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Holy Blood devotion in later medieval Scotland

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ABSTRACT

Of the Christocentric devotions which achieved widespread popularity in later medieval Scotland, the cult of the Holy Blood gained the greatest prominence. Strong Scottish connections with the blood-relic centres at Bruges and, to a lesser extent, Wilsnack, primarily established by Scotland's urban merchant class, provided the conduit for the development of the cult in the east coast burghs from the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The cult remained principally an urban phenomenon and was associated closely with the guildry of those burghs in which Holy Blood altars were founded. Holy Blood devotion, while by no means exclusively associated with members of the merchant community, provided a vehicle for expression of guild identity and, as in Bruges, a mechanism for the regulation and control of guild members' public behaviour. That regulatory function, however, was secondary to the cult's soteriological significance, its popularity in urban Scotland reflecting the wider late medieval European lay quest for closer and more direct personal connections with God.



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Sometime in 1440 the townsfolk of Aberdeen watched the performance of a 'certain play of *ly Haliblude* played at the Windmill Hill' just outside their burgh.¹ Plays of such a spiritual nature were part of the established culture of public-religious display that was shared by all parts of later medieval Latin Christian Europe, alongside religious

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¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: *Aberdeen Breviary*: W. Blew, ed., *Breviarum Aberdonense*. 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1854); CSMPC: Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches; *Edinburgh St Giles Register*: D. Laing, ed., *Registrum cartarum ecclesie sancti Egidii de Edinburgh...* Bannatyne Club 105 (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1859); *Lanark Records*: Robert Renwick, ed., *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Lanark*. Scottish Burgh Records Society (Glasgow: Carsons and Nicol, 1893); NRS: Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland; *Peebles Records*: Robert Renwick, ed., *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Peebles* (Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Record Society, 1910); RMS, 2: James B. Paul, ed., *Registrum magni sigilli regum Scotorum*, vol. 2, 1424–1513 (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1882); RMS, 3: James B. Paul and James M. Thomson, eds., *Registrum magni sigilli regum Scotorum*, vol. 3, 1513–1546 (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1883); *Rotuli Scotiae*: David Macpherson and others, eds., *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londinensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi asservati...* 2 vols. (London: Record Commission, 1814–19); SCA: Stirling Council Archives; STAUL: St Andrews University Library; TA, 3: James B. Paul, ed., *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, vol. 3, 1506–1507 (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1901). All cash sums are in medieval Scottish currency, the pound Scots.

Elizabeth Gemmill, ed., *Aberdeen Guild Court Records 1437–1468* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 2005), 55, 104.

processions and elaborate liturgical performances in which lay supporters figured prominently.² Their function, however, was not exclusively religious or devotional, and they were as much a medium for regulating behavioural norms within the tightly controlled structures of medieval urban society as they were a vehicle for expressions of lay piety. Fewer references to such plays survive in Scottish medieval sources than in England or northern Europe and this Aberdeen record is one of the earliest known Scottish examples.³ Whilst its early date renders it important enough in a Scottish context, its significance is all the greater for its also being the earliest surviving Scottish reference to a public quasi-religious act which focused on one element in late medieval Christocentric devotion, the Holy Blood.

Recent studies of Holy Blood devotion in Western Christendom have pointed to its relatively late development as a widespread phenomenon.⁴ The question of what happened to the blood shed by Christ at the Passion had been explored by early Christian theologians, but despite their writings on the topic earlier medieval devotional art and literature, and liturgical performance itself, were remarkable for their relative bloodlessness. That began to change in the course of the thirteenth century as theories of purgation and redemption evolved, with a developing trend away from visual and textual imagery which presented Christ and the sacrifice of the Crucifixion in generally comforting and often symbolically representative forms towards presentation in increasingly bloody and violent terms. That trend led to often horrifyingly graphic representations of the Passion by the fifteenth century. Running in parallel with the earlier stages of that shift was growth in the devotional focus upon blood relics, many of which had claimed origins in the Holy Land, as for example in the cases of relics at Bruges, Schwerin and Weingarten, and the revival of interest in items housed in the relic collections of the Holy Roman Emperors, kings of France and their greater nobles. At Bruges Count Thierry of Alsace (d. 1168) was credited with bringing a blood relic from Jerusalem, but it was only from the middle of the thirteenth century that the town began to emerge as a major northern European cult centre.⁵ There was a similar efflorescence of Holy Blood devotion in England in the second quarter of the thirteenth century with Henry III's securing of a blood-relic for Westminster Abbey. It was, however, the slightly later gift to Hailes Abbey and the college at Ashridge by his nephew Edmund of Cornwall of blood-relics obtained by his father, Henry's younger brother Richard, who as King of the Romans and claimant to the imperial throne had had access to the relic collection of the Holy Roman Emperors, that drew pilgrims; Westminster, despite its royal patron, did not flourish as a cult centre of the Holy Blood.⁶

Henry's enthusiastic promotion of Westminster may have been amongst the many reasons for its failure to secure popular interest, but it was also harmed from the outset

² For discussion of the interplay of ceremony and religion in a civic context, see Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c.1300–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³ A.J. Mill, *Medieval Plays in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1927) is still the key work on this topic.

⁴ The most detailed recent analysis of the phenomenon in a northern European context is Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁵ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion*, 8–9, 11. It is suggested that the blood-relic was amongst religious items looted from Constantinople in 1204 and brought back to the West.

⁶ For discussion of the relics and their impact in England, see Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

by controversy over the relic's authenticity.⁷ No such doubts arose at Bruges where, from the mid-thirteenth century, its accepted authenticity as a tangible primary relic of Christ's once-physical earthly presence saw a coalescing of communal pride and identity around it. Through this talismanic function it had begun to acquire a close association with the promotion of civic identity and, from the early fourteenth century, the reliquary was central in an annual procession on 3 May (the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross) in which the craft guilds and civic authorities were the chief participants.⁸ The close relationship between the religious performance of the procession and the expression of collective identity amongst the townsmen of Bruges has been researched in depth by Andrew Brown. Amongst his key observations is the role of the relics in legitimating civic authority and their link to the exercise of justice and the associated maintenance of civic order.⁹ Punishments for misdemeanours recorded in civil and criminal court rolls from Bruges included payments in wax for candles to light the altar where the relic was displayed; offerings to be made at the altar; and pilgrimages to other Holy Blood cult centres, usually Wilsnack in Brandenburg.¹⁰

The social-control dimension of the cult explored by Brown also resonates with Caroline Walker Bynum's analysis of the explosion of popular devotion at new Holy Blood cult centres which housed new forms of blood-relics, usually bloody hosts.¹¹ There are interesting symmetries between the primarily German and Central European incidence of these new centres, reports of Jewish host-desecrations and increases in anti-Jewish violence, but this should not obscure the fact that Holy Blood devotion was as popular in regions with small or no Jewish populations or where there was no significant anti-Semitism evident. Host-desecration libels and anti-Semitic traditions contributed to the growth and spread of the new blood piety in northern Europe, but probably of greater importance was the demand which this new expression revealed amongst lay Christians for a closer and deeper personal relationship with God. Indeed, exploring the cult from a German-centred but more widely northern European perspective, Bynum has identified an upswing in visual and literary expressions of the Holy Blood as a devotional focus from the mid fourteenth century, an increase possibly linked to the then contemporary growing demand from laymen for access to the chalice and not only the host at Mass and the wider question of personal access to God generally.¹²

With no known primary or secondary Holy Blood relic, either claimed blood of Christ or blood-host, or cult site associated with blood miracles, Scotland has not been considered a fruitful source of evidence for late medieval blood piety. This situation is simply one dimension of a wider historiographical problem in respect of medieval Scotland, where substantial narrative accounts and royal financial records dating from before c.1350 are rare; and records of urban institutions and non-monastic religious establishments are almost entirely absent for the period before 1400.¹³ This

⁷ Vincent, *Holy Blood*, 164–70.

⁸ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion*, 9, 50–1.

⁹ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion*, 50–1.

¹⁰ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion*.

¹¹ For the dating of the new blood-host centres, see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 51, table 1.

¹² Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 1–5, 7.

¹³ The earliest surviving council records, from Aberdeen, start in the last decade of the fourteenth century and in most other burghs commence in the fifteenth century. The high level of parish church appropriations in Scotland (approaching 85% by the end of the thirteenth century) means that few ecclesiastical records survive at parish

dearth of record evidence makes it very difficult to identify the presence or otherwise of most urban institutions before the late medieval period. It is also difficult to construct a detailed account of lay cultural practices; tracking innovation in respect of devotional focus and changing approaches to devotional expression are particularly problematic topics.

There are also institutional differences at play, in that most Scottish towns contained only one parish church throughout the pre-Reformation period. Large and well-endowed non-parochial chapels were present in some of the largest burghs, such as St Clement's in Dundee and St Mary's at the bridge end in Perth. Tight control over parish revenues exercised by appropriating institutions ensured that such chapels remained dependent on the local parish church and key mortuary and commemorative functions were reserved to the parish churches. Usually, these burgh parish churches became large establishments both physically and in terms of numbers of associated clergy, and drew in most religious endowments from townsfolk;¹⁴ a proliferation of altars within them was a consequence of the articulation of individual and group devotional expression within the sole available arena for such actions. Although altars came to be endowed with significant portfolios of property, only a small percentage of the parchment records of the gifts, management of the income generated through them and of the arrangements for services performed at them has survived the general devastation of ecclesiastical archives at the Reformation.

Despite this fragmentary record, in Scottish scholarship the emergence of significant popular devotion to the Holy Blood has been identified in the laconic documentary records of foundation of altars dedicated to it. It is witnessed also in a handful of surviving sculptural and pictorial representations and the sparse surviving records of the confraternities that were vehicles for organised lay expression of that devotion, and has been viewed mainly through the lens of wider Christocentric devotions.¹⁵ These devotions are dominated by Corpus Christi, with which the Holy Blood cult was associated through shared Thursday Masses, but there was also a late medieval upsurge in interest in the Holy Cross or Rood, Holy Saviour and other Christocentric devotions like the Name of Jesus/Holy Name and Image of Our Saviour.¹⁶ Following its introduction through Bishop William Elphinstone's 1510 Aberdeen Breviary, provision for the Holy Blood Mass was made in churches where there was no dedicated focus for that service at a separate altar (as indicated by its inclusion in the list of Masses noted on the flyleaf of the early

level before the Reformation, and only a handful of the major urban parish churches – Aberdeen, Ayr and Edinburgh especially – have cartularies that contain substantial bodies of pre-fifteenth-century material.

¹⁴ St Nicholas in Aberdeen was the largest burgh church in Scotland: see M. Lynch, G. des Brissay and M.H. Pittock, 'The Faith of the People', in *Aberdeen Before 1800: a New History*, eds. E.P.D. Dennison, D. Ditchburn and M. Lynch (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 289, 291–3. St Mary's in Dundee had more subsidiary altars than at Aberdeen, with up to 34 recorded there before 1550, while up to 47 existed at St John's in Perth.

¹⁵ David Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: the Medieval Kingdom and its Contacts with Europe, 1214–1560* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 52–3; David McRoberts, 'The Fetternear Banner', *Innes Review* 7 (1956): 69–86; David MacRoberts and Stephen M. Holmes, *Lost Interiors: the Furnishings of Scottish Churches in the Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: The Aquhorthies Press, 2012), 44–5 and illustration 43. The surviving representations extend beyond the figurative into the symbolic, such as the trinity of chalices in the final panel and individual chalices receiving goutts of blood in the end panels of the tomb of Margaret Stewart, countess of Douglas and duchess of Touraine, at Lincluden Collegiate Church, to the numerous *arma Christi* representations.

¹⁶ Only two parish churches in Brechin, Dunblane, Dunkeld and St Andrews dioceses held altars of Corpus Christi, at St Mary's Dundee and St Michael's Linlithgow, where at the latter there was a chaplainry or service of the Holy Blood. For devotional fashions at Aberdeen, see Lynch, des Brissay and Pittock, 'Faith of the People', 292.

sixteenth-century Arbuthnott Missal).¹⁷ However, beyond incomplete lists of altar locations and a general argument that Scotland's close trade links with Flanders and Bruges especially were probably responsible for its presence in the principal Scottish trading burghs, there has been no detailed analysis of the growth of blood piety there.¹⁸ The cult received recent discussion in Audrey-Beth Fitch and Mairi Cowan's separate monograph-length studies of lay piety in later medieval Scotland and in David Ditchburn's re-examination of prevailing theses on the Scottish late medieval devotional experience.¹⁹ This present essay, which arises from research undertaken for the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches (CSMPC) project, builds on those discussions.

From the CSMPC project, whose two completed phases covered the dioceses of Brechin, Dunblane, Dunkeld and St Andrews, augmented by research on churches in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Moray dioceses, significant differences have been identified between patterns of dedications favoured for subsidiary altars in urban and rural locations. Always bearing in mind the caveat that significant skewing in the evidence may have occurred due to the fragmentary and uneven distribution of Scotland's surviving medieval records, documented Holy Blood altars have an almost entirely urban distribution; 21 with that sole or shared dedication are recorded, 16 in parish churches in royal burghs (one located in the nave of a monastic church), one in a small baronial burgh's church, three in cathedrals and one in a large urban chapel, while in two further cases an endowed Mass of the Holy Blood was celebrated weekly at a Corpus Christi altar and in one case at a high altar. Eleven of the altars were in the dioceses of Brechin and St Andrews, within which most of Scotland's medieval burghs were located, with seven in Scotland's second most-populous diocese, Glasgow. Only three other dedications, at St Machar's Cathedral and St Nicholas' church in Aberdeen and in Dunkeld Cathedral, have been identified outside the two main diocesan concentrations. It is particularly striking that with the exception of the two Aberdeen altars, none has been identified in the other burghs of that diocese; there also seems to be none in the sees of Whithorn, Dunblane, Argyll, the Isles, Moray, Ross, Caithness or Orkney.

Two other aspects of the distribution are noteworthy. First, only three Scottish cathedrals housed a Holy Blood altar, with those in Dunkeld and Glasgow being secondary dedications at altars of Our Lady and Corpus Christi respectively. Second, with the exception of Dunfermline Abbey, where it was located in the parochial-use nave of the monastic church, no Scottish monastery from which records survive contained one. This apparent separation of diocesan centres and the regular monastic orders from direct promotion of and support for the devotion in Scotland is striking. Given the mid-fifteenth-century involvement of senior Scottish secular clerics in the Bruges procession,²⁰ it is also

¹⁷ *Aberdeen Breviary*, vol. 1, Feasts, 'In festo Corpus Christi', ff. 4v-10r; Audrey-Beth Fitch, *The Search for Salvation: Lay Faith in Scotland 1480-1560* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), 156.

¹⁸ Most recent discussion stems from Alexander Stevenson, 'Medieval Scottish Associations with Bruges', in *Freedom and Authority: Historical and Historiographical Essays Presented to Grant G. Simpson*, eds. Terry Brotherstone and David Ditchburn (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 93-107, which lists most of the burghs in which Holy Blood altars were established between c.1450 and the Reformation.

¹⁹ Fitch, *Search for Salvation*, especially 156-7; Mairi Cowan, *Death, Life and Religious Change in Scottish Towns, c.1350-1560* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 103; David Ditchburn, 'The "McRoberts Thesis" and Patterns of Sanctity in Late Medieval Scotland', in *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland*, eds. Stephen Boardman and Eila Williamson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 177-94 (179).

²⁰ Stevenson, 'Medieval Scottish Associations with Bruges', 105; Annie I. Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy, Bishop of St Andrews* (St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 1950), 135.

deeply puzzling. Despite senior clerics possibly having a personal involvement with the cult whilst abroad, this did not translate into active promotion of it at home. Instead, the first recorded endowments associated with Holy Blood altars have strong lay associations and, although secular clerics also patronised the cult, surviving evidence for blood piety is weighted towards the ruling elites of Scotland's royal burghs.

From where did this attachment spring? With neither blood-relic nor evidence for significant devotion to the Holy Blood before the 1440s, the efflorescence of blood-piety in Scotland in the second half of the fifteenth century was not home-grown. Plantagenet promotion of the cult in mid thirteenth-century England and a consequent link to the English crown perhaps renders Ashridge, Hailes or Westminster less likely as stimuli for devotion in Scotland, especially after the Anglo-Scottish wars of the fourteenth century, but Scottish pilgrims still visited Hailes in the mid-1400s.²¹ Westminster, however, ceased to promote its possession of a blood-relic even before Henry III's death, and at both Ashridge and Hailes levels of pilgrim interest declined in the late Middle Ages. Instead, it appears that Scotland's post-1300 political and economic orientation towards France, the Low Countries and the Baltic region drew Scottish attention to the revived popularity of several older cult centres, like Bruges, and emerging centres of bloody host devotion in Germany and Poland, principally from 1383 at Wilsnack. It is to the Continent that the historiography of blood piety in Scotland has pointed consistently and the traditional emphasis is on a Low Countries link.²² Its association with the merchant-burgesses of several east coast burghs involved in international trade provides circumstantial evidence for the importance of that traffic as the conduit for its introduction to Scotland. Particular emphasis is placed on Bruges as the centre from which devotion to the cult was brought by Scottish merchants and clerics who passed through the Flemish town when travelling to and from Rome, including on 3 May 1451 Bishop James Kennedy of St Andrews.²³ Alexander Stevenson, moreover, has highlighted the proximity of the basilica in Bruges in which the relic was housed to the wool-house, frequented until the late 1300s by Scottish merchants.²⁴ Although the records for the cult's spread in Scotland post-date the withdrawal of Scottish merchants from the wool-house by over 50 years, its particular association with members of the merchant-burgess class could indicate continuing links through trading connections between eastern Scotland and that city. But Scottish merchants also travelled east into the Baltic and to northern German ports, and it is important to note that Scottish blood-relic pilgrims also travelled there.²⁵

Evidence for activities related to the cult in Scotland pre-dates the first surviving record of Holy Blood altar dedications there. Importantly, the earliest known reference relates not to private, personal devotional acts, but to a very public event staged by a burgess association or guild, the religious play organised by guild-brethren in Aberdeen in 1440. That connection further illustrates the close identification of members of burgh elites with

²¹ *Rotuli Scotiae*, 2: 347, where two Scottish priests secured a safe conduct in June 1451 to visit Canterbury, Hailes and Walsingham in England.

²² See, for example, MacRoberts and Holmes, *Lost Interiors*, 125, where the direct link to Bruges is asserted confidently.

²³ McRoberts, 'Fetternear Banner'; Fitch, *Search for Salvation*, 156; Ditchburn, "'McRoberts Thesis'", 179; Cowan, *Death, Life and Religious Change*, 103; Dunlop, *James Kennedy*, 135.

²⁴ Stevenson, 'Medieval Scottish Associations with Bruges', 104–5.

²⁵ J.C. Robertson, ed., *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, vol. 2. Rolls Series 67 (London: Longman, 1876), 295–6.

the cult.²⁶ Such guild-organised events, mainly arranged in the context of Corpus Christi festivities, were of a fundamentally Christocentric nature and underscore how religious functions were as central to such guilds as their regulatory and charitable roles and, indeed, the interconnectedness of all three aspects.²⁷ A deeper awareness of the cult amongst Aberdeen burgesses was revealed shortly afterwards, when in 1445 one Alexander Stephenson was cured of a crippling illness at the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury and subsequently went on pilgrimage to Wilsnack.²⁸ In June 1451, Wilsnack was the final destination for two Scottish chaplains who planned to go on a pilgrimage that included the shrines of St Thomas at Canterbury, of Our Lady at Walsingham, and the Holy Blood at Hailes in their itinerary.²⁹ The inclusion of both Hailes and Wilsnack in their route suggests a particular veneration on their part for the Holy Blood.

From the 1450s, reference to the Holy Blood dimension of Christocentric devotion increases in Scotland, manifest in altar or service foundations, establishment of chaplainries (the Scottish equivalent of chantries) as private or communal endowments, and the development of confraternities which organised public religious ceremonies and discharged charitable functions. The first surviving reference to a Holy Blood altar dedication in Scotland, at St Giles' in Edinburgh, dates from 1450.³⁰ This altar became one of the best-endowed in the parish church and the devotional focus of the largest lay confraternity in the kingdom. The 1450 reference is to an existing altar and chaplainry, endowed with rental income, located 'near the northern entrance'; Edinburgh's Holy Blood devotion apparently began with a secondary dedication at the Holy Cross altar at the east end of the north choir aisle.³¹ That link suggests a Christocentric duality in the devotional focus of the chapel in which the altar stood. The pairing reflects the Bruges situation, where the procession of the blood-relic occurred on the feast of the Invention of the Cross. Later references confirm the pairing: it was referred to between 1497 and 1507 as the Black Rood altar,³² and in 1506 as the altar of the Holy Blood and the Cross of Lucano. It was in the patronage of the burgh,³³ and a further chaplainry was founded there in 1512 with its patronage granted to the Holy Blood confraternity.³⁴

Although there is no surviving foundation charter to shed light on the devotional inspiration of the original founders and patrons of Edinburgh's altar, in most cases the altars

²⁶ Cowan, *Death, Life and Religious Change*, 101–3.

²⁷ See, for example, discussion in E. Patricia D. Torrie, 'The Guild in Fifteenth-Century Dunfermline', in *The Scottish Medieval Town*, eds. Michael Lynch, Michael Spearman and Geoffrey Stell (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishing, 1988), 245–60.

²⁸ Robertson, ed., *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, vol. 2, 296; James Stuart, 'Notice of an Original Instrument Recently Discovered Among the Records of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, Describing the Miraculous Cure Effected on a Citizen of Aberdeen While on Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 10 (1874): 528–35.

²⁹ *Rotuli Scotiae*, 2: 347a. This is the only English safe conduct for a Scottish pilgrim to Hailes in the Scottish Rolls, with Canterbury and to a lesser extent Walsingham being by far the favoured objectives of Scottish pilgrims.

³⁰ *Edinburgh St Giles Registrum*, no. 68. For general discussion of the altars and chaplainries in the church and of their architectural setting, see CSMPC Edinburgh St Giles, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158554> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

³¹ George Hay, 'The Late Medieval Development of the High Kirk of St Giles, Edinburgh', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 107 (1975–6): 242–60 (251, 253, 255).

³² Gordon Donaldson, ed., *Protocol Book of James Young, 1485–1515*. Scottish Record Society Publications 74 (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1952), nos. 874, 895, 904, 907, 1744.

³³ W. Macleod and Marguerite Wood, eds., *Protocol Book of John Foular, 9th March 1500 to 18th September 1503*. Scottish Record Society 64, 72, 149–50, 161. 2 vols. in parts (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1930–53), nos. 203, 224, 295.

³⁴ *Edinburgh St Giles Registrum*, no. 126.

were foci for chaplainries. There is, however, an obvious soteriological link between the redemptive power of Christ's blood shed during the various stages of the Passion and the personal search for salvation underlying the bequests for one's soul (*pro anima*) made for such chaplainries and services. Such a function is evident at St Nicholas' church in Aberdeen, where the altar existed before 14 January 1455.³⁵ The first reference to it is uninformative of purpose, recording simply payment of an annualrent³⁶ owed to the altar, but a fresh endowment made before November 1480 by William Rattray provided income for a chaplain and stipulated the *pro anima* service he would celebrate there.³⁷ Only an abstract of the endowment survives, unfortunately shorn of the rationale for Rattray's choice of the Holy Blood altar. A second endowment for weekly requiem Masses was made sometime after c.1480 by Master Thomas Muresone, vicar of Premnay;³⁸ this also lacks explanation of his devotion but its chaplainry-founding intention is explicit. This parish church altar and chaplainry precede those in St Machar's Cathedral in the adjacent episcopal burgh by 40 years. That altar was founded by a cathedral prebendary between the death in 1479 of John Stewart, earl of Mar, and January 1494 when it received royal confirmation, with its chaplainry endowed explicitly for the salvation of the souls of Earl John and his predecessors, the patrons of the prebend.³⁹ No further record of it survives but the founder's monument is located in the second bay from the east of the nave's south aisle, perhaps indicating the altar's former position.

A chaplainry existed at the Holy Blood altar in Holy Trinity parish church at St Andrews in Fife by 1472, when Thomas Brown, a burges, gave an endowment to it,⁴⁰ but no record survives of when or by whom the original foundations were made. With leading St Andrews clerics including Bishop Kennedy participating in the Bruges procession, and with Kennedy's interest in wider Christocentric devotions evident in the dedication of the university college of St Salvator that he founded in 1450, a connection with one of the many religious institutions in the city could be conjectured, but the altar's location in the parish church argues for a burges-led initiative.⁴¹ A second chaplainry was established in 1548 as the result of a bequest.⁴²

The St Andrews altar and its chaplainries had a single dedication but a more complex Christocentric dedication to which a private chaplainry function attached occurs at Montrose.⁴³ In January 1532 David Stirling, the burgh's provost, made a substantial *pro anima* endowment at the altar of the Holy Saviour Jesus Christ and His Precious Body and Blood which had been founded by him and Sir John Gilbert, master of the burgh hospital.⁴⁴ Stirling

³⁵ James Cooper, ed., *Cartularium ecclesiae Sancti Nicolai Aberdonensis*. New Spalding Club, 2, 7. 2 vols. (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1888–92), 2: 328.

³⁶ *Annualrent* is the Middle Scots legal term for interest on money which has been lent, which takes the form of a yearly rent out of land.

³⁷ Cooper, ed., *Cartularium ecclesiae Sancti Nicolai Aberdonensis*, 1: 215.

³⁸ Cooper, ed., *Cartularium ecclesiae Sancti Nicolai Aberdonensis*, 1: 219.

³⁹ [Cosmo Innes], ed., *Registrum episcopatus Aberdonensis, ecclesie cathedralis Aberdonensis, regesta que extant in unum collecta*. Spalding Club 13. 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1845), 1: 333–4.

⁴⁰ StAUL, Miscellaneous writs relating to properties with connections to St Mary's College, St Andrews, UYSM110/B16/3.

⁴¹ CSMPC, St Andrews Holy Trinity <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158866> (Accessed 3 August 2015).

⁴² StAUL, Burgh Charters and Miscellaneous Writs, B65/23/299c; Register Book of the City of St Andrews (The Black Book), B65/1/1, f. 16v.

⁴³ CSMPC, Montrose, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158990> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

⁴⁴ RMS, 3: no. 1146.

provided for a perpetual chaplain skilled in chant, musical arts and grammar, who would be the burgh's choir-master, qualifications which illuminate the elaborate services that would have been conducted at the altar for the souls' weal of the named beneficiaries. With two associated chaplainries, the St Andrews altar was also the focus of rich liturgical performance in its obit and anniversary functions as laid out in its endowment charters, while at Dumfries, discussed below, up to 20 priests sang in the commemorative services at its Holy Blood altar. Music was clearly a major dimension of the services at these altars,⁴⁵ but, sadly, no Mass setting or other music related to the Holy Blood survives from Scotland.

Haddington's Holy Blood altar, first mentioned only in August 1536, was also apparently a private chaplainry endowment.⁴⁶ It illustrates a little-known dimension of trade in heritable property rights involving ecclesiastical appointments, for when its patron sold portions of his possessions to another burghess, the advowson of the chaplainry was included.⁴⁷ Although the vendor perhaps reserved future *pro anima* benefits such as a patron of an altar and chaplainry could expect, the buyer gained access to the benefits flowing from the Masses and prayers of future chaplains. The situation is confused by a further legal process in 1555 which referred to an altar of St Salvator alias Holy Blood.⁴⁸ Patronage of St Salvator's had been assigned by a burgh court judgement in 1539 to George Crosar, the altar having been founded by his father, and in 1543 one John Crosar was chaplain at the Holy Blood altar.⁴⁹ This settlement confirms that by 1555 the St Salvator and Holy Blood services were located at the same altar. It perhaps had a dedication similar to that in Montrose, where the Holy Saviour Jesus Christ and His Precious Body and Blood combined three Christocentric elements: St Salvator, Corpus Christi and Holy Blood.

Most Holy Blood altars in Glasgow diocese had perpetual chaplainry functions attached to them. It is unknown when and by whom the earliest recorded of these was founded but that at St John's in Ayr existed before 25 May 1484, when it received an obit endowment in memory of Thomas Mason, burghess of Ayr, and his wife, Cristine Glover.⁵⁰ It received a second endowment in 1502 when Andrew Makcormyll, vicar of Straiton, granted 20 shillings annually split between payment for the church's choristers and alms for the poor on the anniversary of his death.⁵¹ The next recorded foundation was made by Thomas Forsyth, canon of Glasgow, in the cathedral's nave on 16 June 1487, originally with a sole dedication to Corpus Christi.⁵² Forsyth bequeathed properties for the benefit of his own soul and those of his parents, benefactors, friends and parishioners more generally.⁵³

⁴⁵ See discussion in R. Bowers, 'Liturgy and Music in the Role of the Chantry Priest', in *The Medieval Chantry in England*, eds. J.M. Luxford and J. McNeill (Leeds: Maney, 2011), 130–56.

⁴⁶ CSMPC, Haddington St Mary, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158616> (Accessed 7 August 2015). The lack of medieval records may arise from the occupation of Haddington in the later 1540s by an English garrison and the sacking of the church at that time.

⁴⁷ RMS, 3: no. 1616, confirmation under the great seal dated 28 August 1536.

⁴⁸ NRS, Haddington Burgh: Court and Council Records 1530–55, B30/9/2, f. 83r.

⁴⁹ B30/9/2, ff. 101v and 188v.

⁵⁰ James Paterson, ed., *The Obit Book of the Church of St John the Baptist of Ayr* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1848), 28.

⁵¹ W.S. Cooper, ed., *Charters of the Royal Burgh of Ayr* (Edinburgh: Ayr and Galloway Archaeological Association, 1883), no. 54. A further Mass of the Holy Blood was founded at the Holy Blood altar in 1533 by Thomas Neil, burghess, and Agnes Wishart, his wife. The charter of endowment provides details of the form of the service; Paterson, ed., *Obit Book of the Church of St John*, 36–7.

⁵² C.N. Innes, ed., *Registrum episcopatus Glasguensis*. 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs, 1843), 2: no. 446.

⁵³ Glasgow, Mitchell Library, Cartularium Glasguense (MS), vol. 2: 1172, cited in John Durkan, 'Notes on Glasgow Cathedral', *Innes Review* (1970): 62.

It may be that a Holy Blood Mass was celebrated there on one weekday from the time of its foundation, but sometime before 1534 the Corpus Christi altar received a secondary dedication to the Holy Blood, with an associated chaplainry.⁵⁴ At Dumfries, the altar and chaplainry of the Sacred Blood of Jesus Christ, located in St Mary's aisle in the parish church, was founded in 1506 by William Cunninghame, burgess, for the salvation of his wife's soul.⁵⁵ Altar and chaplain were sustained on rents from Cunninghame's property, and further rents provided by two fellow burgesses. Cunninghame expanded the endowment in 1510 and increased the *pro anima* beneficiaries to include kings James III, James IV and their wives,⁵⁶ adding new income from his own properties but with much of the augmented endowment derived from rents due from the tenements of seven other burgesses and one chaplain. The final element of the 1510 charter provided for annual Masses on the anniversary of Cunninghame's death, to be celebrated by 20 priests. Strongly personal though his endowments were, there is behind them evidence for a wider community of interest in the Holy Blood amongst Cunninghame's fellow burgesses. Finally, a similar function can be inferred at the altar and chaplainry founded in 1519 at Sanquhar, but that purpose is not stated explicitly in the surviving confirmation of the lost foundation charter.⁵⁷ This altar has the only Holy Blood dedication identified in the church of a small, non-royal burgh and is the only instance where the rights of presentation after its founder's death passed to a noble patron rather than to the magistrates and council or trade-guildsmen of the community.

It is as the focus of the devotions of merchant-guilds and confraternities that most evidence survives. At Edinburgh, Aberdeen and St Andrews the loss of early charters permits burgess connections with the foundation of the altars only to be inferred, but a direct association between the merchant-burgess oligarchs of a Scottish burgh and patronage of the Holy Blood cult is established clearly in a 1484 royal confirmation of a grant made by three bailies and five councillors of Inverkeithing in Fife.⁵⁸ Their grant established a chaplain at the altar of the Holy Blood in Inverkeithing's parish church with annual rents of 10 merks for his maintenance by bequest from a fellow burgess.⁵⁹ Although the foundation originated with that private bequest, patronage rested with the bailies, council and community of Inverkeithing, turning the altar and chaplainry from a private chantry into a communal resource.

Burgess community links are also evident at Lanark and Dunfermline. At the former a process of endowment of a new chaplainry and service occurred in September 1490. Unlike the majority of Holy Blood altars, which were located in parish churches, Lanark's was in the chapel of St Nicholas in the burgh, rather than in the parish church which lay outside the town.⁶⁰ St Nicholas' was a substantial structure with at least three altars by the later 1400s, and post-Reformation replaced its mother-church as the

⁵⁴ Durkan, 'Notes on Glasgow Cathedral', 62.

⁵⁵ RMS, 2: no. 3010.

⁵⁶ RMS, 2: no. 3513.

⁵⁷ RMS, 3: no. 862.

⁵⁸ CSMPC Inverkeithing, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158650> (Accessed 7 August 2015). RMS, 2: no. 1596. John Blackburn was a prominent member of the burgess community and is earlier recorded acquiring property in south Fife as a result of money-lending activities, RMS, 2: no. 1488.

⁵⁹ CSMPC, Inverkeithing <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158650> (Accessed 3 August 2015).

⁶⁰ Lanark Records, 8.

parish church.⁶¹ Its town-centre location, close to the seat of burgh government in the tol-booth, perhaps explains why it rather than the parish church was chosen to house the altar. At Dunfermline it is again unclear if the merchant guild was responsible for founding the altar in the parochial nave of the abbey church,⁶² but it was certainly one of three which the guild took under its patronage.⁶³ It was first recorded in the Guild Court Book in 1491, but this does not mark its date of foundation. Entries in that book detail the allocation of guild fees and annualrents to support the altar, provide its furnishings and maintain its chaplains.⁶⁴

Dunfermline's altar was in the merchant guild's patronage and was the focus of guild-brethren devotions from at least the 1490s, but there is no evidence for the formalisation of those devotions through the establishment of a confraternity. The first clear evidence for such an association occurs at Perth.⁶⁵ Some sources refer to Perth's altars of the Holy Cross/Rood and Holy Blood almost interchangeably, raising the possibility, as at Edinburgh, that the latter began as a service at the former.⁶⁶ Specific reference to a separate Holy Blood altar at Perth first occurs in 1505 but there is reference to Holy Blood devotions in the burgh as early as January 1496.⁶⁷ In that month a record of guild elections fined anyone interfering with the electoral process 20 shillings to be paid to 'the Haly Blud', while in March 1498 anyone convicted of breaching certain burgh ordinances was bound to pay a £3 fine.⁶⁸ For the most part, the fines (paid in cash or wax) were levied for breaches by guild-brethren of ordinances governing trade, and by non-guild-brethren for contraventions of the guild's trade monopoly, but the increasing frequency from the 1540s of reiteration of the requirement to attend the Mass and uphold the altar, coupled with fines for defiance and non-compearance, point to their use as a mechanism for enforcing religious conformity amongst the burgh's elite. Similar application of fines can be seen in respect of the altar in Dundee, which had been founded in 1515 by the burgh's merchant guild and provided by them with a fund for weekly Masses.⁶⁹ By a 1551 ordinance, Dundee's council awarded to the guild's altar all fines levied on non-freemen who traded in

⁶¹ *Lanark Records*, xxiv–xxvi. For additional altars and services in the chapel, see *Lanark Records*, 5, 337, 352–3, 355, 360.

⁶² CSMPC Dunfermline Abbey, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158524> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

⁶³ Torrie, 'Guild in Fifteenth-Century Dunfermline', 255.

⁶⁴ Torrie, 'Guild in Fifteenth-Century Dunfermline'; Peter Chalmers, *Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1844), 126.

⁶⁵ CSMPC, Perth St John, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158836> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

⁶⁶ The Holy Cross or Rood altar had been founded by Sir John Spence in 1431, one of a group of altars founded by him in the recently rebuilt choir of the church; NRS, Records of King James VI Hospital, Perth, Altarages, GD79/4/8. Despite Marion Stavert's suggestion that it was the Holy Blood altar that Spence founded at that date, the records make no mention of that dedication before 1512; see Marion L. Stavert, ed., *The Perth Guildry Book 1452–1601*. Scottish Record Society, new series, 19 (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1993), v.

⁶⁷ Reference in October 1505 to King James IV making an offering of 14 shillings 'on the Halyblude bred' at Perth appears to be the earliest incidence; *TA*, 3: 67. 'Bred', i.e. 'a board', is Scots usage for a table or altar.

⁶⁸ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, nos. 235, 243. Fine payments are recorded in 1537, 1538, 1545, 1547, 1548, 1551, 1552, 1556; Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, nos. 325, 327, 356, 372, 381, 385, 408, 423, 450. The last reference to a fine levied on a guild-brother and applied to the upkeep of the altar occurred in August 1556, Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, no. 452.

⁶⁹ CSMPC, Dundee St Mary, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158956> (Accessed 7 August 2015); A. Maxwell, *The History of Old Dundee* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1884), App. 1, 558.

the burgh and infringed the privileges of the merchant guild.⁷⁰ Burgh guild support likewise maintained Cupar's Holy Blood altar.⁷¹ It is recorded only in 1550 and 1552, on the latter occasion the deacon bailie being identified as responsible for overseeing its upkeep.⁷² Such association between the Holy Blood cult and the authority of civic government and the formal institutions of the trade and craft guilds has been observed as a characteristic of the interplay of civil and religious power at Bruges,⁷³ but it was clearly also present in the context of Scottish civic government where the membership of the merchant guild, burgh community and lay confraternities were closely aligned.

The highly regulated ceremonial role of the guilds in the Holy Blood procession and wider religious performance at Bruges has Scottish parallels in the well-recorded examples of Perth and Edinburgh. At Perth on 15 November 1504 the guild court ordained arrangements for the conduct of the Holy Blood Mass, requiring all guild brethren to convene every Thursday at the ninth hour before noon when the bells were rung, to join the procession bearing the Eucharist through the church, and then attend the Mass. Failure to attend without reasonable cause or special licence incurred a penalty of one penny for each non-appearance.⁷⁴ Unlike at Bruges, no account survives that prescribes clothing requirements connected with guild-brothers' participation in the processions, but a 1505 reference from Edinburgh suggests that the Holy Blood confraternity there was distinguished by their crimson hoods.⁷⁵ A degree of management of a social group's religious behaviour which parallels many of the Flemish regulations is present in the 1504 Perth ordinance. For example, it required all guild brethren to make regular supplication at the Holy Blood light during the time of the Mass, with a 12 pence fine towards the light's maintenance for every failure. Regulation of the devotional activity of guild-brethren is clearer still following the first explicit reference to the focus for those devotions actually being a separate Holy Blood altar in a Guildry Book minute of 4 September 1512. On that date John Ermar presented his accounts to the guild-brethren, within which payment of 10 merks had been made for buying vestments for the celebration of devotions 'at the altar of the Holy Blood' ('ad altare cruoris divini').⁷⁶ A schedule of maintenance payments for the altar due from individual merchant-burgesses was agreed by the guild court in January 1531, and in 1533 it was agreed that all fees for the hiring of the guild's 'mort clath', or coffin pall, should be paid to the altar, but it is only in 1535 that the altar was recorded specifically as in the patronage of the dean and guildry of Perth.⁷⁷ Guild ordinances of 24 November 1542 affirm the guildry's obligation to maintain the Holy Blood Mass and altar; payments from brethren would contribute to that obligation.⁷⁸ In June 1544, an ordinance concerning the appointment of auditors of the guildry's finances

⁷⁰ Dundee and District Archives, Dundee Burgh and Head Court Books, 1550–5, f. 92v. The sacking of Dundee by English forces in the 1540s and again in the late 1640s saw the destruction of most of the burgh's medieval parchment records.

⁷¹ CSMPC, Cupar, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158500> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

⁷² StAUL, Cupar, Court & Council Records, 1549–54, B13/10/1, ff. 15, 97v.

⁷³ Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion*, 50.

⁷⁴ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, no. 261. This statute was confirmed in 1531: no. 311.

⁷⁵ TA, 3: 39.

⁷⁶ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, no. 277.

⁷⁷ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, nos. 311, 318.

⁷⁸ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, no. 342.

affirmed that only merchants, or craftsmen who had been admitted as guild-brethren and paid their dues to the altar 'as merchandis dois', could serve as auditors.⁷⁹ It is implicit in this arrangement that all of Perth's merchants and some prominent craftsmen were guild-brethren and all paid annual fees, part of which were assigned for the support of the guild's altar. By extension from that position, it seems that all guild-brethren were members of the Holy Blood confraternity.

Burgess status was not a requirement for confraternity membership at Edinburgh, which had emerged in the late fifteenth century as the principal burgh of the kingdom; in July/August 1505 it gained its most prominent member in King James IV, payments being recorded for the purchase of crimson satin for his hood and taffeta for its lining 'quhen he wes maid brodir to the Haly Blude'.⁸⁰ On 11 June 1506, the feast of Corpus Christi, after Mass in his chapel the king joined his confreres at St Giles'.⁸¹ Intentionally or not, this royal participation underscored the prestige attached to the confraternity in the kingdom's chief town and also indicates its members' social standing within the burgh as the leaders of its merchant community. Wealth followed those factors and it is likely that the construction of a new chapel which could provide a splendid sole-use setting for their altar was a consequence of their privileged status. It is unclear if the chaplainry and associated endowments relating to the original Holy Blood altar moved in 1518 to the new location in the chapel south of the two eastern bays of the nave's outer south aisle which still carries the name of the Holy Blood Aisle. On 10 December 1518 a petition from Edinburgh's merchant and guild brothers gained permission that 'ws [use] of the ile now laity biggit within our parochie kirk of Sanct Geill on the south syde of the samen, in honour of the Haly Blude to be assignit and given to thame'. It was also agreed that 'the Haly Blude [would] be thare patrone, and to haif the Octavis of Corpus Christi to be their procuratiounn dais'.⁸² Work on the new chapel was complete by 1522 when its altar was described as newly created.⁸³ Endowments flowed to it, the earliest recorded being a private donation on 15 August 1527.⁸⁴ Subsequent gifts were linked directly to the confraternity of the Holy Blood, beginning in 1529 with a money grant to the altar's chaplain in the confraternity's name.⁸⁵ At the Reformation the effect of these endowments can be seen in the altar's three chaplainries, whose joint value was nearly £50.⁸⁶

The only other surviving explicit evidence for a Holy Blood confraternity occurs at Stirling, where the altar existed by 1502 and in 1522 the 'fraternity of the Holy Blood' was

⁷⁹ Stavert, ed., *Perth Guildry Book*, no. 348.

⁸⁰ *TA*, 3: 39.

⁸¹ *TA*, 3: 75.

⁸² M. Wood and H. Armet, eds., *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*. 9 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1927-67), 1: 181-6.

⁸³ Wood, ed., *Protocol Book of John Foular*, 2: no. 302.

⁸⁴ *RMS*, 3: no. 491.

⁸⁵ John Durkan, ed., *Protocol Book of John Foular, 1528-34*. Scottish Record Society, new series 10 (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1985), no. 132; *RMS*, 3: no. 2600. Amongst the surviving items relating to the Holy Blood cult and its confraternity at Edinburgh is the so-called 'Fetternear Banner', a processional banner dating from c.1520 displaying the blood-drenched figure of Christ Crucified and the instruments of the Passion. For discussion of the banner and the symbolism within the depiction of the Crucifixion which it displays, see McRoberts, 'Fetternear Banner'; Fitch, *Search for Salvation*, 133; Audrey-Beth Fitch, 'Mothers and Their Sons: Mary and Jesus in Scotland, 1450-1560', in *Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary*, eds. Boardman and Williamson, 159-76 (172).

⁸⁶ James Kirk, ed., *The Books of Assumption of the Thirds of Benefices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 117, 130, 131.

recorded and the altar, described as pertaining to the skimmers' craft, was endowed with two annualrents.⁸⁷ The confraternity received a further annualrent in 1530, the gift being made 'for the weal of [the donor's] soul and support of the faculty of the brethren of the altar of the Holy Blood'.⁸⁸ On 12 October 1556 the council ordered that the annuals of the Holy Blood altar should be gathered by the dean of guild and put in the common purse to be divided at the council's discretion for the ornamentation of the church.⁸⁹

In three cases, it remains unclear when and by whom the altars were founded and direct evidence for a pre-Reformation link to either civic authorities or confraternities is lacking. Nothing is known of the circumstances at Irvine where the Holy Blood altar's existence is recorded only once in a 1546 rental.⁹⁰ Kirkcaldy's altar is equally obscure, being first mentioned in a surviving record only at the Reformation.⁹¹ At Peebles, first reference to the altar dates from June 1565 when the council commanded the pointing of goods belonging to unnamed individuals who owed rents to the former chaplain of both it and the Rood altar.⁹² By that date the burgh council controlled the patronage but it is not clear how long before the Reformation that position had been established. Later sixteenth-century records list 35 individual properties from which annualrents were due. Some pertained to the Rood altar rather than the Holy Blood, but it is clear that the latter had received an extensive portfolio of endowments from Peebles' burgesses.⁹³

Although the altar at Dumfries had been endowed by several burgesses down to 1510 it remained in the private patronage of the Cunninghames rather than passing into the gift of the burgh authorities. In December 1550, when Herbert Cunninghame was named as patron of the chaplainry, a notarial instrument records that he went to the altar to present and admit the priest, James Gledstanes, who would sing a solemn Mass of Corpus Christi every Thursday 'as his predecessors had been wont to do'.⁹⁴ Gledstanes then bound himself to sing with the other chaplains and choristers in the choir of the church on all feast days of the year. A second instrument involving the Holy Blood altar the following February reveals measures taken to secure *pro anima* functions where endowments were inadequate to sustain a chaplain. It also throws light on another dimension of Holy Blood devotion, the Mass of St Gregory, in which Pope Gregory the Great had a vision of the redemptive power of Christ's blood, flowing from the Man of Sorrows' wounds into the chalice on the altar and thence streaming out to souls in need of redemption.⁹⁵ The instrument records that James Gledstane's kinsman, Matthew Gledstanes of that ilk, patron of Dumfries' altar and service of St Gregory,

⁸⁷ *Charters and Other Documents Relating to the Royal Burgh of Stirling, A.D. 1124-1705* (Glasgow: For the Corporation of Stirling, 1884), Appendix I, 188; Robert Renwick, ed., *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Stirling, AD 1519-1666* (Glasgow: Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1887), 13; SCA, Stirling Burgh Charters and Other Documents, B66/25/53; Stirling Court and Council records, 1519-1530, B66/15/1, 13 February 1522; Stirling Burgh Charters and other Documents, B66/25/75.

⁸⁸ *Extracts from the Records of Stirling*, App. 1, 266.

⁸⁹ SCA Stirling Court and Council records, 1554-7, B66/15/3, 12 Oct 1556.

⁹⁰ *Muniments of the Royal Burgh of Irvine*. 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Ayrshire and Galloway Archaeological Association, 1890-1), 1: 189, 190.

⁹¹ Kirk, ed., *Books of Assumption*, 81.

⁹² *Peebles Records*, 300.

⁹³ *Peebles Records*, 348-50.

⁹⁴ R.C. Reid, ed., *Protocol Book of Mark Carruthers 1531-61*. Scottish Record Society 86 (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1956), no. 138.

⁹⁵ For discussion of the Mass of St Gregory, see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 11-12. For a Scottish representation of Pope Gregory's vision of the Man of Sorrows as source of the blood in the Mass chalice, see the Arbuthnot Prayer Book, Paisley Museum, Renfrewshire.

had presented him to that chaplainry also. Matthew had consented, however, that St Gregory's image should be placed on and the service made at the Holy Blood altar 'and thair to remaine for evyr, notwithstanding the clausis and restrictionis contenit in the charteir of mortificatioune, becaus I knaw it vill not sustene ane chaplane of itself'.⁹⁶ Matthew reserved heritably the right to make every second provision to the now combined altar and service of the Holy Blood and St Gregory, to which Herbert Cunninghame likewise consented and recognised that the resources allocated to his service alone could not sustain a chaplain.

Further dedications to St Gregory which may have an association with Holy Blood devotion are found at Dundee and Edinburgh.⁹⁷ A blank page in the 1454 inventory of the moveable goods of the various altars in St Mary's, Dundee, suggests that St Gregory's altar was in existence by then, but it is only from 1550 that record of a chaplain survives.⁹⁸ A secondary chaplainry of St Gregory was endowed at the altar of St James the Apostle in St Giles' Edinburgh in 1491.⁹⁹ In neither case is there such clear association with the Holy Blood as occurs at Dumfries. It is probably in the same wider redemptory context as the Gregory cult that a linkage between Marian and Holy Blood devotions at Dunkeld Cathedral should be seen. Only first revealed in a legal agreement from 1592, it emerges that an altar of Our Lady in the cathedral had a secondary dedication to the Holy Blood, with attached chaplainry.¹⁰⁰ There were two altars of Our Lady at Dunkeld, one founded by Donald MacNaughton, bishop-elect (1437–40), and the other shortly before c.1500 by Bishop George Brown (1483–1515).¹⁰¹ To distinguish the two, Brown's, which appears to have been founded as a post-epidemic thanks-offering, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary *libera nos de penis inferni* ('free us from the punishments of Hell'), and, given that dedication and its intercessory and redemptive character, it is more probably at this altar that the secondary dedication to the Holy Blood occurred.

The interrelationship of various strands of Christocentric devotion manifest in the compromise at Dumfries, and in the dual or multiple dedications at Dunkeld, Edinburgh, Haddington or Montrose, is displayed clearly as a purposeful act at St Michael's, Linlithgow.¹⁰² There was no separate Holy Blood altar, but almost a decade before its formal incorporation into Bishop Elphinstone's new Scottish breviary a Mass of the Holy Blood was being celebrated at the altar of Corpus Christi, which was probably founded in the mid-1400s by William Foulis, archdeacon of St Andrews.¹⁰³ Foulis was active in the 1440s and 1450s, which accords well with the altar's first securely dated appearance in 1456.¹⁰⁴ The Holy Blood Mass here was one to which King James IV was personally devoted and when resident in the adjoining palace on four occasions in 1505 and 1507

⁹⁶ Reid, ed., *Protocol Book of Mark Carruthers*, no. 151.

⁹⁷ A paired dedication to St Gregory and St Augustine at Perth may relate to an English-inspired cult relating to the sixth-century mission to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons and perhaps is associated with members of the household of King James I and Queen Joan Beaufort, who were probably also responsible for the Zita dedications at Perth and Linlithgow.

⁹⁸ Alexander C. Lamb, *Dundee: Its Quaint and Historic Buildings* (Dundee: G. Petrie, 1895), xxxiv.

⁹⁹ RMS, 2: no. 2058.

¹⁰⁰ NRS, GD220/1/A/5/2/14.

¹⁰¹ Alexander Myln, ed., *Vitae Dunkeldensis ecclesiae episcoporum* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1831), 18, 40.

¹⁰² CSMPC, Linlithgow St Michael <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158732> (Accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁰³ John Ferguson, *Ecclesia antiqua or, the History of an Ancient Church (St Michael's, Linlithgow)* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1905), Appendix I, 322.

¹⁰⁴ NRS, Linlithgow Burgh Charters, B48/17/8.

he attended that service, starting in the month after his reception into the Edinburgh confraternity.¹⁰⁵ There is similar pre-Elphinstone origin for a Mass of the Sacred Blood and Body of Christ celebrated in St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall in Orkney, which in February 1495 James IV confirmed as an endowment made by the bishop of Orkney.¹⁰⁶ The wording of the charter is ambiguous and it is unclear if a separate Holy Blood/Corpus Christi altar was established in the cathedral or, as seems the case if a *prima facie* reading of the document is accepted, the Mass was celebrated at the high altar.

Fragmentary though detail such as that from Linlithgow or Kirkwall is, collectively the data from all known Scottish Holy Blood dedications and devotions reveal a richly textured record of the individual and communal significance of this cult amongst Scotland's urban lay population. Its importance and its functions were manifold and reflected particularly Scottish manifestations of different dimensions of common later medieval European lay religious expression. The particular relationship of the Holy Blood cult to the intensification through the thirteenth century and beyond of quests for personal redemption, closely bound up in the development of theories of Purgatory, made it especially attractive as a focus for both private and guild-supported chaplainry foundations. In this, it can also be seen as a dimension of the later medieval trend towards provision of increasingly elaborate liturgical opportunities in secular ecclesiastical contexts, most evident in collegiate foundations but also in the proliferation of chaplainries in Scotland's urban parish churches from the later fourteenth century onwards. From the time of its inclusion in Elphinstone's Aberdeen Breviary, that significance extended from the churches where it already had a presence in altar dedications to all parish churches and chapels in the kingdom.

Bishop Elphinstone's inclusion of Corpus Christi and Holy Blood services in his breviary, which replaced the Sarum Use that had been employed in Scotland since the thirteenth century, should be seen partly as a local response to the wider European trend towards finding opportunities to give laymen a more direct spiritual relationship with God. Whilst still officiated over by priests, the processions, devotional activities and Masses in which members of the Holy Blood confraternities took part provided routes for personal and collective interaction with liturgical performance. At Edinburgh and Perth, and probably at the majority if not all of the known locations of merchant-guild patronised Holy Blood altars, the confraternities performed weekly – if not daily – highly visible roles in services within the parish churches. Involvement in those activities became an important aspect of their collective identity as the leaders of the burgh community and sealed a close relationship between the Church and the representatives of civic authority, following models best represented by the activities of the Holy Blood confraternity at Bruges.

Caroline Walker Bynum has rightly warned against focusing on the civic control and identity-forming significance of the cult at the expense of recognising its fundamental devotional and soteriological significance. Nevertheless, as at Bruges, there is clear evidence from Scotland of just such a social-control function associated with Holy Blood devotions. In multiple instances in Scotland, clearest at Cupar, Dundee, Dunfermline,

¹⁰⁵ *TA*, 3: 61, 64, 68, 291.

¹⁰⁶ George Burnett, ed., *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol. 10, 1488–1486 (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1887), 583–5.

Edinburgh, Perth and Stirling, it can be seen that the confraternities and the religious performance associated with them were employed as mechanisms to regulate social behaviour through religious conformity and vice versa. Such dimensions are most evident from the mid-1520s onwards, by which time Lutheran ideas and literature were percolating into Scotland through its North Sea ports. At Perth, as already discussed, guild/confraternity members who failed to participate or who participated in a manner that displayed an absence of sincere commitment were fined. Enforcement continued until the mid-1550s when the legal and spiritual authority of the established hierarchy faced open resistance from a growing body of Protestant sympathisers amongst the leading members of the burgh communities.

Reduced largely to the fragmentary parchment record for its former significance, the almost complete absence of surviving physical paraphernalia associated with the Holy Blood devotion in Scotland – the notable examples of the Fetternear Banner and the Gregory Mass illumination in the Arbuthnott Missal apart – has served to reduce its visibility and distort the significance of the cult in the spiritual life of the lay population at large as a devotion of choice and not simply a vehicle for conformity and control. But, as the play of the Holy Blood performed on Aberdeen's Windmill Hill in 1440 serves to remind us at the end, its popularity originated in its value as a means of bringing the population at large into a closer and more personal understanding of the significance of Christ's Crucifixion.

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