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What “the authorities” did to people in the Middle Ages was shocking by any standards. Before execution, individuals—such as William Wallace—were drawn behind a horse on their way to the place of execution. The process is seen in this drawing by the 13th-century chronicler Matthew Paris. It depicts William de Marisco being punished in this fashion. “Execution of William de Marisco. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 16, folio 155v.” See, also, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora*, by Suzanne Lewis, at [page 235 of the online version](#).

Wallace was found guilty, but what is most remarkable is the intentional cruelty of the sentence.

Death was not enough to satisfy Edward's anger at this Scottish patriot. The manner of death, imposed by the court, was almost beyond belief.

...he be there hanged, and afterwards taken down from the gallows. And that, inasmuch as he was an outlaw, and was not afterwards restored to the peace of the Lord King, he be decollated and decapitated...that the heart, the liver and lungs as well as all the other intestines of the said William, from which such perverted thoughts proceeded, be cast into the fire and burnt.

Torture was not enough, though. After death, William's body would be...cut up and divided into 4 parts, and that the head, so cut off, be set up on London Bridge, in the sight of such as pass by, whether by land or by water; and that one quarter be hung on a gibbet at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, another quarter at Berwick, a third quarter at Stirling, and the 4th at St. Johnston [Perth], as a warning and a deterrent to all that pass by and behold them.

(Quoted in *Brave heart*, by James Mackay, at page 263.)

A contemporary chronicler from the monastery of Lanercost summed up how the English people viewed the cruel sentence:

*Butcher of thousands,
Threefold death be thine,
So shall the English
From thee gain relief.
Scotland! Be wise,
And choose a nobler chief.*

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Media Stream



Monastery of Lanercost - William Wallace Chronicle

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