

Ally beyond the grave

## **Alexander Forbes**

**d.1491**

The loyalty of the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Forbes to King James III did not end with the king's mysterious death following the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488.

The monarch's downfall was the result of a rebellion in favour of his own son, who became James IV.

Forbes was not content to make his peace with the new regime.

He tried to raise a counter-rebellion, reputedly by carrying the dead king's blood-stained shirt on a spear through Aberdeen and the surrounding area.

In 1489 he was at the mighty fortress of Dumbarton to join the leaders of a southern revolt.

But what were Forbes' motives – principle, self-interest, or both?

James III was a political blunderer, praised by some for his piety and condemned by others for his lechery.

Forbes himself had to pay 2,000 merks in compensation after reneging on a promise to marry the daughter of Margaret, Lady Dirleton.

The reason was simple – a better offer, the hand of Margaret Boyd, daughter of James III's sister Mary.

This opened up great prospects for the lord, which were dashed by the change of regime.

The revolt ended in defeat.

Forbes was pardoned, headed back north and departed the political arena.

- Read the Oxford DNB biography here: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/54202.html>.