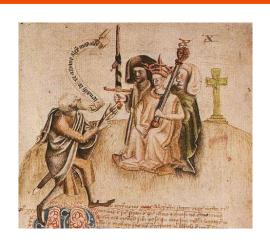
THE MAKINGS OF A HERO



0. THE MAKINGS OF A HERO - Story Preface

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This illustration is an artist's conception of King Alexander as he is crowned King of the Scots. It is part of the late-medieval manuscript known as the <u>Scotichronicon</u> by <u>Walter Bower</u> (abbot of Inchcolm) and is maintained at <u>Corpus Christi College Cambridge</u> (folio 206 MS 171) where its description includes these words:

"Coronation of King Alexander on Moot Hill, Scone. He is being greeted by the ollamh rígh Alban, the royal poet of Scotland, who is addressing him with the proclamation 'Benach De Re Albanne' (= Beannachd Dé Rígh Albanaich - 'God Bless the King of Scots'); the poet goes on to recite Alexander's genealogy. Malcolm II, Earl of Fife, depicted holding the sword standing beside King Alexander.

"(Albannaich is the plural form of Albannach, 'Scot' or 'Scotsman' and refers to the Scots collectively [as a nation]. The unique title of the Scots monarchs has long been 'King of Scots' rather than 'of Scotland' as opposed to the monarchs of England and other countries, who are titled 'King [or Queen] of England' etc. This style is ancient, and reflects the Gaelic tradition of the chief as 'father' of his 'clann' [lit. children]. As the monarch is the 'Chief of Chiefs' he or she is the 'father' or 'mother' of the people, not merely the ruler of the land.)"

At first blush, William Wallace would have been an unlikely candidate for "hero."

<u>Born</u> in <u>Elderslie</u>, in approximately 1272, the second son of a minor Scottish laird (lord), William was bound for the church. That's the path most second sons took in 13th century Scotland. Family wealth, titles and land were always inherited by first-born sons. William's brother Malcolm, named for their father, would inherit what little wealth the Wallace family had. William would be a priest.

On closer examination, though, William Wallace *had* the early makings of a hero. At a time when most men stood 5 feet, Wallace was 6'7". By the time he was 20, English invaders had already killed the father and older brother he adored. While at Cambuskenneth Abbey, studying with his uncle, William learned about the "idea" of freedom in a poem that today is part of the Wallace monument in Stirling, Scotland:

Freedom is best I tell thee Of all things to be won Then never live within the bond Of slavery my son

English efforts to forever control the region would not go unchecked in Scotland as rage built within the young Wallace. Longshanks had required a mere six years to <u>crush Wales</u>. Wallace would see to it that his Scotland would not be completely subjected as <u>Wales</u> had been. But his efforts would result in a trial that was a gross judicial sham. And in his efforts to "legally" crush Wallace, Edward I created a Scottish martyr whose heroism is still honored 700 years later.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-MAKINGS-OF-A-HERO-Braveheart

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Map of Wales

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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