

Robert II of Scotland

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Robert II (early 1316 – 19 April 1390) was King of Scots from 1371 to his death as the first monarch of the House of Stewart. He was the son of Walter Stewart, 6th High Steward of Scotland and of Marjorie Bruce, daughter of Robert the Bruce and of his first wife Isabella of Mar.

Edward Bruce was named heir to the throne but he died without legitimate children on 3 December 1318 in a battle near Dundalk in Ireland. Marjorie by this time had died in a riding accident probably in 1317. Parliament decreed that her infant son, Robert Stewart, was to be heir presumptive, but this lapsed on 5 March 1324 on the birth of a son, David, to King Robert. Robert Stewart inherited the title of High Steward of Scotland on his father's death on 9 April 1326, and a Parliament held in July 1326 confirmed the young Steward as heir should Prince David die without a successor. In 1329 the king died and the six year-old David succeeded to the throne with Sir Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray appointed Guardian of Scotland.

Edward Balliol, son of King John Balliol, assisted by the English and Scottish nobles disinherited by Robert I, invaded Scotland inflicting heavy defeats on the Bruce party on 11 August 1332 at Dupplin Moor and Halidon Hill on 10 July 1333. Robert fought at Halidon, where his uncle and former guardian, Sir James Stewart, was killed. Following this battle, Robert's lands in the west were given by Balliol to his supporter David Strathbogie, the titular Earl of Atholl. Robert took refuge in the fortress of Dumbarton Castle in the Clyde estuary to join his uncle, King David. In May 1334 David escaped to France leaving Robert and John Randolph, 3rd Earl of Moray as joint Guardians of the kingdom. Robert succeeded in regaining his lands but following Randolph's capture by the English in July 1335, his possessions were once again targeted by the forces of Balliol and King Edward III of England. This may have persuaded Robert to submit to Balliol and the English king and may explain his removal as Guardian by September 1335. The Guardianship transferred to Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell but following his death in 1338 Robert was re-appointed and retained the office until King David returned from France in June 1341. Robert accompanied David into battle at Neville's Cross on 17 October 1346 but he and Patrick Dunbar, Earl of March escaped or fled the field and David was taken prisoner. In

Robert II



King of Scots

Reign	22 February 1371 – 19 April 1390
Coronation	26 March 1371
Predecessor	David II
Successor	Robert III
	Earl of Strathearn
Title held	1357-1390
Spouse	Elizabeth Mure Euphemia de Ross
Issue	Robert III of Scotland Walter Stewart, Lord of Fife Robert Stewart, 1st Duke of Albany Alexander Stewart, 1st Earl of Buchan Jean Stewart Katherine Stewart David Stewart, 1st Earl of Caithness Walter Stewart, 1st Earl of Atholl Thomas Stewart Isabel Stewart Margaret Stewart
House	House of Stewart
Father	Walter Stewart, 6th High Steward of

October 1357, the king was ransomed for 100,000 marks to be paid in installments over ten years.

Robert married Elizabeth Mure around 1348, legitimising his four sons and five daughters. His subsequent marriage to Euphemia de Ross in 1355 produced two sons and two surviving daughters and provided the basis of a future dispute regarding the line of succession. Robert joined a rebellion against David in 1363, but submitted to him following a threat to his right of succession. In 1364 David presented a

proposal to Parliament that would cancel the remaining ransom debt if it was agreed that a Plantagenet heir would inherit the Scottish throne should he die without issue. This was rejected and Robert succeeded to the throne at the age of 55 following David's unexpected death in 1371. England still controlled large sectors in the Lothians and in the border country so King Robert allowed his southern earls to engage in actions in the English zones to regain their territories, halted trade with England and renewed treaties with France. By 1384 the Scots had re-taken most of the occupied lands, but following the commencement of Anglo-French peace talks, Robert was reluctant to commit Scotland to all-out war and obtained Scotland's inclusion in the peace treaty. Robert's peace strategy was a factor in the virtual coup in 1384 when he lost control of the country, first to his eldest son, John, Earl of Carrick, afterwards King Robert III, and then from 1388 to John's younger brother, Robert, Earl of Fife, afterwards the first Duke of Albany. Robert II died in Dundonald Castle in 1390 and was buried at Scone Abbey.

	Scotland
Mother	Marjorie Bruce
Born	Early 1316 Paisley Abbey, Renfrewshire
Died	19 April 1390 (aged 74) Dundonald Castle, Ayrshire
Burial	Scone Abbey

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Heir presumptive

Robert Stewart, born in 1316, was the only child of Walter Stewart, High Steward of Scotland and King Robert I's daughter Marjorie Bruce, who died probably in 1317 following a riding accident.^[1] He had the upbringing of a Gaelic noble on the Stewart lands in Bute, Clydeside, and in Renfrew.^[1] In 1315 parliament removed Marjorie's right as heir to her father in favour of her uncle, Edward Bruce.^[2] Edward was killed at the Battle of Faughart, near Dundalk on 14 October 1318^[3] resulting in a hastily arranged Parliament in December to enact a new entail naming Marjorie's son, Robert, as heir should the king die without a successor.^[4] The birth of a son,

afterwards David II, to King Robert on 5 March 1324 canceled Robert Stewart's position as heir presumptive, but a Parliament at Cambuskenneth in July 1326 restored him in the line of succession should David die without an heir.^[2] This reinstatement of his status was accompanied by the gift of lands in Argyll, Roxburghshire and the Lothians.^[5]

High Steward of Scotland

Renewed war for independence

Main article: Second War of Scottish Independence

The first war of independence began in the reign of King John Balliol.^[6] His short reign was bedeviled by Edward I's insistence on his overlordship of Scotland. The Scottish leadership concluded that only war could release the country from the English king's continued weakening of Balliol's sovereignty and so finalised a treaty of reciprocal assistance with France in October 1295.^[7] The Scots forayed into England in March 1296—this incursion together with the French treaty angered the English king and provoked an invasion of Scotland taking Berwick on 30 March before defeating the Scots army at Dunbar on 27 April.^[8] John Balliol submitted to Edward and resigned the throne to him before being sent to London as a prisoner. Despite this, resistance to the English led by William Wallace and Andrew Moray had emerged in the name of King John Balliol.^[8] On their deaths, Robert the Bruce continued to resist the English and eventually succeeded in defeating the forces of Edward II of England and gained the Scottish throne for himself.^[7]



Dumbarton Castle on Dumbarton Rock where Robert Stewart and King David took refuge in 1333

David Bruce, aged five, became king on 7 June 1329 on the death of his father Robert. Walter the Steward had died earlier on 9 April 1327^[9] and the orphaned eleven-year-old Robert was placed under the guardianship of his uncle, Sir James Stewart of Durrissdeer^[2] who along with Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, and William Lindsey, Archdeacon of St Andrews were appointed as joint Guardians of the kingdom.^[10] David's accession kindled the second independence war which threatened Robert's position as heir.^[11] In 1332 Edward Balliol, son of the deposed John Balliol, spearheaded an attack on the Bruce sovereignty with the tacit support of King Edward III of England and the explicit endorsement of 'the disinherited'.^[12] Edward Balliol's forces delivered heavy defeats on the Bruce supporters at Dupplin Moor on 11 August 1332 and again at Halidon Hill on 19 July 1333, at which the 17-year-old Robert participated.^[10] Robert's estates were overrun by Balliol, who granted them to David Strathbogie, titular earl of Atholl but Robert evaded capture and gained protection at Dumbarton Castle where King David was also taking refuge.^[11] Very few other strongholds remained in Scottish hands in the winter of 1333—only the castles of Kildrummy (held by Christian Bruce, elder sister of Robert I and wife of Andrew Murray of Bothwell), Loch Leven, Loch Doon, and Urquhart held out against Balliol forces.^[13]

In May 1334, the situation looked dire for the house of Bruce and David II gained safety in France.^[11] Robert set about winning back his lands in the west of Scotland.^[10] Strathbogie came over to the Bruce interest after



Dairsie Castle where the 1335 Parliament was held

disagreements with his fellow ‘disinherited’ but his fierce opposition to Randolph came to a head at a Parliament held at Dairsie Castle in early 1335 when Strathbogie received the support of Robert.^[14] Strathbogie once again changed sides and submitted to the English king in August and was made Warden of Scotland. It seems that Strathbogie may also have persuaded Robert to submit to Edward and Balliol—Sir Thomas Gray, in his *Scalacronica* claimed that he had actually done so—and may explain his removal as Guardian around this time.^[15] The Bruce resistance to Balliol may have been verging on collapse in 1335 but a turn-round in its fortunes began with the appearance of Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell as a potent war leader at the Battle of Culblean.^[16] Murray had been captured in 1332, ransomed himself in 1334 and immediately sped north to lay siege to Dundarg Castle in

Buchan held by Sir Henry de Beaumont with the castle falling on 23 December 1334.^[17] Murray was appointed Guardian at Dunfermline during the winter of 1335–6 while he was besieging Cupar Castle in Fife. He died at his castle in Avoch in 1338 and Robert resumed the Guardianship.^[18] Murray’s campaign put an end to any chance of Edward III having full lasting control over the south of Scotland and Edward’s failure in the six-month siege of Dunbar Castle confirmed this.^[19] Balliol lost many of his major supporters to the Bruce side and the main English garrisons began to fall to the Scots—Cupar in the spring or summer of 1339, Perth taken by Robert also in 1339 and Edinburgh by William, Earl of Douglas in April 1341^[20]

John Randolph, released from English custody in a prisoner-exchange in 1341, visited David II in Normandy before returning to Scotland. Just as Randolph was a favourite of the king, David II mistrusted Robert Stewart with his powerful positions of heir presumptive and Guardian of Scotland.^[21] At the beginning of June 1341 the kingdom appeared sufficiently stable to allow the king to return to a land where his nobles, while fighting for the Bruce cause, had considerably increased their own power bases.^[22] On 17 October 1346, Robert accompanied David into battle at Neville’s Cross, where many Scottish nobles including Randolph, died—David II was wounded and captured while Robert and Patrick, earl of March had apparently fled the field.^[10]

King David’s captivity

With the king now imprisoned in England and Randolph dead, the Guardianship once again fell to Robert.^[24] In 1347 he took the important step of ensuring the legitimation of his four sons, John, Earl of Carrick (the future King Robert III), Walter, Lord of Fife (d. 1362), Robert (the future Duke of Albany) and Alexander, Lord of Badenoch (and future Earl of Buchan), and six daughters by petitioning Pope Clement VI to allow a canon law marriage to Elizabeth Mure.^[25]

Even though an English prisoner, David retained influence in Scotland and Robert had his Guardianship removed by parliament and given jointly to the earls of Mar and Ross and the lord of Douglas—this did not last and Robert

Petitions to the Pope, 1342–1419 ^[23]

The kings of France and Scotland, bishops William of St. Andrews, William of Glasgow, William of Aberdeen, Richard of Dunkeld, Martin of Argyle, Adam of Brechin, and Maurice of Dunblane. Signification that although

was once again appointed Guardian by the Parliament of February 1352.^[26] The paroled David attended this Parliament to present to Robert and the members of the Three Estates the conditions for his release. These contained no ransom demand, but required the Scots to name the English prince John of Gaunt as heir presumptive. The Council rejected these terms, with Robert opposed to a proposal that threatened his right of succession.^[27] The king had no option but to return to captivity—the English chronicler Henry Knighton wrote of the event:^[28]

... the Scots refused to have their King unless he entirely renounced the influence of the English, and similarly refused to submit themselves to them. And they warned him that they would neither ransom him nor allow him to be ransomed unless he pardoned them for all their acts and injuries that they had done, and all the offences that they had committed during the time of captivity, and he should give them security for that, or otherwise they threatened to choose another king to rule them.

By 1354 ongoing negotiations for the king's release reached the stage where a proposal of a straight ransom payment of 90,000 merks to be repaid over nine years, guaranteed by the provision of 20 high-ranking hostages, was agreed—this understanding was destroyed by Robert when he bound the Scots to a French action against the English in 1355.^[29] The capture of Berwick together with the presence of the French on English soil jolted Edward III into moving against the Scots—in January 1356 Edward led his forces into the south-east of Scotland and burned Edinburgh and Haddington and much of the Lothians in a campaign that became known as the 'Burnt Candlemas'.^[30] After Edward's victory over France in September, the Scots resumed negotiations for David's release ending in October 1357 with the Treaty of Berwick. Its terms were that in turn for David's freedom, a ransom of 100,000 merks would be paid in annual installments over ten years—only the first two payments were completed initially and nothing further until 1366.^[31] This failure to honour the conditions of the Berwick treaty allowed Edward to continue to press for a Plantagenet successor to David—terms that were totally rejected by the Scottish Council and probably by Robert himself.^[32] This may have been the cause of a brief rebellion in 1363 by Robert and the earls of Douglas and March.^[33] Later French inducements couldn't bring David to their aid and the country remained at peace with England until he unexpectedly died on 21 February 1371.^[34]

Elizabeth Mor and Isabella Boutellier, noble damsels of the diocese of Glasgow, are related in the third and fourth degrees of kindred, Robert Steward of Scotland, lord of Stragrifis, in the diocese of Glasgow, the king's nephew, carnally knew first Isabella, and afterwards, in ignorance of their kindred, Elizabeth, who was herself related to Robert in the fourth degree of kindred, living with her for some time and having many children of both sexes by her; the above king and bishops therefore pray the pope that for the sake of the said offspring, who are fair to behold (*aspectibus gratiose*), to grant a dispensation to Robert and Elizabeth to intermarry, and to declare their offspring legitimate.

To be granted by the diocesan, at whose discretion one or more chapelries are to be founded by Robert.

Avignon, 10 Kal. Dec. 1347

King of Scots

Consolidation of Stewart power and personal rule

David was buried at Holyrood Abbey almost immediately but an armed protest by William, Earl of Douglas delayed Robert II's coronation until 26 March 1371.^[35] The reasons for the incident remain unclear but may have involved a dispute regarding Robert's right of succession^[36] or may have been directed against George Dunbar, Earl of March and the southern Justiciar, Robert Erskine.^[37] It was resolved by Robert giving his daughter Isabella in marriage to Douglas's son, James and with Douglas replacing Erskine as Justiciar south of the Forth.^[38] Robert's accession did affect some others who held offices from David II. In particular, George

Dunbar's brother John Dunbar, the Lord of Fife who lost his claim on Fife and Sir Robert Erskine's son, Sir Thomas Erskine who lost control of Edinburgh Castle.^[39]

The Stewarts greatly increased their holdings in the west, in Atholl and in the far north: the earldoms of Fife and Menteith went to Robert II's second surviving son Robert, the earldoms of Buchan and Ross (along with the lordship of Badenoch) to his fourth son Alexander and the earldoms of Strathearn and Caithness to the eldest son of his second marriage, David.^[40] Importantly, King Robert's sons-in-law were John MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, John Dunbar, Earl of Moray and James who would become the 2nd Earl of Douglas.^[40] Robert's sons, John, Earl of Carrick, the king's heir, and Robert, Earl of Fife, were made keepers of the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling respectively, while Alexander, Lord of Badenoch and Ross and afterwards Earl of Buchan, became the king's Justiciar and lieutenant in the north of the Kingdom.^[10] This build-up of the Stewart family power did not appear to cause resentment among the senior magnates—the king generally did not threaten their territories or local rule and where titles were transferred to his sons the individuals affected were usually very well rewarded.^[10] This style of kingship was very different from his predecessor's—David tried to dominate his nobles whereas Robert's strategy was to delegate authority to his powerful sons and earls and this generally worked for the first decade of his reign.^[40] Robert II was to have influence over eight of the fifteen earldoms either through his sons directly or by strategic marriages of his daughters to powerful lords.^[40]



Robert II depicted on his great seal

In 1373 Robert ensured the future security of the Stewart dynasty by having Parliament pass entailments regarding the succession. At this time, none of his sons had heirs so it became necessary for a system to be devised to define precisely the circumstances in which each of his sons could inherit the crown—none of this would take precedence over normal succession by Primogeniture.^{[41][42]} By 1375, the king had commissioned John Barbour to write the poem, *The Brus*, a history intended to bolster the public image of the Stewarts as the genuine heirs of Robert I. It described the patriotic acts of both Sir James, the Black Douglas and Walter the Steward, the king's father, in their support of Bruce.^[40] Robert II's rule during the 1370s saw the country's finances stabilised and greatly improved due in part to the flourishing wool trade, reduced calls on the public purse and by the halting of his predecessor's ransom money on the death of Edward III of England.^[10] Robert II—unlike David II whose kingship was predominantly Lothian and therefore lowland based—did not restrict his attention to one sector of his kingdom but frequently visited the more remote areas of the north and west among his Gaelic lords.^[43]



Robert the warrior and knight: the reverse side of Robert II's Great Seal, enhanced as a 19th-century steel engraving

Robert II ruled over a country that continued to have English enclaves within its borders and Scots who gave their allegiance to the king of England—the important castles of Berwick, Jedburgh, Lochmaben and Roxburgh had English garrisons and controlled southern Berwickshire, Teviotdale and large areas in Annandale and Tweeddale.^[44] In June 1371 Robert agreed to a defensive treaty with the French, and although there were no outright hostilities during 1372, the English garrisons were reinforced and placed under an increased state of

vigilance.^[45] Attacks on the English held zones, with the near certain backing of Robert, began in 1373 and accelerated in the years 1375–7. This indicated that a central decision had probably been taken for the escalation of conflict rather than the previous small-scale marauding attacks by the border barons.^[46] In 1376 the Earl of March successfully recovered Annandale but then found himself constrained by the Bruges Anglo-French truce.^[47]



Dunfermline Abbey which received Coldingham Priory as daughter house from King Robert

In his dealings with Edward III, Robert blamed his border magnates for the escalating attacks on the English zones but regardless of this the Scots retained the recaptured lands, which were often portioned out among minor lords, so securing their interest in preventing English re-possession.^[48] Despite Robert's further condemnations of his border lords, all the signs were that Robert backed the growing successful Scottish militancy following Edward III's death in 1377.^[10] In a charter dated 25 July 1378 the king decreed that Coldingham Priory would no longer be a daughter house of the English Durham Priory but was to be attached to Dunfermline Abbey.^[49] In early February the Scots—apparently unaware of the conclusion of an Anglo-French truce on 26 January 1384 that included the Scots in the cease-fire—conducted an all-out attack on the

English zones winning back Lochmaben Castle and Teviotdale.^[50] John of Gaunt led a reciprocal English attack that took him as far as Edinburgh where he was bought off by the burgesses but destroyed Haddington.^[51] Carrick and James, Earl of Douglas (his father William had died in April)^[52] wanted a retaliatory strike for the Gaunt raid. Robert may have concluded that as the French had reneged on a previous agreement to send assistance in 1383 and then having entered into a truce with England, that any military action would have been met with retaliation and exclusion from the forthcoming Boulogne peace talks.^{[52][53]} On 2 June 1384, Robert resolved to send Walter Wardlaw, Bishop of Glasgow to the Anglo-French peace talks yet Carrick ignored this and allowed raids into the north of England to take place.^[53] Despite this by 26 July the Scots were part of the truce that would expire in October. Robert called a Council in September probably for working out how to proceed when the truce concluded and to decide how the war was to proceed thereafter.^[54]

Loss of authority and death

Robert's sons, John, earl of Carrick, had become the foremost Stewart magnate south of the Forth just as Alexander, Earl of Buchan was in the north.^[55] Alexander's activities and methods of royal administration, enforced by Gaelic mercenaries, drew criticism from northern earls and bishops and from his half-brother David, Earl of Strathearn. These complaints damaged the king's standing within the Council leading to criticism of his ability to curb Buchan's activities.^[56] Robert's differences with the Carrick affinity regarding the conduct of the war and his continued failure or unwillingness to deal with Buchan in the north led to the political convulsion of November 1384 when the Council removed the king's authority to govern and appointed Carrick as lieutenant of the kingdom—a coup d'état had taken place.^{[40][57]} With Robert sidelined, there was now no impediment in the way of war. In June 1385, a force of 1200 French soldiers joined the Scots in a campaign that involved the Earl of Douglas and two of Robert's sons, John, Earl of Carrick and Robert, Earl of Fife.^[58] The skirmishes saw small gains but a quarrel between the French and Scottish commanders saw the abandonment of an attack on the important castle of Roxburgh.^[59]



A medieval tapestry depicting the Battle of Otterburn where Carrick's close ally, James, Earl of Douglas was killed



Dundonald Castle, where Robert II died in 1390

The victory of the Scots over the English at the Battle of Otterburn in Northumberland in August 1388 set in motion Carrick's fall from power. One of the Scottish casualties was Carrick's close ally James, Earl of Douglas. Douglas died without an heir, which led to various claims upon the title and estate—Carrick backed Malcolm Drummond, the husband of Douglas's sister, while Fife sided with the successful appellant, Sir Archibald Douglas, lord of Galloway who possessed an entail on the Douglas estates.^[60] Fife, now with his powerful Douglas ally, and those who supported the king ensured a counter-coup at the December Council meeting when the guardianship of Scotland passed from Carrick to Fife.^{[60][61]} Many had also approved of Fife's intention to properly resolve

the situation of lawlessness in the north and in particular the activities of his younger brother, Buchan.^[61] Fife relieved Buchan of his offices of lieutenant of the north and justiciar north of the Forth—the latter role was given to Fife's son, Murdoch Stewart. Robert II toured the north-east of the kingdom in late January 1390 perhaps to reinforce the changed political scene in the north following Buchan's removal from authority.^[62] In March, Robert returned to Dundonald Castle in Ayrshire where he died on 19 April and was buried at Scone on 25 April.^[63]

Historiography

The reign of Robert II has undergone a re-appraisal since the works of historians Gordon Donaldson (1967) and Ranald Nicholson (1974). Donaldson admits to a paucity of knowledge (at the time that he was writing) regarding Robert's reign and accepts that the early chroniclers writing near to his reign found little to criticise.^[64] Robert's career before and after he succeeded to the throne is described by Donaldson as “to say the least, undistinguished, and his reign did nothing to add lustre to it.”^[65] Donaldson goes further and debates the legality of the canon law marriage of Robert and Elizabeth Mure following the papal dispensation but

acknowledges that the acts of succession in 1371 and 1372 although sealing the matter in the eyes of Parliament did not end the generational feud of the descendants of Elizabeth Mure and of those of Euphemia Ross.^[66] Robert's earlier participation in combat at the battles of Halidon and Neville's Cross, according to Donaldson, had made him wary of sanctioning military expeditions against the English and that any such actions by his barons were concealed from him.^[67] Similarly, Nicholson described Robert's reign as deficient and that his lack of the skills of governance led to internal strife. Nicholson asserts that the Earl of Douglas was bought off following his armed demonstration just before Robert's coronation and associates this with the doubt surrounding the legitimacy of Robert's sons with Elizabeth Mure.^[68]

In contrast, the historians Stephen Boardman (2007), Alexander Grant (1984 & 1992) and Michael Lynch (1992) give a more even-handed appraisal of Robert II's life.^[68] Modern historians show a kingdom that had become wealthier and more stable particularly during the first decade of his rule.^[10] Boardman explains that Robert II was subjected to negative propaganda while he was High Steward—David II's followers denigrated his conduct during his lieutenancies and described them as "tyranny"—and again later as king when the supporters of his son John, Earl of Carrick said that Robert was a king lacking drive and accomplishments, weighed down by age and unfit to govern.^{[69][70]} Robert II's association with Gaelic Scotland also drew criticism. He grew up in his ancestral lands in the west and was completely at ease with the Gaelic language and culture and possessed a potent relationship with the Gaelic lords in the Hebrides, upper Perthshire and Argyll. Throughout his reign, Robert spent long periods in his Gaelic heartlands and complaints at the time in Lowland Scotland seem to have been influenced by the view that the king was too much involved in Gaelic concerns.^[71] Boardman also asserts that much of the negative views held of Robert II find their origins in the writings of the French chronicler Jean Froissart who recorded that '[the king] had red bleared eyes, of the colour of sandalwood, which clearly showed that he was no valiant man, but one who would remain at home than march to the field'.^[72] Contrary to Froissart's view, the early Scottish chroniclers—Andrew of Wyntoun and Walter Bower (who both utilised a source that was nearly contemporary with Robert II)—and later 15th and 16th century Scottish chroniclers and poets showed 'Robert II as a Scottish patriotic hero, a defender of the integrity of the Scottish kingdom, and as the direct heir to Robert I'.^[73]

Grant (1992) acknowledges that Robert II's reign in terms of foreign and domestic policy was "not so unsuccessful".^[74] As far as William, Earl of Douglas's reaction was concerned when he staged an armed demonstration before Robert's coronation, Grant does not hold to the view that Douglas was in some way demonstrating against Robert's legitimate right to the throne but more an assertion that royal patronage should not continue as in the time of David II. Grant also advocates that the demonstration was aimed at father and son Robert and Thomas Erskine who held the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling and Dumbarton from Robert's predecessor.^[74] Grant seriously called into question the dependability of Froissart's writings as an effective source for Robert II's reign.^[75] Influential magnate coalitions headed by Carrick, having undermined the king's position, manipulated the Council of November 1384 to effectively oust Robert II from any real power.^[76] Grant gives little weight to the asserted senility of Robert and suggests that the deposition of Carrick in 1388 and then the resolution to join the Anglo-French truce of 1389 were both at the instigation of Robert II.^[77] Yet power was not handed back to Robert II but to Carrick's younger brother, Robert, earl of Fife which once again saw the king at the disposition of one of his sons.^[78] Despite this, the now unknown source whom both Wyntoun and Bower relied on made the point that Fife deferred to his father on affairs of state emphasising the difference in styles in the guardianships of his two sons.^[79]

Michael Lynch points out that Robert II's reign from 1371 until the lieutenancy of Carrick in 1384 had been one exemplified by continued prosperity and stability and which Abbot Bower described as a period of “tranquility, prosperity and peace”.^[80] Lynch suggests that the troubles of the 1450s between James II and the Douglasses which have been interpreted by some historians as the legacy of Robert II's policy of encouraging powerful lordships was in fact a continuation of David II's build up of local lords in the Marches and Galloway—Robert was satisfied with government to leave alone the Douglas and the Stewart earls in their fiefdoms.^[81] The weakening of government if anything, Lynch suggests, came not before the 1384 coup but after it despite the fact that the coup had at its root Robert II's favouring of his third son, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan (known as the Wolf of Badenoch).^[82]

Fictional portrayals

Robert II has been depicted in historical novels. They include:

- *The Three Perils of Man; or, War, women, and witchcraft* (1822) by James Hogg. The tale takes place in the reign of Robert II whose “country enjoyed happiness and peace, all save a part adjoining to the borders of England.” Part of the action takes place at Linlithgow Palace, where Robert promises to marry his daughter Margaret Stewart “to the knight who shall take that castle of Roxburgh out of the hands of the English”. With Margaret adding her own terms, that “in case of his attempting and failing in the undertaking, he shall forfeit all his lands, castles, towns, and towers to me.” In the absence of volunteers, Margaret vows to take the Castle herself, defeating Lord Musgrave and his mistress Jane Howard.^[83]
- *The Lords of Misrule* (1976) by Nigel Tranter. Covers events from c. 1388 to 1390. Depicting the last years of Robert II and the rise of Robert III of Scotland to the throne. As the elderly king has grown “feeble, weary and half-blind”, his sons, daughters and other nobles campaign for power. An ungoverned Scotland is ravaged by their conflicts. Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany and Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan are prominently featured.^[84]
- *Courting Favour* (2000) by Nigel Tranter. Follows the career of John Dunbar, Earl of Moray in the courts of David II of Scotland and Robert II. John is a son-in-law to the latter and serves him as a diplomat.^[85]

Ancestry

Notes

1. ^{^ a b} Oram, et al., *Kings & Queens*, p. 123
2. ^{^ a b c} Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 3
3. [^] Bradbury, *Companion to Medieval Warfare*, p. 222
4. [^] Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament*, pp. 70–1
5. [^] Oram, et al., *Kings and Queens of Scotland*, p. 124
6. [^] Watson, *Power of the Past*, p. 29
7. ^{^ a b} Watson, *Independence, Wars of*
8. ^{^ a b} Oram, et al., *Kings & Queens*, p. 99
9. [^] Weir, *Britain's Royal Family*, p. 214
10. ^{^ a b c d e f g h i} Boardman, *Robert II*, ODNB
11. ^{^ a b c} Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 4
12. [^] ‘The disinherited’ - those nobles or their descendents who had fought for the English but had not entered into Robert I's peace and had their property confiscated and distributed to the Bruce supporters.
13. [^] Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland*, p. 227

14. ^ Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland* pp. 225–6
15. ^ Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland*, footnote 2, p. 226
16. ^ Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland* p. 231
17. ^ Duncan, *Andrew Murray*, ODNB
18. ^ Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland* p. 233
19. ^ Brown, *The Wars of Scotland, 1214-1371*, pp. 241–2
20. ^ Grant & Stringer, *Medieval Scotland* p. 234
21. ^ Brown, *The Wars of Scotland, 1214-1371*, p. 244
22. ^ Brown, *The Wars of Scotland, 1214-1371*, pp. 241–3
23. ^ "Volume XIII: 6 Clement VI (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92363>)“, *Petitions to the Pope: 1342-1419* (1896), pp. 124-126. Date accessed: 04 April 2009. (10 Kal. Dec. 1347 = 22 November 1347)
24. ^ Sadler, *Border Fury*, p. 228
25. ^ Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament*, footnote 34, p. 85
26. ^ Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament*, pp. 85–6
27. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 9–10
28. ^ Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament*, pp. 86–7
29. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 10
30. ^ Brown, *The Wars of Scotland*, p. 253
31. ^ Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, pp. 218–9
32. ^ Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, p. 219
33. ^ Barrell, *Medieval Scotland*, p. 130
34. ^ Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, p. 220
35. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 40
36. ^ Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament* pp. 102–105
37. ^ Grant in Jones, et al., *New Cambridge History*, p. 360
38. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 45
39. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 39, 53
40. ^ *a b c d e f* Oram, et al., *Kings & Queens*, p. 126
41. ^ Barrell, *Medieval Scotland*, pp. 141–2
42. ^ The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2012), 1373/3. [1] (<http://www.rps.ac.uk/trans/1373/3>) Date accessed: 21 May 2012
43. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 94–5
44. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 108
45. ^ Sadler, *Border Fury*, p. 258
46. ^ Tuck & Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, pp. 38–9
47. ^ Sadler, *Border Fury*, p. 260
48. ^ Sadler, *Border Fury*, pp. 259–260
49. ^ Tuck & Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, p. 40
50. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 118
51. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 118–9
52. ^ *a b* Tuck & Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, p. 42
53. ^ *a b* Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 120–1
54. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 123
55. ^ Barrell, *Medieval Scotland*, p. 141–2
56. ^ For an account of the background to Buchan’s activities in the north of Scotland and the context in which he operated see Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pages 83–9
57. ^ Grant in Jones, et al., *New Cambridge History*, pp. 360–1
58. ^ Oram et al., *Kings and Queens*, p. 127
59. ^ Goodman & Tuck, *War and Border Societies*, p. 45
60. ^ *a b* Goodman & Tuck, *War and Border Societies*, p. 51
61. ^ *a b* Grant in Jones, et al., *New Cambridge History* p. 361
62. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 171
63. ^ The date of Robert II’s death and the disputed date for Robert II’s burial and the reasons for the delay in Robert III’s

coronation are explained by Dauvit Broun in Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament* pp. 112–6

64. ^ Donaldson, *Scottish Kings*, p. 33
65. ^ Donaldson, *Scottish Kings*, p. 39
66. ^ Donaldson, *Scottish Kings*, p. 37
67. ^ Donaldson, *Scottish Kings*, pp. 39–40
68. ^ *a b* Pearson, *Robert II*
69. ^ Grant in Jones, et al., *New Cambridge History*, p. 359
70. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 123–5 & 171–2
71. ^ Boardman in Broun & MacGregor, *The Great Ill-Will of the Lowlander*, p. 84
72. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, p. 137
73. ^ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, pp. 108, 125 (footnote 2)
74. ^ *a b* Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, P. 178
75. ^ Tuck & Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, pp. 30–65
76. ^ Oram et al., *Kings and Queens*, pp. 126–7
77. ^ Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, pp. 180–1
78. ^ Oram et al., *Kings and Queens*, p. 128
79. ^ Brown & Tanner, *History of Scottish Parliament*, pp.110–2
80. ^ Lynch, *Scotland: A new History*, p. 138
81. ^ Lynch, *Scotland: A new History*, pp. 138–9
82. ^ Lynch, *Scotland: A new History*, p. 139
83. ^ Hogg,p. 4-10
84. ^ “Lords of Misrule”, synopsis from the bookjacket (<http://cunninghamh.tripod.com/books/synopses90/misrule.htm>)
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Robert II of Scotland House of Stewart Born: 1316 Died: 1390		
Regnal titles		
Preceded by David II	King of Scots 22 February 1371 – 14 April 1390	Succeeded by Robert III
Peerage of Scotland		
New title	Earl of Strathearn 1357–5 March 1390	Succeeded by David Stewart
Court offices		
Preceded by Walter Stewart	High Steward of Scotland 1326–1371	Succeeded by John Stewart

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