THE ROLE OF THE SCOTTISH CATHOLIC SOCIETY

Again feel that the church in the city was not divorced from the real world. In this sense identity consolidation necessarily entails the co-opting of competing identity foci. Another important difference between the rural and urban spheres of activity was in the destiny of economic co-operation: replacing the merchant of commercial capitalism was far easier to accomplish than transforming industrial capital through the co-operative technique applied to coal-steel production. Hence economic co-operation based on low capital needs worked best in rural life; in urban areas it could only be partially enacted. The symbolic value of the return of the church to urban life lay in its development of what was lacking in the industrial areas i.e., credit, housing, and consumer goods for workers chained to company stores, homes, and income.

Some Remarks on the Episcopal Ideal in Sixteenth Century Scotland

A LONG AND VENERABLE TRADITION in Scottish historical thought has placed much of the responsibility for the deplorable condition of the church in Scotland on the eve of the Reformation squarely on the shoulders of the episcopate. Modern historical writing has confirmed the view,1 rooted in a mass of contemporary testimony and record evidence, that in the main the sixteenth-century bishops were neither conscientious about their spiritual duties nor seriously taken up with the cause of ecclesiastical reform. We have been reminded in a seminal study of the entire sixteenth-century episcopate2 of the role of the crown in this problem, through the flagrant misuse of the ius nominandi, granted first in an indult of 1487 to James III by Innocent VIII. Here the appointment to a bishopric or prelacy over one of the greater monasteries was often reduced to a means by which political support could be consolidated, royal servants supported and rewarded and ecclesiastical revenue made accessible to crown uses. The creation of an episcopate almost totally secular in patterns of behaviour and outlook, reflecting fully the structure and character of the Scottish nobility from which it was drawn, produced within the church a crisis of spiritual leadership at a time in which not only was some measure of reform desperately needed, but also when the means to self-reform, in strict legislation enacted at successive provincial councils from 1549 to 1559,3 lay near at hand. Careful research has shown that there were isolated individuals, of whom the best known perhaps is Robert Reid of Orkney, who took their episcopal duties more seriously than the others. And there is certainly the need for patient and close study of
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the later medieval Scottish church for precise information on the quality of pastoral and administrative oversight furnished by diocesan authorities. It is unlikely, however, that much will be discovered to alter the general view of the sixteenth-century bishops as ill-suited for, and little concerned with, the proper discharge of their spiritual obligations.

Contemporary observers were painfully aware that the prelates had failed collectively to satisfy the demands of their office and the needs of the souls in their care. Perhaps John Knox best epitomizes the attack of the reformers when he refers scathingly to the negligent bishops as 'idle bellies' and 'dum doggis'. Nor was such criticism confined entirely to the Protestant camp. Even the energetic Ninian Winzet, one of the most vocal and articulate defenders of Catholic orthodoxy after the reformation, who was rewarded for his efforts with the abbacy over the Scots Benedictines at Ratisbon, publicly conceded that the root cause of the present religious difficulties lay in the election of unqualified bishops and other pastors. What is most interesting is that many critics of the episcopate recognized not only that the bishops had failed but, more than this, they had a reasonably clear notion of a bishop's true duties and where their contemporaries had fallen short.

A recurring theme in the writings of Protestant critics of the Scottish episcopate prior to 1560 stressed that the office of bishop was first and foremost a preaching office and entailed a commitment to works of pastoral care. The severe attacks by reformers in Scotland were grounded not in some vague and personal dissatisfaction, but on the conviction that the bishops had failed to follow the guidelines of episcopal behaviour clearly set out in Scripture, particularly in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul. This is not the place to investigate the pastoral dimension of Scottish reformed theology, a much neglected subject which could fill a large book. We can only note in passing that the Scottish reformers regarded the pastoral duties of the bishop in preaching and teaching the Word as pre-eminent among episcopal obligations, and precisely in this area contemporary bishops were judged deficient.

The theological consequences of this view were fraught with implications for the history of church government in post-Reformation Scotland and, more immediately, the fate of the last generation of Catholic bishops before the Reformation. Neglect of pastoral concerns, the failure of the bishop to attend to the spiritual needs of the community whose spiritual well-being was placed directly in his care, in the eyes of the Protestant reformers severely compromised a bishop's authority — even the claim of apostolic succession was made contingent upon the diligent fulfilment of the essential obligation to provide religious guidance to clergy and laity. Echoing a familiar humanist line of argument from the previous century, it was suggested that 'true' bishops justified their claim to obedience not in the mere possession of office and title, but rather in the exercise of those duties which characteristically pertained to them. In short, those who did not live like bishops, though they be consecrated and in full possession of those powers and privileges which bishops have in the past enjoyed, since they do not preach and teach the message of salvation as Paul and Christ commanded, merit not even the title of bishop nor may they rightfully expect the obedience of the community of believers.

However, as we have noted above, criticism of the Scottish episcopate was not limited to Protestant voices. In point of fact, a survey of selected writings of prominent orthodox Scots of the first half of the sixteenth century reveals an underlying conception of the nature of episcopal life which shares the Pauline pastoral emphasis, but refrains from drawing revolutionary implications. Indeed, it would appear that the wider European discussion of the nature of the bishop's role in the life of the Church, a central feature of Catholic reform thought of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had reached Scotland and so prepared the ground that anti-episcopal Protestant invective of the mid-sixteenth century appeared to be neither innovative nor revolutionary. The real crisis of the bishops in Scotland has its origin, I believe, in the circumstances when, precisely at a time when the subject of episcopal life was of concern to all segments of religious opinion, their actual quality was low. Before we examine these works of pre-Reformation Scots Catholics, a brief word concerning the European background onto which their ideas may be properly sketched would be in order.

It is possible to discern a direct line of development among Catholic reformers in the rehabilitation of the episcopal ideal as the foundation of ecclesiastical life, beginning in early sixteenth-century Italy to its codification in the enactments of the Council of Trent. Broadly
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speaking, this ideal was nourished by the scriptural figure of the Good Shepherd, the Pauline epistles and an historical vision of the Church in late antiquity derived from Patristic sources. The numerous commentators who took up the question of the nature of the episcopal office display remarkable in their common emphasis on the personal role of the bishop in the care of souls.9

Perhaps the earliest and most characteristic of these treatises on episcopal duties was composed by the future cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1481-1542) on the occasion of the election of Pietro Lippomano to the bishopric of Bergamo in 1516. Contarini's later career as the leader of the reform movement at the Roman curia gives this exposition, entitled De officio, episcopi, an added significance. The essential obligation of a bishop's life, according to Contarini, lay in the personal participation of the ordinary in the cura animarum. Thus it is urged that the bishop ought to be resident in his diocese in order to supervise the formation of the clergy and ensure that religious foundations remain faithful to their original purposes. Furthermore, the bishop is expected to preach in person each Sunday and Contarini insists that direct pastoral activity of this sort could do much to rescue the laity from the great spiritual peril in which many of them live.9

Writing three years later, Claude de Seyssel bishop of Turin (b.1450) repeated many of Contarini's points and added that all the pastoral duties of the bishop find their proper fulfilment in preaching, by example of virtuous conduct as well as by exhortation.10 Occasionally, theory was transformed into action. The life of Matteo Giberti, the bishop of Verona from 1524-1543, prefigured the reform programmes of post-Tridentine Italian bishops, which encompassed the duties of residence and preaching among the diocesan clergy and ordinaries alike, personal participation by the bishop in divine office and the saying of Mass, visitations and synods, vigilance in assigning benefices and the conscientious administration of church revenues.11 The episcopal career of St Charles Borromeo at Milan following the Council of Trent provided European prelates with a living example, in the ecclesiastical organization of his diocese and in the realm of personal spirituality, of a model Tridentine bishop. Several congregations, over which the ordinary or his personal appointee presided, kept Borromeo and his emulators well informed about virtually all matters which affected the spiritual health of the diocese—from clerical formation and lay education to the condition of church buildings to lay confraternities. Under this form of administration the bishop was able to provide an unparalleled personal leadership in all areas of diocesan concern.

The pastoral ideal of the bishop became part of Europe's intellectual stock and it is our purpose to inquire whether it found expression in pre-Reformation Scotland.

HECTOR BOECE (c.1465-1536), one of the dominant figures of early sixteenth-century Scottish humanism and the first principal of the University of Aberdeen, wrote a collection of lives of the bishops of Aberdeen from the earliest days of the see to his own time. Although not his most substantial effort in the realm of historical writing, the Marthlacenseum et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Vitae deserves close scrutiny for the light it sheds on the question of the episcopal ideal in Scotland. As Boece is rarely studied from the viewpoint of church reform it may be instructive to recall his connections with Continental reform influences. While his later career brought him within the circle of court humanists centred about Bishop William Elphinstone, Boece spent his student days in the austere and quasi-monastic surroundings of the college of Montaigu at Paris. Life at Montaigu in the 1490's drew Boece into direct contact with the mainstream of northern religious reform.12 The principal of the college was Jan Standonck, a product of the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life and renowned preacher of ecclesiastical reform in and around Paris. Standonck introduced into the college the ideal of Christian education he had learned from the disciples of Groote which was directed at bringing together communities of poor students and instructing them in approved subjects in order to repopulate the monasteries of Europe with educated and pious young men. It is clear that by at least 1499 the Montaigu community, comprising mostly poor university students, a few rich pensioners and teaching staff, though not yet an independent religious congregation, observed a detailed rule of life which owed much to the Brethren in its rigorous asceticism.13 Public confession, examination of conscience, mutual denunciation, corporal punishments, distinctive robes, enforced abstinence and the saying of night offices enshrined in the formal rule of the Congregation of Montaigu published in 1503 were undoubtedly regular features of collegiate life during the years of Boece's residence there.
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Standonck's contribution to the cause of reform was not confined to Montaigu and Paris. At Tours in 1493, in an assembly called by Charles VII for the reform of the French church, Standonck articulated a broad plan of action distinctive for his insistence on the spiritual revivification of the episcopate as the foundation. He sought to renew in the French bishops a sense of purpose in their spiritual duties through enforced residence, visitations and a willingness on the part of the crown to appoint only men who were spiritually suitable to prelacies which entailed the care of souls. Indeed, recent research has shown that Standonck was only one of a group of French preachers, active until 1510 under the protection of Cardinal George d'Amboise, who called for the renewal of the episcopate as the fundamental step toward reform. Boece's experience at Montaigu in the closing years of the fifteenth century partook of both the practical dimension of Flemish piety and the stimulus of religious reform.

The Scotorum Historiae (1527), which became the foundation of much sixteenth-century Scottish historiography, was Hector Boece's major effort at historical writing. Though providing eloquent evidence of the author's classical acumen, the historical credibility of the work and his reputation as an historian were devastated in the well-known essay of Fr Thomas Innes in 1729 where he exploded the fantastic myths upon which Boece had founded the Historiae. The general history of Scotland was preceded by another work of historiographical interest which has received comparatively little attention, composed for Gavin Dunbar, bishop of Aberdeen, and printed at Paris in 1522. This was the already mentioned treatise on the bishops of Aberdeen, written in memory of Elphinstone, Boece's humanist patron at the court of James IV and Dunbar's illustrious predecessor in episcopal office. The judgement of modern historians seems inclined to regard the Vitae much more seriously than the Scotorum Historiae as portions of the work may be confirmed by independent sources. Boece presented his work to Dunbar with the hope that he would imitate the traditions of religious integrity and public service, especially evident in the career of Bishop Elphinstone, of Aberdeen's bishops. It is to this work that we turn for some insight into Boece's perception of the proper work of the good bishop.

The Vitae stresses two general characteristics of the good bishop: sanctity in personal life and care in administering to the needs of his diocese. The younger Alexander de Kininmund (bishop from 1355 to 1380) is said to have lived as a true Christian bishop, 'chaste, modest and righteous', and spent weekdays teaching theology and canon law, while feast days and Sundays were reserved for preaching from the Gospel. The thirteenth-century figure Ralph de Lamley is praised for his pursuit of holiness, humble clothing and simple table — a living example of Christian humility before his people — as well as promoting the cause of religion through frequent diocesan visitation. The elder Alexander de Kininmund (1329-1345/4), a doctor in theology, is held up to Dunbar as one who took his episcopal duties most seriously and 'at once devoted his whole energies to preaching and admonition, in both of which on account of his learning he was most persuasive.' Another bishop of the thirteenth century, Peter de Ramsey (1247-1256) is portrayed by Boece as an able administrator of cathedral and diocese, having reformed worship, redistributed ecclesiastical properties, carefully regulated episcopal income and other works 'characteristic of an excellent bishop.' We might also mention John de Rate (1350-1354/5) who was cited by Boece for his efforts to settle church properties and the annual visitations made throughout the diocese during which he would appear in parish churches personally to say Mass and preach to the people.

While the problem of episcopal residence is not dealt with explicitly in the Vitae, it is assumed that the bishop who dutifully attends to diocesan affairs must be constantly present among his flock. Adam de Kalder (1207-1228) spent his early episcopal career serving the crown until the death of King William and accordingly his claim to the title of bishop rested 'more at the suggestion and by command of the king than by the votes of the clergy', perhaps a less than veiled criticism of the exercise of the ius nominandi by the crown. Boece relates how, upon the death of the king, de Kalder was summoned by the clergy and people of Aberdeen to return to his see, and that during his remaining years he devoted himself to a restoration of the church which had seriously declined in his absence.

The importance which Boece attached to the careful choice of men for the episcopate is dramatically underscored in certain passages of the Vitae where the clergy and people of the diocese take an active interest in the election of a bishop. In the case of the younger Alexander de Kininmund, for example, it is stated that the cathedral canons had elected him over a royal nominee from France since they...
considered Alexander to be a spiritually better suited candidate. Boece concludes the story of his election with a brief lamentation that the heroic course of action pursued by the cathedral clergy of Aberdeen in the face of royal opposition would not be equalled in modern times.27

Boece did not confine his remarks on Aberdeen’s bishops solely to the faithfulness with which they attended to spiritual obligations (religiorentum rerum). He recognized and praised the distinguished roles which many of these bishops played in the political life of the realm (urbainarum rerum) as ambassadors, officers of state and advisors to the crown and he urged Dunbar to imitate this great tradition of public service. In so doing Boece reminded his audience that a Scottish bishop was often required to perform services to the nation outside of the boundaries of his diocese and beyond the limitations of his strictly pastoral charge.

The record of William Elphinstone represented for Boece a paragon of episcopal life, heroically preoccupied with preserving the nation against invasions and rebellions, yet solicitous to observe his duties to the diocese of Aberdeen. It is pointed out that even when absent from Aberdeen for reasons of state, Elphinstone directed his attention to the well-being of his dioecesans. Preparation for his future life as a bishop was obtained during a four-year stay in the parish of Kirkmichael, where he is said to have apportioned his hours between the performance of his duties as pastor of the parish church and literary pursuits. Boece describes his stay at Kirkmichael as a continuous rhythm of prayer and reflection inspired by sacred works and quiet literary studies — a programme with which a person schooled in Flemish pietistic humanism would have much sympathy.28

We are frequently reminded of Elphinstone’s generosity in restoring the cathedral church, providing it with beautiful ornaments, assisting the work of the religious in Aberdeen, the re-establishment of ecclesiastical discipline and the foundation of the university of which Boece was first principal. Though we are told nothing of Elphinstone’s personal preaching accomplishments, he is given credit for creating at Aberdeen’s university the milieu in which John Adamson, a theology professor and later Provincial over the Scots Dominicans, would mature. Adamson restored among the Dominicans in Scotland their reputations as great public preachers and biblical exegetes.29

Some effort has been spent in analyzing the collection of Aberdeen episcopal lives by Boece as it represents possibly the most comprehensive statement on the duties of the bishop by any pre-Reformation Scots writer. The influence of Standonck, whom Boece regarded as his guide in things of the spirit, may be discerned. Boece’s historical treatise does not pursue a systematic analysis of the nature of the episcopal life. Rather, the historical record is allowed to speak for itself and through it all the image of the good bishop is delineated with considerable clarity. The bishop’s duties include the conscientious discharge of diocesan business, residence, visitation, public preaching and the religious instruction of the faithful. Boece seems to have breathed much the same atmosphere as Contarini.

Boece was not the only Scot interested in the history of bishops. Alexander Myln was appointed abbot of the Augustinian house at Cambuskenneth by the Duke of Albany in 1517 following a career of twelve years as an official of the diocese of Dunkeld. He came to enjoy a most active public role, having taken part in an important embassy to England in 1524, was named one of the custodians of James V the following year, created President of the College of Justice in 1532 and finally elected one of the Lords of Articles.30 Myln’s political life was complemented by the strict attention which he seems to have devoted to the administration of his house. An important letter, of June 1522, from Myln to the abbot of the great Augustinian monastery of St-Victor at Paris, which since 1515 was connected to the French monastic reform inspired by Windesheim, establishes that Cambuskenneth monks were to be trained at the French house at Myln’s request in theological and scriptural study as well as in the monastic discipline of St-Victor.31 This significant chapter in the history of Scottish monastic reform has yet to be studied in detail.

Our interest in Myln pertains to the earlier portion of his career as a diocesan official at Dunkeld, for it was in this capacity that he came to compose a collection of Lives of the Bishops of Dunkeld as a tribute to the bishop Gavin Douglas, who had succeeded Andrew Stewart in 1516 after some considerable difficulty.32 While at some points it would appear that Boece’s Vita, which postdates the Dunkeld lives by four or five years, is modelled after Myln’s work, the earlier treatise is clearly not the work of a humanist panegyrist. Rather, one has the impression of Myln writing as a serious diocesan archivist whose interests lay in elucidating the institutional history of
Dunkeld and its cathedral church and diocesan staff with reference to the granting of various foundations, the history of individual parishes, contested diocesan rights, the architectural development of the cathedral and like matters. The bishops are portrayed as jealous guardians of ecclesiastical privilege and generous benefactors, and in general there is little of the personal anecdotes, comment on the character of individual bishops and their attention to pastoral concerns, which enliven Beece’s treatise.

To this general observation of Myln’s Lives there is one outstanding exception: if Beece’s work was composed in praise of the singular career of Bishop Elphinston, the lives of Dunkeld’s bishops reserve extended treatment for George Brown, bishop from about 1485 to his death in 1515, though he was incapacitated by senility from 1507. Brown’s ability to appoint able administrators and his concern to provide his diocese with adequate preaching merit considerable approbation from the pen of Myln. The effect of the introduction of well-educated men into diocesan service could be seen, Myln asserted in the case of a subdean, possibly David Abercrombie, who prosecuted a campaign of correction against those clerics who continued to support concubines. Further, we have it on Myln’s authority that Brown arranged with Franciscans and Dominicans who were acquainted with Gaelic to preach in the remoter parts of the diocese and hear confessions there, while the principal regent of the Pedagogy at St Andrews was brought to preach in the cathedral itself. The preaching programme initiated by Brown succeeded in bringing many souls to confession for which, Myln remarks significantly, the bishop would take no money.

In both historical studies of Scottish bishops we are presented with something more than bald historical records. History was intended to edify as well as inform, and these Vitaes provided mirrors of episcopal conduct – exhortations to Dunbar and Douglas to imitate the great traditions of the bishops in their respective dioceses and epitomized by the individual lives of bishops Elphinston and Brown.

There is no know study by a sixteenth-century Scots Catholic theologian on the duties of the good bishop. This is not to say that there was complete silence on the subject by theologians, as may be seen in an examination of the published works of John Major, Scotland’s last great writer in the scholastic tradition. The greatest single achievement of modern historians who have studied Scottish intellectual life in the middle ages has been to rescue the reputation of Major, who enjoyed enormous influence at Paris as well as in Scotland, from obscenity. Following the Reformation, and largely until the regeneration of serious interest in scholastic thought characteristic of historical scholarship in the 1930’s and 1940’s, it was common to regard Major as, in the words of a modern commentator, the author of only one book that mattered: Greater Britain, published in 1521, the parallel histories of Scotland and England from the earliest records and chronicles to Major’s own generation. We now know that Major’s historical writing comprised but a tiny part of his total output which consists mostly of very influential theological and scriptural commentaries.

Careful research by Dr John Durkan and Professor J.H. Burns into continental archival holdings as well as Major’s long neglected theological works has supplemented the pioneering biography by Sherriff Aeneas Mackay in the nineteenth century to the point that his life as a university teacher and his notable place in European intellectual life may be discerned in outline. Major commenced his formal theological studies at Paris with Standdock in 1493 and during the period of his master’s banishment he transferred to the college of Navarre, from which he graduated doctor in theology in 1506. Nostalgia for Scotland, and the promptings of certain prominent Scots, among them Gavin Douglas, the future bishop of Dunkeld, led him to entertain the notion of accepting the Treasurership of the Royal Chapel, which he rejected finally by 1510. There is no need to assume that life at Paris meant total exile from Scotland as there exists some evidence to suggest that Major may have had a hand in founding St Leonard’s College in 1512, whose statutes were inspired by, if not modelled directly after, Montaigu at Paris.

Although Major never composed a separate study on the character of episcopal life, there are certain themes which emerge from his various commentaries and Greater Britain which, when assembled, provide a composite sketch of the episcopal ideal. Major was highly critical of the wealth and ostentation of Scotland’s prelates. The commentary on the fourth book of Lombard’s Sententiae which he published in 1512 contains a severe castigation
of the misuse of ecclesiastical revenue and the people who have come to expect this from the bishops: 'In Britain a prelate is praised to the skies if he goes about surrounded by a great crowd of nobles and displays the wealth of the Church supronously at his table. Those who make a little display (and they are few indeed) are accounted misers.' Later on in the same distinction Major lays blame for this state of affairs on the uneducated masses who view it to be deserving of praise that an episcopal prelate would lavish church properties on friends and relatives. Indeed, Major went as far to suggest a numerical limit on the personal servants sufficient for a bishop, though he cautioned that actual expenditures of money and labour should not be employed as the sole measure of extravagance as commodity prices may vary considerably in widely separated localities.41

Major's disgust at the misuse of clerical wealth served as the basis for his well known criticism of the otherwise spotless record of James Kennedy as archbishop of St Andrews. Kennedy's general praise from Major for having held property 'in a manner fitting for bishops', but he insists that the archbishop erred in possessing the revenues of the monastery of Pitenweem in commendam, in addition to ordering the construction of a very costly tomb.42 In his opinion, the prelate who holds any benefit in commendam, is in fact only a procurator and not a prelate. The legalistic turn of mind in these comments suggests strongly that they were inspired by a study of canon law. This observation seems to be confirmed by references to refusals by two popes, Paul II and Benedict XII, to grant bishoprics solely on the grounds that the applicants were princes: Paul is said to have insisted that the young man first become a son of God before he is eligible for such a dignity.43 There is little in all this that is inspiring, but Major admitted in several places that he had given up the life of a preacher for the more contemplative atmosphere of academic life. What is interesting about Major's views on the subject lies in his eagerness to apply rigorously to bishops the church laws pertaining to the use of ecclesiastical revenues, as he intimates that improper appropriation of such wealth had seriously compromised the quality of pastoral care.44

In 1522 Major's life took on a somewhat unexpected dimension as he appears connected to the court of the evangelical Marguerite of Navarre, patron of the reform minded bishop Brignonnet who with the aid of Lefèvre d'Étaples organized an intensive programme of reform and renewal in the diocese of Meaux which was intended to spread eventually throughout the entire kingdom of France. This radical movement, which contemporaries and later scholars with varying degrees of success have attempted to connect with Lutheranism thought, stressed the use of frequent diocesan synods and visitations, the distribution of translations of the Pauline epistles and the Gospels to encourage lay participation in biblical study sessions and above all regular preaching by resident parish priests centred on the New Testament. The fervour of the reform, coupled with the suspicion that Brignonnet's group had corresponded with known Lutherans, aroused the strong conservative reaction of the Franciscans, the faculty of theology at Paris and the Parlement. By 1525 the reform had been suppressed and 1526 marks the return of John Major to a permanent residence at the university of Paris—from 1518 he had assumed teaching duties at Glasgow first and then at St. Andrews. Further study is needed into Major's relationship, if indeed there is much to know, with the Meaux reform and Lefèvre d'Étaples. What is most interesting to note for our purposes is that when Major again speaks to the subject of the duties of the bishop, almost seven years after his known association with the court of Marguerite of Navarre, the emphasis is decidedly different.

A brief, but clear, indication of Major's later opinion regarding the function of the bishop may be found in the dedicatory letter to James Betoun which precedes the St Matthew portion of his complete commentary on the Gospels printed in 1529. Here it is stated in no uncertain terms that the office of archbishop made it Betoun's first duty to study and preach the message of the Gospel.45 The clear pastoral and scriptural orientation evident in Major's comment places him in the mainstream of progressive European Catholic thought on episcopacy and may suggest sympathy with Lefèvre and the Meaux reform.

It was entirely natural that Major's theological opinions influenced his participation in heresy trials and examinations. A most instructive episode is preserved in Knox's History: a Dundee friar by the name of William Airth was examined for certain statements he had made in connection with the irregular lives of Scotland's bishops. The date and much of the detail of the examination are not attested to, but we are informed that one of the examiners was John Major, according to the testimony of Knox regarded as an 'oracle' in matters of religion. Knox concludes his story by saying that Major failed to detect any sign of heresy in the friar's preaching, though of the exact
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Church and in general bespeaks an interest in reform directed more toward preserving status and authority rather than a desire born of an anxiety for true renewal of the spirit.

The ideal of the bishop as a preacher and an active influence in the spiritual life of his community was not the exclusive preserve of clergymen and academics. There are few students of medieval Scotland who are not familiar with Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. This important vernacular play has been accorded by historians an honourable, if ill-defined, place in the study of the background to the upheavals of 1560 and after: according to Pinkerton it contributed more to the possibility of reform that the sermons of Knox; and a recent scholar of later medieval Scots literature has said that the 'periodic vulgarity [of the *Thrie Estaitis*] is an invitation to violent reformation.' An early version of the play, now lost, was reported to have been performed before James V, Marie Lorraine, and the lords spiritual and temporal on 6 January 1540. The episode was recounted by an eye-witness and the report eventually forwarded to Cromwell in England. The texts which do survive are from the years 1552 and 1554, the last representing a considerable expansion over the first.

The subject of the play is the brutal subjugation of Scotland's third estate by a conspiracy of nobles, ecclesiastical and secular, whose interests are devoid of humanity, morality, and any sense of communal welfare. The eventual triumph of virtue in the life of the King results in the calling of a Parliament at which the gross abuses against the common people are rectified. The reasons for the play's popular appeal, which must have been very great, lie certainly in its theme, the oppression of the lower orders, its frequent sexual vulgarity and flagrant anti-clericism. One would hardly expect to find in the play a compendium of well articulated theological definitions and concepts, yet in the matter which concerns us, the *Thrie Estaitis* is full of interest.

Not surprisingly, Lyndsay mercilessly lampoons the contemporary hierarchy through a piercing caricature which delineates the moral and intellectual degeneration of the clergy as a whole and the prelates in particular. At certain points, however, satire gives way to a genuine scriptural humanism through which Lindsay describes the bishop's true functions. Early in the play there is an abortive attempt...
by the virtues to take over the corrupted kingdom. The crystal voice of
Veritie, immediately before her arrest on the pretext of being a
'Lutheran', sharply instructs the episcopal prelates as to their duties
as spiritual leaders:

And specially ye Princes of the Priestis,
That of the peopell hes spiritual cuir,
Dayly ye should revolve into your brestis
How that thir haly words ar still must sure.
In veresteus lyfe gif that ye do inder,
The pepill will tak maire tent to your deids
Than to your words: and als baith rich and puir
Will follow you baith in your works and words. (11.1061-1068)

The spiritual lords, horrified by the teaching of Veritie and perceiving
how far this contrasts with their present condition as temporal rules
little concerned with their pastoral duties, silence her and it is left to
Gude Counsell near the end of the play to describe in plainer terms the
duties of the good bishop:

Ane Bishops office is for to be ane preichour
And of the law of God ane publich recheour
Ryght sa the Persone unto his parochoun
Of the Evangell soould leir them ane lessoun. (11.2899,2902)

When confronted by Spiritualite, Lyndsay's personification of the
episcopal prelates, to defend this teaching regarding the proper work
of a bishop, Gude Counsell replies simply that they ought to
familiarize themselves with St Paul's epistle to Timothy. His
pronouncement is followed by a powerful indictment of the
assembled ecclesiastical estate by the practical and clear thinking
Merchand. How is it, he asks, that the bishops have been given great
temporal holdings, unless it is for the provision of qualified religious
teachers and preachers — a task at which the current lot of bishops
have failed miserably? Apparently Lyndsay did not shrink from
instructing the bishops to their faces as the report of the lost version
of the Thrie Estaitis recounts that the bishop's true office was amply
demonstrated in the course of the play by the use of the New
Testament.

The final event of the play is a public recitation of the acts of
parliament by which order has been restored to the kingdom and the
provisions made for bishops are interesting. The ninth article
specifies that bishops are to be more careful in their choice of men for
the priesthood, in effect a demand that the bishops exercise more of
their responsibility in the area of clerical training and ordination. The
preceding article enjoins that no benefice will be given to any many
who does not show himself to be well versed in Scripture and other
branches of learning or would not be prepared to take up preaching or
school teaching duties. The twelfth article enjoins that all bishops and
parish clergy remain resident in order to supervise the religious
instruction of the people — a standard requirement in orthodox
reform programmes across Europe.

That the Thrie Estaitis was designed for popular consumption is
beyond doubt. Its effect on the thinking of those who attended
performances can only be guessed at. One would suspect that it
contained little which would appear novel to the sixteenth-century
mind. Rather, it more than likely articulated ideas and emotions that
were 'in the air', but rarely achieved the purgation of public
expression. As regards the obligations of the good bishop, the popular
biblical humanism of the author speaks clearly through his characters:
the bishop must withdraw from the world of lust and naked power,
retire to a careful consideration of the message of the Gospel and then
make provision for teaching this message to those persons of whom he
has spiritual care. Lyndsay's contention that the office of bishop is
first that of a preacher of the Word remains in substantial agreement
with Major's advice to James Betoun; with Boece's praise of
Aberdeen's bishops; with Claude de Seyssel's analysis of the nature of
episcopal duties. Preaching in a sense epitomizes the pastoral aspect
of the bishop's work and becomes a sign of dedication to the spiritual
duties which must characterize the life of the true bishop. The
orthodox episcopal ideal, and the consequent criticism of contem-
porary bishops of the Scottish church, must have provided an area of
considerable common ground during times when hard and fast
distinctions between Roman Catholics and Protestants would be
almost impossible to draw.

There are other instances of sixteenth-century Scots speaking to
the question of the true nature of episcopal life which I have not
SOME REMARKS ON THE EPISCOPAL IDEAL

studied. Florence Wilson found reasonable employment for his humanistic talents in France as secretary to the archbishop of Carpentras, Jacopo Sadoletto, in 1535 and later became a school instructor at Arras. In his De animi tranquillitate (1530) he praises some prominent Italian reformers in order to suggest that if the bishops abandoned their lives of ease and returned to the ancient duty of preaching the Gospel then heresy would not pose such a threat, especially to intellectuals.37 John Law, successor to John Annand as principal of St Leonard's College and the author of a little known chronicle, makes a comparison between Bishop Elphinstone, the hero of Boece's Vitae, with the great fifteenth-century reformer and theologian Nicolas of Cusa.38 To these examples one could undoubtedly add many more.

The foregoing discussion has done little to specify the precise influences at work in shaping the various similar episcopal ideals expressed by orthodox Scots before the Reformation — it may be vain to search for them. Those Scots writers whom we have noted expressed an ideal of episcopal life rooted in scripture, tradition and canon law which emphasizes an active, pastorally-oriented episcopate. As with the better known Continental commentators, renewal is the goal and a renewed episcopate is the instrument. Preaching, residence, holiness in personal life are signs of the acceptance of the message of salvation and acceptance of the episcopal station as one of teacher and guide, essentially as St Paul has described it.

Our investigation would suggest that the assumption which has long pervaded sixteenth-century Scottish studies, to the effect that Scotland was isolated from or immune to the wider currents of church reform which swept the Catholic church, ought to be questioned. Historians must face the difficult problem of determining at what points did Scots encounter the moral, theological and psychological renewal which evolved from the great projects for reform of the fifteenth century into the counter-reformation. It is my hope that this cursory study will serve as a stimulus to a consideration of these questions.

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DAVID I. HOWIE

1 Much of the evidence is summarised in D. Hay Fleming, The Reformation in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1910).


3 A short history of the conciliar enactments may be found in Statutes of the Scottish Church 1225-1559, ed. David Patrick (Scottish History Society, v.54: 1907).

4 For Winzet's activities in Germany, see Mark Dillworth, The Scots in Franconia: A Century of Monastic Life (Edinburgh, 1974), 23-31.

5 Winzet, Certane Tractatis for Reformation of Doctryne and Manneris in Scotland (Maitland Club, 1835), 7.

6 An extensive consideration of this question may be found in Gordon Donaldson, The Scottish Reformation (Cambridge: 1961), Chapter V. The influence of Donaldson's treatment of the problem upon this study will be apparent to those who care to investigate.

7 Illuminating remarks on Knox in this regard may be found in an important study by James S. McEwen, The Faith of John Knox (London, 1961).

8 Hubert Jedin, L'évêque dans la tradition pastorale du XVIe siècle, French adaptation by Paul Brouin, S.J. (Bruges, 1953).

9 Ibid., 40.

10 Ibid., 35.

11 Ibid., 45, 74.

12 For Montaigut and Standonck see Marcel Godet, La congrégation de Montaigut (1490-1580) (Paris, 1912).

13 Ibid., 47.

14 M. Piron, 'L'idéal épiscopal selon les prédicateurs français de la fin du XV siècle et du début du XVIe', Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique LXI (1966), 82.

15 Ibid., 371-380, 393-425.

16 Boece was apparently the victim of an anonymous writer from about the end of the reign of James III who had passed himself off as an early chronicler.


19 Vitae, v.

20 Spelling of proper names and dates of episcopates are supplied from D.E.R. Watt, Fasti Ecclesiæ Scotiaeæ Medii Aevi (Scottish Record Society, n.s., v.1: 1969).

21 Vitae, 23-4: 'Professis quidem diebus suos aut divinum aut humanum jus ducir: festis autem praedicaconibus admonitionibus insisteret ei fuit peculiare...'

22 Ibid., 12-13.

23 Ibid., 18-19.

24 Ibid., 14.

25 Ibid., 21.

26 Ibid., 10.

27 Ibid., 23.


29 Ibid., 61-62.

30 Ibid., 92.

31 Caralith of Cambusbenneth, ed. William Fraser (Grampian Club, 1872), xcii-xciv.

32 Ibid., xc-xx.

33 Vitae Dunbartonensis Ecclesiae Episcoporum a Prima Sedis Fundatione ad annum M.D.XV. (Bannockburn, 1823).
SOME REMARKS ON THE EPISCOPAL IDEAL

[Footnotes]

44 Ibid., 60-61.
46 Ibid.
47 The relevant studies by Durkan and Burns may be found in various issues of Inner Review which commenced publication in 1950.
49 Ibid., 88.
50 The present writer has begun a systematic study into Major's ideas on the nature of the true episcopal calling.
51 These remarks are taken from the Dist. xxiv and are edited by Burns, 'The Scotland of John Major', Inner Review II (1951), 74 and Major, Greater Britain, ed. and trans. by A. Constable (Scottish History Society, v.10: 1892), 138 n.l.
52 Greater Britain, 388-389.
53 Ibid., 137 n.l.
54 Ibid., 28-29.
55 Ibid., scil. 'Professioni vero et dignitati tuae, qui et archiepiscopus es, et primas, et legatus (ut dicis) natus Scotiae, maxime convenit et lectitare et predicare evangelia, iuxta sententiam illius cuius dignitati archiepiscopi succedunt, vaeh mibi est si non evangelizaveris; genti autem tuo, cui ut illustrissimo quique semper fut primum et antiquissimum, ecclesiae sanctae nos protegere et integre fidei patrociniari.'
58 Ibid., 20.
59 Ibid., 13.
60 Statutes of the Scottish Church, 84.
63 Ibid., 11, 2906, 2909.
64 Ibid., 11, 2928-2937.
65 Ibid., 6.
66 Ibid., 11, 3863-3871, 3910-3912.

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Some Remarkable Relatives of that Remarkable Man, John Galt

JOHN GALT HAS AN ALLUSION to his "late acquaintance, Glengarry, who was great an genealogies."! Galt was himself interested in genealogy, his own in particular, but, in that respect, he hardly holds a candle to his present-day descendants in Canada, some of whom have provided me with enough genealogical material to fill a fair-sized volume.

The remarkable relatives of John Galt on whom I have undertaken to address you this afternoon are, for the most part, found to begin with, in Irvine, Ayrshire where I was born, and which at the time of Galt's birth there on May 2, 1779, stood third in importance among Scottish seaports; and in the neighbouring parishes of Stewarton, and Dunoon, the latter commands at its highest point a wide prospect of the nearby Ayrshire coast. I say, "to begin with" because, as our tale unfolds, we shall discover that the various activities of these relatives of Galt range over a much larger area.

A fragment of a book, The Banished Conventerists, which he evidently began to write but never finished, reads as follows:

I have ever thought that the spirit by which the Scottish Covenanters were actuated was one of the holiest manifestations of the determination to maintain the rights of the people that has yet irradiated the history of mankind. The incidents of the following journal are imaginations, but the event is true on which the idea of the journal is founded. It is mentioned in the second volume page 341 of the folio edition of Woodrow's history of the Church of Scotland.
SOME REMARKS ON THE EPISCOPAL IDEAL

14 Ibid., 60-61.
15 Ibid., 30-31.
16 Ibid.
17 The relevant studies by Durkan and Burns may be found in various issues of *Inner Review* which commenced publication in 1950.
19 Ibid., 88.
20 The present writer has begun a systematic study into Major’s ideas on the nature of the true episcopal calling.
22 *Greater Britain*, 388-389.
23 Ibid., 137 n.1.
24 Ibid., 28-29.
25 Ibid., xci: Professioni vero et dignitati tuae, qui et Archiepiscopus es, et primus et legatus (ut dicitur) natus Scotiae, maxime convenit et lecturae et predicac evangelia, iuxta sententiam illius cuius dignitati archiepiscopi succedit, vae qui est si non evangelizaverit; genet astern tuo, cui us illustrissimo cuique semper fut primum et antiquissimum, ecclesiae sanctae iura protegere et integrae fidei patrocineri.
28 Ibid., 20.
29 Ibid., 13.
30 Statutes of the Scottish Church, 94.
32 A modern edition of the play is found in the second volume of *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount*, ed. Douglas Hamer (Scottish Text Society, 1931).
33 Ibid., 11.2906-2909.
34 Ibid., 11.2928-2937.
36 Ibid., 11.3865-3871, 3910-3912.

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