

Robert Wishard position paper

Liam Cronin

Before the death of Alexander the 3rds there was a simple bishop in Glasgow though a prominent figure at the time it would only be Alexander's death that would elevate him to greater deeds than any man would imagine. Very little is known about the childhood of Robert Wishart but what little is known presents the image of an ordinary boy born among the Wishart and Pittarrow families, a union of mixed Norman and French origin. Robert quickly followed in the footsteps of his relative William Wishart in joining the church of Scotland for which he secured the position of archdeacon at St Andrews at the age of twenty seven. Robert continued to become more influential within Scotland and eventually rose to be the bishop of Glasgow a powerful position yet this is not where Robert's true power lay. During the reign of Alexander Robert remained as a key advisor to the king and would often assist in determining the trajectory of the nation. Robert became such an influential figure within Scotland that King Alexander went so far as to choose him as the sole Scottish representative to the council of Lyon in 1274. However all things come to an end and unfortunately so too did the illustrious life of Alexander the 3rd meet its natural conclusion. Robert was shocked and dismayed by the death of his good friend and king losing his interest in politics for a time and instead choosing to focus on building the Glasgow cathedral.

Robert may have turned his eye away from politics but politics did not avert its gaze from him and on the 19th of March 1286 Robert found himself thrust into a position of power yet again as one of the six guardians of Scotland a role to lead the country as an intermediary until Margaret the maid of Norway would come of age. The nation immediately erupted into conflict

as John Baliol alongside John Comyn attempted to seize the nation themselves and usurp the crown. The rebellion was stifled and the guardians of Scotland managed to suppress the violence in the country laying a thin veneer of peace over the nation. The six guardians of Scotland quickly diminished to four and fearing for the stability of the country the remaining guardians enacted a controversial and dangerous decision to marry Margaret maid of Norway to the son of Edward the first. The treaty stated that Scotland must be left to its own powers and sovereignty while still tied closely to England however this treaty was never to be enacted as Margaret died while traveling to the Orkney islands once again throwing the country into a state of chaos and confusion.

Once again civil war loomed over Scotland threatening to drive the entire nation into a state of death and destruction as many prominent Scottish figures fought for power. King Edward felt the need to intercede at the time and with his immense power decide the fate and direction of the Scottish people. For a time Edward desired Robert himself to take the throne however Robert denied this power as he believed it was not a role that he himself had any reason to take. Robert and Edward had acted as close friends for some time Robert even acting as an intermediary for Scottish leaders and the king however over the course of the Scottish war of independence this relationship fell apart and close friends turned into brutal enemies. After denying the offer to become the king of Scotland Robert became the chief adjudicator in the decision for Scotland's king and once again had power thrust upon him. During this time Robert was a staunch supporter of Bruce however his opinion was not enough to sway Edward's choice and the cracks in his and Edward's relationship began to form. At this point Robert began his silent crusade against

England and while King Edward began to look elsewhere for conquest and power Robert began to work through cloak and dagger to ensure the independence of Scotland.

Cracks began to form in the relationship which he held with the king as King Edward attempted to increase the reach of the English church over Scotland. Robert would not allow this and he repeatedly refused to obey the church of England and the Church of York a decision which infuriated King Edward. Robert was correctly cited as one of the main conspirators in the repeated attempted rebellions against the puppet king and was imprisoned against his will. Robert was forced to swear loyalty to King Edward and swear to submit to the desires of the English church. Robert had no other option but to do so. Once released Robert went about immediately breaking his oath to King Edward and going back to his unadulterated rebellion. Edward continued to be infuriated by the antics of Robert going so far as to send a message to the Holy See admitting his desire to see Robert excommunicated this resulted in a harsh scolding of Robert's actions. Robert had acted so against the English government in his rebellion that he was forced into exile, an exile that he very quickly ignored to continue his work.

While Robert lived an interesting and adventurous life for a bishop his story is not one that ends in happiness but instead in pain as his capturing at Cupar demonstrates. Robert was taken away to an English prison but this time he did not escape instead he lived in that prison for the next eight years of his life during which time he went blind due to the poor conditions of his prison. Robert was not released until after the battle of Bannockburn as part of a prisoner exchange however the fight was knocked out of him and a man filled with fire who opposed an empire had lost his will to fight. Robert lived in peace for the rest of his life dying in his home of Glasgow in the midst of November 1316.

Bibliography MLA format

"Robert Wishart from The Gazetteer for Scotland." *Robert Wishart: Overview of Robert Wishart*.

N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2016. <<http://www.scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst1142.html>>.

"Robert Wishart." *Robert Wishart*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.

<http://www.wishart.org/robert_wishart.html>.

"Robert Wishart." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 3 Mar. 2016. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Wishart>.

Wishart, Scott. "Bishop Robert Wishart : Warrior & KIngmaker." *Bishop Robert Wishart :*

Warrior & KIngmaker. Wishart Connections, 2013. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.

<<http://www.wishartconnections.org/index.php/notablewisharts/bishop-robert-wishart-2/>>.