

# **PRAVDIVOST' HISTORICKÝCH FAKTOV VO FILME STATOČNÉ SRDCE**

## **The verity of facts depicted in Braveheart**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

It is almost impossible to live in present world without gathering, producing, passing and providing the huge amount of information. Nowadays, people's perception is attracted by variety of communication channels, for example: internet, television, radio, mobile phones and many others. We have an opportunity to read, watch, copy and use all provided information. But is it safe? Are all facts provided in massmedia true? Of course not. The more data we have, the more careful we should be. There is a growing importance of distinguishing between fiction and reality, present and past, fun and danger.

The topic that was chosen to show the reader a difference between fact and fiction is very close to both of these areas. History can be sometimes presented partly as fiction. Although it is an exact science, history can be interpreted in many ways depending on the subjective view of historians and scientists. When watching the film, you will also feel like it really happened in this way. But it did not. In fact, drama, adventure and action films hardly ever portray real historical facts, which we tried to prove in this thesis by studying the movie Braveheart.

So our basic aim was to bring only true facts about the life of William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and the Scottish War of Independence, to compare all these facts with the film version and to enlighten the mind of readers and film spectators.

The main goal was to provide the list of changed facts, costumes and information and to prove that the real historical film portraying only true facts can be as interesting and entertaining as an adventurous drama full of special effects.

This work is based on comparing film and historical facts, on studying different historical book materials, internet sites and investigation at places where William Wallace, Edward the Longshanks and Robert the Bruce lived and ruled for example in Edinburgh Castle, Stirling Castle, Elderslie, Paisley Abbey, Falkirk, Bannockburn, Dunfermline Abbey, The Tower of London etc.

## 1 FILM VS. REALITY

As it was previously stated at the beginning of our thesis, Braveheart is war and romance drama just based on historical facts. Thus it contains many differences worth to be mentioned in this chapter. Every important fact, either false or true, is clearly marked and it also contains an explanation based on close and intensive research.

**1. Fiction:** Braveheart begins with the statement that The King of Scotland has died and Edward the Longshanks, the cruel English King, took his place and claimed the throne of Scotland for himself.

**Fact:** Yes, partly it was like that. Edward saw a possibility to gain the Scottish throne for his own dynasty after the death of King Alexander III. He proposed a marriage between Margaret, Maid of Norway and heir to the Scottish crown, and his son, prince Edward. Unfortunately for Edward, Margeret died on her way to England in 1290 leaving the question about hereditary succession widely opened.

According to webpage Britannia: “Edward claimed the right to intercede as feudal lord of the Scottish kings through their Anglo-Norman roots. Edward arbitrated between thirteen different claimants and chose John Baliol. Baliol did homage to Edward as his lord, but the Scots resisted Edward's demands for military service. In 1296, Edward invaded Scotland and soundly defeated the Scots under Baliol. Baliol was forced to abdicate and the Scottish barons did homage to Edward as their king.” (1)

**2. Fiction:** William Wallace is described as a son of a poor highland farmer in the film. They live in a small cottage among the Scottish Highlands.

**Fact:** Wallace was in fact born to a rich and noble family of the middle class. They are told to have lived and owned large estates and possessions near Elderslie. This small town is located near Glasgow, thus it can not be considered to be in Highlands. So we can derive from this knowledge that William Wallace was a lowlander, not a highlander as stated in the film.

**3. Fiction:** Wallace’s mother died before William could remember her.

**Fact:** She was a part of her son’s life, she took care of him and she enjoyed healthy life until 1297. She traveled a lot, many times along with her son and she was alive when William finished his studies and lived with his uncle. She died in Dunfirmline and she is probably buried there in Dunfirmline Abbey. (2, p. 56)

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<sup>1</sup>. *Edward I, Longshanks*. 2005

<sup>2</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *Sir William Wallace*. 2008

**4. Fiction:** Wallace achieved whole education at the uncle's estate. He taught him languages and basic knowledge.

**Fact:** William is said to have started his basic education in Paisley Abbey where he was taught by monks. Then he continued his study in Dundee. It is possible that he gained some knowledge from his uncle he lived with, but it was not the main part of his education.

**5. Fiction:** Young orphan William goes with his uncle, Argyle, after the funeral. He grows well on his uncle's estates and he is well educated there. William travels to many countries and Argyle teaches him to use his brain first before using the sword. He becomes a very strong and wise man there.

**Fact:** The story about William's education is partly true, but no Argyle Wallace ever existed. Two people were important in Wallace's childhood considering education. William's uncle, his father's brother, a priest of Dunipace. It is said that he provided his nephew with the basics of Latin language and literature. It is also believed that he raised the love of freedom in Wallace's soul.

Wallace was also sent to another uncle, a priest at Kilspindie in the Carse of Gowrie. He protected his nephew and his mother and provided him further education. But it is not clear, whether the priest was Wallace's, lady Wallace's or Sir Reginald's uncle. Sir Reginald Crawford was the Sheriff of Ayr and he took care of young William and his mother for some time. (2, p. 50- 52)

**6. Fiction:** Wallace lived only with his father and an older brother. Both of them died during a highlander uprising against Edward when William was just eight years old.

**Fact:** Wallace had certainly one older brother Malcolm and possibly a younger brother John. It is presumed that he had also two sisters. John was executed in London in 1307. Two opinions exist about Malcolm's life. Either he survived and enjoyed the Wallace's heritage, or he was killed along with his father at Loudon Hill in 1296, or 1291. (2, p. 118)

**7. Fiction:** At the beginning of Braveheart the English King creates a conspicuous plan about how to seize Scotland. He gives his nobles the Scottish lands and he allows them to use the right of "prima nocta" in Scotland. According to this right, they are allowed to spend the first night after wedding with the Scottish bride.

**Fact:** There exist many speculations about this particular right. Many historians agree that this right was never applied. But let us start from the very beginning. Original latin name is "Jus Primae Noctis". It means "the Law of the First Night" in English language. Many nations have developed its own name for this law. In France they called it "Droit Du Seigneur"- the

right of the feudal landlord, the Germans have "Das Recht der ersten Nacht" and "Das Herrenrecht" (The Lord's or Master's right). There are also many ancient and middle aged literary texts referring to this law, such as: The Epic of Gilgamesh, Herodotus' works and some Irish legends. The number of law names and literary themes is the proof that this phenomenon was commonly known during past times. But was it really practised? When we come to Scotland, we can find an interesting story of King Evenus III. He is said to have lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Boethius wrote *Hystory & Croniklis of Scotland* where we can read the following: "Ane othir law he (King Evenus) maid, that wiffis of the Commonis sal be fre to the nobilis; and the Lord of the ground sal have the madinheid of all virginis dwelling on the same."

This law thus could be used until 1089 when Malcolm III, King of Scots, abolished such laws due to his wife Margaret. On the other hand, many people deny the existence of *Jus Primae Noctis*. They claim that King Evenus did not exist in Scotland and that Boethius wrote pure fiction. They believe that Law of the First Night was based just on misunderstanding, because they consider *Droit Du Seigneur* to be a civil law in which the father had to pay a tax when his daughter married out of their own estate. To sum up, there is no valid evidence that this law ever existed in Middle Ages. But considering political and church machinations, hiding crimes, slaughter and pursuit of poor people and slaves we can easily believe that such laws existed and were really used.

Anyway, at this point we should suggest that William Wallace was a noble man and if the Right of the First Night ever existed, it would not apply on him and on his noble family under any conditions. (3)

**8. Fiction:** The film shows political machinations of Edward the Longshanks. He could not be fully involved in the Scottish matters, because he tried to secure the peace between France and he travelled many times to Flanders.

**Fact:** It is nearly the same as in the film, but this background was not developed very much in *Braveheart*.

According to Britannia webpage: "Edward I retained English holdings in France through diplomacy, but was drawn into war by the incursions of Philip IV in Gascony. He negotiated a peace with France in 1303 and retained those areas England held before the war." (1)

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<sup>3</sup>. RICKARDS, R. *Jus Primae Noctis*. 2002

<sup>1</sup>. *Edward I, Longshanks*. 2005

**9. Fiction:** The film shows Wallace's deep love and secret marriage with Murron Mac Clannough. They met at Wallace's birthplace after his return from Duke Argyle. They were happy just for some time. Murron was killed by an English commander, occupying Scotland, when she defended herself against his rape. She was killed too early to provide Wallace with any children. William defended her, but he could do nothing and watched hopelessly her death.

**Fact:** Historians do not have lots of information about Wallace's woman, but we can surely claim that the movie depiction is not true. Wallace's love, Marion Braidfute, was born as a daughter of Sir Hugh Braidfute of Lamington. She became the heiress of Lamington after the father's death. But she decided to stay and live in Lanark. Wallace and Marion met in the Church of St. Kentigern and they fell in love immediately. Since then, Wallace secretly visited her in her house at Lanark. They had to be hidden because Wallace was a pursued outlaw; moreover, the Sheriff of Lanark, Sir William Haselrig, proposed a marriage between Marion and his own son. (4)

William did not stay with her, but continued his fight against the Englishmen. He returned back after some time and intended to marry her. Blind from love, he did not pay attention and he did not hide himself properly. English soldiers soon realized his presence in Lanark town. It did not last long and the fight was provoked. Wallace and his friends, pursued by the soldiers, ran to Marion's house and went out through the back door. William Haselrig, having heard about his escape, came to Marion's house and demanded information about her husband. She protected him in spite of the fact she knew her fate. The news of Marion's death reached William very soon. He decided to revenge immediately and with the two groups of men entered the town again. Wallace slew Sheriff Haselrig and the group of Wallace's men killed Haselrig's companions. (5, p. 65)

There exist many opinions considering William's and Marion's daughter. Peter Donaldson believed the fact that she was pregnant before her death: "Alas for pregnant Marion, cruelly murdered by the enemy of her husband and her country..." (5, p. 60)

On the other hand, John D. Carrick stated that: "Wallace appears to have left a daughter, whose legitimacy has been called in question, but on very slender grounds." (6, p. 277)

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<sup>4</sup>. SAVOY, J. *On the topic of William Wallace and Marion Braidfute*. 2001

<sup>5</sup>. DONALDSON, P. *SIR WILLIAM WALLACE, The Governor General of Scotland and Hero of the Scottish Chiefs*. 1851

<sup>6</sup>. CARRICK, J.D. *Life of Sir William Wallace of Elderslie*, vol. II. 1830

Some people are more sceptic and they claim that no Wallace's child ever existed. Moreover, Ed Archer, a historian from Lanark, asserts that Marion is a pure fictional character. She appeared in a revised edition of the poem from 1570 for the first time. This version was encouraged by the Baillies of Lamington, a noble family, who claimed to be Wallace's descendants and wanted to heighten their status before Queen Mary. But despite a deep study, Mr. Archer did not find any information about the Braidfutes living in that area at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. (7)

**10. Fiction:** Princess Isabella, the wife of prince Edward, met Wallace in England, she protected and warned him against the threats and she fell in love with him. Moreover, she bore his child and threatened with his succession to dying King Edward.

**Fact:** Although she was born in August 1292, she did not meet William Wallace. Isabella married Edward II in 1308 and then she moved to England. At this time William Wallace had already been beheaded. Thus they could not fall in love or meet each other in any way. (8)

**11. Fiction:** Edward II, Isabella's husband, did not have the best relationship with his French wife. The film suggests his homosexual inclinations.

**Fact:** It is true! Edward departed from his wife for some time and it is believed that he spent more time with Piers Gaveston. He supported nobles, especially Hugh le Despenser Younger and his family. All these men were possibly his male partners. (8)

**12. Fiction:** Wallace and group of his clansmen, highlanders and warriors wore traditional Scottish kilts and fought only in those clothes. They did not have any chain or plate armour as opposed to the English army.

**Fact:** Scottish national dress- the kilt is very popular and many foreign people consider it to be one of several typical features marking this nation. Many people, the Scots too, date the development of kilt to early middle ages. In fact the truth is different. There were many typical dresses in past, but there is no reference to kilt until the 16<sup>th</sup> century which developed as belted plaid. No matter what you saw in Braveheart, the kilt was not worn in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. People wore actons in early middle ages. These were heavy and long tunics which served as a light armour. (9)

**13. Fiction:** William Wallace and other soldiers painted their faces blue with white St. Andrews cross in the middle before the battle. It was supposed to be a sign of courage and national pride.

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<sup>7</sup>. LISTER, D. *Wallace's dead wife was 'fictional'*. 2005

<sup>8</sup>. LEWIS, J.J. *Isabella of France. England's Queen Isabella, "She-Wolf of France"*. 2011

<sup>9</sup>. NEWSOME, M. *Generations of Highland Dress*. 2003

**Fact:** No evidence about this act can be seen in historical sources from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, it was an old pagan habit possibly used by the old tribes settling in the area of future Scotland. The idea is possibly inspired by the Picts, who were called painted or tattooed people. Some old historic materials prove that they painted their faces and bodies for some religious, cultural and protecting reasons before battles. Anyway, William Wallace and the whole Scotland was at these times already christianized so none of these pagan practices could be realized. (10, p. 702)

**14. Fiction:** In the movie the battle at Stirling is depicted as the first great battle Wallace has won. His army used long stakes there. They were made in order to protect the huge army bodies and William also invented the tactics of arranging soldiers into schiltrons, military formations which were hard to break through.

**Fact:** The truth is that it was the battle of Stirling Bridge where the bridge played a crucial role. It was the bridge which helped the Scots to win this battle, because it divided the English into halves and it was much easier to defeat them then. It is true that William Wallace created the tactics of schiltrons, but it was not before the battle of Stirling Bridge. It was before the battle of Falkirk when Wallace feared of a huge Edward's army and prepared his men to be organized in phalanx formations called schiltrons. These formations were used many years before by Greek and Macedonian warriors, but it is thought that Wallace could not have any prior knowledge about that fact. (391)

**15. Fiction:** The film depicts the terrible massacre of the Scottish Highlanders and nobles in the barn where they were invited to discuss the matters with the English King without arms. They were hanged upon the barn roof as a warning for other nobles who would like to disagree with the English homage.

**Fact:** According to a poem written by Blind Harry in about 1477, this bloody event really happened and it is known as "The Barns of Ayr" in the history. Some leading Scottish nobles, Campbells, Crawfords, Stewarts and many others along with William Wallace were invited to summon at court in Ayr on 18 June. They were hanged one by one as they entered the barns by the English soldiers. Wallace escaped by chance. It is said that he gathered several men, returned back to Ayr and burnt down the barns with the English inside. But a question rises there about verity of Harry's words. The poem was written 172 years after and

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<sup>10</sup>. HUTCHINSON. *The Encyclopedia of Britain*. 1999

<sup>391</sup>. GUNN, R. M. *The Battle of Falkirk (1298) and the Execution of Wallace*. 1997-2003

many facts could be easily changed so this era of Wallace's life must be left for further discussion. (2, p. 82)

**16. Fiction:** The film depicts a scene in which Edward the Longshanks orders the Irish troops to attack the Scots as the first one. They had to come and fight on the English side during the battle at Falkirk. A really amazing thing happens. The Scottish warriors welcome the Irish heartily as the old friends and they immediately change the sides to fight with them.

**Fact:** Edward the Longshanks was really present at the battle of Falkirk, but he ordered the Welsh troops not the Irish one to start the fight. Welsh longbowmen were his secret advantage, although some sources claim that they declined to move until they saw the winning side. Concerning the Irish who changed sides, we must state that it is a complete film fiction. The Irish fought on the English side all the time and they had the position of slingers, throwing the stones. (11)

**17. Fiction:** Wallace is knighted Sir William Wallace, the Guardian and High Protector of Scotland, in Edinburgh after the battle of Stirling. At the same council, the Bruces and the Baliols, seeing no barrier to the throne now, quarrel again about the hereditary succession and ask for Wallace's support. Sir William refuses all these quarrels. He asks them whether the lands and estates are more important than the lives of ordinary men, because that is what they suggest. William ignores their aspiration and suggests to invade the English on their own land.

**Fact:** Wallace was knighted Sir William Wallace by an unknown nobleman during a convention in a forest near Selkirk, not in Edinburgh. He and Andrew de Moray were elected 'generals of the army of Scotland'. There is no evidence that Robert the Bruce was present at this council. But the next council was held on 19 August 1299 at Peebles. It was the time of Wallace's loss after the battle of Falkirk and the great number of the Scottish nobles gathered to elect another Scottish Guardian. There were: The Earls of Carrick, Buchan, The Bishop of St. Andrews, Menteith, Sir John Comyn and The Steward of Scotland, William Wallace and his brother Malcolm. The question about the election for the Guardianship has created so much tension that Sir Comyn attacked The Earl of Carrick, Robert the Bruce, and the Earl of Buchan aggressed against the Bishop of St. Andrews. Consequently, Wallace refused to participate with the ambitious nobles. This could be possible inspiration for film adaptation. (2, p. 137,138)

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<sup>2</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *Sir William Wallace*. 2008

<sup>2</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *Sir William Wallace*. 2008



The fact that nobles did not want to fight against Edward because they did not want to lose their estates is also true.

According to A.F. Murison: “They (nobles) were afraid the English army would attack them to burn and destroy their lands. Thus, they were told for certainty that the king meant to seize all the middle people of Scotland to send them beyond sea in his war (in Gaskony), to their great damage and destruction. They took counsel to assemble their power to defend themselves from so great damages, until they could have treaty and conference with such persons as had power to abate and diminish such kind of injury, and to give security that they should not be exceedingly aggrieved and dishonoured. And, therefore, when the host of England entered the land, they went to meet them and had such a conference that they all came to the peace and the faith of our Lord the King.” (392, p. 19,20)

**18. Fiction:** Robert the Bruce is introduced as “Robert, the 17th Earl of Bruce, the leading contender for the crown of Scotland“ in the film. This information is quite confused and slightly changed.

**Fact:** The later King of Scotland was originally titled: Robert Bruce I, 4th Earl of Carrick, 7th Lord Bruce of Annandale, King of Scots. He inherited the earldom of Carrick from his mother and the earldom of Annandale from his father. Moreover, Robert the Bruce was in the eighth generation of Bruces in an original lineage. Although some sources provide slightly different lists of Bruce’s titles, it is certain that King Robert the Bruce could not be the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bruce in any way.

**19. Fiction:** William discovers Robert the Bruce defending the English King during the Battle of Falkirk. Sir Wallace is so surprised and depressed that he can not kill him. Now he gives up all his pains and let himself to be killed by arriving Englishmen. Bruce, aware of the fact that he betrayed his own country, helps William to escape from the battlefield.

**Fact:** Robert the Bruce was not present at the Battle of Falkirk. He could not betray Wallace in this way. Moreover, there is no evidence that he made an alliance with Edward until 1302. (2, p. 124)

Considering the Battle of Stirling Bridge and Bruce, the film depicts true information. Bruce had nothing common with it. So neither was he present at Falkirk nor at Stirling.

**20. Fiction:** The first betrayal. The battle of Falkirk seemed to be successful for Wallace until he discovers that the nobles betrayed him and did not come to fight. On the other hand,

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<sup>392</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *King Robert The Bruce*. 2008

<sup>2</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *Sir William Wallace*. 2008

William was betrayed by Bruce who fought on the side of his enemy. We explained it in the previous section, but let us have a look at the real betrayal of the Scottish nobles. Did they really leave Wallace's army alone at the Battle of Falkirk and if yes, who it was?

**Fact:** Yes, it is true. Sir John Comyn was a commander of the Scottish cavalry, a force including almost 1000 horses. Seeing that they are greatly outnumbered, Comyn ordered to flee without any sign of fighting. Their function was to protect schiltrons and after their breakdown, they should protect the rear of the retreat. But their escape left Wallace, protecting his soldiers on his own, alone on the battlefield.

It is hard to discuss whether it was a part of Wallace's betrayal or whether it was just the cowardice of this Scottish noble. Whatever, if they remained at the battlefield, their presence and force would appear very helpful.

**21. Fiction:** The second betrayal. The nobles were afraid of their lives and estates after the English winning at Falkirk. They were sent to Wallace and they suggested him to arrive to Edinburgh. They claimed that they wanted to apologize for betrayal and to join his army. They gave him his own scarf, kept by Bruce since Falkirk, as a proof. Comrades warned William that it could be the trap again, but he set out for journey anyway. He wanted to believe that Scotland can be saved. But the dreadful presumptions proved to be true. Sir Wallace was attacked and arrested. Bruce did not know that and he accused his dying father of treason.

**Fact:** The second betrayal really happened, but in a different way as it was presented during the film. Sir John de Menteith, Constable of Dumbarton Castle and Sheriff of Dumbartonshire, set to pursue William Wallace. Menteith is said to have sent his nephew, Jack Short, to join Wallace's followers with the specific instructions. Robert the Bruce then sent a message to Wallace urging him to meet at Glasgow Moor. Sir Wallace, accompanied only by faithful Kerly and Menteith whom he trusted, rode to Robroyston to meet Bruce. They set to sleep there and on midnight Menteith started his treacherous plan. Someone, possibly Jack Short, removed William and Kerly's weapons and gave signal to Menteith. English soldiers surrounded the house and caught Kerly. Wallace defended himself, but he was captured, too. Menteith convinced William that he will be safe under his protection at Dumbarton Castle, but Wallace recognized the signs of betrayal. It was too late and Wallace

was consigned to Sir Aymer de Valence and Sir Robert de Clifford who arrested him and put him into prison in Carlisle. (2, p. 122,123,165)

It is clear that Sir John de Menteith was the man who caused William's imprisonment, but Sir Robert the Bruce also took part in his betrayal.

**22. Fiction:** William Wallace is described as being chained and tried in London. He is accused of high treason against his King. Wallace defends himself by the claim that he had never sworn loyalty to the English King. He is given time to morrow by the judges to wait for purification. The next day, Wallace is brought to Aldgate on a cart being dragged by a horse. Then his throat is tied by a rope and raised into the air. It does not break him, so William is stretched by ropes tied to his hands and feet. He still resists, so they put him on a wooden cross- shaped table, constraining his arms and legs. His shirt is cut with a hooked blade on a long handle. His face shows that he is in serious pain as being disembowelled in the film. Wallace is beheaded after all.

**Fact:** Wallace was tried in Westminster Hall. His sentence was called out immediately, he did not wait one day. He was sentenced to death by "hanging, drawing and quartering". Then he was chained on a piece of fencing, being dragged by two horses. He was not carried on a wagon. He was hurled to the Tower, then to Smithfield via Aldgate for about three miles. He was hanged, but not racked and he was not allowed to submit to Edward. He was emasculated by cutting his privy parts away. His stomach was cut and disembowelled. Then his chest was widely open to cut his heart. Finally, Wallace was decapitated and quartered. (393)

**23. Fiction:** Robert the Bruce's father had a very important role in the film. He served as his son's advisor and the creator of Wallace's betrayal. He was a rich claimant for the Scottish throne, but very old and sick, dying of leprosis.

**Fact:** Just several things were true about Robert the Bruce's father. For example, it is the fact that he claimed the Scottish throne for himself and later for his eldest son. He also served under Edward I of England. But father as well as his son was not allowed to seize the throne at that time, because Edward supported Balliol. Bruce senior did not live long enough to see his son Robert as the King of Scotland. He died near Carlisle on his way to Annadale, not suffering from leprosis. Bruce's father, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord of Annadale, had also nothing common with Wallace's betrayal. However, he died one year before William's arrestment. (394)

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<sup>2</sup>. MURISON, A. F. *Sir William Wallace*. 2008

<sup>393</sup>. *Wallace's Execution*. 2007

<sup>394</sup>. *Robert Bruce*. 2000-2010

## **2 RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **2.1 Hypothesis**

Our aim was to bring complex and exact facts about the life of William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and the Scottish War of Independence, to compare all these facts with the film version and to enlighten the mind of reader and film spectators. These facts were mainly based on the investigation of many available materials in Slovakia, Scotland and England. This paper also compares different historical books describing the First Scottish War of Independence.

The main goal was to provide the list of changed facts, costumes and information. We also tried to prove that the real historical film portraying only true facts can be as interesting and enterprising as an adventurous drama full of special effects.

We think that drama, adventure and action films hardly ever portray real historical facts, which we tried to prove in this diploma thesis by studying the movie Braveheart.

### **2.2 Research methods**

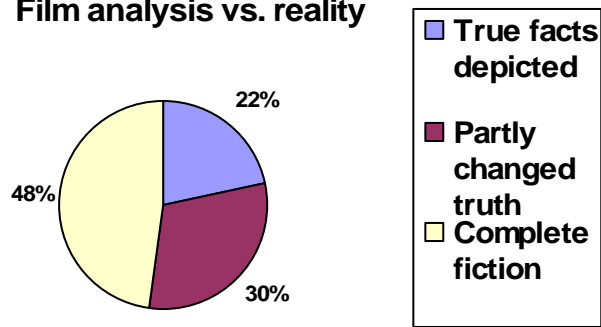
Methods used for achieving these aims were both, qualitative and quantitative, methods of historical analysis, analysis of different historical documents and books, methods of comparison and contrast and investigation based mainly on research in Scotland and London. The areas of birth, life and activity of William Wallace and Robert Bruce were closely studied, too.

### **2.3 Results**

#### **Qualitative research**

The whole movie Braveheart was analyzed and it was compared to real known historical facts. We have found twenty three most important facts worth to be mentioned. It is true that movie company changed many historical facts, but not the whole film was fictional as it was originally presumed in the diploma hypothesis. Please look at the diagram below, depicting the ratio of the truth and fiction in this particular film.

### Film analysis vs. reality



We can see here that the proportion of true facts depicted in the film is really small. We can believe almost certainly that Edward and the Scottish nobles fought for the Scottish throne and that the English King machinated with the neighbouring countries. It is also true that Isabella and her husband did not have good relationship, or that Barns of Ayr and Comyn's betrayal really happened.

On the other hand, Hollywood slightly changed facts about Wallace's education, his family, knighthood and the depiction of Bruce's father was partly false, too.

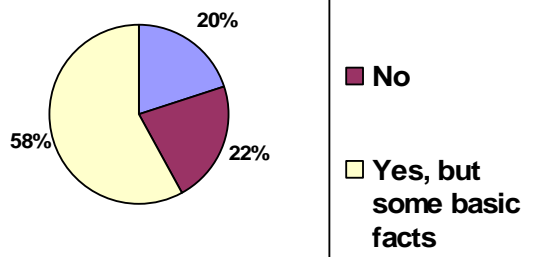
And finally, there is the rest of facts worth to be mentioned. The *prima noctis*, Wallace's love story, dresses and clothes, blue facepaint, missing bridge or Bruce's depiction, all these are complete inventions of the American movie industry.

### Quantitative research

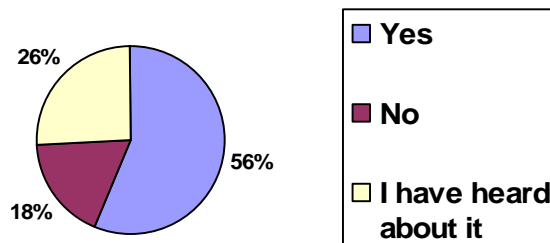
The respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire form dealing with the diploma thesis topic. We asked 50 people, 26 men and 24 women, for their opinions. Almost all of them were native Scots living in Edinburgh, Inverness, Perth, Dunblane, Glenfarg, Livingston, Walkerburn, Falkirk, Elgin, Paisley, Dunfirmline, Bannockburn, Glasgow and many other Scottish towns. The rest of the answers were filed in with the answers of people from The United States, because we were asking about Hollywood companies. The last, but not the least group of asked people is formed by tourists visiting the Scottish national sites and tourists interested in the Scottish history. They were usually from other english speaking countries like Australia etc.

The results gathered from their willing answers were following:

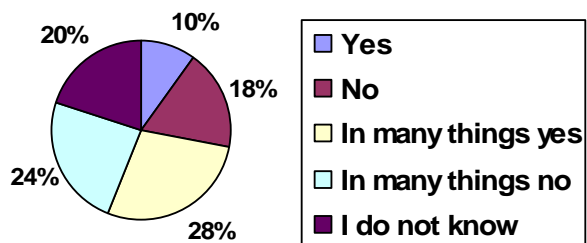
**Question no. 1: Do you know any facts about the life of William Wallace?**



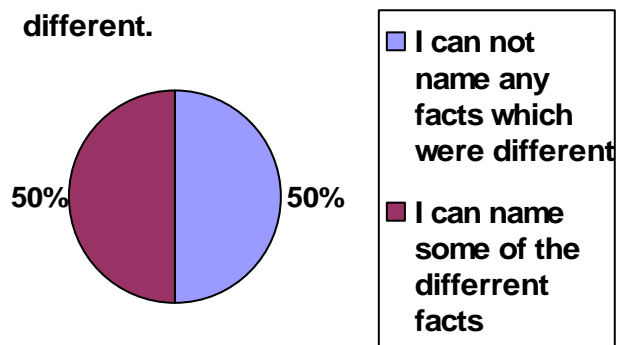
**Question no. 2: Have you seen a popular American movie Braveheart?**



**Question no. 3: Do you consider the movie plot and the Wallace's life similar?**



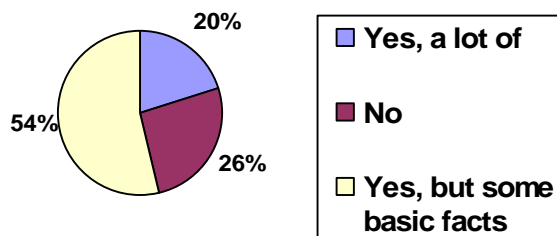
**Question no. 4: Please write down some facts which were different.**



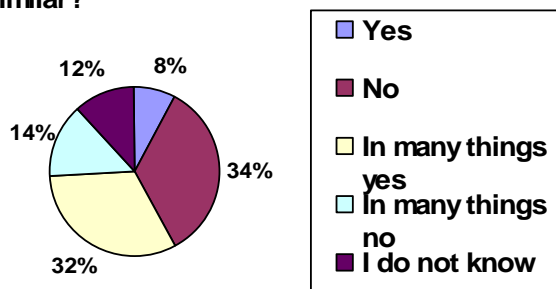
The respondents usually alleged these facts:

- Men's dress was not the same as the real one
- Blue facepaint and Wallace's speeches were fictional
- Battle results were incorrect
- Wallace was a nobleman
- He did not meet either Bruce, King Edward or Isabella
- Important bridge was not portrayed in the Battle of Stirling Bridge
- Bruce did not betray Wallace
- William Wallace was not a major leader in the War of Independence
- He was not a Scot
- Wallace did not shout freedom
- Vital parts of his life were left out
- Battle of Stirling was very similar to Battle of Falkirk
- Time scale was wrong
- False portrayal of Andrew Murray
- No strength test

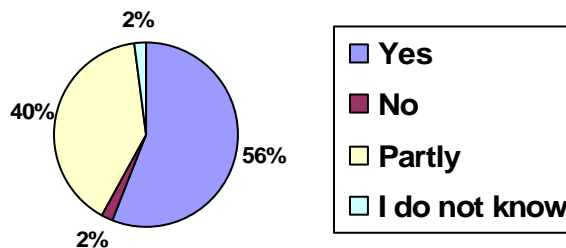
**Question no. 5: Do you know any facts about the life of Robert the Bruce?**



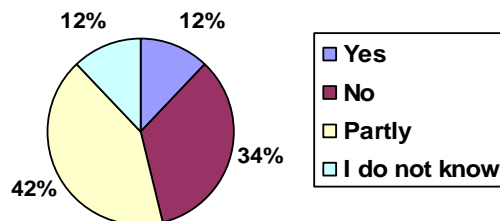
**Question no. 6: Do you consider the movie plot and the Bruce's life similar?**



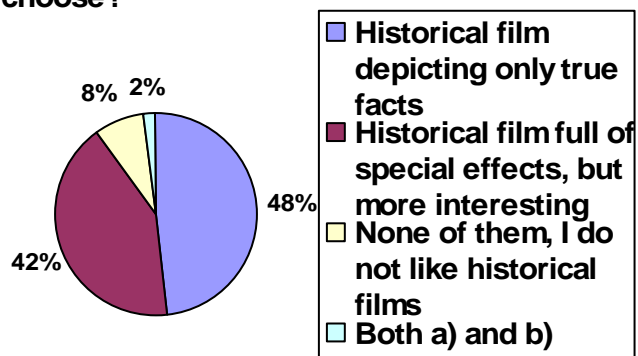
**Question no. 7: Is it true, that Hollywood movie companies change historical facts in order to increase film profit?**



**Question no. 8: Do you agree with it?**



**Question no. 9: What would you choose?**



As you can see from the overall results, the answers of the respondents were relatively balanced. The biggest difference in opinions could be seen between two major groups of questioned people, teenagers from thirteen to twenty and adults from twenty one to sixty five. These two groups showed great differences in the knowledge of the Scottish history.



## CONCLUSION

The accuracy of Braveheart has been widely studied and broadly discussed in both, academic and laic areas, by the authorities of the British history, but also by the nonprofessionals interested in the Scottish history. The aim of this paper was not to repeat what has been already said, but to bring some new ideas and opinions and to provide an integrated view on the topic.

It has been said that historical facts cannot be overwritten and forgotten so easily in our previous thesis. But they can. It is very easy just to follow the steps of the modern world today and to get lost in the fiction. We have seen a masterfull example of overwriting the truth which remained valuable. So why should we remember the real facts and focus our attention on history? Because every man who fought either for independence or for other beliefs fought not just for himself and for his present life, but also for the future of his sons and daughters. Future was important not only for Wallace and Bruce, but also for other great personalities, so the past should be important for us.

The hypothesis stated that drama, adventure and action films based on real history hardly ever portray real historical facts. The diploma thesis proved that it is almost true. The research showed that almost half of the film facts were complete fiction. Another 52% of the facts contained both true and partly changed information. The presence of some exact occurrences in the movie stresses the importance of distinguishing between the truth and fiction. Actually, to force the readers and spectators to think about depicted facts critically and to think about the history while watching another historical film, or film based on historical events was the next aim of the thesis.

In some cases, we will never learn which of the given facts were really true. However, it does not matter all the time. The message being told is sometimes more important than all the debatable circumstances. And this message was there. The movie has stressed and admonished the importance of national pride. Moreover, it has also reminded that it is not always useless to fight for our beliefs. And this is what really matters.

## RESUMÉ

Tento americký film dosiahol obrovské úspechy a ocenenia doma i v zahraničí. Odborníci aj laici sa zhodujú, že Statočné srdce je krásnym príkladom spracovania historickej a národnej témy. Práve preto sa v širokých kruhoch diskutovalo a ešte stále diskutuje o pravdivosti faktov v ňom zobrazených.

Cieľom záverečnej práce bolo priniesť nové poznatky k tejto téme a poskytnúť ucelený pohľad na problematiku zobrazovania historických udalostí v populárnych filmoch. V práci sme tvrdili, že filmy založené na historických skutočnostiach, dobrodružné a akčné filmy len málokedy zobrazujú reálne a pravdivé historické udalosti. Diplomová práca potvrdila takmer úplnú pravdivosť tohto vyhlásenia. Výskum ukázal, že film *Statočné srdce* bol takmer z polovice tvorený kompletnou fikciou amerického filmového priemyslu. Zvyšných 52% skúmaných faktov pozostávalo z čiastočne pozmenených informácií, ale aj udalostí, ktoré sa skutočne stali. Prítomnosť nepravdivých historických faktov zdôrazňuje dôležitosť vnímania a rozlišovania fikcie a reality. Čiastkovým cieľom tejto práce bolo preto aj dosiahnuť, aby sa diváci kriticky zamýšľali nad zobrazenými filmovými faktami.

Veríme, že porovnanie reálnej skutočnosti a filmových faktov bolo nielen poučné, ale aj pútavé a že Vás skutočný príbeh Williama Wallacea dostatočne zaujal na to, aby ste vychutnávali historické filmy aj bez špeciálnych efektov. Napokon dúfame, že ste si porovnali Vaše vlastné názory na film a zobrazovanie faktov v nich s názormi obyvateľov Škótska, turistov a obyvateľov anglicky hovoriacich krajín, ktorí vyjadrili vlastné presvedčenie a názor na *Statočné srdce* a filmový priemysel.

V niektorých prípadoch sa nikdy nedozvieme, ako sa história v skutočnosti odohrala. Ale nie vždy je to podstatné. Dôležitý je odkaz, ktorý nám filmy založené na historických udalostiach zanechávajú. A ten tam bol. Film *Statočné srdce* pripomenul a zdôraznil dôležitosť národnej hrdosti a povedomia a taktiež presvedčivo opísal, že sa oplatí bojovať za to v čo veríme a o čom sme presvedčení. A to je to na čom skutočne záleží.

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## APPENDIX

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### Questionnaire

Dear respondent! Allow me to ask you to fill in this answer sheet. It deals with a popular American movie Braveheart which is based on the important events from the Scottish history. The main aim of the research is to collect the information about the verity of depicted facts and to provide the collection of opinions about depicting the historical events by Hollywood companies.

The questionnaire is anonymous and it serves only for scientific purpose for diploma thesis at University of Prešov in Prešov. Please circle just true and sincere answers. Thank you very much in advance and we hope you will enjoy it.

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Male ☐ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Female ☐ City/town: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you know any facts about the life of William Wallace?  
a) Yes, a lot of b) no  
c) Yes, but only some basic facts
  
2. Have you seen a popular American movie Braveheart, depicting the life of this famous Scottish national hero?  
a) Yes b) no  
c) No, but I have heard about it
  
3. Do you consider the movie plot and the Wallace's life similar, or nearly the same?  
a) Yes b) no  
c) In many things yes d) in many things no

4. If no, please write down some film facts, which were different.

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5. Do you know any facts about the life of Robert the Bruce, popular and very important person in the history and movie?

- a) Yes, a lot of  
b) no  
c) Yes, but only some basic facts

6. Do you consider the movie plot and the Bruce's life similar, or nearly the same?

- a) Yes  
b) no  
c) In many things yes  
d) in many things no

7. Is the statement, that Hollywood movie companies change historical facts in historical films in order to increase the film profit, true?

- a) Yes  
b) no  
c) Partly

8. If yes, do you agree with it?

- a) Yes  
b) no  
c) Partly

9. If possible, what would you choose?

- a) Historical film depicting only true facts  
b) Historical film full of special effects and false information, but more interesting  
c) None of them, I do not like historical films.

Pic. 1– The questionnaire



Pic. 2– Scone Palace



Pic. 3 – The ruins of Dunbar Castle



Pic. 4 – Edinburgh



Pic. 5 – The ruins of Elgin Cathedral



Pic. 6 – Wallace Monument and one of the monument carvings, Elderslie



Pic. 7 – Paisley Abbey





Pic. 8 – Dunfirmline Abbey and the grave of Wallace’s mother



Pic. 9 – Cadger’s Brig



Pic. 10 – William Wallace Monument and the sword of Wallace, Stirling



Pic. 11 – Callendar House, the Battle of Falkirk site



Pic. 12 – Stirling Castle



Pic. 13 – Robert the Bruce Monument, Bannockburn and Stirling Castle



Pic. 14 – Royal Chapel of Scone



Pic. 15 – The tomb of King Robert the Bruce, Dunfirmline Abbey