?
- Using the biography, when was William's reign as king of Scots?
- Using the biography, who did he marry?
- Using the biography, where was he buried?
- The 'Matrix' is the name of the stamp used to make the seal. If you click on the words, you will be able to see more information about the seal. What is William doing on either sides of his seal? How does the 'legend' on the seal (the writing round the edge) identify him?
- Back on William's profile, look at the 'transaction factoids' at the bottom of the page. How many transactions is William involved in?
- Look at the 'witnesses factoids' at the bottom of the page. How many times did William witness a document? Was he a witness consistently throughout his long life?

Activity 2: Document & Transaction profiles

- Go to the ‘**Basic Search**’ page in PoMS. In the blue ‘Enter search terms’ box, select ‘**Sources**’ instead of ‘People and Institutions’.
- Type into the search-box: **1/4/35** (this is the PoMS reference to a particular document²), and press ‘**Go**’. You should then see one result: Document 1/4/35 (*Chrs. David I*, no. 71), with the date 23 April 1124 × 1139 (this is a ‘date-range’ which means that this document was definitely created sometime *after or on* 23 April 1124 but *before or in* 1139).
- Click on the document name to see a preview box, and then ‘**click to show the full record**’.
- You are now looking at the profile of that particular document. The summary of this document tells us that King David I gave the land beneath Edinburgh Castle to St Cuthbert’s church (in Edinburgh). Answer the questions below to find out more about this document.

(Note: PoMS only gives a *summary* of each document’s text. The document’s profile page gives a reference to where the full text is published under ‘Source for data entry’.)

- Looking at the ‘dating notes’, what information has been used to find the date-range for this document?
- What ‘type’ of document is it?
- What language is it written in?
- Does the original (i.e., the contemporary piece of parchment that was written on and sealed) survive?

- Now we know more about the physical document, we can look at the actual event (the ‘transaction’) itself. At the bottom of the Document profile page, under ‘Transaction factoids’, click on the ‘**short summary**’ of the transaction (‘Gift of land below Edinburgh Castle’) to see a preview box, and then ‘**click to show the full record**’.
- You are now looking at the profile of that particular transaction. There is a map showing the land at the top, followed by information about the transaction, followed by three tabs at the bottom for Associated People, Witnesses and Possessions. Answer the questions below to find out more about this transaction.

- What ‘type’ of transaction is it?
- Who is the Grantor of the transaction?
- Who is the Beneficiary of the transaction?
- Look at the names of the witnesses to this transaction. Just by looking at their names and titles, what types of people were witnessing this transaction?

² Every PoMS document has a three-digit reference called a ‘Hammond number’ or ‘H-number’ (e.g. 1/4/35). The first digit indicates what kind of document it is: 1/ = royal charter; 2/ = ecclesiastical (usually a bishop); 3/ = aristocracy, gentry, burgesses and other private individuals; 4/ = agreements. The second part of the ‘H-number’ is the series within that group, such as the documents of the bishops of Glasgow or the earls of Fife. The third number is the unique number of a document within that series. For more info see: www.poms.ac.uk/information/numbering-system-for-documents/.

2. Titles & Occupations in PoMS

This activity will show what kinds of titles & occupations were held by people who used charters.

Activity

- Go to the '**Browse**' tab at the top of the page (between the 'Search' and 'Record' tabs). Make sure you are searching for 'People and Institutions' at the top.
- Look at the red section which is all about 'People and Institutions'. Find the '**Titles/Occupations**' heading. Click on '**more**' to see the full list.
- You are now looking at a list of all the titles or occupations mentioned in the PoMS database. The numbers in brackets next to each entry are the number of individuals who appear with that title in the documents.

- Look at the list of titles/occupations in the database. Which are the most common? To help you find them, here is a list of numbers which match the most common titles or occupations. (You might want to type these numbers into the 'find...' tool on the webpage.)

2,245 people:

826 people:

698 people:

696 people:

676 people:

500 people:

216 people:

107 people:

103 people:

102 people:

102 people:

98 people:

97 people:

93 people:

84 people:

71 people:

63 people:

63 people:

59 people:

57 people:

57 people:

53 people:

52 people:

50 people:

- There are also a lot of other categories of titles and occupations (e.g. sheriff) which are broken down into their specific titles in the list (e.g. sheriff of Stirling, sheriff of Perth). What are some of the main categories which have been broken down into many specific titles?

3. Types of Document in PoMS

The activity below will get you to think a bit more about the different types of sources from the period covered by the database (1093–1314).

Activity

- Click on the **‘Browse’** tab (between the ‘Search’ and ‘Record’ tabs). In order to search for Sources instead of People and Institutions, change the ‘Searching for’ criteria at the top of the page to **‘Sources’**.
- Scroll down to the grey ‘Sources’ section. Find the **‘Document type’** heading. Click on **‘more’** to find the complete list.
- You are now looking at all of the different types of document which the database has extracted information from, with the number of each type in brackets.

- Below is a list of numbers which correspond to the largest categories of documents in the database. Look at the list on the database and find which type of document matches each number.

4,519:

1,146:

715:

364:

334:

271:

207:

Questions to consider

- Where do you think these documents would have been kept, and by whom?
- Why did people keep documents like these?
- Can these ‘types’ of documents tell us anything about how dependent the governing of the kingdom was on the written word?
- What can be said about Scotland’s written contact with people outside of the kingdom from this list?

4. Women in PoMS

These activities will demonstrate what information the database reveals about women in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland.

Activity 1: Names

- Go to the '**Browse**' tab at the top of the page. Make sure you are searching for 'People and Institutions' at the top. Look at the red section and find the '**Gender/Type**' heading. Click on '**F**'.
- You are now looking at a list of profiles for all the women in the PoMS database (947 individuals in total).
- On the top left hand side of the page, you will see a blue tab labelled '**Refine Search**'. This allows you to add more criteria to your search. Click on this tab. You will then see a list of other criteria.
- Click on the + sign next to '**Forename**' to see a drop-down menu of names. Click on '**more**' to see the full list of female names in the database. The numbers in brackets next to each name gives you the number of individuals with that name recorded in the database.

➤ What are the **five most common names** for women in the database?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Activity 2: Titles/Occupations

- Go back to the main list of women (click on the **Browse** tab > click on '**F**' under the Gender/Type heading).
- **Refine** the search again: this time, expand the tab '**Titles/Occupations**' and click '**more**' to get the full list.

➤ What are the **four most common titles/occupations** for women in the database? You should count all those in a general category (e.g. Lady) as well as those with specific titles (e.g. Lady of Gordon).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Activity 3: Roles

- Go back to the main list of women (click on the **Browse** tab > click on 'F' under the Gender/Type heading).
- **Refine** the search again: this time, scroll down to the green '**Relationships**' section and expand the tab '**Roles**'. Click '**more**' to get the full list of the roles that women are said to have occupied in the documents.

➤ What are the **eleven most common roles** that women occupy in the database's documents? (This is all roles with above 100 entries.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

5. Renders in PoMS

A 'render' (or 'return') is anything that a tenant gives to their lord in exchange for being able to hold a specific piece of land. They could be military renders (e.g. knight service), a 'nominal' render (i.e. an object of symbolic value, e.g. a pair of gloves), a cash render (e.g. £10), or a render in kind owed regularly at specified dates in the year (e.g. cheese, hides). The activities below guide you through the PoMS database to find the records it contains about each of these.

Activity 1: Military Renders

- Go to the '**Browse**' tab. Change the 'Searching for' criteria at the top of the page to '**Factoids**'. (Factoids are statements in a text. This means you will be searching for any statements where military service was a render.)
- Scroll down to the light blue '**Terms of Tenure**' section. Find the '**Military Service**' heading and click '**more**' to see the full list.

Glossary

Cupistium:	unknown meaning.
Layyelde:	an unknown service to the king.
Haubergel/habergeon:	a sleeveless coat of mail; sometimes called a hauberk, though a hauberk was originally larger and heavier.

- What is the most common type(s) of military service to be specified?
- Looking at the figures in this list, do you think it was common for military service to be specified in charters during this period? (To find the total number of charters, go to the 'Browse' tab > make sure you are searching for 'Sources' > look in the grey 'Sources' section > find the 'Document Type' heading > look at the number listed for 'Charter').
- Click on the option '**more than one knight**'. Once you see the list of 11 matching factoid records, click on '**show mappable results**'. This maps the lands which were held in exchange for more than one knight's service. If you click on an icon you can see information about the place, the document, and the people involved in the transaction. You will also notice that in some cases, a few places relate to the same transaction and document. For example, most of the lands around Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh were held by David earl of Huntingdon from his brother, King William (charter: *RRS*, ii, no.205). Another example is William de Vieuxpont II who held lands around Falkirk, Berwick and in northern England from King William in exchange for multiple knights' service (*RRS*, ii, no.84). Where were these lands held for multiple knights' service concentrated? Who are the lords holding these lands for multiple knights' service (i.e. the transaction's beneficiaries)?
- Repeat the Browse search as before, but this time click on the option '**one knight**'. **Refine** the search: scroll down to the grey 'Sources' section, find the heading 'Document category', and click on the category '**Royal charters**'. **Refine** the search once again: under 'Sources', find the category 'Source date' and click on '**more**'. In which decade(s) did the king give the most lands in exchange for one knight's service? In whose reign was this?

Activity 2: Cash Renders

- Go to the **‘Browse’** tab. Change the ‘Searching for’ criteria at the top of the page to **‘Factoids’**.
- Scroll down to the dark blue **‘Transactions’** section. Find the **‘Revenues in Silver’** heading, and click **‘more’** to see the full list.

- This list shows you the number of times money is mentioned as a ‘return’ in a transaction. It is listed according to the amount of money that is mentioned. Looking at the numbers, how common was it for money to be a return in comparison to military renders? Was there a set amount of money given as a return, or was it very varied? Why do you think this was?

Activity 3: Renders in Kind

- Go to the **‘Browse’** tab. Change the ‘Searching for’ criteria at the top of the page to **‘Factoids’**.
- Scroll down to the dark blue **‘Transactions’** section. Find the **‘Revenues in kind’** heading, and click **‘more’** to see the full list.

- This list shows you what could be given in kind. What types of things could be specified as a ‘kind’ render?

- How common was it for kind to be a return in comparison to military or cash renders?