

# *the Scottish Kings of Dalriada and the House of Alpin*

(500 - 1251)

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## the birth of Scotland

The earliest evidence of a cohesive northern kingdom is linked with the name of Kenneth<sup>40</sup> MacAlpin between the period 843 – 850. He succeeded in uniting the four races which inhabited what is today called Scotland – the Picts in the north, the Celts in the south, the Angles in the southeast, and in the west the immigrants from northern Ireland, the Scots, from which Kenneth came. The unification was aided by the need for cooperation because of invasions from Norway. Kenneth was among the ancient kings of Dalriada and the kingdom he ruled over was considerably smaller than is present day Scotland.

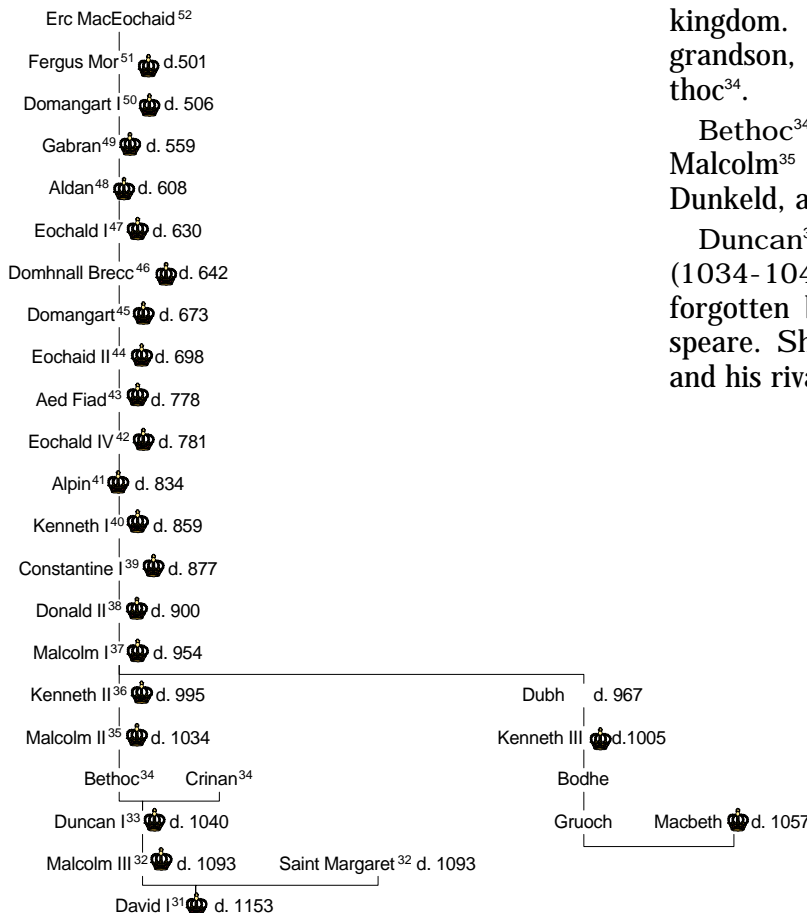
The crown continued in his family, often alternating between two of the branches, although in these times being a king was a hazardous and often temporary job – there were always cousins or brothers who wanted the title and a convenient murder or assassination was usually the most efficient way to succeed to it.

## the royal line of Scotland

Malcolm<sup>35</sup> II; King of Scots (1005 - 1034): His ascendancy to the throne was contested for ten years, but he murdered the king of an alternate line and became established as king. He then continued the policy of his predecessors of aggression in the south. He won more battles than he lost and he was able to expand upon his kingdom. He was succeeded as king by his grandson, Duncan<sup>33</sup>, son of his daughter, Bethoc<sup>34</sup>.

Bethoc<sup>34</sup> McAlpin: The eldest daughter of Malcolm<sup>35</sup> II, married Crinan<sup>34</sup>, Abbot of Dunkeld, and gave birth to Duncan<sup>33</sup>.

Duncan<sup>33</sup> I (ca. 1001 – 1040), King of Scots (1034-1040): Duncan might have been largely forgotten by history if it were not for Shakespeare. Shakespeare told the story of Duncan and his rival, Macbeth, in his tragedy, *Macbeth*.



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## Duncan<sup>33</sup> & Macbeth & Shakespeare



Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*, opens as Duncan<sup>33</sup>, King of Scots, learns of the bravery and success of his general, Macbeth, in defeating the invading Norwegians. Duncan decides to reward Macbeth with a rich lordship and proposes a great feast be held at Macbeth's castle so that all can honor Macbeth and celebrate his new lordship.

Meanwhile, Macbeth happens upon three witches who predict great riches for him, and tell him that someday he will be king, but that he will sire no king.

In the play Duncan is portrayed as a benevolent and kindly king, the embodiment of everything good; while Macbeth is weak-willed and totally under the influence of his evil and conniving wife. Lady Macbeth urges Macbeth to kill

Duncan at the feast in order to steal the crown of Scotland. Macbeth is reluctant, but nevertheless bends to her wishes.

The wicked witches appear repeatedly throughout the play, usually in the background, silently guiding the hands and actions of the weak and unethical, always plotting the total destruction of all about them. The moral of the story is that weak persons are easily influenced and guided by the forces of evil, and that they will eventually be destroyed.

Macbeth kills Duncan and his guards. Duncan's sons, Malcolm<sup>32</sup> and Donaldbain, flee to England, fearing for their lives. Macbeth becomes king. Out of fear of his crown, Macbeth murders his best friend and others, too – men, women, children – because of threats, real or imagined, always urged to these actions by his wife, Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth eventually dies, simply burdened down by the huge weight of her sins.

Years later, Malcolm<sup>32</sup>, Duncan's eldest son, aided by the English king, returns to Scotland with an army to re-claim the crown. There is a battle which ends, as does the play, with Macbeth's bloodied and severed head being held high aloft for all to see.



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Duncan<sup>33</sup> was one of the more successful kings of Scotland -- he is credited with the consolidation and unifying Scotland to near its present borders.

He was murdered by his cousin, Macbeth, in the year 1040. He had two sons, one of which was Malcolm<sup>32</sup>.

Malcolm<sup>32</sup> III Canmore [Great Head] (1031 – 1093), King of Scots (1057 - 1093): At his father's ascension to the throne in 1034, Malcolm was made King of Strathclyde, although only three years of age. When his father was murdered he was still just a young boy and was quickly carried away to England for protection

and lived in the royal court there. After he reached adulthood, and with the aid of England, he raised an army and returned to claim his heritage. He defeated and killed Macbeth in 1057 and ascended to the throne. To consolidate his power, Malcolm, of course, had to eliminate several of Macbeth's family who might prove to be a threat.

Malcolm became king and, despite the fact he owed a great debt to England for their assistance in aiding him regain his crown, he attempted to invade England several times. Those invasions had to be halted, however, when William the Conqueror invaded from Normandy

and forced Malcolm to submit and aid William's own cause.<sup>a</sup>

Malcolm married twice. First to Ingibjorg, and then to the English Princess Margaret<sup>32</sup> who was later canonized as a saint – (see the Sainly Queen Margaret, page 23). Of these two marriages, four sons, including David<sup>31</sup>, became kings of Scotland, several of whom met with untimely deaths.

After Malcolm married Margaret and was influenced by her saintly characteristics, he truly became a kindly king -- pious towards his god and compassionate to the poor. Nevertheless, even pious and compassionate kings sometimes must take war-like actions. One such action was when a rival family captured his castle of Alnwick. Malcolm and his two sons led an army to lay siege to the castle in order to re-capture it. As the army approached the castle, a single knight emerged from it carrying only his lance upon which hung the heavy keys of the castle stronghold. "*I come to surrender*", he cried, "*Let your King come forward to receive at our hands the keys of his fortress*". Malcolm rode forward alone, visor up, to accept the offer of surrender, but as he advanced, the knight spurred on his horse and with a sudden swift movement, lowered his lance and drove its point straight into the eye of the King, piercing his brain and killing him. A battle ensued in which one of Malcolm's sons was also killed, and his army forced to retreat. His wife, Saint Margaret, died of grief upon hearing the news of the death of her husband and son.

David<sup>31</sup> I (ca. 1084 - 1153), King of Scots (1124 - 1153): David<sup>31</sup> was close to England. First, because he was raised there as a member of the Scottish royal family in exile while David's unfriendly half-brother ruled Scotland. Second, because David's sister, Matilda, married Henry I, King of England, And third, because he married Matilda<sup>31</sup>, daughter of Earl Waltheof<sup>31</sup> of Northampton and Huntingdon, and through that marriage he inherited two wealthy English earldoms.

He ascended to the throne of Scotland in 1124.

David developed an interest in religion and founded monasteries and nine dioceses in the country. Even today much of the religious orientation of Scotland is attributed to his efforts.

Despite the fact that he could be pious, he could also be brutal. There are legends about his slaughters and his wasting of whole regions to consolidate his power. Although, he lost some important battles which were setbacks to his position. To enhance his authority he granted valuable fiefdoms to Anglo-Norman and French families. By the end of his reign, much of the southern part of the country was controlled by these non-Scottish foreigners. One of these fiefdoms, the 200,000 acre Annandale, was granted to Robert Bruce<sup>31</sup>, a Norman who David had met while in exile in England. David's great-granddaughter, Isabel<sup>28</sup> later married into the Bruce family – see Robert Bruce, first Lord of Annandale, page 6.

Henry<sup>30</sup>, Earl of Northumberland (1115 – 1152): Henry married Ida<sup>30</sup> and together they had three sons, two of whom became kings – Malcolm IV and William the Lion. Their third son was David<sup>29</sup>.

David<sup>29</sup>, Earl of Northumberland (1144 – 1219): David married Maud<sup>29</sup>, daughter of Hugh<sup>30</sup> de Kyvelioc, Earl of Chester. They had a son and three daughters, one of whom was Isabel<sup>28</sup>.

Isabel<sup>28</sup> ( - 1251): Isabel married Robert<sup>28</sup> Bruce, Fourth Lord of Annandale. (The genealogy now continues through family Bruce -- see p. 6 for a continuation.)

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**Sources:**

*Who's Who in Scottish History*; Gordon Donaldson.  
*Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe*; Jiri Louda.  
*Dictionary of the Middle Ages*.  
*Brewer's British Royalty*; David Williamson.  
Various web sites.

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<sup>a</sup> see William the Conqueror, page 24.