

“THE KING OF SCOTTIS IS NOW HOOM IN HIS LAND”:
JAMES I AND JOAN BEAUFORT: A POLITICAL
PARTNERSHIP (1424-1436)

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Introduction

James I's behaviour, during his short reign as an adult king of and in Scotland, was very much influenced by his queen Joan Beaufort. She helped him negotiate the intricacies of international relations in the central years of the Hundred Years War.¹ Furthermore Joan acted as a calming influence on her husband who was famous for his short temper. He was born in 1394, the son of Robert III and Annabella Drummond. By the time James was eleven his father had a desire to see him in France where he could be educated and ‘quhare he mycht eschew all tressoun devisitt againis him’.² Robert thought that he could then return to his homeland when he was of age in greater safety and able to govern his kingdom ‘the more wisely’.³ He was the last

¹ Anne Curry, ‘France and the Hundred Years War, 1337-1453’, in David Potter, ed., *France in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). See also: C. T. Allmand, ed., *War, Literature, and Politics in the Later Middle Ages* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996); *Contemporary Chronicles of the Hundred Years War From the Works of Jean le Bel, Jean Froissart & Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, Peter E. Thompson, trans. and ed. (The Folio Society, 1966); Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War* (London: MacMillan, 1993); J. R. Maddicott, ‘The Origins of the Hundred Years War’, in Nigel Saul (ed.), *England in Europe 1066-1453* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 133-143; Nigel Saul, ‘Henry V and the Dual Monarch’, in Nigel Saul (ed.), *England in Europe 1066-1453* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 144-150; M. G. A. Vale, *Charles VII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974); M.G.A. Vale, ‘The End and Aftermath of the Hundred Years War,’ in Nigel Saul (ed.), *England in Europe 1066-1453* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 151-162.

² Hector Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, translated into Scots by John Bellenden, 1531, Vol. II, ed. Edith C. Batho and H. Winifred Husbands (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1941), p. 366. Note: Queen Annabella Drummond died in 1401.

³ E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots 1406-1437* (London: Methuen, 1936), p. 29; Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, ed. D. E. R. Watt (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 61; M. Brown,

son of a troubled family, his elder brother David Stewart, Duke of Rothesay, having died mysteriously while in the hands of his uncle, Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, and Archibald the Tyneman, Earl of Douglas. Rothesay had been arrested at the instigation of his father, Robert III, for misdemeanours against the realm. Whatever the case may be, Albany and Douglas were cleared of any charges.⁴

Even though safety was the aim in sending James to France, he was still captured by the English en route to France on 22 March 1406. He was in English custody for the next eighteen years of his life. His father, who was sixty-nine, was overcome with grief. He stopped eating and consequently died on 4 April that same year.⁵ In these tragic circumstances, not only was there a child on the throne, but he was a hostage in a hostile country. King Robert's brother, also called Robert, Duke of Albany, was made governor in June 1406 until such times as James not only became of age, but was released from English incarceration.⁶ His cousin Murdoch, Albany's much older son and the heir presumptive was also in English hands.⁷ He was released from English captivity in 1413 in exchange for Henry, heir to the earl of Northumberland.⁸ Murdoch took over the governorship following his father's death in 1420 but was executed at the king's command in 1425.

International Relations

The Hundred Years War between France and England was inflamed by France's alliance with Scotland. The *Auld Alliance*, which had been renewed periodically for nearly one-hundred and fifty years, was of an offensive-defensive military nature. Its main aim was to restrain the

James I (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), pp. 16-17; R. Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1974), pp. 226-228.

⁴ Balfour-Melville, pp. 19-21; Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, pp. 361-2; Nicholson, pp. 221-222.

⁵ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 63; E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, *The English Captivity of James I King of Scots* (London: The Historical Association, 1929); A. Grant, *Independence and Nationhood 1360-1469* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), p. 45.

⁶ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 63; Balfour-Melville, *The English Captivity*, pp. 6-9; A. Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, p. 45. James I and his cousin Murdoch spent at least some time together while they were kept captive in England, especially after the ascension to the throne of Henry V, when both were sent to the Tower.

⁷ Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, pp. 363-365.

⁸ Brown, *James I*, p. 15; A Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, p. 46.

English. The French king, Charles VII, had approached the Scottish king, James I, in 1425, as soon as he was firmly restored to his throne.⁹ Charles wished to renew the *Auld Alliance* that had connected the two countries since 1295 renewed in the Treaty of Corbeil of 1326 and then again in 1334.¹⁰ It was thereafter renewed by every Scottish and French monarch, with the exception of Louis XI, until the mid sixteenth-century.¹¹ If French troops disembarked in Scotland with the intention of invading England from the north, England would find itself in a most vulnerable situation. English resources were already stretched between the wars with Gascony on the European continent and Scotland to the north.¹²

In James's absence, the governors of Scotland had continued the French alliance. In 1419 a Scottish army that consisted of 6,000 men, mainly archers, went to France. It seems that the Scottish government probably sanctioned this as part of the *Auld Alliance*. Michael Brown states in *The Black Douglases* that 'the "army of Scotland" in France was led, raised and equipped by the great magnate families which dominated the

⁹ *The Book of Pluscarden*, Vol. II, Felix J. H. Skene, ed. (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1880), p. xxvii; Patrick Tytler, *Tytler's History of Scotland, a New and Greatly Enlarged Edition*, ed. Rev. Professor Eadie, Vols. 9 (London, Glasgow and Edinburgh: William Mackenzie, 1873-1877), Vol. III, p. 395.

¹⁰ François Autrand, 'Aux Origines de l'Europe moderne: l'alliance France-Ecosse au XIV siècle', in J. Laidlaw, ed., *The Auld Alliance; France and Scotland over 700 Years* (Edinburgh: Communications and Public Affairs, The University of Edinburgh, 1999), p. 37; Elizabeth Bonner, 'Scotland's "Auld Alliance" with France, 1295-1560', *History*, Vol. 84, no. 273, (January 1999), p. 11; P. Contamine, 'Les Alliance Franco-Écossaises de 1371 et 1448-1449', in Lucien Bély and Isabelle Richeford, eds., *L'Europe des traités de Westphalie: Esprit de la diplomatie et diplomatique de l'esprit* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), pp. 95-96; M. Lynch, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 245; N. Macdougall, *An Antidote to the English: the Auld Alliance, 1295-1560* (East Lothian: Tuckwell, 2001), pp. 9-27. Note: This is the first Franco-Scottish treaty for which there is documentary evidence. 'It was directed against England and the incursions of Edward I who was pressing his claims of overlordship of the Scots. By the terms of the alliance neither the French nor the Scots would make a separate peace with England' (Bonner, 'Scotland's Auld Alliance', p. 11).

¹¹ Elizabeth Bonner, 'Communication: French Naturalization of the Scots in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1997), p. 1085-1086.

¹² Maddicott, *The Origins of the Hundred Years War*, pp. 139-140.

structures of government and warfare in the kingdom'.¹³ Among them were John, Earl of Buchan, younger son of the Duke of Albany, the Earl of Douglas's eldest son, Archibald, Earl of Wigton, and, briefly in 1424, the fourth Earl of Douglas himself.¹⁴ They were defeated at the battle of Verneuil in 1424, but the earlier battle at Baugé in 1421 had been a great French victory at which the Duke of Clarence, Henry V's brother, had been killed. This was a crucial battle as far as France was concerned.¹⁵

Whilst James had been in custody in England, Henry V had used him as a puppet against his own people. In 1420 the Scottish king had been taken to France as part of the English forces, where he 'was to provide a justification for treating the Scots who supported the Dauphin (the future Charles VII), against their king's wishes, as rebels'.¹⁶ When the town of Melun was defeated by the English, the Scots in the Dauphin's pay were hanged as traitors.¹⁷ James was back in France again the following year at the battle of Baugé. He was treated by the English as an active King of Scots and was supplied with his own banners and military equipment. More importantly, though, he was portrayed as being on the side of the English.¹⁸ He was very much a tool, manipulated by the English, during his captivity.¹⁹

The English king, Henry V, died in 1422 leaving the infant Henry VI on the throne. The kingdom was indeed vulnerable, never more so than from its northern neighbour, Scotland. In 1423 the Earl of Buchan returned to Scotland from France, where he had been fighting on the side of the French, to raise a fresh army to aid the French Dauphin against the English. Thus, the English deemed themselves extremely vulnerable to a Franco-Scottish rebellion on their northern borders.²⁰

James and Joan

¹³ Michael Brown, *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland 1300-1455* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 218.

¹⁴ Brown, *James I*, p. 21.

¹⁵ Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁶ Brown, *James I*, p. 23.

¹⁷ Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1460-1437*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁸ J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth*, Vol. III (1415-1422) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 216.

¹⁹ Balfour-Melville, *The English Captivity*, pp. 10-12; Brown, *James I*, p. 23; for further information on James I in France see pages 21-24.

²⁰ Michael Brown, *The Stewart Dynasty in Scotland: James I (James I)* (East Lothian: Revised Tuckwell, 2000), p. 24.

Joan had known the king since 1421. It has been difficult to discover exactly where they first met. The most likely scenario is that Joan met the King while at court in the company of her mother Margaret, who had married as her second husband her husband's great nephew, Thomas, Duke of Clarence. Clarence was, before he was killed in France during the battle of Baugé in 1421, not only heir presumptive, but also Joan's step-father.²¹ It is quite likely that Joan went to France as part of the English entourage to celebrate the wedding of Henry V and Catherine of Valois. Unfortunately, no festival books were printed at this time that shed light on this event.²² It would have been most unusual for a young woman of Joan's rank not to be included in her mother's train on such an occasion. James was often at court and was certainly treated as a king by his captor, Henry V.²³ Agnes Strickland, a Victorian commentator, suggests that Catherine of Valois, wife of Henry V, held James in high esteem. It is thought that she interceded with her husband at her coronation in 1421, at which James was present, indeed seated, at her table, to have James released to Scotland to take up his own crown there.²⁴ Henry V granted this request. The catch was that James should bear arms under Henry's banner, in the further wars with France. Strickland states that 'Stowe affirms that this lady [Joan Beaufort with whom James was greatly enamoured] was betrothed to King James before the festivals of Katherine's coronation ended'.²⁵

James' poem '*The Kings Quair*' demonstrates his acquiescence to this bond. In stanza forty, when he saw her from the tower window at Windsor, he described her as 'The fairest of the freschest yong[e] floure / that euer I sawe, me thought, before that houre'.²⁶ He was quite clearly

²¹ *Calendar of Close Rolls for the Reign Henry V*, Vol. I, 1413-1419 (Public Record Office, 1908), pp. 34, 35, 39, 40. Note: The wardship, in the event of young Earl Henry dying underage, extended to any future underage heirs until one became of age.

²² There are a number of festival books available at the British Library that pertain to weddings, funerals, coronations and the like, unfortunately none of them appear before the early sixteenth century.

²³ Wylie and Waugh, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth*, p. 269.

²⁴ Fiona Downie, *She is But A Woman: Queenship in Scotland 1424-1463* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), pp. 92-93.

²⁵ Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England, From the Norman Conquest*, fourth edition, Vol. II (London, 1854), pp. 134-135;

²⁶ James I of Scotland, *The King's Quair*, ed. J. Norton-Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 10, stanza 40, ll. 275-6. It is thought that James wrote this poem whilst he was still in England, just after his marriage to Joan. Commentators agree that it is very likely that he saw Joan for the first time from a tower at Windsor in 1421 (pp. xxii-xxiv).

smitten with her. Furthermore in stanza forty-two as he looked out the window again, he not only admires her womanliness but also questions whether she is ‘... a wardly creature, / Or hevinly thing in likeness of nature?’²⁷ By the time James gets to stanza forty-five the reader is in no doubt that he had fallen in love with Joan.

To do a sely prisoner thus smert, (sely = lone or alone)
That lufts yow all and wote of nocht bot wo?
And therfor, merci, suete, sen it so. (sen = see)

Quhen I a lytill thrawe had maid my moon, (thraw = contorted)
Bewailing myn infortune and my chance,
Vnknawin[g] how or quhat was best to doon,
So ferr I falling into lufis dance,
That sodeynly my wit, my contenance,
My hert, my will, my nature and my mynd,
Was changit clene right in another kind.²⁸

It appears that the poem was written after their marriage, possibly around St. Valentine’s Day, in the February following their December nuptials. In this case, James was free to write of his love for Joan as the object of his passion had been duly acquired. Since the royal newly-weds were in the process of making arrangements to travel back to Scotland it is possible that his poem was written as a dedication to St. Valentine, who is the patron saint of both lovers and travellers.²⁹ James was clearly taken with Joan and she had at her side a husband who it seemed cared deeply for her. The queen appears to have had a calming influence on James during tough times.

James’s Return to Scotland

An absentee and therefore impotent king of Scotland was no real use to the English. What England needed in Scotland was a loyal ally. The most effective way of countering the immediate threat was to marry the Scottish king to a suitably royal English bride. Hence, James I and Joan Beaufort were married in England in 1424.³⁰ This marriage was supposed to forge a peaceful link between Scotland with a mature king and the government of the infant King of England, Henry VI. Joan was the daughter of Sir John Beaufort, Marquis of Dorset and Earl of Somerset, a legitimated son of Sir

²⁷ James I of Scotland, *The King’s Quair*, p. 11, stanza 42, ll. 290-94.

²⁸ James I of Scotland, *The King’s Quair*, pp. 11-12, ll. 306-315.

²⁹ James I of Scotland, *The King’s Quair*, p. xxiv.

³⁰ Brown, *James I*, p. 25.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Joan's mother was Lady Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas de Holand, Earl of Kent, the brother of King Richard II.³¹ The Beauforts had actively pursued a marriage since July 1423.

The senior Beauforts, Thomas, Duke of Exeter, and Henry, Bishop of Winchester, half-brothers of Henry IV, also held dominant positions in the household of the infant king, Henry VI, and on the council in 1423.³² Exeter was Henry VI's guardian and Bishop Henry became chancellor in 1424.³³ Furthermore, John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who were nephews to the Beaufort men, acted as defender, protector and chief councillor of the realm. Gloucester deferred to Bedford, who was heir to the throne, when Bedford was in the realm.³⁴ Joan was in fact related to almost every nobleman and various kings, past and present, at that time. She was an extremely high ranking woman, who in the absence of any other princess or noble woman of the realm of marriageable age was the only fitting bride for James. Anyone of lesser standing would indeed have been considered an insult. She herself had one younger sister who was just twelve when a bride for James was being considered.³⁵ The nuptials were eventually celebrated by Joan's uncle, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, in his church of St. Mary Overy within the liberty of Southwark. The wedding banquet was held in his palace nearby.³⁶

James's obedience was secured by replacing him with high ranking Scottish hostages.³⁷ One of James's chief obligations as part of the marriage

³¹ <http://www.thepeerage.com/p10198.htm>

³² Brown, *James I*, p. 24.

³³ R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (UK: Sutton Publishing, 2004), p. 51.

³⁴ Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, pp. 21-22.

³⁵ Joan's heritage was very complex. Some genealogies make her sister, Margaret, the eldest daughter. This is wrong. She was married sometime after 1421 to Thomas Courtney, Earl of Devon, who was not born until 1414; she would have been considered too old to be his bride if she had been born before Joan. <http://www.thepeerage.com/p10198.htm>

³⁶ G. L. Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort: A Study of Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 131-132; Brown, *James I*, pp. 25-26.

³⁷ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland (CDS)*, Vol. IV: AD 1357-1509, ed. Joseph Bain (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1888), Vol. IV, No. 952. This entry lists all the hostages and gives their monetary value; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Henry VI, 1422-1429 (first published in 1901 in Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Public Record Office, Kraus Reprint, 1971), p.

arrangements was to cease the supply of military men to France.³⁸ What James signed in Durham on 28 March of that same year was indeed a truce with England that took this into account. However, the agreement did not include those military men who were already engaged in the French king's wars. These men were not bound by the truce unless they returned to Scotland.³⁹ James I was released by the English in 1424 in the company of his English bride, Joan Beaufort. He had been charged a fee of 60,000 marks for expenses incurred by him during his captivity. Although he was excused 10,000 of this by way of Joan's dowry, the other 50,000 was secured on hostages from Scotland.⁴⁰ These were some of the earls, barons and sons and heirs of many of the Scottish magnates who numbered twenty-one in total.⁴¹ They were gradually released as their ransoms were paid.⁴² In

217. The following have been recorded from the 1424 entries of May 26 and 27. Spelling of names has been maintained. These hostages numbered twenty-seven in all. They were: David, eldest son and heir of the earl of Athol, Alexander, earl of Craufurd, Alexander, Lord Gordon, John de Lyndesey, Patrick, eldest son and heir of Sir John Lyon, Andrew Grey of Foullys, David de Ogilby, Sir William de Rothnane, David Meignez and William Olyphaunt – these ten hostages were taken from Pountfreyt castle to the Tower of London; Robert Marshall, Gilbert, eldest son and heir of William, constable of Scotland, Robert de Lyle, Walter Lord of Driltoune, William of Abbynethy, and Robert, eldest son and heir of Sir Robert de Mautalent – these six hostages were conveyed from Knaresburgh castle to the Tower of London; William, eldest son and heir of the Lord of Dalkeith, Duncan, Lord of Argyll, Thomas Boyd of Kylmernok, Patrick de Dunbarre Lord of Caumok, George, eldest son and heir of Hugh Campbell, James Lord of Cadezo, and Sir Robert Levynston – these last seven hostages were escorted from Fodryngey castle to the castle of Dover. A further four hostages listed were Thomas, Earl of Moray, Robert Erskine, James Dunbar of Fendraught and James Sandilands of Calder (E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437* (London: Methuen, 1936), Appendix D, p. 293). Hostages were exchanged from time to time, while several died in custody. Furthermore, it is possible that some were not released until as late as 1451 (Balfour-Melville, pp. 294-295).

38 Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 62. Because James had been exchanged for high profile hostages it was unlikely that he would field an army against the English both on his own borders and indeed in aid of the French Dauphin.

39 Ranald Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages*, pp. 258-260; R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, p. 156.

40 *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 344, n. 3; R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), pp. 156-157, 173, n 20.

41 *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 221.

42 McGladdery, *James II* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990), p. 5.

due course the Scottish royal couple were back in James's realm sometime in the first half of 1424.⁴³

The king and queen were 'solemnly crowned' together at Scone in 1424 on 21 May. The ceremony was conducted by the Bishop of St. Andrews, Sir Henry de Wardlaw. Nearly all the bishops, prelates and magnates of the realm were present at the coronation. Sir Murdoch Stewart, Duke of Albany and Earl of Fife, regent in James's absence, installed the king on the throne by right of privilege as Earl of Fife. This was a lay right that originated in the reign of Malcolm Canmore. Albany is also symbolically recognising the right of James I, his cousin, to the throne.⁴⁴ At this time James also knighted 'many aspirants [who] were girded and decorated with the belt of knighthood'.⁴⁵ Significantly, these knights were not only important from a military perspective, but James employed many of them in administrative offices.⁴⁶ These were James's chosen men. The coronation was closely followed by the first parliament, at which James was present, on 26 May at Perth.⁴⁷ There appears to be no evidence for the full

⁴³ Michael Brown and Steve Boardman, 'Survival and Revival: late Medieval Scotland', in Jenny Wormald, ed., *Scotland a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 95.

⁴⁴ Rev. Cooper, 'Four Scottish Coronations', in *Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society and of the Glasgow Ecclesiological Society* (Aberdeen, 1902), pp. 11, 13.

⁴⁵ Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, 1987, p. 221; *The Book of Pluscarden*, , Vol. II, p. 279. Pluscarden lists these knights as Archibald, third Earl of Angus; George, Earl of March; the Lord Hailes; Thomas Hay, Lord of Yester; Walter Haliburton; Patrick Ogilvy; David Stewart of Rosyth; the Lord Seton; the Lord Gordon; the Lord Kinnoul, the Earl of Crawford; John Red Stewart; David Murray; John Stewart of Cardenen; William de la Hay, Constable of Scotland; John Scrimgeour; Alexander Irvine; Hernert Maxwell; Herbert Herries of Terreagles; Andrew Gray of Foulis; the Lord Kilmaurs; the Lord Dalhousie and the Lord Crichton.

⁴⁶ Katie Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland, 1424-1513* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 34-37. For example, Patrick Ogilvy of Auchterhouse and William Erskine of Kinnoul became auditors of taxation for the payment of James I's ransom, and William Crichton of that Ilk became his close councillor and then his Gentleman of the Bedchamber.

⁴⁷ Bower has the date of the parliament as the day after the crowning ceremony, but *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, 1124-1707 (APS)*, 12 Volumes, ed. (Edinburgh: T. Thompson and C. Innes, 1814-1875), Vol. II, *APS*, gives the date as the 26 May 1424 (p. 3).

proceedings of that coronation process except for what Walter Bower has to offer in *Scotichronicon*, and the brief reference in *The Book of Pluscarden*.⁴⁸

Re-establishing a Scottish Court

Queen Joan was not a ‘pawn’ in this political chess game; she was a very real player. At times she acted as an intercessor between the king and his people, between the pope and the king, accompanied him on at least one trip to talk politics, sat in court with him, gave him eight children, was engaged in the preparations of the marriage of her eldest daughter Margaret, and avenged James I’s murder most terribly. As there had not been any queen in Scotland for twenty-three years, Annabella Drummond having died in 1401, and no resident king since 1406, the royal couple had the task of establishing a new court.⁴⁹ Although the Albany Stewarts, who acted as regents in James’ absence, carried on a court of sorts at Doune, Falkland and Stirling Castles, and indeed did much refurbishing to them, it appears that their courts lacked the dynamism and opulence of future courts and indeed the majesty of a royal court. Since there had been no royal court for those years and there was therefore no ingrained protocol to follow, the new incumbents were at some liberty to develop this medieval institution along whatever lines they deemed fit.

There is little evidence that illustrates Joan’s role specifically in the recreation of a Scottish court. However, there is no reason to suggest that she was not an influential cohort with James in the establishment of what became an opulent court; she had, after all, been reared among the most elite ranks of England. She had been brought up in castles all her life and was familiar with royal court fashions, manners and etiquette. While these experiences were extremely valuable assets to a returning king, they also gave her an advantage over others as the first woman of the realm. Enormous amounts of money were spent on clothing, jewellery, horses, furnishings, entertainment, wine, rebuilding as well as on ship making and the acquisition of armaments.⁵⁰ Linlithgow Palace had burned down along with the town in 1424.⁵¹ This palace had been little more than a large manor

⁴⁸ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 221; *The Book of Pluscarden*, p. 279.

⁴⁹ Brown, *James I*, 114-115.

⁵⁰ *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum, (The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, ERS)*, ed. George Burnett et al. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1878-1908), Vol. IV, pp. 626, 666, 678-683; E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots 1406-1437*, pp. 259-265; A. A. M. Duncan, *James I, 1424-1437* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Scottish History Dept. Occasional Papers, 1976), pp. 15-16; M. Brown, *James I*, pp. 112-119.

⁵¹ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 243.

house, but James rebuilt it in the style of a palace along English and French lines, with which both he and Joan would have been familiar.⁵² In December of 1425, James spent Christmas at St. Andrews, where the festivities lasted until after Epiphany. Furthermore, according to Walter Bower, almost all the ‘princes and magnates of the realm’ were there as well. Burgundian ambassadors were also entertained and given audience with the king at this time.⁵³

The English passed comment that ‘the king of Scottis is now hoom in his land’.⁵⁴ The court of James and Joan was an expression of their rank; firstly it demonstrated their superiority over their nobles and secondly, it expressed their claim to equality with other European princes.⁵⁵ What little information remaining that relates to Joan, suggests that she was usually at James’ side at court, wherever it might be held. Although James used many of the royal palaces and castles, such as Linlithgow, Doune and Falkland, the traditional centres of government, Stirling, Edinburgh and Perth, were where court was usually conducted. James and his entourage were housed in the Dominican Friary at Perth when court was in session there. He often used Holyrood Abbey when he was in Edinburgh in preference to the castle.⁵⁶

The French Connection

England expected that James I’s marriage would promote better Anglo-Scottish relations. The English who were severely stretched in France at this time after the death of Henry V needed peace on the northern borders. They were particularly conciliatory and James responded in kind. He was not long bound by any sense of commitment. By 1428 France, in need of help, called upon James I who recommitted to the *Auld Alliance*. Negotiations for a French marriage for Margaret began in earnest in July 1428 with high profile ambassadors, including the Archbishop of Rheims and his entourage, travelling to Scotland.⁵⁷ This was confirmed in a marriage

⁵² *ERS*, Vol. IV, pp. cxxxvi-cxxxix.

⁵³ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 257.

⁵⁴ Brown, *James I*, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Brown, *James I*, p. 114, 118.

⁵⁶ Brown, *James I*, p. 114.

⁵⁷ (*APS*), Vol. II, pp. 26-28; G. Du Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII*, Tome II, Librairie de la Société Bibliographique, Paris, 1882, pp. 394-395; L. Barbé, *Margaret of Scotland and Dauphin Louis* (London, Glasgow and Bombay: Blackie and Son, 1917), p. 19; J. C. Laidlaw, ed., *The Poetical Works of Alain Chartier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 12; E. Bonner, ‘Charles VII’s Dynastic Policy and the ‘Auld Alliance’: the marriage of James II and Marie de Gelders’, *The*

contract between the princess Margaret, James's eldest daughter, and Charles VII's eldest son, the Dauphin Louis. The English were unhappy about this. In March 1429 Cardinal Beaufort (Queen Joan's uncle), before travelling off to Bohemia on crusade against the Hussites, ventured to Coldingham Priory to meet the Scottish royal couple and to discuss James's supposed allegiance to England.⁵⁸ James was reminded of his 'English connections and the debt, political and financial that he owed for his liberty'.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the treaty between England and Scotland was due to expire in May 1431.

James talked of his willingness to renew the treaty when the time came. He came under pressure over the next eighteen months to commit himself to an even closer bond with England, one that carried even more weight than his own marriage to Joan Beaufort. English ambassadors were hopeful that one of James' daughters would marry the child king Henry VI of England, thereby forging a lasting peace.⁶⁰ Whether the English were serious about this is debatable. Since France had claimed the first daughter of the Scottish King in marriage with the Dauphin it is unlikely that the English would settle for a second daughter and thereby be considered second-best to the realm of France. James played political chess and delayed answering whilst holding forth on the ransom money still owed to England. To agree to the marriage at this point in time would have been political folly. His eldest daughter, Margaret, was already promised to the Dauphin of France and to side with England would be in breach of the treaty already agreed on, but not yet fulfilled, with France. There was also a remote possibility that when the English King came of canonical age (fourteen) he would be able to revoke an agreement pertaining to a marriage.⁶¹

Innes Review, Vol. 54, no. 2 (Autumn 2003), pp. 154-155. Note: The ambassadors on the French side were Jean Stewart of Darnley, lord of Aubigny and Constable of the Scottish army in France, Regnault de Chartres, the Archbishop of Reims and Alain Chartier, Chancellor of Bayeux and chief of the king's secretaries. On the Scottish side James I chose Henry Leighton, Bishop of Aberdeen, Edward Lauder, Archdeacon of Lothian and Sir Patrick Ogilvy of Auchterhouse, Justiciary of Scotland.

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ERS, pp. 466-465; *CDS*, Volume IV, pp. 210, 211, 212, 214; A. Lang, *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1900), p. 308; Brown, *James I*, pp. 111-112.

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Brown, *James I*, p. 110.

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This marriage would be within the forbidden degrees as Joan was Henry VI's second cousin. A papal dispensation would be necessary.

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Brown, *James I*, p. 111.

The Cardinal however, did manage to encourage James to reconsider the truce with England and in December 1430 it was renewed for a further five years.⁶² Although it did not cover the Scots that were employed as soldiers in France, it certainly covered England and the sea.⁶³ James, however, did not fulfil the contract with France until 1436, at which time a truce between England and Scotland expired.⁶⁴ His reasons may have included some sense of allegiance to England following his captivity there, his wife's influence and more certainly, financial difficulties. Furthermore, the English were since 1419 allied to Burgundy, whose dominions included the Low Countries, Scotland's main trading partners. Conflict with England or a large Scottish military presence in France would have caused tensions with Burgundy, in turn compromising Scottish interests as far as trade and revenues were concerned.⁶⁵ However, by the time 1435 came around the Anglo-Burgundian alliance had collapsed, leaving a greatly weakened England in its wake. James I was free to continue his foreign policy where he deemed fit.⁶⁶

Asserting Royal Authority at Home

Queen Joan's presence was particularly evident in the negotiations surrounding Alexander of the Isles, who early in 1427-8 took on the title of 'Lord of the Earldom of Ross'. He was previously styled Master of Ross. Alexander's mother, Countess Mary, was heiress to the Earldom.⁶⁷ Giving himself the title was clearly in contravention of the king's wishes. James took action and revived the claims of the Albany Stewarts to Ross that he had previously rejected in 1424.⁶⁸ This whole issue was dealt with rather rigorously on James' trip to Inverness in August 1428.⁶⁹

⁶² CDS, IV, p. 215.

⁶³ Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort*, pp. 180-181.

⁶⁴ A. A. M. Duncan, *James I: 1424-1437*, p. 22. The truce expired on 1 May, 1436.

⁶⁵ Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, p. 49.

⁶⁶ Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, p. 50.

⁶⁷ Alexander's mother was Margaret or Mary, daughter of Euphemia Ross by her first husband Sir Walter Leslie, who died in February 1381/2. Her second husband was Donald, Lord of the Isles, who was Alexander's father (*Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, fn. 26-27, p. 362; Brown, *James I*, p. 95).

⁶⁸ Brown, *James I*, p. 95. 'From 1428-1431 ... James paid an annuity of £12 6s 8d to his cousin, Robert Stewart, son of the late Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany. This was probably in return for his resignation of his rights to Ross as heir to his brother, John, Earl of Buchan.' Furthermore, 'in 1431 James was to pose as John Stewart's heir himself as the basis of his claim to Ross. As early as April 1428, therefore, the king was clearing the way

Queen Joan was a party to all the proceedings and accompanied James to Inverness, along with his parliament, which met in the newly repaired 'tower' there.⁷⁰ Her political importance had already been established at the recent general council in Perth in July 1428, where James had the tenants-in-chief and the prelates include her in the oath of loyalty.⁷¹ James had this repeated in a similar act in later times at the parliament of Perth in January 1435.⁷² Although her role was mainly ceremonial, she nevertheless would have 'added to the peaceful façade which masked the royal plan'; she was in essence a cohort to his domestic policy.⁷³ Both Alexander and his mother, along with many others numbering around fifty,⁷⁴ were promptly arrested when they came to meet the king at Inverness.⁷⁴ Three were executed and the rest, including Alexander and his mother, remained in captivity for a short while before being released. The Lord of the Isles continued to cause strife by burning the royal town of Inverness in June 1429. The King and his army pursued and hounded Alexander until the 23 June, when Alexander surrendered to the king.⁷⁵ Furthermore, on 27 August 1429 at Holyrood the king demanded his complete submission:

And so Alexander surrendered himself to the king's mercy and ... clad only in his shirt and drawers and on his knees, he offered and rendered to the king, a naked sword before the high altar of Holyrood at Edinburgh, while the queen and more important lords of the kingdom interceded for him. The king admitted him to his grace.⁷⁶

for a resolution of the problem of Ross as well as a fresh extension of his own lands'.

⁶⁹ Balfour-Melville, *James I*, p. 165.

⁷⁰ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 259. The editor, D. E. R. Watt states, p. 362, that there are no official records of this parliament, but that it must have been formally summoned as the (*ERS*, iv, 488-90) lists fines to several burghs who did not send representatives. For a greater discussion on this topic see Balfour-Melville, *James I*, Appendix B, p. 284.

⁷¹ *APS*, Vol. II, p. 17.

⁷² *APS*, Vol. II, p. 23.

⁷³ Brown, *James I*, pp. 95-96.

⁷⁴ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 259. Balfour-Melville, *James I*, p. 165.

⁷⁵ Balfour-Melville, *James I*, p. 172.

⁷⁶ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 263; *Pluscarden*, p. 283; Brown, *James I*, pp. 100-103.

On this occasion his life was spared and he was committed to the castle of Tantallon in the care of the king's nephew, William Earl of Angus.⁷⁷

There was another occasion in 1431, where Queen Joan, along with the 'bishops and prelates, earls and barons' interceded once again, on behalf of both Alexander Macdonald (who was still in custody), and Archibald, fifth Earl of Douglas who had been recently incarcerated.⁷⁸ Douglas may have been arrested because of his connection with Malise Graham. He had married his sister Euphemia Graham shortly after Malise lost the Earldom of Strathearn. Furthermore Douglas had been involved in covert meetings with the English, possibly as a means to securing the release of Malise as a hostage for James I.⁷⁹ Both were released, and Alexander regained the Lordship of the Isles.⁸⁰

There is at least one more incident recorded where Queen Joan stepped in as an intercessor. Bower described the incident as involving

a certain great nobleman, a near relative of the king, who was on some occasion which I cannot recall staying at the royal court. Because he slapped another man in the king's hall [at which the man who had been struck complained to the king], the king ordered the same hand as had struck the blow to be stretched out on the dining table, and handing a little knife to the young man who had been slapped, ordered him under pain of death to strike the hand that was pinioned in this way and pierce the palm. On hearing this the queen with her ladies and the prelates with their clerics prostrated themselves on the floor.⁸¹

Since the king was particularly angered by this incident, the queen and her supporters had quite a difficult task to placate him. Eventually James pardoned the man but nevertheless banished him from his sight and court for a time.⁸²

⁷⁷ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 263. The earl's mother was 'committed for fourteen months to the island monastery of Inchcolm' (Balfour-Melville, *James I*, p. 173).

⁷⁸ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 265; Brown, *James I*, p. 140. This event took place at the parliament held at Perth on 22 October 1431.

⁷⁹ Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages*, p. 320

⁸⁰ Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages*, p. 317. Alexander, Lord of the Isles, had been in prison since 1429.

⁸¹ *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 321.

⁸² *Scotichronicon*, Vol. 8, p. 321.

James appears to have been a rather difficult individual to deal with in most instances, especially when he had his mind set in a particular direction. On the other hand, the queen, from what little is known of her, was a calming and sensible influence on him. Furthermore, this particular trait seems to have been recognised by Pope Eugenius IV, from whom she even received a letter in 1436.⁸³ Eugenius, having already sent a letter to James about assisting the papal nuncio, Anthony, Bishop of Urbino, to make reforms in the Scottish Church,⁸⁴ then asks for extra support and ‘he requests and exhorts her [Joan] to assist the above nuncio, and to exhort the king to do the same’.⁸⁵

For the most part, James appears to have been in control of his foreign policy but his domestic rule was at times, wanting. Domestic politics dominated the Scottish scene and were foreseen as a struggle between a monarch working towards effective centralised control with him as the chief overseer, and expecting obedience from an aristocracy, who saw the king as little more than another magnate, a *primus inter pares*, a first among equals.⁸⁶ Scottish nobles were sorely tested by some of James’s policies, especially the introduction of extraordinary taxation, which they were not used to. They saw it as ‘the thin edge of the wedge of imposition and interference from central royal government’.⁸⁷ In order to provide the money for the ransom of those still held in English captivity, the lords of James’s first parliament at Perth on 26 May, 1424, agreed that a special tax had to be levied.⁸⁸ This was to be twelve-pence on the pound on lands, rents, malys [rent or tribute paid to a senior] and goods, two shillings on the boll of wheat, rye, bere and peas and sixpence on oats.⁸⁹ Although this was unpopular – Albany had not imposed any taxes during his regency – there was little problem with the first year. However, during the second year there were complaints of impoverishment and the king abstained from further taxation until the marriage of his daughter Margaret in 1436. This took the

⁸³ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland (CPL)*, Vol. VIII, ed. J. A. Tremlow (Nendeln/Leichtenstein: Kraus, 1972, first published 1909), p. 230.

⁸⁴ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers*, p. 229.

⁸⁵ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers*, p. 230. The pope also wrote a letter addressed to the bishops, nobles and council of King James. This letter is listed immediately under the one Joan received on the same page. Brown, *James I*, p. 17.

⁸⁷ *APS*, Vol. II, pp. 3-6; Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots: 1460-1437*, pp. 108-110; McGladdery, *James II*, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots*, pp. 108-109

⁸⁹ *APS*, Vol. II, p. 4.

form of a levy imposed upon well-off towns and wealthy lords, and was heavily resented by the lords in particular.

Moreover, the confiscation of lands in favour of the king proved most unpopular and added resentment and insecurity to an already, edgy nobility.⁹⁰ From 1424 to 1435 the king had acquired the Earldoms of Buchan, Fife, Mentieth, Lennox, Strathearn, March, Mar and Garioch. Following the forfeiture of the Earldom of March, ‘all the lords of parliament both ecclesiastical and secular, and also the commissioners of the burghs, promised to give their letters of renitence and fealty to our lady the Queen’.⁹¹ E. W. M. Balfour-Melville suggests that this may have been because the king feared rebellion as a result of March’s forfeiture and was simply ensuring the regency of the queen in the event of his death.⁹² Kindling this underlying tension was the fact that the king, by fifteenth-century Scottish standards, was enjoying an overly lavish lifestyle at their expense. The raising of taxes had been primarily for the ransom of their kin in England and very little made its way there. Instead, it was spent on diplomatic missions, armaments and most unpalatably, to the nation’s elite, large sums were spent on jewels and luxuries for the royal couple.⁹³ Eventually, the lack of support from his aristocracy was expressed by their ‘detestable schism and most wicked division’ at Roxburgh in August 1436. This campaign to recapture the castle from the English had to be abandoned.⁹⁴ James further inflamed his lords by persisting with the idea of retaking Roxburgh. To fund this campaign he suggested, in the face of extreme opposition, yet more taxes.⁹⁵ He did nothing to rectify the discontent among his nobles with dire consequences indeed. Some among them assassinated him at a Dominican friary at Perth in February 1437.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots*, pp. 122-125, 149-150, 216-217; McGladdery, p. 7.

⁹¹ Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots*, pp. 216-217; *APS*, Vol. II, p. 23.

⁹² Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots*, pp. 216-217; *APS*, Vol. II, p. 23.

⁹³ Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots*, p. 245; M. Brown, *James I*, pp. 112-118.

⁹⁴ *The Book of Pluscarden*, p. 380; McGladdery, p. 8.

⁹⁵ Brown, *James I*, p. 174; Roland Tanner, ‘“I Arest you Sir, in the Name of the Three Astatte’s in Perlement”’: The Scottish Parliament and Resistance to the Crown in the Fifteenth Century’ in T. Thornton, ed., *Social Attitudes and Political Struggle in the Fifteenth Century*, Sutton, 2000, pp. 101-112.

⁹⁶ McGladdery, *James II*, pp. 9-10. For the debates surrounding the death of James I see also Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II, pp. 398-402; Brown, *James I*, pp. 172-193; A. A. M. Duncan, *James I 1427-1437*, pp. 8-26; Lister M. Matheson, ed., *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles. The Dethe of the Kyng of Scotis and Warkworth’s Chronicle*

A Powerful Widow

While Joan was able to keep the peace in many instances she was ultimately unable to protect her husband's life. James I was assassinated by a group of discontented nobles in the Dominican monastery at Perth on 20 February 1347.⁹⁷ The mastermind behind it was thought to be Walter, Earl of Athol. The assailants included Athol's grandson, Robert Stewart, Robert Graham, Christopher and Thomas Chambers, two brothers surnamed Hall and two Barclays of Tentsmuir⁹⁸ James I was buried in the church of the Carthusian Convent at Perth. This is the church that he had founded. James's heart however, made a journey to the church of Rhodes, for it was returned from there in 1445, borne by a knight of the Order of St. John of Rhodes.⁹⁹

There is an element of mystery surrounding some aspects of Joan's movements after the murder. There is no apparent record of who assisted her back to Edinburgh, or the nature of her wounds. However, her first priority was to gain possession of the prince James, heir to the throne.¹⁰⁰ Although Joan is reported to have been injured by the king's assassins, the wounds must have been minimal as she was, within a few days, possibly two, back in Edinburgh and had her only son James II, aged seven, in her care. This not only meant that the king was in safe hands, but it also gave her a stronger position as a possible regent in his minority. Furthermore it enabled her with James I's supporters to go on the offensive and capture and execute the conspirators, which she did most savagely by medieval standards.¹⁰¹ Her cause was supported and even legitimated by the Bishop

(Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), pp. 1-56; Tytler, *Tytler's History of Scotland*, Vol. I, pp. 416-418; R. Weiss, 'The Earliest Account of the Murder of James I of Scotland', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 52 (1937), pp. 479-491.

⁹⁷ Hector Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II, , pp. 398-402; John Shirley, *The Deth of the Kynge of Scotis*, in *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, ed. Lister A. Matheson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 23-56; R. Weiss, 'The earliest Account of the Murder of James I of Scotland', in *The English Historical Review*, Vol LII (1937), fn. 2, p. 490.

⁹⁸ *Pluscarden*, II, p. 289.

⁹⁹ Lang, Vol. I, p. 320; *ERS*, Vol. V, pp. xliii, xliiiv, 178. The knight was paid 90 li. for his trouble. There seems to be no account of who took the heart on this journey at the time of James I's death.

¹⁰⁰ Tytler, P., *Tytler's History of Scotland 1249-1603*, Vol. II, chapter I, p. 2; Annie I. Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy Bishop of St. Andrews* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1950), p. 21.

¹⁰¹ Shirley, *The Deth of the Kynge of Scotis*, pp. 46-55; Tytler, Vol. II, chapter. I, p. 2. By the time James II was crowned Joan's supporters

of Urbino, the papal legate, who having confessed James only eight days prior to his assassination,

uttered a great cry with tearful sighs, and kissed his piteous wounds; and he said before all the bystanders that he would stake his soul on his having died in a state of grace, like a martyr, for the defence of the common weal and his administration of justice.¹⁰²

It appears that when the queen took the authority, she became a real political player in her own right, and called a ‘council’ herself, to undertake the task of retribution. Brown states that ‘Waurin and Monstrelet report that “the nobles and great lords of the kingdom of Scotland were summoned and gathered together with the queen and planned to pursue the murderers with great strength.”’¹⁰³ Although the participants could have had less than the forty days’ notice required, Parliament was called on 25 March 1437. The rank of the captured Earl of Atholl demanded not just a general council, but also the authority of a full parliament to try him.¹⁰⁴ Once the chief conspirator had been detained, James II was crowned.

The coronation took place at Holyrood on that same day.¹⁰⁵ Scottish kings were generally crowned at Scone, but this was thought too dangerous – for although the chief conspirator, the Earl of Atholl, had been detained and was probably executed on the day of the coronation, others involved in the regicide were still at large. While Joan kept the custody of the king, she did not rule. At this stage, according to a later document known as ‘the appoyntement’ of 1439, the queen was recognised as the guardian of her children and in accordance with the three estates an allowance of 4,000 marks had been given to her for their maintenance.¹⁰⁶ The estates commissioned Archibald, fifth Earl of Douglas as Lieutenant-General of the realm.

included Archibald, fifth Earl of Douglas, who became the Lieutenant-General, William Crichton, Keeper of Edinburgh Castle, William, Earl of Orkney and William, Earl of Angus.

¹⁰² *Pluscarden*, Vol. II, p. 290.

¹⁰³ Brown, *James I*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁴ Brown, *James I*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁵ C. McGladdery, *James II*, p. 12; Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ *APS*, Vol. II, pp. 54-55; Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy* p. 28.

As Queen Dowager, Joan continued to be involved in the politics of the realm but in a country that was not only anti-English, but also extremely polarised politically, she found it necessary to make another marriage to ensure her protection and that of her children. She married Sir James Stewart, the Black Knight of Lorne in July 1439.¹⁰⁷ While she lost the custody of her children, she did have free access to them, provided the retainers that came with her to visit them passed the scrutiny of Alexander Livingston, in whose care they were.¹⁰⁸ Joan was never far from the politics that surrounded her son's minority. She died on July 15 1445 at Dunbar castle after a conflict between her supporters and the earl of Douglas. It is not known whether she died as the result of injuries received in the battle, but the castle was surrendered by Adam Hepburn of Hailes, its keeper, as soon as she died.¹⁰⁹ She was buried with James I at the Carthusian convent at Perth.

Conclusion

By the time of his death James I 'The King of Scottis' was at "hoom in his land". He had ruled from his return from England in 1424 with his queen Joan Beaufort at his side until his untimely death in 1436. They, as a couple, re-established the Scottish royal court, which by all accounts, was lavish, generous and well recognised by international diplomats. While international relations seem to have been successful, domestic politics was fractious and factious. However, the queen was seen as a most able and talented royal partner who had a most calming influence over her husband. James made sure that his nobles had sworn allegiance to her in the case of his death. Furthermore, following James' death, she was given the custody of their seven children, while she remained a queen dowager. This was a sign of his belief in her as not only a good and loyal mother but also as a worthy politician and guide to the young King, James II. Joan protected the rights of her children, where she was able, until her dying day.

James I's temper was well known and important figures such as the pope called on her to help their causes with the king. James involved Joan in the majority of his international dealings and she certainly played a large role in the marriage of her daughter Margaret to the French Dauphin. They entertained foreign dignitaries together and Joan accompanied James on many of his progresses throughout the country. Her role as queen consort was not underestimated in domestic policy either, and while James

¹⁰⁷ Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁸ *APS*, Vol. II, p. 54; *The Life and Times of James Kennedy*, pp. 28-30; McGladdery, *James II*, pp. 16-19.

¹⁰⁹ Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy*, pp. 74-75

James I and Joan Beaufort

administered justice, Joan often interceded so that he could also demonstrate mercy. Their marriage was considered to be one that was based on love. This was first seen at the beginning of their marriage in James' poem 'The King's Quair', and at the end of their marriage through Joan's ferocious treatment of the men who killed her husband. These acts bear testimony to their love for one another. Joan Beaufort and James I were not only a partnership in marriage, but by extension, in many aspects of both Scottish foreign and domestic politics.