

# Dominicans and the Scottish University Tradition

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In March 1217 brother Dominic, a Castilian canon of the chapter of the diocese of Osma, returned to Toulouse from a visit to Rome. He, and the small community he had gathered round him, had been preaching against the Cathar heretics of Languedoc for the previous ten years. Soon after his arrival he summoned the community of canons which had just settled into their newly restored monastery to meet him. It rapidly became clear that the situation every religious dreads had arisen: the superior had an idea. The strategy involved the creation of a new religious force in Catholic Europe which was to take the form of an entirely novel religious Order. Its mission was to be wholly given over to the preaching of the Word of God. This was to take precedence over every other conventual observance. The Order was to be international; its members were to be called friars, brothers, they were to be bound to stability within the Order and not to any one particular house. They were to go wherever the needs of evangelisation and the defence of doctrine took them, living in poverty, holding no property, not even the houses in which they dwelt. They were to live out some elements of the monastic life, celebrating the divine office and the Eucharist solemnly and in common with, but without undue fussy ceremonial. They were to elect their own superiors, who in turn would be members of Provincial Chapters. These would elect prior provincials, who would, along with delegates from the provinces, form the supreme legislative body of the Order, the General Chapter, which would elect the general superior of the Order, known as the Master, to whom every friar would vow obedience. The friars would not be like monks including some element, no matter how vestigial, of manual labour in their rule. Manual labour was to be replaced by study. Each preaching friar was to be a contemplative student of the Word of God, his preaching flowing from his life of liturgical prayer, and the ascetic discipline of a life lived in charity in a community of brethren. The novelty was the mission entrusted to the new Order symbolised by its title, it was this that came as such a surprise to Dominic's community in Toulouse.

On 21 January 1217, Dominic had obtained papal approval of his new idea in a papal bull of confirmation. Dominic's desire had always been that the new order should be called the Order of Preachers. The Church had always hesitated to entrust the canonical mission of preaching the faith to any religious community. Hitherto, the term *Ordo Praedicatorum* had

referred to the bishops alone, now it was to be applied to a religious fraternity. Dominic secured further bulls of recommendation and commendation from the papacy instructing each bishop to welcome the friars and to allow them to preach in his diocese. In 1219 letters of commendation were sent to the bishops of Spain and Italy and later in the same year a general mandate to preach was issued, recognising that the friars had been deputed to their work by the papacy. A fruitful partnership was concluded between a reforming order and a reforming papacy which gave the papacy purchase on ineffective or reluctant bishops, as well as encouraging the reformation of clerical life and pastoral renewal.

Dominic realised that an Order of Preachers must also be an Order of Doctors, it must be learned. He did not wish for luminous minds, but for those who wished to cultivate the mind in love, the mind in love with the mystery of divine truth which would engage the heart in wonder prompting the preacher to preach of divine mercy. The preachers were sent first to the universities of Paris and Bologna to study, preach and found a house. The association between Dominicans and universities was forged at the very outset and has remained a constant feature of Dominican life and experience. By 1221, the year the Dominic died, the first house had been established in these islands, Blackfriars, in Oxford. There were 24 other houses throughout Europe and five provinces. By 1223 there were 123 members of the Order in Paris alone, and by 1234 nine out of the fifteen doctors of divinity in Paris were probably Dominicans. Dominic's Order had caught the imagination of some of the brightest minds in Europe and had fired the enthusiasm of a generation.

The association with universities was not an end in itself. It was recognised that study for its own sake was a fine thing, but for the preachers it was to serve preaching. In a fairly short time the Order found itself developing an educational structure of its own to form preachers, although the vision of study was primarily utilitarian.

At first the Order provided that Paris was to be the only international study house, its theology syllabus was basically the syllabus for the Order for the next four centuries. Due to pressure of numbers in Paris other *studia generalia* were established by 1248 at Montpellier, Bologna, Cologne and Oxford. Each province was to have the right to send two of its best students to these houses to study theology at a higher level. These students proceeded from the provincial *studia* which were in turn attended by the priory schools. The provincial *studia* were fed by the brightest students from the priory schools. The Order could thus provide a comprehensive education which, although originally was exclusively theological, came to include arts subjects after 1250. A consequence of this was an upsurge in vocations in some provinces as it was thought that the Order's system offered a short cut to education. Study formed an essential part of every priory's life. In each house there was not only to be a prior, a superior, but also a lector, or teacher.

In every priory lectures were to be given daily on the Bible and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, attendance was compulsory for every friar from the prior downwards. Academic exercises, involving repetitions and disputations, where what had been learned was reviewed and then contentious points argued according to logical form were held regularly.<sup>1</sup>

The value of such an educational system to the wider Church was quickly appreciated by enlightened Church authorities. In his bull of recommendation of the preachers to the masters and students of Paris, Pope Honorius III asked that the friars be welcomed not only because they worked for the cure of souls, but because they offered 'a salutary antidote for diseased minds.'<sup>2</sup> Their apostolate was not only preaching but teaching. This insight was seized by a number of bishops who, in their turn, recommended the Dominicans to their flocks. In 1221 the bishop of Metz encouraged his diocesan clergy to welcome the preachers saying that they would not only serve the laity through their preaching, but they would be a great help to the clergy through their sacred lectures.<sup>3</sup> From the very outset, the friars' schools were to be open to outsiders, and they were to fulfil the canon of the fourth Lateran council stipulating that there should be a school in every diocese and a Master in Theology who would be able to instruct the clergy in Scripture and pastoral care. As the aim of Dominican education was to prepare friars for the ministry of the pulpit and the confessional, so it was an additional purpose to offer that to other clergy charged with the same duties. What was true for the particular diocesan schools was true for the general schools which were the universities. In certain universities the Dominican schools were incorporated through some of the Masters actually becoming friars and bringing their chairs with them, as with Roland of Cremona and John of St Giles in Paris in 1230, and Robert Bacon in Oxford. There were other cases when universities, or more particularly theology faculties, were formed in Dominican schools. There was no theology faculty at Bologna until 1360. When papal permission to establish one was finally granted, the friars schools became the core of the new faculty. The theology faculty at Toulouse was placed in the hands of the friars in 1230. There was no theology faculty in Cambridge when the friars arrived there but one emerged from the common contribution of the Franciscans and Dominicans by about 1250. In other universities like Louvain, founded in the fifteenth century, and Cologne, the priory buildings were often used for university congregations, ceremonies, or even lectures. In Louvain the university customarily met for Mass on St Hubert's day, in the Dominican priory. A general congregation was often held afterwards in the priory refectory. The election for rector of the university was held in the priory, and the town had been so pleased at the graduation of a Dominican friar as the first bachelor of theology of the new university in 1434, that it had presented a gift of Rhenish wine to the convent to celebrate the occasion.<sup>4</sup> The friars were not slow to try and capitalise on their relation to the university when in 1532,

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they asked for some help from the faculty with replacing the window in their refectory where the congregations regularly met. The faculty offered to replace one window. Against this background it comes as no surprise that in 1451 the first congregation of the new university of Glasgow should be held in the Chapter room of the Glasgow Blackfriars. Bishop Turnbull, a graduate of the university of Louvain, would have known of the links between the university and priory in Louvain. Sentiment and tradition, as well as expediency, may have dictated the choice of place.

Although the university began its life in the Blackfriars, it would seem that no Dominicans were directly involved in teaching at that point, most of the Masters seem to have had some connection with the cathedral or were Cistercian monks. Dominicans do not definitely appear in the surviving records until 1457 when Patrick Sharp, John Symson and Andrew Hasting were incorporated into the university; it has been suggested that they were either teachers or students of theology.<sup>6</sup> None of them is found in connection with studies again, suggesting that they may have been students rather than teachers of theology, particularly since Hasting was still alive and a member of the community in Edinburgh in 1509. No other Dominican was found until John Mure, the vicar general of the Scottish Dominicans, was incorporated in 1470. What accounts for this apparent lack of personal involvement in a university which continued to operate either within the walls of the priory or else as a near neighbour and possibly tenant of it?

The friars may simply not have had any suitable students to send to the university. The teaching of theology, like the teaching of canon law in Glasgow may have been erratic. The university was under-endowed and Turnbull's death in 1454 damaged it still further. Whatever money there was went into the support of the Arts faculty and there was little left over to support anything else. The friars would perhaps have been reluctant to commit themselves to an institution whose future was in grave doubt and which could not provide an integrated and respectable course. It could also be that until a proper faculty of theology began to emerge they had no need of what the new university could offer.

Dominican friars did not attend secular schools of arts. They were to be prepared within their own educational system and allowed to proceed as far as their intellectual gifts would take them. There had been a long debate, dating from the earliest days of the Order, and dramatically renewed amongst the Observant Dominican friars of fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy, as to the place of philosophy and the arts in the formation of a preacher. Humbert of Romans, Master of the Order in 1254 during the lifetimes of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, discusses in his commentary on the Dominican Constitutions the place of philosophy in Dominican life. He concludes that it is permissible to study it, but perhaps only for a few gifted students. He suggests that there are basically three sorts of friars: the simple ones who will have no need of philosophy and for

whom what is offered in the priory schools will be enough. Then there will be those who have need of a basic level of philosophical expertise to support and enlarge their study of Scripture, these will need a second level of classes. Then there are those with quick minds and who can combine philosophical rigour with the contemplative study of the Scriptures and these should be permitted to approach philosophy in proper schools. The General Chapter of 1259, largely on the recommendation of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, ordered the establishment of provincial schools of arts, whilst the Chapter of 1261 ordered provincials to see to it that bright friars were instructed *in logicalibus*, in logic. What Dominicans meant by their schools of arts was logic and the forms of dialectic. Student friars could then be tested and the brightest might be fortunate enough to be chosen, eventually, to represent their province at one of the *studia generalia* possibly even Paris itself. They might not be able to move straight from the provincial school to the general immediately, but at least access was possible.

We know that the Ayr Dominicans maintained a school because in 1436, Hugh Kennedy, a former pupil in their Grammar School, complained that he had been coerced into the Order by his parents and the friars, forced to become a priest and even made to live with the English Dominicans for a time before he decided he could stand it no more and ran away to become a soldier with the King of France's armies for fifteen years.<sup>7</sup> Another Dominican, John Mussilburgh, had been Regent of the St Andrews Grammar School in 1430, probably before he entered the Order, and later went on to become Vicar General of the Scottish Dominicans. There were evidently enough people to teach grammar to the new entrants to the Order, both postulants and novices. In 1478 Thomas Robinson, a member of the Chester community who was a native of Glasgow was assigned to the Glasgow Blackfriars to teach the *artes liberales*.<sup>8</sup> Robinson was something of a catch. He had studied in the *studium generale* of Bologna where he was ordained priest in 1469 and was still a member of the community in 1472, the same community Girolamo Savonarola was to join two years later in 1474. They were to be taught by the same teachers. Robinson remained in England for only a short time before coming to Glasgow.

Robinson provides an interesting link to a vital and divisive tradition within Dominican history which was to mark the subsequent development of the Scottish Dominican province. It is known as the Observantine movement, the movement towards the strict observance of the primitive constitutions of the Order. It began under Raymund of Capua, Master of the Order from 1380–1399. The reform originated in Germany and then spread to the Low Countries. Its second focus was Italy where it was led by friars who had been disciples of Catherine of Siena. The initial dispute between Observants and Conventuals, as they came to be called, was ever the question of poverty. The conventuals accepted a certain amount of individual ownership of property in terms of books and clothing, as well as

a certain measure of private life, which could involve the possession of sets of rooms, benefices, and private funds which gave the individual friar a measure of independence. The principle of dispensation had always been part of the Dominican way of life and was intended to ensure that nothing came in the way of study or preaching. Hence professors of theology, lectors or students even, might be dispensed from some of the conventual observances so that their contribution to the common work of the Order might not suffer. What had begun as dispensation became privileges which were jealously guarded. In this way Masters of Sacred Theology gained rights to permanent representation at Chapters and were often permanently absent from ordinary conventual life. An elite developed which was able to travel, to function independently and still to exercise constitutional rights which were denied to the simpler friars in the Order. It has often been suggested that the situation within religious life generally declined as a consequence of the Black Death since laxer standards of recruiting were applied in order to sustain numbers of friars and the institutional commitments of provinces. The reform movement was a movement of renewal and an attempt by certain elements within the Order to return to the sources of Dominican life.

Raymund of Capua believed that eventually the Order would be reformed through the leaven of the Observant friars. There would be houses of observance in each province, which would send delegates to the provincial Chapter and elect the officers of the province. The provincial would appoint a vicar for the observant houses, a guarantee of reasonable stability or personnel in the houses would be maintained since friars joined a particular house, served their novitiate and became sons of that house, sometimes not moving from it at all during their lifetime. Things began to change in the mid-fifteenth century when there was a major upheaval in the Order which encompassed the life of Friar Thomas Robinson in Bologna.

Bologna belonged to the association of reformed houses of Lombardy. It was an important place since it held the tomb of St Dominic, and even to this day is known as the patriarchal convent. The Observant houses of Lombardy had become the focus of a dispute which brought the temporary removal from office of one Master of the Order and came close to splitting the Order entirely and irrevocably. In 1459, Pius II had united the reformed houses of Lombardy together with some of its dependents like San Marco in Florence and Santa Sabina in Rome into a reformed Congregation which was in effect a non-territorial province. In response to the petitions of the members of the new Congregation the Pope granted almost total self-government to them. This was fiercely opposed by the Master of the Order, Martial Auribelli who was determined that the Order should not split into different branches as the Franciscans had done. In the end the Lombard Observants prevailed with Pope Pius II and at the General Chapter of 1462 Auribelli was removed and the Pope's candidate Conrad of Asti elected

Master both in the same session.<sup>9</sup> Conrad then set about promoting the formation of the Congregations the most significant of them being the Congregation of Holland, one of the largest and most powerful in the Order and founded in 1464. It comprised 67 convents of friars and 9 monasteries of nuns spread over Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Finland and Denmark. It stretched from Brittany to Rostock. It was to this Congregation that the Scottish Dominican province turned to promote and strengthen its own reform.

The civil war between the Observants and the Conventuals was brought to a temporary halt with the resignation of Conrad of Asti and the re-election of Martial Auribelli in 1465. Auribelli then set about attempting the deconstruction of the concessions made to the Lombard Congregation. The complaints against the Observants were that they were too keen to resort to powers outside the Order to support and prosecute their cause. They turned too quickly to the secular powers to deal with their enemies amongst the conventuals. Time and again we can read of the reform of priories in towns or regions or even states undertaken at the request of secular rulers. The Observants also used their influence at the Roman curia to press their own cause. A consequence of the Avignon papacy was the appointment of a Cardinal Protector of the Order who exercised enormous power over it, subverting the constitution which had sustained it for centuries and even undermining the power of the Master of the Order. Similarly, the Observants had recourse to the Pope himself soliciting privileges, favours, protection and dispensation. In effect, doing exactly what they accused the Conventuals of doing, except, of course, their view was that they were upholding the integrity of the Order rather than damaging it as the Conventuals did. When Auribelli was re-elected he and the Chapter who elected him removed the Vicar General of Lombardy from office; he also refused to accept candidates presented for the mastership and regency by the Bologna studium—something which the Master had specifically been forbidden to do by the Pope himself. The General Chapter of 1470 had meanwhile annulled the acts of the 1468 Chapter because the Vicar General who had presided over it in Auribelli's absence had acted without authority. The Pope decided that Auribelli and the Chapter had acted beyond their power in deposing the Vicar General of Lombardy. He was re-instated, the doctoral candidates, who had hitherto been approved by the General Chapter were now approved by the Pope at the recommendation of the Bologna studium and the same was true of the Masters and those who were to be regents at the Bologna studium. It was a massive victory for the Observants, a defeat for the Master and a vindication of the Observant tactic of using the secular power in conjunction with appeals to Rome. Thomas Robinson, the Glasgow friar, was a student at Bologna during this crisis. It was the degrees and posts of his teachers that were being contested.

The annulment of the acts of the 1468 Chapter had another significant

effect on Scottish Dominican development. The Chapter was a strange one. The 1468 Chapter was to have been held in Aix-en-Provence, but for some reason Auribelli changed it to Rome even though that meant he could not get there in time himself. In the same way, provincials and delegates who had been making their way to Aix found themselves in the wrong place. Most never made it to Rome and, as a result, the Chapter was poorly attended. The gaps amongst the voters were filled, as was customary by then, by delegates who were picked to fill in and who could be counted on to vote the right way. In this way the Vicar of Lombardy was removed from office, but a further move in the direction of reform was made. The Chapter commissioned Master Andrew Cruden, described as a Preacher General and Master of Arts to reform the convents of Scotland at the request of King James III of Scots.<sup>10</sup> In 1437 Andrew had determined at St Andrews university then, like many other Scots, he had gone on to Cologne to study Arts and then to Paris where he was licensed as an MA in 1446. He was part of a small group of friars who studied at St Andrews in the 1430s, along with John Mussilburgh who determined in 1429 and was Vicar General of Scotland in 1468, and John Mure who probably determined at St Andrews in 1436 and was Prior of Glasgow in 1468, succeeding John Mussilburgh as Vicar General in 1469 and being incorporated in the University of Glasgow in 1470. The Observant-Conventual debate had definitely reached the shores of Scotland. It was complicated by the emerging pressure to secure complete juridical independence from the English Dominicans, who had made it perfectly clear over the centuries that they were in no way interested in reform and had used their royal connections not to promote the reform, but to ensure that the bacillus of Observance never touched English priories. It was the only province in the Order to be able to boast of never having had a reformed house.

The pressure for Observant reform was felt in Ireland at the same time as in Scotland. Ireland too was a vicariate of the English Dominican province but was moving towards independence, with the encouragement of the central authorities of the Order. Pressure for Dominican reform in Ireland sprang mostly from the Gaelic speaking areas. But the General Chapter of the Order in 1484 approved the foundation of an autonomous Irish Province. The first provincial was an outstanding theologian and preacher, Maurice Ó Mocháin, who had been a member of the communities of Salisbury, Worcester and Oxford, where he was promoted Master of Sacred Theology in 1474. He worked tirelessly to introduce the reform throughout the new province, but his work was frustrated by the English Dominicans who invoked a papal bull of 1397 to have the province suppressed in 1491.<sup>11</sup> It remained a vicariate until 1536 when the collapse of the English province before the onslaught of Henry VIII removed any obstacle to their independence.



There were moves for reform on the fringes of Christendom in two vicariates of the English province. In both, theologians with a cosmopolitan and highly-educated background led the way. A concern of the Dominican reform was the restoration of the intellectual and theological apostolate of the Order and the reassertion of theology as the handmaid of preaching. In 1475 the Papacy had already given to the heads of the four mendicant Orders in Ireland permission to establish a *studium generale* in Dublin, citing as the reason, the dangerous necessity for Irish students to cross the seas and to face the enormous expense of a foreign education. Such an institution had to wait some time before it was founded and Trinity College, Dublin was not exactly what the popes had in mind.<sup>12</sup> Dominican reform had a distinct intellectual programme. One of the reasons the Lombard Congregation was so insistent on promoting candidates for the higher degrees themselves, and for having control over the staffing of their one *studium generale* in Bologna, was that they wished to ensure the doctrinal orthodoxy and fervent religious practice of their teaching staff. They wished to see an end to the abuse of dispensation, and an end to the practice of friars raising the money to buy their degrees by papal concession from Rome without the inconvenience of sitting an examination. They might have all of the privileges of lecturers and Masters without any of the inconvenience of academic responsibility or diligence in study. This custom was condemned unequivocally by the General Chapter of Ferrara of 1495, but it did not stop it. A Master was ex-officio a member of the conventual council and the Provincial Chapter. He was dispensed from most of the choral office, he could choose the best cells and the most financially rewarding preaching limits, he could take meals in his cell, thereby avoiding the abstinence from meat which was compulsory in the refectory and could possess a mule and stable it in one of the priory courtyards.

The Observant reform wished to stress the importance of study in the service of preaching, whilst uniting it to the highest standards of Dominican asceticism and fidelity to the primitive Dominican inspiration. In order to be able to carry out this project it needed its own academic institutions, or at least contact and influence with those with which it believed an association would be most fruitful. In Scotland the university of St Andrews was a possibility, but the Dominican house there was poorly endowed and not large enough to support a community of more than one or two friars. Glasgow seemed to offer a better possibility, although it was still struggling to establish itself. There are few references to theologians in Glasgow in the next decades. In 1470 James Ogilvy, the vicar of Cupar in Fife along with a Cistercian monk, Walter Bunch, were recruited as bachelors of theology, the same year as John Mure was incorporated into the university. No other Dominicans appeared until 1487.

The Scottish Dominicans had meanwhile succeeded where their Irish brethren were to fail. In 1481 the General Chapter of the Order, acceding to the request of King James IV, emancipated the Scottish friars from the last vestiges of English Dominican control and erected Scotland into a separate province in its own right with John Mure confirmed as its first provincial.<sup>13</sup> Mure seems to have had important court contacts and may have used his influence to secure the independence of his province. The province was to be granted a degree of local autonomy since delegates from Scotland were to attend General Chapters only once every five years, and the provincial was to be confirmed in office not by the Master, but by the priors of the province, rather in the manner of the Congregation of Lombardy. James IV was to take a keen interest in the affairs of the new province for the remainder of his life, prompted no doubt by Dominicans with influence or friends in high places at court.

The General Chapter of 1481 had renewed its calls for an improvement in the intellectual standard of Dominican studies, it reminded the brethren that the purpose of the Order was preaching, teaching and the hearing of confessions, everything was to be directed towards the proper fulfilment of this mission. The new Scottish province took this seriously and was aided in this by the Master and his curial administration which began to see the Scottish province and certain elements of the Irish vicariate as means for promoting reform in the British Isles. Scotland and Ireland would give them some purchase on the more recalcitrant English Dominicans who were proving very tough nuts to crack.

It is in this context that we should see another attempt to revive the fortunes of theology in Glasgow. In 1487 the provincial and diffinitors of the Provincial Chapter, who were priors of the main houses in Scotland, accepted an endowment of a chaplaincy for one of their number from William Stewart, canon of Glasgow. Stewart also endowed the completion of a range of buildings on the west of the cloister with two halls, kitchens, eight chambers on three stories. The endowment was made with a view to the presentation to the rector of the university of one of the friars to lecture. The provincial and diffinitors gathered in Chapter in Edinburgh confirmed the gift and in due course David Craig, prior of Glasgow, and described as a professor of theology from Paris, together with his bachelor 'Friar Denis' were incorporated in the university.<sup>14</sup> The main centre of Dominican theological commitment was to be Glasgow in the new provincial regime.

The turn that events had taken in Scotland was consistently supported by successive Masters of the Order and it is possible to see how developments amongst the Scottish and Irish Dominicans formed part of a wider European Dominican strategy. In 1481, ten days after his election and during the General Chapter Salvo Cassetta, thirty-second Master of the Order, gave permission for Master John of Scotland, a member of the Dominican community in Cologne to go to Scotland and to return to

Germany.<sup>15</sup> John, whose identity is unknown, is first found in Cologne in 1452 when we are told he entered the Order there after his licentiate. He was an Albertist and is found disputing about the resurrection in 1477.<sup>16</sup> There is no reason given for his return to Scotland neither is there any clue as to whether he returned to Germany. He would certainly have known the various Scots who had studied at Cologne in the middle years of the century and who had now returned to teach at home. Cologne was very much under the influence of the reformed Dominican congregation of Holland and it is interesting to speculate as to whether Master John's visit home had anything to do with the emergence of the new province and the attempt to revive its intellectual life in association with Scottish academic institutions. He may also have been on a 'fishing' expedition, since in January 1483 a Friar Andrew of Scotland was assigned by the Master of the Order to Cologne for studies and given leave to be promoted to Holy Orders there.<sup>17</sup> Was Andrew one of the first fruits of the Scottish province's new-won right to send students to the *studia generalia*, of which Cologne was in the forefront? Cologne was also a much more reliable place than Saint Jacques in Paris, since major attempts to reform the life and studies there were about to be mounted by the Master of the Order in conjunction with the Congregation of Holland. Despite repeated attempts to shore up and develop the Glasgow theology faculty, it did not succeed as well as the Arts faculty. At the same time, after the death of John Mure in 1491, there seems to have been an intensification of the debate as to the direction the new province should take.

Mure's successor John Smith (1491–96) had been prior of Glasgow in 1478 when he was able to welcome Thomas Robinson, the new lector in Arts, to the priory. Smith may be counted as being broadly favourable to the Mure tradition. It was during his provincialate that a decisive shift was made away from the Glasgow connection towards identification with a new venture in Scottish academic life, the university of Aberdeen. During Smith's provincialate a major Dominican investment was made in William Elphinstone's new university of Aberdeen, which was to be the cradle and model of renewal of the Scottish province in the sixteenth century.

Elphinstone had been brought up in Glasgow in the shadow of the Glasgow Blackfriars. he had studied in the university and must have known the community well. Three Dominicans had been his contemporaries in the university of Glasgow and he must have had frequent dealings with the community in his capacity as Official of the Glasgow diocese. Amongst the first members of his university were Dominicans who were prominent as both teachers and students in the new theology faculty. The attractions to the Dominicans were obvious. They found themselves welcomed and at the heart of a dynamic academic institution with a glittering staff assembled from Scotland and all over Europe. Elphinstone was a model reforming bishop whose ideals totally coincided with their own. The university of

Aberdeen was founded for the education not only of clergy but for laymen too. Above all Elphinstone was ensuring that it would be well-endowed, in contrast to Glasgow, which, as John Major described it, despite attempts at reform in 1492, was but 'poorly endowed and not rich in scholars'. The Dominicans decided to abandon their Glasgow experiment for the time being and to concentrate their resources in Aberdeen.<sup>18</sup>

The most prominent and well-respected member of the community was John Adamson, who is described as the first professor of theology in the new university. With him there was a nucleus of friars who were to be the leading intellectuals and reformers of the new province: John Grierson, who later became dean of the faculty of theology at St Andrews, provincial and a leading Catholic reformer; Robert Lyle, who took his bachelor's degree in Aberdeen and then went on to Glasgow; John Spens, a close collaborator of Adamson who became prior of Glasgow in 1517 where he is also described as a bachelor of theology; and Alexander Lawson, originally a lawyer in Aberdeen who subsequently joined the Order and whose bachelor degree was approved by the General Chapter in 1522. Lyle was prior of Glasgow from 1519–24 and was incorporated into Glasgow University as bachelor of theology in 1521 when he began lecturing on the IV Book of the *Sentences* in the presence of the Rector, the Dean of Faculty and under the presidency of John Adamson, the provincial. Aberdeen became the nursery of the Order's next generation of theologians and from there they were to be fed back into the Theology faculties of Glasgow and St Andrews giving the Order a base in all of them. The great advantage of Aberdeen was that it offered a short course. In Paris doctorates in theology could take up to fourteen years. In Aberdeen it was possible to incept as a doctor in six years. The great advantage to the Dominicans was that it was cheap and you could have your men back on the road comparatively quickly. The question was what trouble would they create once they had finished their studies and were ready, full of ideals, to begin their apostolic work.

John Smith was succeeded as provincial by Ninian Shanks, who appears to have been something of a nonentity and who had spent virtually all of his thirty years of conventual life in the priory in Wigtown. David Anderson, who had been prior of Aberdeen when Elphinstone began his great undertaking, was elected to succeed Shanks and remained in office until he was removed by visitators from the Congregation of Holland with delegated full powers from the Master of the Order. It was during his provincialate that major ideological conflicts developed between various parties within the province. A younger group of friars, highly-educated and committed to the ideal of reform and determined to renew the Church in whatever way they could, was opposed by those who were more conservative in their approach and who did not have pretensions to academic expertise or profound theological interests. A key figure in this struggle was, once again, John Adamson.

In 1502, he became prior of Aberdeen and was significant in attracting other religious to study in the theology faculty. Meanwhile, a new Master of the Order, Vincenzo Bandelli, had been elected in 1501. A member of the reformed congregation of Lombardy he was renowned for his academic brilliance and his commitment to the reform and renewal of the Order. This commitment was expressed in two ways, a determination to render the studies even more rigorous and respectable, and a strategy to promote reformed provinces and not congregations, thus avoiding the threat of division and schism within the Order. His first encyclical letter to the entire Order exalted the place of study within it: Master Bandelli took to the road visitating the European provinces to promote his vision. It was during his visitation of the Congregation of Holland that he was to develop that part of his strategy which concerned Scotland, Ireland and France. The Congregation of Holland was to be the means by which provinces were reformed. In 1503, he commissioned Jean de Bauffremez, Vicar General of the Congregation of Holland, to reform Ireland. It is not quite clear if he had any success, or even if he was allowed by the English to get there. In 1505, the General Chapter accepted Spain as a province of Observance. Similar moves must have been made in Scotland since it is from 1505 that we have regular reports of Scottish friars defecting from their convents and fleeing to the more relaxed atmosphere of England. According to the Order's legislation it was forbidden to transfer from an Observant environment to a conventual, although it was possible to pass the other way. In 1505, the Master of the Order wrote to the provincials of the Order ordering them not to accept fugitive friars from the Scottish province without the permission of the Scottish provincial. James IV in letters in 1506 and 1508 repeats the charge to the Master General that fugitives are undermining the work and reputation of the Scottish province and demands that something be done about it. That there were such is shown by permission granted by the Master of the Order in 1520 to Friar John Duncanson, a Dominican of the Stirling priory, who had fled Scotland in 1505 and taken refuge in the Boston priory in Lincolnshire. He was ordained subdeacon in 1509 and deacon and priest in 1511.<sup>19</sup> In 1510 Nicholas Gonor, Vicar General of the Congregation of Holland, together with the priors of Ghent and Valenciennes, was appointed visitator of the Dominican houses in Scotland with full powers of the Master. The king received them well and supported their work of reform. In 1511 David Anderson was removed from office and replaced by John Adamson, who was to remain provincial until his death in 1523 when he was succeeded by his disciple John Grierson, who saw the story through to its sad end in 1560.

James supported Adamson and his collaborators because, so he says in his letters, they were reforming 'the discipline of a decayed religious order'. The rhetoric of these letters is immediately recognisable as that of the Observants within the Order.<sup>20</sup> They always presented their conventual

opponents as sunk in decadence and decay. The reform party within the Scottish Dominican province also adopted the traditional Observant strategy of engaging the support of powerful secular authority and using that in conjunction with central Roman authority, either of the pope or of the Master. There was a struggle within the province which lasted throughout 1511 and into 1512. Adamson was not accepted as provincial without opposition and, as in the reform of the priory of Saint Jacques in Paris in 1501, his authority was enforced with the aid of the secular arm; as it had been in so many other European towns and cities where the reform had been supported by kings, princes and city councils. The kings of Scots, like their French cousins, were happy to tolerate, promote and benefit from the most outrageous abuse of their rights of patronage in the Scottish Church, milking the revenues of the Church for the benefit of the crown and state, whilst promoting reform amongst the regulars, which salved their consciences, cost them nothing, and increased the dependence of international religious Orders on the Crown. Paradoxically, the reforming religious were helping to dig their own graves by inviting and relying on the help of the secular powers.

The story of the growth of the reform of the Scottish Dominican province and its involvement in the intellectual and theological life of the nation must be told another time. The story began, in many ways, in Glasgow in the Chapter house of the Blackfriars, but took in many different places on the way. The Dominicans made another effort to promote Glasgow theology in the work of Robert Lyle who took up where John Mair left off after his brief sojourn in Glasgow before being taken off to Saint Andrews by Archbishop Beaton. It was St Andrews which was to be the great hope of the renewed province, purged of its unreformed elements and firmly fixed on reform of morals and practice within the church, through the exercise of the mind in love and the joys of contemplation of the divine mystery.

In 1477 a papal bull authorised the transformation of the St Andrews Dominican house, which was described as a hospital, perhaps a refuge for pilgrims, into a conventual house.<sup>21</sup> Although the university had used the church for university events on various occasions since 1476, by the beginning of the sixteenth century the buildings had become dilapidated. In 1514 the remainder of Bishop Elphinstone's estate was transferred to the Dominicans for the construction of a priory 'within the university of St Andrews'. In 1516 the Provincial Chapter endorsed the project and by 1517 John Grierson was in residence as prior of the new convent. This represented a new and final chapter in the history of the Scottish province. St Andrews was undergoing its own process of renewal, and the friars now had a site within the town itself, unlike Aberdeen where their priory was almost two miles from the university in Old Aberdeen. It offered them more than Glasgow could at that time, although, without their involvement in Glasgow they would never have been able to make the foundation in St

Andrews. During the course of the next twenty years a large number of highly qualified and intelligent young men became Dominicans. An exceptional number of them had their degrees recognised by the General Chapter of 1525, a tribute to the investment John Adamson and his colleagues had made in Dominican education.<sup>22</sup> Adamson himself received the ultimate accolade at the 1518 General Chapter, having walked all of the way to Rome with his loyal lieutenant John Spens, keeping the traditional fast of the Order all of the way, he was commended by this, the largest Chapter to have gathered in two hundred years, for reforming the Scottish province and for founding the house in St Andrews. Adamson died before the tidal wave of the Scottish Reformation swept over all that he had spent his life labouring to build. He saw the beginnings of the Lutheran reform, but did not live to see its effects. Those in the first generation of Protestant reformers who emerged from religious life had mostly belonged to the reformed or Observant branches of their Order. It was the same with the Scottish Dominicans; a number of those who had been so carefully educated in the discipline of Catholic theology and Church reform in the schools of St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Cologne and Paris, found that the dynamic of their vocation led them to lay aside their habit and to embrace the Protestant reform. John McAlpine the former prior of Perth studied at Cologne, and later fled to Wittenberg ending his days as a Lutheran and professor of theology in Copenhagen. John McDowell, another Cologne student, former sub-prior of Glasgow also fled the country and took up Protestantism.<sup>23</sup> There were others, but these focus the unpredictable course of a massive regenerative movement within Christianity which was to lead to schism within the Christian Church. But that is another story.

What of Glasgow, Blackfriars? The last surviving member of the community, Father John Hunter, died in exile in the Dominican priory in Bordeaux a little before 1590. He had studied at Cologne and been Prior of the Glasgow Blackfriars in 1552. He kept up his Glasgow contacts and was in regular touch with the exiled Archbishop Beaton. Beaton wrote in 1584 that there was a significant number of exiled Scottish priests hoping to return home, the only thing that deterred them was want of means, amongst them he lists Father John Hunter.<sup>24</sup> It would appear that Hunter was part of the communication system between Archbishop Beaton, the Duke of Guise, the Duke of Parma and dissident Catholic elements plotting the conversion of James VI and the restoration of Catholicism. A major concern in his last years was with securing the freedom of his imprisoned Queen Mary, the Queen of Scots, a hope which was to be disappointed. It was perhaps, not a bad way, for a great tradition to end.

1 An excellent study of Dominican education can be found in Michèle Mulcahy 'First the Bow is bent in Study' ... *Dominican Education before 1350* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1998).

- 2 *Monumenta diplomatica S. Dominici*, ed Vladimir J. Koudelka, *Monumenta Ordinis fratrum Praedicatorum historica* 25. (Rome, 1966) no 115, pp. 119–20.
- 3 Mulcahy, 'First the Bow is bent', p. 50.
- 4 H. de Iongh, *De l'ancienne Faculté de théologie de Louvain au premier siècle de son existence (1432–1540)*. (Louvain, 1911) p. 39
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 6 *Munimenta Almae Universitatis Glasguensis*, ed C Innes (Maitland Club, 184) ii 66.
- 7 *Calendar of Papal Registers*.
- 8 British Library Ad. Ms. 32446 f 10.
- 9 R.P. Mortier, *Histoire des Maîtres Généraux* (Paris, 1909) iv, pp 36.
- 10 *Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis Praedicatorum* (ed. B.M. Reichert).
- 11 Thomas S. Flynn OP, *The Irish Dominicans 1536–1641* (Dublin, 1993).
- 12 *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, 1906–60) xiii part i pp 426–27.
- 14 *Munimenta Universitatis Glasguensis*, ii 100, cf. *ibid.*, 78 83 226.
- 15 B.M. Reichert, *Registrum Litterarum Salvi Cassettae et Barnabi Saxoni* (Leipzig, 1912) p 2.
- 16 G M Löhr, *Die theologischen Disputationen und Promotionen an der universität Köln in ausgehenden 15 Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1926) p28.
- 17 *Registrum Salvae Cassettae*, p 64.
- 18 A full account of the foundation and early years of the university of Aberdeen can be found in Leslie J Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and The Kingdom of Scotland 1431–1514: The Struggle for Order* (Aberdeen, 1985) pp 290–402.
- 19 J Durkhan and J Kirk, *The University of Glasgow 1451–1577* (Glasgow, 1977) p 171.
- 20 *The Letters of James V*, eds. R K Hannay and D Hay (Edinburgh, 1954) pp 104, 114, 115.
- 21 *Calendar of Papal Registers*, xiii, p 571.
- 22 *Acta capitulorum generalium*, iv, p 206.
- 23 Anthony Ross OP, 'Notes on the Religious Orders', in ed D McRoberts, *Essays on the Scottish Reformation* (Glasgow, 1962) pp 185–233, p 220–201
- 24 *Narratives of Scottish Catholics under Mary Stuart and James VI* (Edinburgh, 1885) ed William Forbes Leith SJ. p 196.