

The Kingship of David II (1329-71)

Although he was an infant, and English sources would jibe that he soiled the coronation altar, David Bruce was the first king of Scots to receive full coronation and anointment. As such, his installation at Scone abbey on 24 November 1331 was another triumph for his father.¹ The terms of the 1328 peace had stipulated that Edward III's regime should help secure from Avignon both the lifting of Robert I's excommunication and this parity of rite with the monarchies of England and France. David's coronation must, then, have blended newly-borrowed traditions with established Scottish inaugural forms: it probably merged the introduction of the boy-king and the carrying of orb, sceptre and sword by the incumbents of ancient lines of earls, then unction and the taking of oaths to common law and church followed by a sermon by the new bishop of St Andrews, the recitation of royal genealogy in Gaelic and general homage, fealty and knighting of subjects alongside the king.² Yet this display must also have been designed to reinforce the territorial claims of authority of the Bruce house in the presence of its allies and in-laws from the north, west and south-west of Scotland as well as the established Lowland political community. Finally, it was in part an impressive riposte to Edward II's failed attempts to persuade the papacy of his claim for England's kings to be anointed with the holy oil of Becket.³

¹ *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, ed. E.A. Bond (3 vols., London 1868), ii, 361-2; *Chron. Fordun*, i, 346; *Chron. Wyntoun*, 382; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 71.

² It is interesting to speculate whether or not this oath now included promises by the king against the 'inbringing of the English', a sentiment expressed by the Declaration of Arbroath, probably invoked against David II in 1352 and a treasonable charge used by Robert III against the Dunbars in 1400 and by James III against the Duke of Albany in 1483; it does not, though, appear in the revised parliamentary oath of 1445 [J.W.M. Bannerman, 'The King's Poet and the Inauguration of Alexander III', *SHR*, lxxviii (1989), 120-49; Penman, *David II*, 171; Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, 228-9; N.A.T. Macdougall, *James III – a Political Study* (Edinburgh 1983), 188; R. Tanner, *The Late Medieval Scottish Parliament: Politics and the Three Estates, 1424-1488* (East Linton 2001), 113].

³ T.A. Sandquist, 'The Holy Oil of St Thomas of Canterbury', in T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke eds., *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto 1969), 330-44.

However, not far beneath the surface, David's coronation was symptomatic of the strains which would beset and set the tone of his minority in exile (1334-41) and each period of his personal rule split by his long captivity in England (1346-57). Not least, there seemed to be uncertainty about the royal succession, a mixture of agonies over the adult Balliol alternative, the dangers of an infant's accession, the loyalties of successive Guardians (or 'King's Lieutenants') and questions over the desirability and agenda of the teenage Bruce backup, Robert Steward, from another aspiring baronial line. David's investiture came, in fact, over two years after his accession, just months before Edward Balliol's anticipated invasion with the Disinherited and English backing. The imminent return of the dispossessed exposed both the vulnerabilities and strengths of Robert I's lordship in redistributing lands and offices. The possible refusal of the earls of Fife and Strathearn and lords like MacDonald of the Isles (and, surely, many others) to fulfil their necessary role at David's coronation may have encouraged further opportunism and loyalty to the Bruce dynasty in other Scots: but, however brief, the defection of such men to Balliol and Edward III after their invasions in 1332-3, confirmed these figures and their lands as the focus of dispute over the next four decades.⁴ Duncan of Fife and Malise of Strathearn (and Orkney and Caithness), in particular, sought Balliol support because ambitious Bruce regional lords like Robert Steward and the earl of Ross were circling their lands.⁵ In the vacuum of war which would follow c.1332-41 and c.1346-57 there would indeed emerge 'much envy among them [the Scottish nobles] who might be hyest; for every one ruled yn his owen cuntrey'.⁶

⁴ The chronicle descriptions of the coronation conspicuously do not mention a role for Fife or Strathearn [*Chron, Bower*, vii, 71 and 198 notes].

⁵ Penman, *David II*, ch. 2; Brown, *Wars of Scotland*, ch. 11.

⁶ *Chron. Scalachronica* (ed. H. Maxwell), 118.

In addition, the extraction of oaths from the seven year old king during the course of what had actually been a coronation *parliament* in November 1331 was the first sign that important matters of the realm were now to be the subject of *real*, and not crown-dictated, consultation or negotiation between king and community. The prominent place afforded to the estates through the Bruce regime's careful manipulation of the legitimating power of council or parliament had created this default, thanks to David's age and the successive deaths of the old king and his key supporters by 1333 (including Bishop Lamberton, Sir James Douglas and Guardians Thomas Randolph and Donald of Mar). Ironically, despite Robert I's fiscal needs in his later years, it was to be the uncertain issue of royal succession which would really enhance parliament's powers to monitor the crown after 1329, rather than as in England the granting of subsidy in return for redress of grievances.⁷

It is now clear, though, that whilst the legacy left to David II and his generation was fraught with difficulty, the second Bruce king would add his own layers of complication not least through his character and inability to father a child. It is a truth, too, however, that had David been just a few years older when he came to the throne he might not have been so personally detached from the inheritance of the spirit and policies of his father's robust rule. As it was, by the time David returned about 2 June 1341, aged seventeen, from seven years of refuge at Chateau Gaillard in Normandy, much of the territorial struggle for Scotland against Balliol and Edward III had been won by regional magnates, aided by the English king's preoccupation with invading France after 1337. Under the lieutenancy of Robert Steward from 1338, especially, the Bruce Scots'

⁷ Penman, 'Parliament Lost – Parliament Regained?', 74-101; S. Boardman, 'Coronations, Kings and Guardians: Politics, Parliaments and General Councils, 1371-1406', in *idem*, 102-22.

recovery of occupied land had been slow but steady, allowing successful regional captains to expand and establish their own lordship in the wake of war, at the expense of local rivals and in the absence of an adult king. Steward's growing family, as well as the particular interest he had displayed in the 1330s in acquiring provincial titles in central Scotland and in controlling royal revenues, clashing openly with magnates closer to the king as a result, had left David understandably anxious and paranoid.⁸

It followed that when the teenage king assumed his active majority, his patronage had to be, like his father's before him, distinctly partisan. But David's studied, and perhaps hurried and inexperienced, redistribution of lands and offices between 1341 and 1346 was directed not simply to restoring Bruce support against Balliol sympathisers but to redressing a balance of lordship within the Bruce establishment, checking those self-made nobles the king deemed too powerful and untrustworthy.

So it was that the chief beneficiaries of David's early favour, often in return for specified military services, were, much as his father's lieutenants had been, generally a generation of younger and lesser knights, 'flowers of chivalry' who had established local fame and following in the 1330s. Men like Sir William Douglas of Lothian, Sir Malcolm Fleming of Biggar (whom the king made earl of Wigtown in 1342), Sir Maurice Murray of Cambuslang (made earl of Strathearn c.1343-4), Sir John Graham of Abercorn (confirmed as earl of Menteith), Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie (made sheriff of Roxburgh in 1342) and his extensive following of south-eastern Lowland warrior kindreds including Livingstones, Haliburtons and Prestons, as well as many of the chivalry of Fife, Angus and the Mearns and the north-east. The elevation of these men and others, and their regular presence at court, was designed to contain the further

⁸ Penman, *David II*, 47-79; Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, 6-7.

intrusion of Robert Steward into the earldom of the aged Duncan of Fife and his associated Perthshire baronies, as well as into the earldoms of Strathearn, Atholl and Menteith. David also suspected William, earl of Ross, John MacDonald now the self-proclaimed 'Lord of the Isles', and Patrick Dunbar ninth earl of March as a result of their actions in the 1330s. Instead by 1344 the king favoured John Randolph earl of Moray, William earl of Sutherland and south-eastern knights at the expense of these magnates.⁹

Yet such was the dissipation of royal authority and the entrenchment of some magnate lines since 1329 that David suffered several rude checks to his own revival of lordship. In 1342, Douglas of Lothian, to whom David had granted the earldom of Atholl late in the previous year, exchanged his new title with Robert Steward in return for the border lordship of Liddesdale and then proceeded to murder Ramsay of Dalhousie, his rival favoured by the king in office. It was the Steward who protected Douglas of Liddesdale from David's wrath and who seems to have co-ordinated opposition which obliged the king, about June 1343, to undo his recent favour to MacDonald of the Isles, and to restore Robert I's original grants of Kintyre and Skye to the Steward and the earl of Ross respectively. Furthermore, David had to pack a parliamentary assize in June 1344 to overcome, at least on paper, Steward and Ross opposition to the crown's forfeiture and re-granting of the lands of Malise, earl of Strathearn.¹⁰

However, the ultimate reaction to David's early and somewhat blunt patronage came in the campaign of October 1346. The king had been consistently unable to emulate his father's military formula or reputation, outshone as he was by slightly older Scottish knights active before 1340. Nonetheless, Philip VI of France's pleas for Scottish

⁹ M. Penman, 'The Scots at the Battle of Neville's Cross, 17 October 1346', *SHR*, lxxx (2001), 157-80.

¹⁰ Penman, *David II*, 84-93, 98-100, 106-16; J.M. Thomson, 'A Roll of the Scottish Parliament, 1344', *SHR*, ix (1912), 235-40.

diversionary action afforded David the opportunity to lead his reordered community to glory. But rather than captain a classic Bruce lightening raid, David's decorative full host and baggage train, modelled surely on the forces he had witnessed in Flanders c.1339-41, was abandoned by those magnates he had sought to undermine since 1341 – the Steward, Ross, March and their followings – and was routed by a smaller English militia at Neville's Cross outside Durham with the deaths of most of the best-rewarded lords of the early reign and the king's own humiliating capture.¹¹

David had fought with his father's courage but his assumption of royal political dominance had been premature. Inevitably, when he finally returned from English captivity in late 1357 he faced a further decade of embedded magnate self-interest and had, at first, to concede regional aristocratic dominance. But David's lordship quickly became even more partisan than in 1341-6. This time, hampered as he was by a ransom and truce with England, the king sought to focus his favour on nobles, clerics and burgesses interested in royal service and closer relations with England but, above all, on participants in activities of Christian chivalry.¹² According to the 1440s chronicle of Abbot Walter Bower:

...David had shown favour and affection to a great and exaggerated extent to his knights and men-at-arms who were every numerous at this time, who had been enlisted for undertakings of this kind.¹³

The anonymous contemporary source of Prior Andrew Wyntoun of St Serfs of Lochleven in Fife was well aware, too, that these men were crucial to the king's challenge to the

¹¹ Penman, 'The Scots at the Battle of Neville's Cross', 175-80.

¹² M. Penman, 'Christian days and knights: the religious devotions and court of David II of Scotland, 1329-71', *Historical Research*, vol. 75, no. 189 (August 2002), 249-72; Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, 12-25.

¹³ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 361.

territorial and political power of magnates like the Steward (earl of Strathearn by 1357), his young adult sons, Thomas Stewart earl of Angus, the earl of Ross, the earl of March (who held the earldom of Moray, too), and now William Douglas, by 1358 first earl of Douglas, the slayer of his namesake the knight of Liddesdale:

‘Agayne the stout richt stout was he [David];

Til sympyl he schewit gret debonarte.

He gaf to gud men largely,

And walde mak sa prewaly...

His mennys hartis til hym wan he’.¹⁴

So it was that in his long-running contest with the Stewarts over the earldom of Fife, David twice intruded experienced crusading knights, Sir William Ramsay of Colluthie in c.1358-9 and Sir Thomas Bisset of Upsetlington in c.1362-6, blocking the claims of the late earl Duncan’s daughter.¹⁵ David also interfered in the natural course of inheritance of heiresses to Menteith and Strathearn, favouring the marriage of famed warrior Sir Archibald ‘the Grim’ Douglas, a bastard of the good Sir James, in his marriage to Maurice Murray’s widow in 1362 and elevating him to be Lord of Galloway in 1369.¹⁶ Experienced crusaders to the Baltic from north of Tay were given royal thanages, forests and judicial office and trusted with royal authority during David’s intrusion into Moray from 1359 and Mar, from 1362, for example the Marischal, Sir William Keith, and deputy justiciar, Sir Walter Moigne.¹⁷ After 1366, David also pushed the lordship of the celebrated mercenary and crusader to the Holy Land and Baltic, Sir Walter Leslie, into

¹⁴ *Chron. Wyntoun*, vi, 154, 244.

¹⁵ Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, 13-4.

¹⁶ Brown, *Black Douglasses*, 52-64, 78-9, 96-7.

¹⁷ Grant, ‘Thanes and Thanages’, 66-7.

the inheritance of Ross and royal lands in the north-east. These men, together with professed crusaders Sir Robert Erskine and his sons, and George, tenth earl of March, and his brother, John (whom David made Lord of Fife c.1368-9), as well as Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith and his martial brothers, formed the vigorous heart of David's household, court and administration by the close of his reign. Such an affinity was undeniably daunting to royal opponents and served David well in facing down political dissent in the Lowlands, in obliging MacDonald of the Isles to submit to the royal person at Inverness in 1369 and as an entourage on the king's personal diplomatic trips to Westminster which took place in 1359, 1363, 1369 and, perhaps, 1370.¹⁸

But this party also had painful weaknesses. For one thing, David's network of support could be dissected by the potent lordship and followings established by the Stewarts and the earl of Douglas and others during their military resistance of England while the king was absent. The affinities of armed and administrative support at the disposal of these magnates helped block David's intentions for Fife between 1359 and 1362, Moray in 1359 and Menteith in 1361-2. Such forces were also used to target the 'king's people' and close counsel during the three earls' rebellion of spring 1363 by Douglas, Patrick of March and the Steward and his eldest sons, John of Kyle and Robert of Menteith. On that occasion, David's chivalric followers effectively quelled a fragmented revolt led by magnates with divergent local agendas and the king was able to extract an oath from the defeated nobles promising loyalty to 'my lord and his ministers and whomsoever my lord king wishes to call his faithful men'.¹⁹

¹⁸ Penman, *David II*, chs. 10-11 passim; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1232-1509* (52 vols, London, 1891-1906): *Edward III 1367-70*, 431; NA, E403/440 m. 9 and m. 17.

¹⁹ Penman, *David II*, 221-41, 258-60, 283-95; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 331-3.

These men were no low-born favourites. Yet the cold fact that David had had to pay over £600 for troops over the course of a few weeks in 1363 to hunt down the earls hinted that his interest in African and Prussian adventure, his landed patronage and office salaries only went so far in binding loyalty.²⁰ Like his father before him, David found his demesne resources sorely depleted by this necessary search for support: hence, to resource his party, he resorted to two parliamentary revocations reversing alienations of royal land (in 1357, which was abortive, and in 1367) and increasingly to taxes, customs hikes, pensions of retinue or interference in noble inheritance.²¹ But David must also have been aware of the dangers posed by the potent connections of kindred and lordship that many of his closest supporters retained with magnates like the Steward and Douglas and the fact that his own largesse might only in the long-run serve to create a second tier of powerful lords with increasingly independent agendas contrary to those of the crown. This much became apparent in the last two years of David's reign. Then his royal following was arguably at the height of its power in facing down antagonists. Nevertheless, lords like Archibald and James Douglas and the Dunbar brothers were happily engaged more and more in the kind of aggression towards England championed most by the Douglas earl and the Steward's sons. It was this former group of the king's southern followers and the Erskines who negotiated their own place in Stewart- and Douglas- dominated Scotland after David died on 22 February 1371, utilising their familial, marital and territorial ties to do so. Many of David's other chivalric supporters from 1357-71 had no such protection and thus fled.²²

²⁰ *ER*, ii, 119-86; Penman, *David II*, 288-9.

²¹ E.g. *RPS*, 1357/11/1, 9, 11 and 1367/9/2; A. Grant, 'Service and Tenure in Late Medieval Scotland, 1314-1475', in A. Curry and E. Matthew eds., *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages* (Bristol 2000), 145-79, at 160-4.

²² A.J. MacDonald, *Border Bloodshed: Scotland, England and France at War, 1369-1403* (East Linton 2000), 9-23; Penman, *David II*, chs. 11-12.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that David's patronage settlement was very similar to his father's. But what left the son's royal acts open unavoidably to severe censure was that they were bound up with David's marital and extra-marital relations, liaisons which were obvious targets for both salacious and politicised criticism.²³ Yet much of the exaggeration of David's womanising and partisan ways must also be explained by the complex involvement of his patronage and personal life with his intertwined plans for the royal succession and, after the battle of Neville's Cross, relations with England.

It is likely that their infancy at marriage, the Anglo-Scottish wars after 1332, exile and the pressures to provide a royal heir after 1341, all meant that David never had a healthy relationship with his first wife, Joan of the Tower, sister of Edward III. She remained politically loyal to him throughout his captivity, residing near London from 1353 and helping David with negotiations over his ransom and alternative peace terms with England in 1359. By then, though, Joan had withdrawn from Scotland surely because of David's public association with mistresses and thus the unspoken (and, as time would show, mistaken) accusation that it was the queen, not the king, who was barren.²⁴

Thereafter, David's choice of three Scottish noblewomen, two of them fairly minor, as his successive partners was a striking reflection of his anxious need for support within factional Scotland. The first, the mysterious Katherine Mortimer, was probably married to Sir William Ramsay, David's placeman in the earldom of Fife by 1358. The second, Margaret Logie (née Drummond), whom did David marry after Joan's death in

²³ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 319-23, 333-59 and viii, 41.

²⁴ Penman, *David II*, 146-8, 186-9, 221-30.

1362, either had to be divorced from her first husband or was a widower with a son. The third, Agnes Dunbar, the more prestigious sister of George, earl of March, and John, lord of Fife, may also have been either wed (to Sir Robert Maitland) or betrothed (to Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith) before the king stepped in: the king's marriage to Agnes was blocked only by Margaret Logie's obstruction at the papacy of the annulment process. Such preference 'for other men's wives' was allied, too, to David's interference in a number of magnate marriages and successions to suit his own political expediency after 1357, namely those of the heiress of Fife, the earl of Mar, the houses of Murray and Menteith, the earl of Angus, the Drummond match of John Stewart lord of Kyle and later earl of both Atholl and Carrick, John Dunbar of Fife's betrothal to a daughter of the Steward and the forced bond of the earl of Ross and the Leslies.²⁵

However, it was the political and cultural connections of these crown women which proved so provocative to David's magnate opponents. Katherine's links to crusaders within the king's affinity from Angus, the Mearns and Fife saw her stabbed to death in the king's presence probably at the behest of Thomas Stewart, earl of Angus (the dismissed Chamberlain who took the blame and was imprisoned by the crown in Dumbarton castle in which he had died by 1363), and Robert Stewart. Margaret Logie's Drummond kinfolk brought the crown invaluable allies in challenging Stewart control of Perthshire. Her marriage to David was a catalyst for the rebellion of 1363 and indeed the ceremony accompanied the Stewarts' ceremonial submission to the king in Fife. Agnes Dunbar's crusading and border warrior family was clearly central to David's fresh magnate coalition of 1368-71 and his renewed hopes of a Bruce heir. But all three women

²⁵ *Ibid*, 242-53, 269-71, 373-8.

were also connected in the eyes of David's detractors by their association with the crown's anglophile policies and succession plans.²⁶

Even before Neville's Cross David undoubtedly harboured a strong dislike and envy of Robert Steward, unwed but with four sons, several daughters and designs on the exiled heiress to Fife, Isabella. This surely placed immense pressure upon David's own marriage to Joan, enough to cause him to consider an alternative line of inheritance to the Bruce throne. It is rumoured by later Scottish chronicles that by 1346 David sought to name John Sutherland (d.1361), his new-born nephew by William, earl of Sutherland and the king's full sister, Margaret Bruce, as heir presumptive instead of his older half-nephew, the Steward.²⁷ But with the king's capture in battle following the Steward's desertion, and the latter's manifest disinterest as king's lieutenant between 1347 and 1349 and between 1351 and 1357 in securing his uncle's release, David's strategy for the succession became inseparable from his dealings with England. Arguably, David's change of diplomatic and dynastic tack after 1346 displayed as much of a real politick as his father had shown in his relations with England and France. Commitment to the latter had after all cost David dear and by the 1350s the alliance with John II of France was dominated by Stewart and Douglas design. In a shift which might be said to presage James III's unpopular but understandable rationale that he should make peace with the only kingdom which was a real threat to Scotland, England, David thus alighted on a panacea for both his domestic and diplomatic dilemmas. He offered a place in his (male) succession to a younger son of Edward III, some compensation of the Disinherited, a

²⁶ *Ibid*, and 292-5

²⁷ *Chron. Bower*, vi, 377 and vii, 159; *Liber Pluscardensis*, 240; *Chron. Boece*, ii, 333.

return to cross-border landholding and a military alliance in return for release without ransom.²⁸

There is some limited evidence that David intended this plan all along as a feint designed to exploit England's need for respite in its long war with France and to secure his own release for free only then to sire a Bruce son of his own. This child would then help him assert his rule over a realm in which Stewart power had been resoundingly weakened by their loss of status as heirs to the throne.²⁹ But for David to return to this plan on at least three occasions over the next fifteen years surely meant there was more to it than duplicity.

The king's first attempt to persuade his subjects of this exchange while on parole to a parliament at Scone in February 1352 met with flat rejection and justifiable rumours that he had even secretly considered using English military force (the 'inbringing of the English'?).³⁰ This obliged David to secure, with great difficulty by 1357, a straightforward deal involving a 100,000 merk ransom and 20 noble hostages: this allowed him to work towards his original solution from Scotland once his affinity had been revived through patronage.³¹ But when David granted the earldom of Moray to Henry Duke of Lancaster, father-in-law of Edward III's third son, John of Gaunt, in April 1359, the available evidence strongly suggests that the backlash of the Steward, Douglas, Angus and others coerced David into conceding approaches to Paris which sought French gold and a renewed military alliance.³² This proved abortive but it was two years before

²⁸ Penman, *David II*, chs. 5-6; A.A.M. Duncan, 'A Question about the Succession, 1364', *Scottish History Society Miscellany XII* (1994), 1-57, at 5-12; Macdougall, *James III*, 113-36.

²⁹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 321-3.

³⁰ Penman, *David II*, 153-74.

³¹ *RRS*, vi, nos. 148-50.

³² *Ibid*, no. 211; M. Penman and R. Tanner, 'An Unpublished Act of David II, 1359', *SHR*, lxxxiii (2004), 59-69.

David felt strong enough domestically to pursue fresh talks with England, moves which in part provoked the rebellion of 1363 in which the earls' publicly-stated motives focussed on the crown's non-payment of the ransom since 1360 (and the non-negotiable entry of certain magnates as hostage collateral).³³

However, although David used his defeat of the revolt and his second marriage to assemble a broad following to accompany him to decisive talks in London in late 1363, Edward III was now only prepared to consider his own nomination as David's heir presumptive, raising the possibility of a union of the crowns. This was probably why David was reasonably content to see a parliament in March 1364 once again reject the proposed English peace terms provided the Bruce regime could continue negotiations seeking a compromise over the succession details, the Disinherited and military alliance.³⁴ Between 1364 and 1368 councils and parliaments debated various 'ways to peace' hashed out by David's envoys. Significantly, these included adaptations of Balliol and Bruce strategies in turn from before 1341. Firstly, David was willing to cede 1,000 librates of land from the lordship of Galloway (or the isle of Man) to an English prince as a start to restored cross-border landholding. Secondly, as a clear indication that he lacked his father's empathy for the Gaelic sea world of Ulster and Carrick David was prepared to offer Scottish west coast forces to serve Edward III, presumably in aiding his second son, Lionel of Antwerp, Duke of Clarence and earl of Ulster, against Irish insurgents.³⁵

³³ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 381-2; *Chron. Scalachronica* [ed. Maxwell], 173-4; Penman, *David II*, 260-83.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 295-325.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 10; Duncan, 'A Question about the Succession, 1364', 13-20; *RPS*, 1365/1/9 [Galloway] and 1365/1/11 and 1365/7/3 [Ireland]; S. Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (London 1997), 52-7. Edward Balliol had ceded the southern counties of Scotland to Edward III and promised to serve in Ireland and Wales [*Rot. Scot.*, i, 261-3]. In June 1368 David granted the earldom of Carrick to Robert the Steward's son, John Stewart of Kyle [*RRS*, vi, no. 400; *RPS*, 1368/6/18].

In June 1368 parliament deemed it ‘not profitable to enter into nor to attempt negotiation with the king and council of England’.³⁶ By then, David must have recognised that his diplomacy had thus far only fulfilled a minority of subsidiary aims, stalling Edward III while France and England drifted towards war once more, evading ransom payment and then reducing its annual rate (May-June 1365): if this had been all David really envisaged from his extensive diplomatic effort he might appear to be every bit as shrewd as his father.³⁷ But whether or not David intended to press on with renewed talks with England about peace and the succession to coincide with his realignment of his chivalric affinity behind the Douglas-Dunbar-Erksine coalition associated with Agnes Dunbar, remains unclear. In May 1369, a third personal embassy to London by David and his knights secured a second substantial drop in the annual ransom. But the following year saw an intensification of Anglo-Scottish border skirmishes, many of them perpetrated by Archibald the Grim and the Dunbars. In addition, in 1370, with Edward III and Charles V again at war, David sent expensive embassies to Paris (headed again by Archibald the Grim). Thus it was possible that David and his new magnate affinity intended to abandon their succession talks with England and to steal the thunder of the Stewarts and Douglas earl, essentially reclaiming Bruce control of Robert I’s policies.³⁸

One factor which must have played a vital role in drawing David to consider this potential change of path was the political and personal price he had paid to the Steward for his succession ideas. At each vital juncture in the talks, Robert Steward had been able to rouse and lead significant opposition to the king in parliament. In 1352 the available evidence, admittedly mostly later English chronicle asides, points to the Steward, who

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1368/6/9.

³⁷ *RRS*, vi, no. 346; Penman, *David II*, ch. 10 passim.

³⁸ *RRS*, vi, no. 441; *ER*, ii, 356, 363; Penman, *David II*, 400-6; MacDonald, *Border Bloodshed*, 9-23.

may have just recovered by force the office of lieutenant from David's supporters, making great play of the English and Disinherited threat to dismember the Scottish kingdom and of the estates' threats to replace David as king.³⁹ In April-May 1359, when David attempted to introduce Gaunt to the Scottish community through his grant of Moray, the coercion of the king at Edinburgh by the Stewarts, Douglas and others may have involved some conciliar provision for the marginalisation of the king in favour of the estates' authorisation of a lieutenant (foreshadowing the coups against Stewart rulers of 1384 and 1388).⁴⁰ And in the Scone parliament of March 1364, it is evident from later documentation, that a heated debate ensued in which those opposed to the tabled treaty with England carried the day not only with various practical objections and the legal power of the parliamentary acts of succession of 1318 and 1326 but with emotive appeals, too, about English trickery and the destruction of the realm, and of the sacrifices of Robert I, the 1330s and 1350s.⁴¹

But with the sluice gates open, the Steward's survival of his defeated rebellion in 1363 and recovery by Spring 1364 heralded a steady flood of parliamentary scrutiny of royal policy. To secure support and funds for his peace-succession negotiations – or for the fall-back of paying a reduced ransom during a truce – David had to secure the estates' approval of finance, either through extraordinary taxation, higher customs or feudal casualty management. This did allow David's government to amass an annual income by c.1369-70 of almost £15,000 Scots, almost five times that of 1328-9, with significant proportions of this revenue, with parliament's approval, assigned to the expenses of talks

³⁹ *Knighon's Chronicle, 1337-96*, ed. G.H. Martin (Oxford 1995), 121-2; Penman, *David II*, 153-74.

⁴⁰ Archives Nationales (Paris) J677, nos. 7 and 8; Penman and Tanner, 'An Unpublished act of David II, 1359'; Boardman, *Early Stewart Kings*, 123-5, 148-53.

⁴¹ Duncan, 'A Question about the Succession, 1364', 24-57; Penman, *David II*, 308-25.

with England or the royal household: David even managed to hoard a ‘king’s deposit’ of ready cash in Stirling castle.⁴² However, in return the estates monitored and at least ostensibly determined the rate and frequency of tax (refusing it in 1368), the customs’ rate, the gold and silver content and royal share of new coinage, prise and hospitality, and the extent of revocations. They also passed a prohibition, without the ‘mature counsel’ of the estates, on the king’s re-alienation of, or extraction of pensions from, crown lands and income. In addition, in 1366, parliament oversaw a fresh assessment of taxable lands and goods to take account of devaluation caused by war and plague.⁴³

In the same way, parliament was given wider scope to supervise royal justice. In November 1357, David’s first meeting with his estates after his release, a Scone council, had empowered him to strike ‘terror in delinquents’ through personal justice heirs.⁴⁴ By and large David seems to have attended to these in person or delegated them to suitable officers after wresting control of the justiciar posts north and south of Forth from the control of the earls of Ross and Douglas respectively. David’s posthumous reputation was, according to even the pro-Stewart source of Wyntoun, that of a ruler of formidable ‘*raddour*’, committed to justice and regular courts.⁴⁵

Yet while the accompanying claim that ‘in all the tyme [David] wes regnand/ That nane durst weill withstand his will/ All worth obeyand him till...’ was clearly exaggeration, more serious deficiencies in the king’s maintenance of the law were raised by his significant subjects between 1357 and 1371. David was the first king to be chastised by parliament for selling remissions for homicide. There were a number of

⁴² *ER*, i and ii passim – ii, 159-61 [‘deposit’].

⁴³ For a detailed discussion of these parliamentary acts and those which follow see Penman, ‘Parliament Lost - Parliament Regained?’, 88-101.

⁴⁴ *RPS*, 1357/11/7.

⁴⁵ Penman, *David II*, 215-8, 235-7, 428-31; *Chron. Wyntoun*, vi, 234-5, 251.

Estates' complaints, too, about the bias of David's officers and pleas that: 'common justice be done to everyone without favour being shown to anybody and without exception...and, in order that justice be shown, that the letters written for the purpose of doing justice that should emanate from the king's chancery...shall not be revoked by any other letters under any seal whatsoever'.⁴⁶ There is indeed evidence of partial justice with royal involvement, not least in an assize to arbitrate a feud in Menteith in 1360 between the Campbells of Lochawe and Menteiths of Rusky on the one hand (backed by the Stewarts) and the Drummonds on the other (backed by the crown). The decision went in favour of Margaret Logie's uncle, John Drummond of Concraig, who became lord of Menteith until his death c.1362 when Robert Stewart junior succeeded him. However, the assize was overseen by Sir Robert Erskine, David's new justiciar, chief envoy to England, sheriff of Stirling and keeper of the 'king's deposit' (and chamberlain during the crisis of 1363) whose second wife was a Menteith and whose kin Erskine had slain in a feud.⁴⁷ The Estates might also have had grounds for complaint about a number of court disputes settled by elected parliamentary committees between 1367 and 1370 in which, by and large, crown supporters were favoured.⁴⁸ William, earl of Ross, certainly sought parliament's sympathy in March 1371, presenting evidence that David and his second queen and supporters had intimidated him and his outlawed brother, Hugh, into resigning a tailzie of their lands to Sir Walter Leslie. Leslie's men had kidnapped and abused the earl's messengers sent out to seek legal and magnate support against this injustice. Ross

⁴⁶ NAS, Liber Niger, PA5/4, f. 44v-47r [1366]; *ibid*, Roll of Parliament, PA1/5 [1368] and PA1/6 [1370].

⁴⁷ W. Fraser ed., *The Red Book of Menteith* (2 vols., Edinburgh 1880), i, 109-15; *CPR*, iii, 564; Penman, *David II*, 244-9

⁴⁸ *RPS*, 1367/9/1, 1368/6/1-7, 1370/2/3-4, 1370/2/16-24.

might have expected redress given parliament's demands, too, that the crown attend to lawlessness throughout northern Scotland in the late 1360s.⁴⁹

But given this level of parliamentary scrutiny of the royal person, party and policies, it is possible to understand why David, increasingly frustrated both at home and in talks with England, encouraged his officers and adherents to use more underhand methods to get their way. At one end of the spectrum this involved the closer management of the Estates. On a number of occasions after March 1364, David's regime took pains to limit attendance at council or parliament to only a 'congregation' of select individuals (1365), a process also possible through packed assizes or the aforementioned nomination of parliamentary committees for general and judicial business in 1367 and 1370 and the dismissal of the rest of the community.⁵⁰ But in 1365, David had taken this even further, excluding recent rebel earls the Steward, Douglas and March (and Ross) from council and summoning them to swear an oath to uphold the domestic and diplomatic policy decisions decided in their absence. Individual magnates could also be alienated and scared away from parliamentary participation only then to be prosecuted for 'contumacious absence' (as happened to Ross, Douglas, MacDonald, Campbell of Lochawe, Macdougall of Lorne, and Mar).⁵¹ Even parliamentary statutes critical of the king and his government could be turned against royal opponents. For example, the reassessment and limited revocation of 1366-7 hit Stewart and MacDonald lands hardest whilst royal supporters retained their lands and goods 'notwithstanding' these acts.⁵²

⁴⁹ A. Fraser ed., *The Frasers of Philorth* (3 vols., Edinburgh 1879), ii, 312-3; *RPS*, 1366/7/18, 1368/6/11-12, 1370/2-8, 32; Penman, *David II*, 362-5.

⁵⁰ *RPS*, 1365/1/1, 1365/7/1-3

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 1365/1/19, 1366/7/1, 1367/9/1, 1368/6/8, 1369/3/1, 1370/2/1, 25.

⁵² Penman, *David II*, 351-3.

However, when working relations declined further during a crisis, David was prone to more controversial methods. In 1342, unable to punish Douglas of Liddesdale for Ramsay's death. David instead seized Douglas's associate, the chamberlain, William Bullock, and had him starved to death in the same fashion as Ramsay. The king also surely approved the slaughter of Liddesdale himself in 1353.⁵³ In 1350-2, 1359 and 1363-8 David initiated and conducted talks with England either in secret or about terms never condoned by the Scottish estates. Nor is there any evidence that David put his treatment of the defeated rebel earls before an assize of their peers in 1363.⁵⁴ More worryingly for the great magnate class, David's pattern of arbitrary interference in inheritance rights was followed by a growing habit of arrest without trial, a fate which seems to have briefly befallen the earls of March (1358), Angus (1360-3), Douglas (1363), Robert Steward and his third son, Alexander (1368), and Earl Thomas of Mar (1362 and 1370).⁵⁵ Where nobles did have grounds for redress they were likely to be met, especially in the late 1360s at the height of royal power, with intimidation by the king and his chivalric and clerical daily council. When William, earl of Ross, attempted to negotiate the retention of his lands with David at Inverness in 1368, he claims he was obliged him to comply out of fear of royal 'wrath' and after the king had bombarded him with points of 'Roman Law'.⁵⁶ This last would seem to be a complete and expedient negation by David of at least the ostensible principals of Aristotelian consultation of the community and due process championed by Robert I's kingship, churchmen and regime. The same trait might be identified in David's adoption of frequent English crown techniques out of 'necessity',

⁵³ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 365-6, 69-70.

⁵⁴ Penman, *David II*, 153-74, 221-30, 295-301.

⁵⁵ *ER*, i, 558 and ii, 115, 168, 309, 347, 357; *RMS*, i, no. 105.

⁵⁶ Fraser ed., *The Frasers of Philorth*, ii, 312-3

the ‘taking’ of donations from his great subjects in 1366 and the cancellation of all royal debts for prise and hospitality in 1368.⁵⁷

In this context there appears to be considerable justification for the aim of several great magnates, on at least two occasions, of ‘bending him [David] to their views...[or] of banishing him’.⁵⁸ However, David’s unofficial ploys were not a reflection of any over-exalted view of royal prerogative and the powers of Bruce kingship. Rather they were tactics of expedient factional politics and make it clear that due to the circumstances of his reign David’s personal rules of 1341-6 and 1357-71 never forged anywhere close to the same level of assured control or capable reaction to events, people and institutions as that exercised by his father and his regime c.1309-29. A firm measure of that reality lies in the fact that David never felt strong enough to attempt what he so badly needed to do to break the stalemate of his rule, measures which his father’s regime had excelled in engineering: namely, either the forfeiture of domestic opponents or passage of a parliamentary act of succession binding the majority of a well-patronised community to the crown’s choice of heir and dynastic policies.

What really constrained the royal party and agenda after that fateful day of battle in 1346 was that David had himself forfeited the great national ‘cause’ of preserving the integrity of Scotland’s estates and institutions. This had been an ideology which Robert I had used to transcend all other problems and a standard which he had wielded so well to overcome his murderous partisan beginnings. Even before Neville’s Cross, the Stewarts and Douglasses fell heir to that crucial, martial and Anglophobe spirit of the first Bruce king’s success (and would so resoundingly claim it for their families and posterity

⁵⁷ *RPS*, 1366/5/1, 1370/2/1-40; *ER*, ii, 346-7; Penman, ‘Parliament Lost – Parliament Regained?’, 98-9.

⁵⁸ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 381-2.

through Archdeacon John Barbour's *The Bruce*, penned immediately after David II's death).⁵⁹ A shrewd and energetic king like David, however, if he were *consciously* his father's son, would have been all too aware of these home truths. In that sense, his fresh approaches towards France in 1370 and the apparent abandonment of plans involving a younger English Prince might indeed point to all his dealings with England as mere pragmatism.

Nevertheless, David persisted with his chosen path of patronage and foreign policy through a litany of embarrassing defeats: 17 October 1346, the parliament of 1352, the failed ransom talks of 1354, the crisis of 1359, the failed treaty and parliament of 1363-4. This run of failures, would possibly have continued despite a botched marriage annulment after October 1368.⁶⁰ As with Robert I, a closer examination of the evolving everyday court and culture of David's personal rule reveals what may be his real nature and motivation, that of a genuine Anglophile or European chivalric king.

The court and household of the juvenile and young adult David were surely heavily coloured by the kingship of his father, staffed as they were by Robert I's contemporaries like Sir Robert Keith, the Marischal (d. 1346), Sir Alexander Seton (d. 1348), Sir David Barclay (d. 1350) and Sir Malcolm Fleming (d. 1357).⁶¹ The evidence of royal activity c.1357-71 suggests that even after David's truce with England there was a place in his monarchical image for commemoration of key Bruce ancestors and events from the first phase of the wars of succession and independence, not least the death dates of Alexander II (1214-49) and Alexander III (1249-86), Robert I's birth, death and inauguration dates and the anniversary of Bannockburn. In the same fashion, in addition

⁵⁹ Penman, *David II*, 421-2 and below ch. 3.

⁶⁰ CDS, iii, no. 1576 for 1354; Penman, *David II*, 371-4, 385-6. for David's annulment of marriage

⁶¹ ER, i, 137-243, 249-50, Penman, *David II*, 38-4052-5.

to universal Christian devotions, the feasts of a number of saints of established Bruce familial and royal or regional Scottish significance seem to have been marked by David, just as they had been by his father, certainly after 1357, possibly from 1341. This annual devotional cycle may thus have included St Andrew, St Margaret, St Ninian and St Malachy. Together with David's apparently strong interest in the cult and shrines of Thomas Becket at Canterbury and Arbroath, all this would seem to suggest a strong continuity of Bruce royal identity and piety.⁶²

However, it can be argued that David's motives for worship of such icons as well as the location and nature of the royal heartland from which he operated were markedly different from those of his father. Focussed on winning a civil as well as a national war, Robert I, given his upbringing, combined a personal and political association with much of the north and west of his realm. His interest in a range of Irish and Gaelic saints was matched by an itinerary which by the 1320s was concentrated between Perth and Scone, Cardross and Dumbarton and the south-west. Berwick-upon-Tweed and Arbroath and Forfar were the exceptions to this general rule. By contrast, David's mature kingship after 1357 came to be focussed, for the first time by a king of Scots, on Edinburgh's burgh and castle (where David built a chapel to St Mary and began a new L-shaped Tower house) but also the Lothians generally along with Stirling and Fife.⁶³ Edinburgh castle, in particular, became the base for David's expansion of the royal household to include a

⁶² Penman, 'Christian Days and Knights', 257-61, 271-2; idem, 'The Bruce Dynasty, Becket and Scottish Pilgrimage to Canterbury'.

⁶³ *ER*, i, 238 and ii, 79, 83, 113, 246, 308, 364, 393, 473, 551, 608; P.G.B. McNeil and H.L. MacQueen eds., *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* (Edinburgh 1996), 169-72; *RRS*, vi, passim; S.T. Driscoll and P.T. Yeoman, *Excavations within Edinburgh Castle in 1988-91* (Edinburgh 1997), 232-4.

number of new offices, perhaps inspired by English practice, and the regular presence of men of chivalry. David also kept a well-stocked jousting armoury and stud.⁶⁴

In contrast, David's visits to Stewart-dominated Perthshire were usually for meetings of the Estates and he relied upon his knights to represent him in areas like Galloway, Annandale, Moray and Ross-shire. His attention to the very often Gaelic saints' cults of these localities may thus have been mere lip-service to a family tradition of which Robert Steward was the more natural heir through his landed connections in Clydeside and Perthshire.⁶⁵ In a similar vein, David's foundation at a cost of over £600 of a chapel to the saint of Irish origin, St Monan, on the south-east coast of Fife in 1362 may have reflected genuine spiritual gratitude by the king, spared illness or shipwreck. But it also provided a convenient personal focus for David's lowland lordship in that fiercely disputed territory and impressed the visiting Hainault chronicler, Jean Froissart, who arrived in Scotland for some months' stay in 1365 with letters of introduction from Edward III and his queen.⁶⁶

This orientation towards the southern and eastern Lowlands and Edinburgh and its port of Leith hints that David was a king comfortable with closer relations with his southern neighbour. It is easy to understand why. Just as Edward I had shaped Robert Bruce's views of kingship, so the charismatic and successful Edward III and his

⁶⁴ *ER*, i, 340, 380, 511, 528, 530-1 and ii, 49-50, 80, 90, 101, 113, 125, 129 (king's macer), 130-2 (Henry, armourer), 165-8, 174 (Nicholas, keeper of king's armour), 176, 308, 348 (steward king's household), 360, 119-203 (King's Secretary), 359 (instrumenter), 114-357 (master of royal works). David may also have intensified the Bruce house's visual association with the lion rampant through armorial banners and coinage inspired by the gold issue of Edward III [*Ibid*, i, 450 and ii, 168; Penman, *David II*, 281-2, 360-1, plate 11].

⁶⁵ S. Boardman, 'The Gaelic World and the early Stewart Court' (forthcoming): my thanks to the author for a preview of this paper.

⁶⁶ *ER*, ii, 114, 357; *Oeuvres de Froissart*, xi, 254; J. Palmer ed., *Froissart – Historian* (London 1981), 26; Penman, *David II*, 260-82. St Monan's feast day was 1 March, the same day as St David day, a date marked by David II while in England [*CDS*, iii, no. 1610] and also close to his own birthday [Penman, 'Christian Days and Knights', 259-60].

confident, strident court of chivalry must have had a far greater formative impact on David than any memories of his own father or Philip VI's nervous commitment to a crusade and evasion of pitched battle against English armies.⁶⁷ David's exposure to London, Westminster, Windsor, Canterbury and the royal stud at Odiham, as well as attendance at two tournaments for Edward III's new Order of St George, or the Garter (1348 and 1357), clearly provided him with a template for his own patronage of knights and esquires after his release.⁶⁸ In Edinburgh in the 1360s, David's hosting of 'lists' before pavilions of subjects and his paternal oversight of trials by combat on the tilting ground there to settle disputes between his knights (Keith versus Mar and Erskine versus Douglas of Dalkeith) was a strong emulation of the standard and style of rule set by Edward.⁶⁹ Wyntoun's contemporary source certainly asserts that it was such shared interests which allowed a 'rycht gret specialtie' to develop between David, his English brother-in-law and that lord's several sons and famous captains.⁷⁰

Yet, despite the ravages of the Black Death, David had also surely formed some impression of England as a powerful and prosperous kingdom, a realm relatively united in its political support for the crown. This may explain why David committed much

⁶⁷ C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England, 1340-1413* (London 1986); W.M. Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III: Crown and Political Society in England, 1327-77* (London 1990); C.J. Tyerman, 'Philip VI and the Recovery of the Holy Land', *EHR*, c (1985), 25-52; J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years War* (2 vols., London 1990-9).

⁶⁸ D'A.J.D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: the Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325-1520* (London 1987), ch. 4; Alexander and Binski eds., *Age of chivalry*, ch. xvi; Penman, *David II*, 150-1, 175-93.

⁶⁹ *ER*, ii, 122, 129 (Sir John Lyle of Duchal, keeper of Edinburgh castle, pays 'tournament heralds', 1363), 177 ('lists' at Edinburgh, 1364); *Chron. Scalachronica* [ed. Maxwell], 172-3; *Chron. Fordun*, i, 370n. The fact that David's tourneys of 1342 and 1364 seem to have been held in February raises the possibility that these were Shrove Tuesday events, anticipating the many such tourneys held in the reigns of James II and James IV [Stevenson, 'Knighthood, Chivalry and the Crown in Fifteenth Century Scotland, 1424-1513', ch. 4].

⁷⁰ *Chron. Wyntoun*, vi, 242.

personal time and energy not only to pursuing his succession-peace-alliance plan but to negotiating firmer economic and spiritual links with England.

After his release, David generally encouraged the participation of Scottish chivalry on pilgrimage and to tournaments in England. The haste with which Froissart reports that David travelled to Edward III's court to meet Peter I of Cyprus in 1363, then gathering forces for the recovery of Alexandria, suggests that the Scottish king was also aware of chivalry as a passport to participation and recognition on the European stage: many of the large group of Scottish laymen and clerics whom David seems to have urged to join Peter's expedition in 1365 – including the Leslies and Archibald the Grim – were also frequent crusaders to Prussia or pilgrims to European shrines like that of St John at Amiens.⁷¹ Their presence at David's court and his great favour to them surely adds weight to all the main Scottish chroniclers' assertions that David intended to travel to the Holy Land himself but was prevented by death. However, again, this was something much more than emulation of his father or great-grandfather.⁷²

Moreover, in autumn 1357 David's own efforts behind the scenes had also secured a restoration (until 1367 at least) of the parity of the English and Scottish pound (£) and perhaps a general safe-conduct for Scottish merchants into England, as one English chronicler put it 'as though they were one people and nation'.⁷³ The damage of war and the Black Death dictated a need for expanding economic activity and David did besides need increased customs income to pay his ransom and thus the support of the

⁷¹ T. Johnes ed., *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles* (2 vols., London 1868), i, 306; *Rot. Scot.*, i, 875-7, 897; Penman, *David II*, 302-4. David's travel documents to England in 1363 stated he was on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, Norfolk.

⁷² E.g. *Chron. Wyntoun*, vi, 168, 244: David was 'Often Justyng, dansing and playing/...He raid with faire court throu all his lands/...chivalrous and worthy,/ Forthy he schupe him halely/ On Goddis fais to travale,/ And for that way he can him traill,/ Had he nocht been preventyt with died'.

⁷³ *Rot. Scot.*, i, 815-6; *ER*, i, i-xi; *Chron. Knighton*, 163.

third estate, the burghs with their merchants, in parliament. But David's close involvement of his person and household with Edinburgh – which became the focus of Scotland's own wool and skin trade and the import of English wool after the loss of Berwick in 1333 – and with a number of Edinburgh's merchants who led the growth of trade with the south, for example, Roger Hogg, points to more than mere monetary motive for the crown.⁷⁴ Similarly, in 1357 David also secured a general safe-conduct for Scottish clerics to attend University in Oxford and Cambridge, an opportunity which a number of David's own clerks exploited.⁷⁵ This may have further enhanced David's generally strong relations with his clergy. Most prelacies, both monastic and secular, were filled by men acceptable to the king, often at the expense of Stewart or other regional magnate's candidates. David's Episcopal bench was dominated by men from Fife and St Andrews, including William Landellis in St Andrews, Wardlaw in Glasgow and Pilmor and then Bur in Moray.⁷⁶ These men played a vital role not only in parliament but on embassies to England. In parliament in October 1370, as a dying act of faith, David rewarded the loyalty of his bishops – and, perhaps, their not always silent tolerance of his heavy taxes on the ecclesiastical estate - with a grant of the right to testamentary bequest of their possessions in return for an annual mass for his soul in every cathedral church.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *ER*, i and ii, *ad indecim* for 'Customs – English wool' and 'Edinburgh'. Roger Hogg, a regular parliamentarian, helped David improve the well at Edinburgh castle and they co-founded an altar to crusaders' favourite, St Katherine of Alexandria, in Edinburgh's St Giles church [*Ibid*, ii, 83; *RRS*, vi, no. 208]. David's expanded household offices included a 'receiver' of king's stores in Edinburgh and a 'victualer' and 'victual house' in Leith; David also housed his mint in Edinburgh under burgess, Adam Torrie [*ER*, i, 615 and ii, 65, 159, 228, 306, 348; *RRS*, vi, nos. 156, 170].

⁷⁵ *Rot. Scot.*, i, 815-6; Penman, *David II*, 190 and n51.

⁷⁶ Watt ed., *Scottish Graduates*, 67-70, 328, 451-2, 569-75; A.D. M. Barrell, *The Papacy, Scotland and Northern England, 1342-78* (Oxford 1995), 58, 116.

⁷⁷ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 378; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 455-7; *RMS*, i, no. 372; Penman, *David II*, 410-1.

In this context, then, David's dedication to the cult of Becket 'ex magna causa' (*out of the great cause of the saint*) should be seen not merely as a dutiful extension of his father's observances but as further means of strengthening relations with Edward III and England. Truth be told, David did not pay as much attention to Arbroath Abbey as his father had (although the abbot there did write to Canterbury to request a new relic in 1358).⁷⁸ But David did request some eight safe-conducts to visit Canterbury between 1358 and 1370, planned trips often co-incident with diplomatic talks.⁷⁹ That David genuinely believed such behaviour would benefit his talks with Edward is made clear by his successful plea to the English chancellor and king that he make a pilgrimage to Canterbury to give alms in summer 1357, just before his release: but the Scottish king's association with Canterbury may have begun *c.*1347-50.⁸⁰ In the same way, it might be argued that David's interest in Melrose abbey lay not so much in the presence of his father's heart there as a symbol of Scottish armed resistance; but rather as an invaluable resource to be wrested from the interference of the Douglas earl and the spiritual and economic hub of a wealthy regality at the centre of the southern Scottish wool economy overseen by a house operating within the peace of the English crown since the 1330s.⁸¹

⁷⁸ J.B. Sheppard ed., *Litterae Cantuarienses* (Rolls Series, 1897-9), ii, no. 851; Penman, 'The Bruce Dynasty, Becket and Scottish Pilgrimage to Canterbury'. In 1359, David gave £7 10/- of 'Canterbury alms' to the abbot of Arbroath and spent his birthday with that abbot in March 1362 [*ER*, i, 591 and ii, 114]. But David's favoured sites for issuing acts were: Edinburgh 303, Perth 120, Scone 59, Aberdeen 39, Dundee 33, Stirling 23, Dumbarton 20, Montrose, Kildrummy/Lindores (Fife)/Arbroath 9, Dunfermline/Berwick 7, St Andrews 4. Robert I's were: Berwick 68, Arbroath 66, Edinburgh 31, Dundee 15, Cardross 14, Stirling 8, Aberdeen 7 [*RRS*, v, pp. 785-6 and vi, p. 573].

⁷⁹ *Rot. Scot.*, i, 828 [July 1358], 872 [April 1363], 881 [February 1364], 887 [November 1364], 900 [March 1366], 917 [October 1366], 928 [January 1369]; *Foedera*, iii, 787 [February 1370]; E.W.M. Balfour-Melville, 'Papers relating to the Captivity of David II', *Scottish History Society Miscellany IX* (Edinburgh 1966), 9-35. For David's limited general alms-giving to the poor see *ER*, ii, 249, 281, 325, 388.

⁸⁰ *CDS*, iii, no. 1610; *RRS*, vi, nos. 116, 123 (letters by David to Arbroath Abbey in 1351-2 'ex magna causa sancto Thome martiri').

⁸¹ *Ibid*, nos. 151, 164, 168, 194, 219, 227, 237, 254, 442, 450; R. Fawcett and R. Oram, *Melrose Abbey* (Stroud 2004), 36-45, 209-71.

In sum, David's antagonism towards his heir presumptive, Robert Steward, and the consequences of Neville's Cross, probably brought him to see England once more as a potential dynastic partner and ally, but this was a change of direction much reinforced by the second Bruce king's genuine empathy for the piety and chivalric culture of Edward III's court. Yet at the same time, there is evident in David's final year of rule some proof that he had come to realise that his personal inclinations, dynastic hopes and diplomatic rationale for so radically recasting the successful policies of 1306-41 must bow before the powerful legacy and precedents left by his father's usurper's regime, really before the patriotic legend of the Wars.

Although to a much lesser extent than his father, David had lived with chronic illness: he was probably treated off and on after 1346 for the head-wounds he sustained in battle and made sure he was attended by personal confessors throughout his reign.⁸² But in his final months, when he knew death was near, David made no attempt as his father had done to secure any measure of rushed, even compromised, closure on those issues which had dominated his reign. He resigned himself to the failure of his personal rule and his family line, the dispersal of his affinity and the rapid decline of new Scottish exchange with England towards war.⁸³ His eclipse at only age forty-seven was to be further symbolised by Robert II's apparent refusal to pay for David's alabaster tomb. This had been planned alongside his father's at Dunfermline although, as with many of his other dilutions of Robert I's habits, David seems not to have visited this royal abbey (and his birthplace) a great deal.⁸⁴ Instead, David was hurriedly interred in Holyrood Abbey,

⁸² Balfour-Melville, 'Papers relating to the captivity of David Bruce', 31; *ER*, i, 455, 466, 535 and ii, 6, 29, 140, 149, 178, 357; NAS RH2/4/562/15/3/57; *RRS*, vi, pp. 45-7; *CPP*, i, 203, 365; Watt, *Scottish Graduates*, 325-6.

⁸³ Penman, *David II*, 406-27.

⁸⁴ *ER*, ii, 348.

appropriately just outside the walls of Edinburgh, but without much lament while the Stewarts and Douglasses confronted each other over the balance of power. The Steward was crowned a month later on the Hill of Faith at Scone on 26 March 1371, the day between the anniversaries of Robert I's improvised inauguration dates.⁸⁵ Thus while Scotland's late medieval chroniclers engaged in a cold war of propaganda about the Bruce-Stewart rivalry, it fell to another anonymous contemporary poet to pen a suitably tepid epitaph for the second and last Bruce king:

David preserved his energies with the firmness of an outstanding king,
 While he sustained the pressures put upon him by the neighbouring kingdom
 He increased the wealth and glory of his poor kingdom...
 The fertility of the land obeyed his wishes...
 So too the useful element of the sea...
 He wanted to enter into a truce agreement for his kingdom,
 He managed to smear his fellow king with sweetness;
 He held on to what he settled, he refused to go back on agreements...
 He is highly regarded by the English, and revered for his strength,
 He is regarded as truthful, and blessed for his goodness...
 What grief! What lamentation! What a dear prince is afflicted!
 What raging! What roaring! What a masterful leader has departed!
 What numbness! What a noise! What a dear knight...
 A generous knight, he was kindly as a ruler, cheerful,
 Handsome, a peace-maker, courteous in his gentle goodness;
 A worthy leader, given to unobtrusive acts of charity...

⁸⁵ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 382; Penman, *David II*, 412 n15.

His unremitting exercise of authority well pacified the kingdom

And he increased the places of note in the region...

Savagery has disappeared, imperial law has triumphed,

Honesty has increased, there is general quiet in the country...

And he made it his business to keep the people visibly in obedience to the law...⁸⁶

⁸⁶ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 363-5.