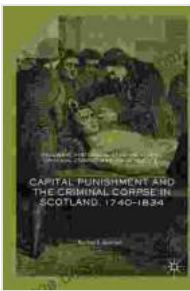


# Capital Punishment and the Criminal Corpse in Scotland, 1740-1834

Capital punishment has a long and complex history in Scotland, dating back to the Middle Ages. The Scottish legal system was heavily influenced by Roman law, which prescribed a wide range of punishments for crimes, including death. In the 18th century, capital punishment was the mandatory sentence for a number of crimes, including murder, treason, and robbery.



## Capital Punishment and the Criminal Corpse in Scotland, 1740–1834 (Palgrave Historical Studies in the Criminal Corpse and its Afterlife) by Thomas Norman DeWolf

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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The execution of criminals was a public spectacle, and it was often used as a means of deterrence. The bodies of executed criminals were often left on display after their death, as a warning to others. This practice was known as "gibbeting."

In the 19th century, attitudes towards capital punishment began to change. There was a growing movement for the abolition of the death penalty, and

in 1834, capital punishment was abolished for most crimes in Scotland.

## **The History of Capital Punishment in Scotland**

The first recorded execution in Scotland took place in the 12th century. The crime was murder, and the execution was carried out by beheading. Beheading was the most common method of execution in Scotland until the 16th century, when it was replaced by hanging.

Hanging remained the standard method of execution in Scotland until the 19th century. In 1834, the Scottish Parliament passed the Anatomy Act, which allowed the bodies of executed criminals to be used for medical research. This led to a decline in the practice of gibbeting, as the bodies of executed criminals were now being used for a more useful purpose.

In 1868, capital punishment was abolished for all crimes in Scotland. However, the death penalty was reinstated in 1931, for the crime of murder. In 1965, capital punishment was abolished again, and it has not been used in Scotland since then.

## **The Treatment of the Criminal Corpse in Scotland**

The treatment of the criminal corpse in Scotland has varied over time. In the 18th century, the bodies of executed criminals were often left on display after their death, as a warning to others. This practice was known as "gibbeting." Gibbets were often erected in prominent locations, such as crossroads and market squares.

The bodies of executed criminals were sometimes also used for medical research. In the 19th century, the Scottish Parliament passed the Anatomy Act, which allowed the bodies of executed criminals to be used for medical

research. This led to a decline in the practice of gibbeting, as the bodies of executed criminals were now being used for a more useful purpose.

In the 20th century, the bodies of executed criminals were buried in unmarked graves. This practice was intended to prevent the graves from becoming a place of pilgrimage for criminals.

## **The Abolition of Capital Punishment in Scotland**

The movement for the abolition of capital punishment in Scotland began in the 18th century. There were a number of factors that contributed to the growth of this movement, including the growing humanitarianism of the Scottish people, the influence of the Enlightenment, and the increasing awareness of the fallibility of the criminal justice system.

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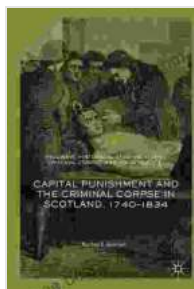
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The abolition of capital punishment in Scotland was a major victory for the movement for human rights. It is a testament to the Scottish people's commitment to justice and compassion.



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