

KING DUNCAN II

BURIED IN

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY



DUNCAN II (1094 - 1094)



Seal of Duncan II.

Walter de Gray Birch (1842-1924). *History of Scottish seals*. 2 volumes. Stirling, 1905-07.

Extracted from -

THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCOTLAND

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JOHN OF FORDUN'S

CHRONICLE

OF

THE SCOTTISH NATION

VOLUME 2. p. 221

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Duncan II



[1094- 1094] Duncan an illegitimate son of the late king¹ *who had been sent as a hostage to England, with the permission of William Rufus, collected a numerous force of English and Normans, expelled Donald* from the country and took possession of the throne (May1094,) whether in his own right or for the lawful family of Malcolm, does not clearly appear. After a reign of only a few months, Duncan was assassinated by Malpedir, the Maormor, or earl of the Mearns, in November 1094, at the instigation, it is alleged of Edmund, the second of the legitimate children of Malcolm Canmore who had entered into an agreement with his uncle, Donald Bane, to share the kingdom between them.² On the restoration of Donald to the throne, his inhospitable edict for the expulsion of foreigners was strictly enforced, and every effort was made to overthrow the measures which his brother had taken for the civilization of the country. Matters remained in this state for more than two years.

At length in 1097, Edgar Atheling, along with his nephew Edgar raised a powerful army in England, and marching against Donald overcame him in battle, and having obtained possession of his person, imprisoned him and put out his eyes. William of Malmesbury states, that Edmund, the unworthy son of the pious Margaret, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, for his accession to the murder of Duncan; that, during his captivity, he was touched with remorse and in token of penitence for his guilt, ordered the fetters he had worn in his dungeon to be buried with him in his coffin.³ Donald Bane died at Roscobie in Forfarshire, and with him terminated the line of the Scottish kings.⁴

¹ Hailes's Annals, vol. I p. 49; Sax. Chron. pp. 199, 200.

² Ibid. p. 423; Fordun, lib. v. chap. xxviii. ³ William of Malmesbury, p. 158.

⁴ It is worthy of notice, that John Comyn, the lord of Badenoch, during the great competition for the crown, claimed the succession as heir of Donald Bane, through the female line.

* (Duncan, now known to be the son of Malcolm's and his first queen Ingibiorg of Orkney),

* Donald (Bane), brother of Malcolm III.

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Duncan, Malcolm's illegitimate son, wrests the kingdom from his uncle Donald - His death - Donald recovers the kingdom - At this time the King of Norway takes possession of our Isles.*

NOW when the throne of Scotland had been usurped by Donald, King Malcolm's lawful heirs - that is to say, Edgar, Alexander, and David, who, though the least in years, was nevertheless endowed with the greatest virtue - tarried in England through fear of him. For, as stated below, the king's three other older sons were not then living. Edward, as was said, was slain with his father. About Ethelred I find nothing certain, in any writings, as to where he died or was buried; except that, as some asserts he lies buried in Said Andrew's Church in Kilremont.** Edmund, a vigorous man, and devout in God's service, after his death was buried at Montacute, in England.* *William*, however, has written tht Edmund's death happened otherwise as will be seen afterwards in the sequel. Meanwhile Duncan, King Malcolm's illegitimate son, when he was with King William Rufus. in England, as a hostage, was by him dubbed knight; and backed up by his help he arrived in Scotland, put his uncle Donald to flight, and was set up as king. But when he had reigned a year and six months, he fell slain at Monthechin by the Earl of Mernys, by name Malpetri, in Scottish Malpedir, through the wiles of his uncle Donald, whom he had often vanquished in battle; and he was buried in the island of Iona. After his death, Donald, again usurped the kingship, and held it for three years; while he had reined for six months before Duncan. And thus after King Malcolm's death, so sad for the Scots, these two - Donald and Duncan, to wit - reigned five years between them. Now *William*, writing about the aforesaid Edmunds says: - Of the sons of the king and Margaret, Edmund was the only one who fell away from goodness. Partaking of his uncle Donald's wickedness, he was privy to his brother Duncan's death, having, forsooth, bargained with his uncle for half the kingdom. But being taken, and kept in fetters forever, he sincerely repented; and, when at death's door, he bade them bury him in his chains, confessing that he was worthily punished for the crime of fratricide. While these, then - namely, Donald, Duncan, and Edgar, too - were struggling for the kingdom in this wise, the king of the Noricans (Northmen) Magnus, the son of King Olave, son of King Harold surnamed Harfager, sweeping the gulfs of the sea with a host of seamen,

* Duncan, son of King Malcolm's first wife In Ingibiorg. **

Return of Malcolm's sons from England - Flight of Donald from battle.

MEANWILE, when Edgar Clito saw that Donald had wickedly usurped the throne of Scotland, which, by right, belonged to his nephews, and that he would not restore it, through more than once besought thereto by ambassadors, by a friendly intervention, he was stirred to wrath. So he gathered together from all sides a vast number of his friends, and being strengthened by the aforesaid King William's help, set out against Donald in order to drive him out and appoint, as king of Scotland his nephew, Edgar, a younger son of King Malcolm and his consort Margaret. While, therefore, young Edgar was hastening towards his native soil, and was in fear of the turbulence of his foes, Saint Cuthbert stood before him in the stillness of night, and said: - "Fear not my son; for God has been pleased to give thee the kingdom. And this shall be a token unto thee;. When thou shalt have taken my standard with thee from the monastery of Durham, and set it up against thine adversaries, I shall up and help thee; and thy foes shall be scattered, and those that hate thee shall flee before thy face!"

When the young man awoke, he reported he matter to his uncle Edgar; and committing himself and all his friends to God and to the patronage of Saint Cuthbert, he carried out, with a stout heart, what the saint had encouragingly bidden him do. When afterwards, the armies met, and Saint Cuthbert's standard was raised aloft, a certain knight of English birth, named Robert, the son of the aforesaid Godwin, and the heir and rival of his father's prowess, being accompanied by only two knights, charged the enemy, and slew their mightiest, who stood out like champions, in front of the line of battle. So before the armies had neared, one another, Donald and his men were put to flight; and thus, by the favour of God and the merits of Saint Cuthbert, Edgar happily achieved a bloodless victory. See how a faithful home-born people is afraid to withstand its true and liege lord - and so forth, as already shown in Chapter VIII. Let, therefore, the lawless usurpers of kingdoms beware, and shrink from leading a faithful people to war against their lawful and liege lord or his heir any more than a good son against his father. But Edgar, being now in better heart, revived the many courage of his men - through, indeed, that was not needed - and marched into the kingdom of his father, which rightfully belonged to him; and as he marched in the kingdom was joyfully offered him by the inhabitants with none to hinder or gainsay; and he accepted it, and governed it gloriously ever after.

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