

## Kenneth II

1327

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attempted to reign, for a single year, when he was killed by his rival Gregory the Great (*z.* 889) [q. v.]

[The Pictish Chronicle in Chronicles of the Picts and Scots; the Ulster and other Irish Annals; the Chronicles of Henry of Huntingdon, Wyntoun, and Fordoun are the principal early sources. Robertson's Scotland under her Early Kings and Skene's Celtic Scotland are the best modern histories.] *Æ. M.*

**KENNETH II** (*z.* 995), son of Malcolm I, succeeded to the Scottish Pictish monarchy on the death of Culen [q. v.] in 971. He continued the war with the Britons of Strathclyde, who had slain his predecessor, and the 'Pictish Chronicle' records a defeat of his foot-soldiers by the Britons at a place which Skene ingeniously identifies with the Moss of the Cornag, a burn which falls into the Firth at Abercorn. He seems to have been more successful in the raids which, according to the same chronicle, he made on Northumbria, now divided between the two Earls Oslac and Eadulf Evil-child, who ruled from the Tees to the Forth. Kenneth is said to have harried as far as Stanemore, at the head of the Tees; 'Cliva,' perhaps Cleveland in Yorkshire; and the pools of 'Deram' (Derna?) or Deerham in Cumberland. But as it is added that he fortified the fords of the Forth, it is evident he did not feel secure from attack, either by the Britons or the Angles of Northumbria. Next year he again ravaged Northumbria, and took captive a son of its king, probably Earl Eadulf. With the statement that Kenneth 'gave the great city of Brechin to the Lord' the 'Pictish Chronicle' closes; and if, as is reasonably conjectured, this chronicle was composed at Brechin in Kenneth's reign, its brief statements have the value of a contemporary record. In the round tower still standing at Brechin we have perhaps the monument of this donation. Its position indicates what is corroborated by other evidence—that the extension of the Scottish monarchy during his reign was to the north of the Tay rather than to the south of the Forth, where Kenneth, though he made successful raids, was unable to keep more than his predecessors had won. He is stated in the 'Annals of Ulster' to have slain in 977, the sixth year of his reign, the son of Indulf, king of Alban; and this may probably have secured to him the fort of Edinburgh, which Indulf had taken from the Angles of Northumbria.

Kenneth's relations with Eadgar, the king of Wessex, have been much disputed. The relations between Kenneth's predecessor Malcolm and Eadgar's predecessor Eadmund have been represented as those of a feudal baron

to his suzerain, on account of the grant of Cumberland by the English to the Scottish king [see under MALCOLM I]. Similarly Florence of Worcester, writing in the twelfth century, gives among the dependent kings who rowed Eadgar, king of England, on the Dee at Chester in 972, in sign of homage, the names of 'Kenneth, king of Scotland, Malcolm, king of the Cumbrians, Maccus, king of the Isles,' and five Welsh chiefs. Mr. E. W. Robertson points out that no such king of Cumbria as Malcolm is to be found at this date, and that suspicion attaches to the names of two of the Welsh princes. The names are not given in the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,' and the account of Kenneth's presence at Chester in 972 is inconsistent with the 'Pictish Chronicle,' which represents him at the period as making successful raids in Northumbria. Another statement of later English chroniclers, which first appears in a tract on the 'Arrival of the Saxons,' and was afterwards expanded in the chronicle of John of Wallingford, or the monk of St. Albans, about 1214, is that Eadgar, at the request of Kenneth, who came to London for the purpose, ceded Lothian to the Scottish king on condition of receiving homage from the latter, and that he should allow its natives to retain their English speech. This is almost certainly an invention to conceal the conquest of Lothian by the victory of Carham in 1018, gained by Malcolm II [q. v.], the son of Kenneth, over Eadulf Outel, the Northumbrian earl. The probable conclusion is that Kenneth neither did homage to Eadgar on the Dee, nor received from him a grant of Lothian. According to Fordoun, the relations between the Scotch and English kings were peaceable. There is no mention of Kenneth II in the English chronicles of the reign (975-8) of Edward the Martyr [q. v.], or his successor Ethelred the Unready (968?-1016) [q. v.]

Kenneth's death seems to have been due to a conflict with the Mormaers or chiefs of Angus, the district now known as the shires of Forfar and Kincardine, or the Mearns, and probably including Gowry, part of the shire of Perth. A Mormaer of Angus called Cunchar or Connachar (perhaps equivalent to Connor), dying without male issue, left his succession to a daughter, Fenella, and Kenneth put to death her only son at Dunsinane, the chief fort of the Angus Mormaers. In revenge Fenella, by a stratagem which left a deep impression on traditionary history, contrived to murder Kenneth at Pettercainn in the Mearns in 995. Tighernac notes that he was slain by his own subjects; the 'Annals of Ulster' add, by treachery. A chronicle of the Picts and Scots of 1251, and Wyntoun,

## Dictionary of National Biography, Volumes 1-20, 22 for Kenneth

Record Index

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**Death Date:** 995  
**Death Place:** Fettercairn, Mearns  
**Father's Name:** Malcolm

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## Kenneth III

1328

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writing about 1395, attribute the treachery to Fenella. Fordoun and later annalists tell in various forms the story that she constructed a figure which, on the touch of the king, shot arrows from crossbows which destroyed him; this is probably an invention, to give a vivid image of her treachery.

The real drift of Kenneth's reign appears to have been the consolidation and defence of the central districts of Scotland, from the Forth and Clyde to the Mounth or the Grampians. Cumbria was held at the time by a separate line of princes, and it may be doubted whether Kenneth possessed permanently any territory south of the Forth.

[The contemporary chronicles have been mentioned above. Freeman's *Norman Conquest* gives the modern English, Skene's *Celtic Scotland* and E. W. Robertson's *Scotland under her Early Kings* the modern Scottish, version of their scanty statements.] Æ. M.

**KENNETH III** (d. 1005?), son of Duff, the elder brother of Kenneth II [q. v.], suc-

ceeded Constantine, the son of Culen [q. v.], as king of the Scottish Pictish monarchy in 997. He is sometimes called the Donn or Brown, sometimes the Grim, and is said, in the prophecy of St. Berchan, to have come from 'strong Duncaith,' perhaps the hill of that name on the Sidlaws, the range which separates Strathmore from the Carse of Gowrie, where the descendants of Kenneth I [q. v.] appear to have held several forts. The single event of his reign recorded in the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' is a raid made upon Cumberland by Ethelred the Unready [q. v.] in 1000; and the 'Ulster Annals' assign his death to a battle fought 'among the men of Alban themselves' in 1005. One of the later Scottish chronicles gives the place as Monaghavard (Monzievaird) in Strathearn, and his successful opponent as Malcolm II, Kenneth II's son, who succeeded him on the throne.

[Chronicles of the Picts and Scots; Wyntoun and Fordoun; Skene's *Celtic Scotland*.] Æ. M.