

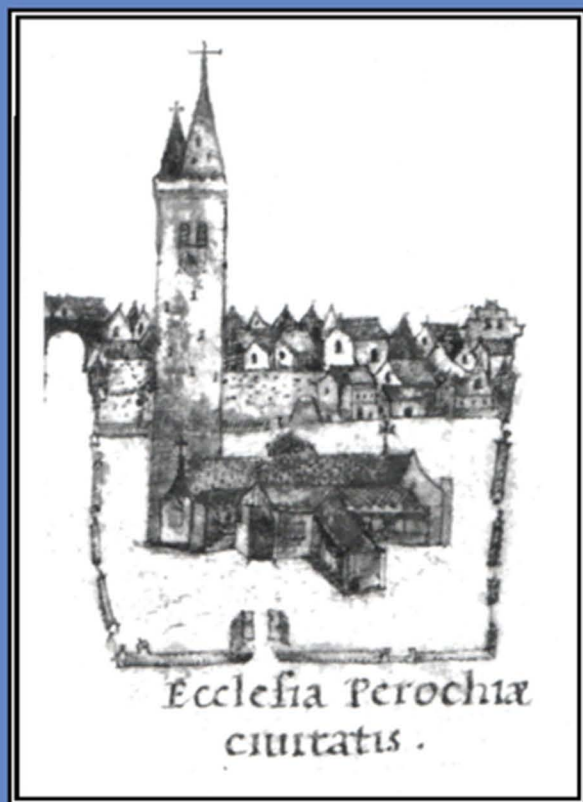


ST ANDREWS STUDIES IN
REFORMATION HISTORY



Reforming *the* Scottish Church

John Winram (c. 1492–1582)
and the example of Fife



Linda J. Dunbar

Reforming the Scottish Church

To mum and dad

Reforming the Scottish Church

John Winram (*c.* 1492–1582)
and the example of Fife

LINDA J. DUNBAR

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Contents

<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>List of figures</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Conventions and abbreviations</i>	xiv
<i>List of maps</i>	xix
Introduction	1
1 St Andrews priory before 1560	5
2 Changing religious convictions	15
3 Superintendency: The theory of the <i>First Book of Discipline</i>	37
4 Superintendency: The developments of the General Assembly	50
5 The practice of superintendency in Fife	65
6 The superintendent's court	83
7 Clerical admissions	102
8 The problems of superintendency	116
9 St Andrews priory after 1560	139
10 St Andrews University	152
11 Friends	163
12 Family	176
Conclusion	192
Appendix A Canons in St Andrews priory	205
Appendix B <i>Fasti</i> of post-Reformation St Andrews canons	210
<i>Bibliography</i>	220
<i>Index</i>	231



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English Catholic Community, 1535–1603*
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Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern England
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The Correspondence of Reginald Pole:
1. *A Calendar, 1518–1546: Beginnings to Legate of Viterbo*
Thomas F. Mayer

Self-Defence and Religious Strife in Early Modern Europe:
England and Germany, 1530–1680
Robert von Friedeburg

Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity
during the French Wars of Religion
Luc Racaut

Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation
Anne T. Thayer

Huguenot Heartland:
Montauban and Southern French Calvinism
during the French Wars of Religion
Philip Conner

Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500–1620
Claire S. Schen

The British Union: A Critical Edition and Translation of
David Hume of Godscroft's De Unione Insulae Britannicae
edited by Paul J. McGinnis and Arthur H. Williamson

List of tables

6.1	Cases brought before St Andrews Kirk Session, 26 October 1559 to 3 April 1561	86
6.2	Cases brought before the superintendent's court: 1562– 1565	90
6.3	Cases brought before the superintendent's court: 1568– 1569	91
6.4	Kirk discipline, social discipline and religious observance cases brought before the superintendent's court	91
6.5	'Clear-up-rates' of cases brought before the superintendent's court	94
A.1	Canons in St Andrews priory, 1501–1600	208–9

List of figures

Dustcover	Parish church of the Holy Trinity. Detail from J. Geddy, <i>S. Andre sive Andreapolis Scotiae Universitatis Metropolitana</i> . Reproduced from National Library of Scotland MS 20996, by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.	
12.1	Family tree of John Winram	177
12.2	Family tree of Margaret Stewart	180
13.1	Tombstone of John Winram	193
13.2	Arms of 'Winram of yat ilk', reproduced from R.R. Stodart, <i>Scottish Arms, being a collection of armorial bearings AD 1370–1678</i> (Edinburgh, 1881), I, p. 45	194

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Conventions and abbreviations

The spellings in all quotations are given as in the original sources. The characters ‘thorn’ and ‘yogh’ have been transcribed as ‘y’ and ‘z’ respectively. The letters ‘i’; ‘j’; ‘u’; ‘v’ and ‘w’ have been retained as in the original. Capital letters and minimal punctuation have been inserted and all abbreviations and contractions have been silently expanded. Within the text personal and place names have been modernized. Dates which fall between 1 January and 24 March are given as, for example, January 1559/60 to indicate both the original Old Style dating, and the New Style equivalent. All sums of money are given in £s Scots.

<i>Acts and Monuments</i>	G. Townshend and S.R. Cattley eds, <i>The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe</i> , London, 1843–49
<i>Acts of Council (Public Affairs)</i>	R.K. Hannay ed., <i>Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs 1501–1554: Selections from Acta Dominorum Concilii</i> , Edinburgh, 1932
APS	T. Thomson and C. Innes eds, <i>The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland</i> , Edinburgh, 1814–75
Balfour, <i>Practicks</i>	P.G.B. McNeill ed., <i>The Practicks of Sir James Balfour of Pittendreich</i> , (Stair Society) Edinburgh, 1962–63
Bannatyne, <i>Memorials</i>	R. Bannatyne ed., <i>Memorials of Transactions in Scotland, A.D. MDLXIX – A.D. MDLXXIII</i> , (Bannatyne Club) Edinburgh, 1836
<i>Brechin Registrum</i>	C. Innes ed., <i>Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis</i> , (Bannatyne Club) Aberdeen, 1859
BUK	T. Thomson ed., <i>Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland from the year MDLX</i> , (Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs) Edinburgh, 1839–45
<i>Burgh Recs. Edinburgh</i>	J.D. Marwick ed., <i>Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh</i> , (Scottish Burgh Record Society) Edinburgh, 1869–82

- Calderwood, *History* T. Thomson ed., *History of the Kirk of Scotland. By Mr David Calderwood ...*, (Wodrow Society) Edinburgh, 1842–49
- Complete Peerage* V. Gibbs ed., *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, extant, extinct or dormant by G.E.C.*, London, 1910–59
- CSP Foreign *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the reign of Elizabeth ...*, London, 1863–1950
- CSP(S) J. Bain et al. eds, *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots 1547–1603 ...*, Edinburgh, 1898–1969
- Diurnal of Occurents* *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurents that have passed within the country of Scotland, since the death of King James the Fourth till the year 1575*, (Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs) 1833
- DSCHT N.M. de S. Cameron ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, Edinburgh, 1993
- Evidence, Oral and Documentary* *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the State of the Universities of Scotland. Evidence Oral and Documentary*, vol. 3, 1837
- Exch. Rolls* J. Stuart et al. eds, *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1878–1908
- Fasti* H. Scott ed., *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, revised edition, Edinburgh, 1915–50
- FBD J.K. Cameron ed., *The First Book of Discipline*, Edinburgh, 1972
- Foirm* R.L. Thomson ed., *Foirm Na N-Urrnuidheadh*, (Scottish Gaelic Texts Society) Edinburgh, 1988
- Formulary* P. Goulesbrough ed., *Formulary of Old Scots Legal Documents*, (Stair Society) Edinburgh, 1985
- Hamilton Papers* J. Bain ed., *The Hamilton Papers: Letters and papers illustrating the political relations of England and Scotland in the XVIth century ...*, Edinburgh, 1890–92

- Hannay, *Statutes* R.K. Hannay ed., *The Statutes of the Faculty of Arts and the faculty of theology at the period of the Reformation*, St Andrews University Publications no. VII, St Andrews, 1910
- HMC *Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, London, 1870–
- James V Letters* R.K. Hannay and D. Hay eds, *The Letters of James V*, Edinburgh, 1954
- Knox, *Works* D. Laing ed., *The Works of John Knox*, (Wodrow Society) Edinburgh, 1846–64
- Laing Chrs.* J. Anderson ed., *Calendar of the Laing Charters A.D. 854–1837: belonging to the University of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 1899
- Letters and Papers F&D. Henry VIII* *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII ...*, London, 1862–1910, 1929–32
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- Maitland Misc.* *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, (Maitland Club) 1833–47
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- Melvill, *Diary* G.R. Kinloch et al. eds, *The Diary of Mr James Melvill, 1556–1601*, (Bannatyne Club) Edinburgh, 1829
- NAS National Archive of Scotland
- NLS National Library of Scotland
- NRA(S) 217 Moray Muniments, National Register of Archives (Scotland), Collection 217
- Papal Negotiations* J.H. Pollen ed., *Papal Negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots during her reign in Scotland, 1561–1567*, (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1901
- Patrick, *Statutes* D. Patrick ed., *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225–1559*, (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1907
- Pitscottie, *Historie* R. Lindesay of Pitscottie, *The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland ...*, (Scottish Text Society) Edinburgh, 1899–1911

RCHMS	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of Scotland
<i>Red Book of Grandtully</i>	W. Fraser ed., <i>The Red Book of Grandtully</i> , Edinburgh, 1868
<i>Red Book of Menteith</i>	W. Fraser ed., <i>The Red Book of Menteith</i> , Edinburgh, 1880
<i>Reg. Hon. de Morton</i>	<i>Registrum Honoris de Morton</i> , (Bannatyne Club) Edinburgh, 1853
<i>Reg. of Min.</i>	<i>Register of Ministers Exhorters and Readers, and of their stipends after the period of the Reformation</i> , (Maitland Club) Edinburgh, 1830
<i>Reg. Privy Council</i>	J.H. Burton et al. eds, <i>The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland</i> , Edinburgh, 1877–1970
RMS	J.M. Thomson et al. eds, <i>Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum</i> , Edinburgh, 1882–1914
<i>Row, History</i>	D. Laing ed., <i>History of the Kirk of Scotland from the year 1558 to August 1637 by John Row ...</i> , (Wodrow Society) Edinburgh, 1842
RSCHS	<i>Records of the Scottish Church History Society</i>
RSS	M. Livingstone et al. eds, <i>Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum</i> , Edinburgh, 1908–
RStAKS	D.H. Fleming ed., <i>Register of the Minister Elders and Deacons of the Christian Congregation of St Andrews ... 1559–1600</i> , (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1889–90
<i>Scots Confession</i>	G.D. Henderson and J. Bulloch eds, <i>The Scots Confession 1560</i> , Edinburgh, 1960
<i>Scots Peerage</i>	J.B. Paul ed., <i>The Scots Peerage</i> , Edinburgh, 1904–14
<i>Scott, Fasti</i>	H. Scott ed., <i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ</i> , revised edition, Edinburgh, 1915–
<i>St A. Acta</i>	A.I. Dunlop ed., <i>Acta Facultatis Artium Universitatis Sanctiandree</i> , Edinburgh, 1964
<i>St A. Form.</i>	G. Donaldson and C. Macrae eds, <i>St Andrews Formulare 1514–1546</i> , Edinburgh, 1942–44
St A. Muniments	St Andrews University Muniments

- St A. Recs.* J.M. Anderson ed., *Early Records of the University of St Andrews*, (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1926
- St A. Rent.* R.K. Hannay ed., *Rentale Sancti Andree*, (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1913
- StA MS 30451 St Andrews University Muniments MS 30451, undated
- The Forme* *The Forme of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments, &c. Used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneva*, Geneva, 1556
- Thirds of Benefices* G. Donaldson ed., *Accounts of the Collectors of Thirds of Benefices, 1561–1572*, (Scottish History Society) Edinburgh, 1949
- Treasurer Accts* T. Dickson and Sir J. Balfour Paul eds, *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1877–1916
- Wodrow Misc.* D. Laing ed., *Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*, Edinburgh, 1844
- Wodrow Misc.*,
'Register' 'Register of Ministers and Readers in the Kirk of Scotland ... 1574' in D. Laing ed., *Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*, Edinburgh, 1844, 319–96
- Wodrow, Collections* R. Wodrow, *Collections upon the Lives of the Reformers and most Eminent Ministers of the Church of Scotland*, Glasgow, 1834

List of maps

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 1.1 | St Andrews <i>c.</i> 1580. J. Geddy, 'S. Andre sive Andreapolis Scotiae Universitatis Metropolitana'. Reproduced from National Library of Scotland MS 20996, by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland | 6 |
| 5.1 | Winram's district | 68 |
| 5.2 | Known visitations undertaken by John Winram | 80 |
| 7.1 | Locations of admissions attributable to John Winram | 107 |



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Introduction

John Winram's life (c. 1492–1582) spanned almost the whole of the sixteenth century. As such, he lived through the years of religious change before, during and after the momentous events of 1559–60. Moreover, he served in both the pre-Reformation Church and the Reformed Kirk at the highest levels – as sub-prior of St Andrews Augustinian Priory and as Superintendent of Fife. Any study of Winram, then, must be seen in the context of the Scottish Reformation. Gordon Donaldson's seminal book, *The Scottish Reformation*,¹ marked an important shift away from the view that the Scottish Reformation expressed rejection of corrupt and bankrupt Roman Catholicism by the Scottish people as a whole. Subsequent studies, such as Ian Cowan's,² highlighted the diversity of regional experiences and emphasized the need to become familiar with local variety in order to appreciate fully the bigger picture.

In spite of increasing numbers of local and regional studies of Scotland's religious experience in the sixteenth century few have appeared in book form. Since Michael Lynch's *Edinburgh and the Reformation*³ only two other books – one on Angus and the Mearns,⁴ and one on Ayrshire⁵ – have been published. The results of other regional studies, many of which began life as doctoral theses, have been published in articles.⁶ Margaret Sanderson has noted that these studies are important because they reveal the diversity of experience and expression during the reformation of religion in sixteenth-century Scotland. More importantly, the detail provided by these studies has helped to undermine the conventional view of an entire people suddenly turning away from the decay and darkness of the Old Church to the vitality and light of the New. In short, moving away from accounts of the Reformation that present a uniform, national movement to-

¹ G. Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1960).

² I.B. Cowan, *The Scottish Reformation: Church and Society in sixteenth-century Scotland*, (London, c. 1982).

³ M. Lynch, *Edinburgh and the Reformation*, (Edinburgh, 1981).

⁴ F.D. Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed: The Reformation in Angus and the Mearns*, (Edinburgh, 1989).

⁵ M.H.B. Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation: People and Change, 1490–1600*, (East Linton, 1997).

⁶ For a valuable listing of works published to 1987 see James Kirk, 'The Scottish Reformation and the Reign of James VI: A Select Critical Biography', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, XXIII, pp. 113–55.

wards a patchwork of regional patterns has contributed to a greater understanding both of the Old Church and of the New Kirk's struggle to survive in its infancy.⁷

Benefits can likewise arise by breaking away from Reformation history that features John Knox alone as the principal character of the drama. The works and letters of Knox that have survived are far more numerous than are those of his contemporaries. This is partly why, in the past, biographical studies in Scottish Reformation history have been dominated by Knox. Indeed, Knox was often given sole credit for the actions and achievements of the Reformed Kirk when he was in fact one participant among a group (for example, in the writing of the Scots Confession or the *First Book of Discipline*). Attributing superhuman achievements to Knox is more the fault of historians than of Knox's portrayal of himself in his *History*.⁸

This is not to say that Knox's contemporaries have been totally ignored. There are some important sixteenth-century Scotsmen about whom we know a great deal. Some such as Cardinal David Beaton, George Buchanan, Patrick Hamilton, Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lord James Stewart and Archibald Campbell, 5th Earl of Argyll each have the distinction of being the subject of an extensive biography.⁹ But none of these men was principally renowned as reforming ecclesiastics. It remains true that John Knox still occupies centre-stage in Scottish Reformation historiography. This distorts the reality and diminishes the efforts and contributions of his contemporaries. A better balance still needs to be struck by shifting the spotlight onto other players as yet not well-known. By expanding the cast of characters, giving them speaking parts and allowing their stories to be heard our understanding of the Reformation drama as a whole can be enriched.

John Winram has long been thought worthy of study. The poet John Johnston (c. 1565–1611) considered him deserving of praise and so wrote about him in one of his many poems about Scottish heroes.¹⁰ Later, Robert Wodrow (1675–1734), minister, historian and antiquary, included Winram among his biographical sketches of principal reformers of the Church of Scotland. (Wodrow's study was augmented in the nineteenth century by the editor of the original manuscript while pre-

⁷ Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation*, p. viii.

⁸ D. Laing, ed., *Works of John Knox*, (Edinburgh, 1846–64), I–II.

⁹ J.E.A. Dawson, *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary, Queen of Scots: The Earl of Argyll and the Struggle for Britain and Ireland*, (Cambridge, 2002). Other people have been the subject of small scale studies in valuable articles. Kirk, 'A Select Critical Biography', pp. 140–43.

¹⁰ See page 15.

paring it for publication by the Maitland Club).¹¹ The only subsequent, extensive biography was by Kirkwood Hewat and published in 1920.¹² It relied heavily upon Wodrow plus scraps of information drawn from printed primary material, such as early Scottish Reformation histories and official church or state papers. The time is ripe for a new, detailed look at John Winram.

Winram's importance lies in two key areas where his involvement was crucial. First, in the Catholic Church in the decades before the Reformation; and second, in the Reformed Church immediately after 1560. As subprior of St Andrews Augustinian Priory (1535–1582) – Scotland's richest and most influential religious house – Winram was deeply involved, at the highest level, in attempts to achieve Catholic reform. He participated in controversial and well-publicized heresy trials in 1540, 1546, 1550 and 1558 and in the Reforming Councils of 1549, 1552 and 1559. But shortly after the 1559 Council he sided with the Lords of the Congregation. He moved, apparently effortlessly, into the new Kirk and quickly made his mark assisting with the writing of the Scots Confession and the *First Book of Discipline*. In 1561 he was appointed superintendent of Fife – one of only five such appointments made – in which office he served the Church for over 15 years. Like Knox and other reformers, Winram stands at the intersection between two worlds: illustrative of the continuity of personnel between the Old Church and the New, and a key player in the transition between the two.

Most modern historians have been content to acknowledge Winram's importance with passing references, but little more. Accounts of Winram's career before the Reformation have for the most part focused only on his participation in heresy trials and in the Reforming Councils. Consequently, his life up to and including 1559 has often been viewed as in direct contradiction with his life after 1560 and his enthusiastic work within the Reformed Kirk. Some scholars have treated Winram's *volte face* as sheer opportunism. John Johnston, for example, confessed himself puzzled by Winram's change from Catholic to Reformer, unable to reconcile himself to this change given Winram's apparently convinced, and convincing, Catholicism. Hewat was blunter and commented that Winram 'may appear to some to have been endeavouring for an inordinate length of time to find out which was the safe side of the burning

¹¹ R. Wodrow, *Collections upon the Lives of the Reformers and most Eminent Ministers of the Church of Scotland*, (Glasgow, 1834), I, pp. 119–30, 453–71.

¹² K. Hewat, *Makers of the Scottish Church at the Reformation*, (Edinburgh, 1920), pp. 166–222.

bush'.¹³ Such characterizations, however, are the result of somewhat limited – and partial – use of available sources.

John Winram began his life committed to service in the Roman Catholic Church. He ended it committed to service in the new Reformed Church. This study attempts to uncover the steps which he took on his journey. It seeks to present a different Winram from the hypocrite and opportunist who has hitherto been described.¹⁴ For Winram the Reformation crisis of 1560 was indeed a turning point; but it marked not a sharp, sudden shift of religious conviction and direction, rather it was a crucial stage in a quest for change that had begun years before. Furthermore, through a detailed consideration of Winram's life and work an attempt has been made to show how ecclesiastical discipline was established in Fife in the years after 1560. From this regional picture emerges a reassessment of the role of superintendents generally in the fledgling Kirk. These men, working with their courts and with their synods, forged the links between the General Assembly and the parishes that were vital in establishing the structures and procedures that enabled the Kirk to be effective early on at local and regional levels.

¹³ Hewat, *Makers*, p. 180.

¹⁴ For example see the brief biography given in D. McRoberts ed., *Essays on the Scottish Reformation, 1513–1635*, (Glasgow, 1962), pp. xix–xx.

St Andrews priory before 1560

In Early Modern Scotland the Fife town of St Andrews was one of the realm's most vital and vibrant centres. A 'Bird's Eye View' plan of St Andrews (c. 1580) illustrates the variety of functions which the town served.¹ (Map 1.1) The physical dominance of the Augustinian cathedral and the priory precinct, together with the archbishop's castle and the Dominican and Franciscan friaries indicate the town's ecclesiastical significance. Its educational importance is suggested by the plan's subtitle, *Scotiae Universitas Metropolitana*, and by the careful labelling of the university colleges. The commercial role of the burgh is evident from the harbour and its trading ships and the market square with its attendant tollbooth, market cross and tron.² It was here that John Winram spent most of his life, coming first as a student of St Leonard's College and, having become, amongst other things, the subprior of the Augustinian priory and the Superintendent of Fife, dying within the town some 70 years later. During this period Winram immersed himself in the activities of the town's ecclesiastical, as well as its educational establishments.

From canon to subprior

John Winram was born c. 1492, the son of James Winram of Ratho and Margaret Wilkie.³ Nothing is known of Winram's early life until 1515–16 when he is listed among the determinants of St Leonard's College, St Andrews who gained their Bachelor of Arts degrees at that time.⁴ The College was founded in 1512 at the instigation of the then prior, John Hepburn, who hoped the college would provide well-educated novices to bolster the number of canons in the priory.⁵ Winram entered the

¹ NLS MS 20996.

² N.P. Brooks and G. Whittington, 'Planning and growth in the medieval Scottish Burgh: the example of St Andrews', *Transactions of The Institute of British Geographers*, New Series II:2 (1977), pp. 281, 284–85.

³ See pages 176–77.

⁴ J.M. Anderson ed., *Early Records of the University of St Andrews. The graduation roll, 1413–1579, and the matriculation roll, 1473–1579*, (Edinburgh, 1926), pp. 104, 211.

⁵ R.G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews: A Short History*, 3rd Edition, (St Andrews, 1992), p. 35; J. Herkless and R.K. Hannay, *The College of St Leonard*, (Edinburgh, 1905), pp. 85–86.