

LEO X AND THE SCOTTISH DOMINICAN PROVINCE

IN the history of the Friars Preachers at the beginning of the 16th century, Dominican Scotland is of very special interest. While the other provinces of the Order were struggling, by the setting up of special congregations, to bring about a rebirth of stricter religious life, Scotland was able to effect, by and in herself, her own reform. Such an achievement was due to the activity of a religious, father John Adamson, whom Dominican chroniclers⁽¹⁾ and Scottish historians⁽²⁾ have been pleased to describe as a Friar Preacher of great holiness and uncommon learning. It is, therefore, all the more regrettable that the work of fr. John Adamson has been somewhat eclipsed. The religious persecutions which the Scottish Dominicans had to undergo as a result of the introduction of the Reformation into the kingdom of the Stuarts, have led to the loss of many documents.⁽³⁾ Four briefs of Pope Leo X, preserved in the collection in the Vatican Archives known as *Brevi Lateranensi*,⁽⁴⁾ allow us to supplement the information supplied by various collections of documents in Scotland.

If Thomas Dempster⁽⁵⁾ is to be believed, fr. John Adamson was a native of Aberdeen. He had been prior of the Aberdeen house for about nine years⁽⁶⁾ when, on Feb. 20th, 1511, he was named Pro-

(1) "Fr. Iohannes Adae, similiter magister et provincialis Scotus, vir prudentia et religionis observantia celebris, quem a Scotia in Urbem et peditem venisse et cibaria ordinis non mutasse multi commendabant." (Sebastian d'Olmeda, *Chronica ord. Praedicatorum*, ed. M. Canal Gomez, Rome, 1936, p. 196). Sebastian d'Olmeda names Fr. Adamson among those who, in 1518, were considered as possible heads of the Order.

(2) "Ioannes Adam aetate nostra vir et pietate et eruditione insignis, qui primus aberdoniae theologiae lauream nobiscum accepit, in pristinum eos (sc.: Praedicatorum) vitae statum relictis vitiis redegit." (Hector Boece, *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine . . . libri XIX*, Paris, 1574, f. 284).

(3) Even before 1559 a certain part of our archives was destroyed. Thus we learn from a document of Mary, Queen of Scotland (4 Oct. 1543) that the archives of the convent of St. Andrews, which had been placed "in camera cuiusdam capellani infra dictam civitatem pro secunda custodia," were stolen and destroyed on the night of Sept. 3, 1543. (Reg. Great Seal, A.D. 1513-1546: No. 2964). But various documents concerning the houses in Glasgow, Ayr, Perth, have come down to us, and were edited in the course of last century. (Cf. P. J. Anderson, *Aberdeen Friars . . .*, Aberdeen, 1909, p. 121-5).

(4) On this section of the Vatican Archives see K. A. Finke, *Zu den Brevia Lateranensia des Vatikanischen Archivs: Quellen u. Forschungen aus italien. Arch. u. Bibliothek*, t. 32, 1942, p. 260-266; K. A. Finke, *Das Vatikanische Archiv*, Rome, 1943, p. 63.

(5) Dempster, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Scotorum*, lib. I, n. 54, Bologna, 1627, p. 37.

(6) The first document in which Fr. Adamson appears as Prior of Aberdeen is dated April 29, 1502. (Anderson, p. 61).

vincial of Scotland by Cajetan,⁽⁷⁾ at that time Master-General of the Friars Preachers. Fr. Adamson succeeded in office fr. David Anderson.⁽⁸⁾ The change of Provincial was not made without trouble, for on the 10th and the 14th of October of that same year, the Master-General had to dismiss fr. Anderson from his office a second time, to confirm fr. Adamson's appointment and to threaten with excommunication *latae sententiae* religious who refused to obey the new Provincial.⁽⁹⁾

Before fr. Adamson took in hand the government of Dominican Scotland the latter had given examples of more than one weakness, more than one scandal.⁽¹⁰⁾ Indeed, a decision of Cajetan's⁽¹¹⁾ informs us that during a period of time, which I am unable to determine, all religious affiliated to the Scottish Province, and those who lived in it, were excommunicated; all the houses of the Province were placed under an interdict. These canonical penalties were only removed by the Master-General in February, 1511.

What was fr. Adamson's attitude, faced with such a situation? The briefs of Leo X allow his action to be clearly outlined, as follows: reorganisation of the two fundamental elements of Dominican life, prayer and study; suppression of houses whose material decay was an obstacle to their reform;⁽¹²⁾ establishment or development of new communities, where regular observance would flourish. The means employed by the new Provincial to reach this goal are unknown to me. One can only say that when in 1518 fr. Adamson reached Rome on foot,⁽¹³⁾ to take part in the Dominican General Chapter, and begged various indulgences from the Holy See, religious life was again thriving in the greater part of the Scottish priories.⁽¹⁴⁾ Leo X distinctly refers to this state of affairs in his

(7) A. De Meyer, *Registrum litterarum Fr. Thomae de Vio Caetani . . .* (Monumenta ord. Praed. historica 17), Rome, 1935, p. 318. The news reached Scotland before May 12, 1511, for on that date Fr. Adamson appears in a document, not as Prior of Aberdeen but as Provincial of Scotland. (Anderson, p. 70).

(8) Prior of Aberdeen since 1494, David Anderson was made Provincial of Scotland between April 4, 1499, and June 18th of the same year. (Anderson p. 54-58).

(9) De Meyer, Reg. p. 318.

(10) On the state of the clergy in Scotland at the beginning of the 16th century, see J. B. Coissac, *Les universités d'Ecosse depuis la fondation de l'Université de St Andrews jusqu'au triomphe de la réforme (1410-1560)*, Paris (1915), p. 157-162.

(11) De Meyer, Reg., p. 317.

(12) See the declaration of the Provincial Chapter of 1519, inserted in an act of Jan. 23, 1520. (Reg. Gr. Seal, n. 196).

(13) See note 1.

(14) Leo X mentions, in his two briefs of June, 1518, religious who had not accepted the reform. Such a state of things is confirmed by a decision of the Prov. Chapter of 1519. (Reg. Gr. Seal, n. 196).

brief of June 5th, 1518. In fact the Pope grants—and that for a period of ten years—to all who shall visit on certain days the churches of the convents of the Order and that of the Dominican Priory of Edinburgh,⁽¹⁵⁾ the station indulgences⁽¹⁶⁾ which the faithful could gain in Rome. The Pope was pleased to underline, in the preamble of the brief, the work of reform which had been accomplished and which the General Chapter had confirmed with its authority⁽¹⁷⁾ some days previously. Religious life was flourishing again; the faithful, as a result, were led to frequent more sedulously Dominican churches and chapels, where the ceremonies of the Liturgy were performed with due regularity.

Leo X could appreciate at its true worth the task which had been embarked upon, and with a view to facilitating it the Pontiff granted to the reformed Scottish friars and sisters the faculty of gaining in their convents those indulgences which were attached to the "visiting of the seven churches" in Rome.⁽¹⁸⁾ This brief, together with that of May 5th preceding, gives high testimony to the moral restoration effected by the Scottish Dominicans.

The re-establishment of primitive observance was not Fr. Adamson's only concern. Unlike a Michaëlis, who ruined the splendid library given by the king, René of Anjou, to the Priory of St. Maximin,⁽¹⁹⁾ the Scottish reformer knew how to appreciate the importance of intellectual work in connection with a return to more intense religious life. This idea of the Dominican reformer is the more important since at that very time, under the influence of Hector Boece,⁽²⁰⁾ John Major⁽²¹⁾ and perhaps also Erasmus,⁽²²⁾

(15) Edinburgh's convent of Dominican nuns was of recent foundation. It had been erected near the church of St. John the Baptist, on land belonging to John Craufurd. The first Prioress was Josina Henrison; cf. a document of April 17, 1517, inserted in an act of May 25 following (Reg. Gr. Seal, n. 170), and Leo X's Bull of Jan. 29, 1518 (Bullarium ord. Prædicatorum, t. 4, Rome, 1733, p. 352-353) confirming the foundation.

(16) On station indulgences, see F. Beringer and A. Steinen, *Les indulgences, leur nature et leur usage* (traduction Ph. Mazoyer), Paris (1925), p. 526-528.

(17) "Approbamus reformationem in provincia Scocie a reverendo eius provinciali factam et volumus eam ab omnibus illius fratribus observari". (Monumenta ord. Præd., t. 9, p. 173).

(18) On the indulgences attached to the visit to the "seven churches", see Beringer and Steinen, *op. cit.*, p. 528-530.

(19) On this library and its dispersal by Fr. Michaëlis, see M.-H. Laurent, *La bibliothèque de Saint-Maximin. Quelques notes sur une période de son histoire (1299-1621)*, Archivum fr. Præd., t. 1 (1932), p. 361-363.

(20) On Hector Boece, see D.N.B.; Cath. Ency.; E. Fueter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie*, Munich-Berlin, 1936, p. 171-2.; *Dict. d'hist. et de géogr. ecclésiastiques*, t. 9, Paris, 1937, col. 383-4.

(21) On John Major, see in addition to articles in D.N.B., Cath. Ency., and A. J. G. Mackay's introduction to the English translation of "De historia gentis Scotorum" (Scottish Hist. Soc., *A History of Greater Britain* . . . , Edinburgh, 1892), the works of C. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, t. 4, Leipzig, 1927, p. 247-51.; C. M. Macdonald, John Mair and humanism: *The Scot. Hist. Rev.*,

Scotland was making contact with the French Renaissance and finding there new resources. Fr. Adamson, who was the first graduate in theology⁽²³⁾ at the young University of Aberdeen,⁽²⁴⁾ had the wisdom to send his religious to the various intellectual centres such as St. Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen, which had been set up in the course of the 15th century.⁽²⁵⁾ Leo X refers to this undertaking of the Dominican Provincial; an undertaking, furthermore, which was crowned with success, for in 1521-2, while John Major was teaching in the Faculty of Arts at Glasgow, fr. Robert Lile inaugurated in the presence of the Rector of that University, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and other doctors of the University, his course of lectures on the Fourth Book of the Sentences.⁽²⁶⁾

Alongside this intellectual revival, a large place should be given to the achievements in the material order with which the provincialate of fr. Adamson is punctuated. When he took the government of the province in hand, more than one of the houses was desolate; the very buildings had had to suffer from the laxity which affected the religious. Some were falling into ruin; others were still unfinished. To suppress the former and complete the latter, was the zealous reformer's programme.

Fr. Adamson's main care was to see to the completion of the house in St. Andrews,⁽²⁷⁾ whose importance had increased since the

1916, p. 149-58; Coissac, *Les institutions*, p. 185-204; P. Leturia, *Maior y Vitoria ante la conquista de América: Estudios ecclesiásticos*, t. 11, 1933, p. 46-58; R. G. Villoslada, *La universidad de Paris durante los estudios de Francisco de Vitoria O.P. (1507-1522)*, Rome, 1938, p. 127-64.

(22) During one of his stays in England Erasmus may possibly have visited Scotland. We know with what biting irony he described the life of the Perth Carthusians in his "Colloquia" (Coll. senile, Op. omnia t. 1., Leyde, 1703, p. 736-737). An account of the revenues of this Charterhouse in 1559 (Keith, *The history of the affairs of church and state in Scotland*, Edin., 1743, p. 183, appendix) shows that his criticism was not unfounded. It is certain that both in England and France the great humanist had frequent occasion to meet Scots; for example, he was a fellow-student at the college of Montaigu, of Major and of Boece, to whom he dedicated a small collection of poems printed at Paris in 1496; the two letters of Erasmus to Boece are also to be noted (ed. Allen, n. 47, 2283).

(23) Cf. note 2.

(24) Aberdeen University was founded in 1495 on the initiative of Bishop Elphinstone. (S. D'Irsay, *Histoire des universités françaises et étrangères des origines à nos jours*, t. 1, Paris, 1933, p. 218-19, and the bibliography).

(25) On the intellectual movement in 15th-16th century Scotland, see Coissac, *Les institutions scolaires*, *passim*.

(26) W. Moir Bryce, *The Black Friars and the Scottish Universities*: Scot. Hist. Rev., vol. 9, 1912, p. 8.

(27) On the St. Andrews house, see D. Henry, *The Dominican friars at St. Andrews*: Aber. Ecclesiological Soc., Trans. II, 7, 1890-93, p. 18-26; D. Henry, *St. Dominic and his friars in St. Andrews*, St. Andrews, 1912.

establishment of a university⁽²⁸⁾ in that town in 1413, by Henry Wardlaw.⁽²⁹⁾ Founded in 1274, by William Wischard,⁽³⁰⁾ bishop of St. Andrews, the house which the Dominicans possessed there was not erected into a formal priory until 1477.⁽³¹⁾ At what date the work of enlarging it was begun, I do not know; but one thing is certain, that at the opening of the 16th century the buildings were unfinished. Such slowness must undoubtedly be ascribed to the want of zeal on the part of the religious, and to lack of resources. In 1516 the Provincial Chapter⁽³²⁾ held at Stirling resolved to assign to St. Andrews the sum of 40 marks of gold and silver which William Elphinstone, bishop of Aberdeen,⁽³³⁾ had left to the Order⁽³⁴⁾ in his will. It was for a similar purpose that fr. Adamson asked of Leo X permission to use for the building of the new priory not only the income but even the materials of the house at Cupar-Fife which, founded in 1348,⁽³⁵⁾ was tumbling to ruin. The Scottish Provincial's request was received favourably by the Holy See, and on Nov. 9th, 1517, Leo X granted this favour. We know from another source that fr. Adamson was able to bring his plan to a successful conclusion. A document transcribed in the Register of the Great Seal⁽³⁶⁾ of the kings of Scotland, tells us that the Provincial Chapter held in Edinburgh in 1519 incorporated into the priory of St. Andrews the convent at Cupar, with its possessions,⁽³⁷⁾ and also the

(28) St. Andrews University was founded in 1413. For bibliography see J. H. Baxter, *Collections towards a bibliography of St. Andrews*, St. Andrews, 1926, n. 667-984.

(29) Henry Wardlaw, Bishop of St. Andrews from Sept. 10, 1403 to 9 (?) April, 1440. (J. Dowden and J. M. Thomson, *The Bishops of Scotland*, Glasgow, 1912, p. 30-31).

(30) William Wischard, Bishop of St. Andrews from May 15, 1273—May 28, 1279. (Dowden, *op. cit.* p. 18-19).

(31) Bull. of Sixtus IV, Mar. 18, 1477. (Bull. ord. Praed., t. 3, p. 547-8).

(32) *Reg. episc. Aberd.* . . . vol. 2, Edin., 1845, p. 310-13.

(33) On Elphinstone, see Dowden, *op. cit.* p. 129-35.

(34) Elphinstone is known to have been buried in the Dominican Priory, Edinburgh. The community was bound to celebrate a Low Mass daily for him, and a High Mass each year on his anniversary. (*Reg. epis. Aber.*, vol. 2, p. 310-11).

(35) The site of the house in Cupar-Fife is described in *Reg. Gr. Seal*, n. 196. It was founded at the request of Duncan, Earl of Fife and brother-in-law of James I: cf. the supplication addressed to Clement VI; *Arch. Vat.*, Supp. 18, f. 52 (*Cal. Papal Reg.*, *Petitions to the Pope, 1342-1419*, vol. 1, p. 144) and the corresponding Bull of Nov. 21, 1348. (*C. P. R.* . . . *Letters, 1342-62*, vol. 3, p. 304).

(36) *Reg. Gr. Seal*, n. 196.

(37) From 1520, certainly, the decision of the Provincial Chapter was effective. A document of Feb. 12, 1520, (D. H. Fleming, *The Reformation in Scotland*, Lond., 1910, p. 601-2) shows Fr. John Grierson, Prior of St. Andrews, demanding that sums due from certain tenants to the Cupar-Fife house, for property at Rathillet, should be brought to his priory.

Church of St. Monans of Inverey.⁽³⁸⁾

Another aspect of fr. Adamson's work is also brought to light by a brief of Leo X. It shows him answering a request made to him by several citizens of Dundee, for the establishing of the Friars Preachers in that town.⁽³⁹⁾ I have been unable to discover when the Dominicans took possession of their new house, but it is certain that they were amply provided for by their benefactors.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The new foundation was to have but a brief existence. In the month of August, 1543, the houses of the Friars Minor and the Friars Preachers of Dundee were pillaged; Reformers and soldiery sacked both churches and monasteries⁽⁴¹⁾ and when, in 1557, fr. John Grierson was to send a report on the houses of the Scottish Province⁽⁴²⁾ to the Master-General, Stephen Usodimare, he was to ask the Master-General to obtain from the Holy See and the General Chapter of the Order, the suppression of this convent, where henceforth no religious could live for want of means.

APPENDIX

1. Leo X authorises fr. John Adamson, provincial of Scotland, to found a convent at Dundee. (1517, September 16th).

Incipit: Quoniam supplicantium votis . . .

Desinit: Dat. Romae etc. die XVI septembris M.D.XVII an. quinto.

Arch. Vaticanæ: Brev. Lat. t. 6, f. 189.

2. Leo X authorises fr. John Adamson, provincial of Scotland, to annex to the convent of St. Andrews, then in course of construc-

(38) The Church of St. Monans of Inverey had been founded by David II in 1362; the patronage had been transmitted to the nuns of North Berwick. Building, which had been entrusted to David Dishington of Ardross, lasted from 1362-1370, to judge from payments by the royal treasury recorded in the Exchequer Rolls. In 1477 the Dominicans were permitted by Sixtus IV to raise this house to the status of a formal priory. (Bull. ord. Praed., t. 3, p. 547-8). When the church was annexed to the priory at St. Andrews in 1519, it was not suppressed; two religious still stayed there and received its revenues, with the exception of an annual rent of 20 marks, granted at an earlier date by Robert, Duke of Albany and Earl of Fife, which was henceforth set aside for the students of the St. Andrews priory. (Reg. Gr. Seal, n. 196).

(39) At the same time, thanks to a gift of Patrick Panter, Abbot of Cambuskenneth and secretary to James V (D.N.B.), dated Mar. 9, 1516, the Dominicans acquired a new building in Montrose. (Acts of Parl. of Scotland, vol. 2, (Edin.) 1814, p. 389-92). Panter's gift was approved by the General Chapter of 1518 (Mon. ord. Praed. t. 9, p. 173). Nevertheless, in 1537, the religious left the new foundation and returned to their old priory. (Reg. Gr. Seal, n. 1725).

(40) Various particulars about the income of the Dundee house are to be found in W. Moir Bryce (The Scottish Grey Friars, vol. 2, Edin.-Lond., (s.d.), p. 147, 337, 340, 343, 347-8, 353, 364, 371).

(41) Cf. J. Maxwell, Old Dundee prior to the Reformation. Edin.; 1891, p. 398-5.

(42) The fragment about the Dundee house has been edited in *Analecta ord. Praed.*, (t. 2, 1895-6, p. 484, note 1). In it the Scottish provincial is wrongly called "Petrus Procloin (vel Grocclain)".

tion, the property of the convent of Cupar-Fife. (1517, November 8th).

Incipit: Tuis humilibus supplicationibus inclinati . . .

Desinit: Dat. Romae etc. die VIII novembris M.D. XVII, pontificatus nostri anno quinto.

Arch. Vaticanes: Brev. Lat. t. 6, f. 192.

3. Leo X grants, for a period of 10 years and under certain conditions, to the faithful who, during Lent or on the days when the stations take place in the churches of Rome, shall visit the churches of the reformed Dominicans of Scotland, the stational indulgences of the churches of Rome. (1518, June 5th).

Incipit: Licet Is de cuius munere . . .

Desinit: Dat. Rome etc. die V iunii 1518 anno sexto.

Arch. Vaticanes: Brev. Lat. t. 6, f. 529v.

4. Leo X grants to the reformed Dominicans of Scotland the faculty of gaining, under certain conditions, the indulgence attached to the visiting of "the seven churches" of Rome. (1518, June 28th).

Incipit: Licet nuper nos et sicut . . .

Desinit: Dat. Rome etc. die XXXIII [*lege*: XXVIII] iunii M.D. XVIII an. sexto.

Arch. Vaticanes: Brev. Lat. t. 5, f. 357v.

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NOTE. Shortage of space has unfortunately necessitated abbreviation of Père Laurent's notes. The original text of the article, with the full text of the documents listed in the Appendix, may be found in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, XIII (1943), pp. 149-161. Ed.

SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANISM

THE Parliament of 1560 having effectively destroyed the power of the Auld Kirk in Scotland, ratified and approved Knox's Confession of Faith as "hailsome and sound doctrine groundit upoune the infallibill trewth of Godis word".

This decision marked a crisis in Scottish history, but revolutionary though it was it must not be thought that Presbyterianism as it now exists in Scotland, was born, like Athene, fully formed and armed. The infant Reformed Church of Scotland was, in 1560, indeed a babe and it was only in the following two centuries that she took shape and developed the *persona* she now presents to the world.

So difficult and so complex is the history of Scottish Presbyterianism, reflecting as it does the ebb and flow of logic and passion that make up the Scottish character, that a short account of it