

### III.

NOTES ON THE TRINITARIAN OR RED FRIARS IN SCOTLAND, AND  
ON A RECENTLY DISCOVERED CHARTER OF ALEXANDER III.  
CONFIRMING THE FOUNDATION OF HOUSTOUN BY CRISTIANA  
FRASER, WIDOW OF SIR ROGER DE MOUBRAY. By JOSEPH BAIN,  
F.S.A. Scot.

The Trinitarian Order of Friars for the Redemption of Christian Captives, sometimes called Mathurins or Red Friars, had various houses in Scotland. Lists of these have been given by Spottiswoode, and more recently by the Rev. J. F. S. Gordon, D.D., in his *Monasticon*, vol. iii. (1867), and the late Rev. Mackenzie Walcott, in his *Scoti-Monasticon* (1874). As no chartularies seem to have been preserved, these lists are probably not very correct. There appear to have been in all ten or eleven houses, scattered over the country from Dornoch in the north-east, to Failfurd in the south-west. One of these, Houstoun, in the county of Edinburgh, seems to have baffled the inquiries of historians from Chalmers downwards. About a year ago Mr St John Hope, Assistant Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, sent me a transcript of a charter which Mr Edward Peacock, F.S.A., had made from the original in the Berkeley charter-room, asking if I could identify some of the names, as it appeared to relate to Scotland. I replied, saying who the foundress was, and I thought that the subject of her grant was Houstoun, in Linlithgowshire.

My note being written somewhat hastily, I thought little more about it, nor did I see it till six months after it was printed.<sup>1</sup> This made me look a little more closely into the subject, and I now beg to submit the results of my inquiry. Only four of the heads of these Trinitarian houses appear on the Ragman Rolls, as doing homage to Edward I. at Berwick-on-Tweed on 28th August 1296. These were Friar Adam, minister of the Order of the Trinity of Berwick; Friar Thomas, master of the Trinity of Soltre "del Counte de Edneburk"; Friar Thomas, master of the House of the Holy Rood of Peebles; and Friar John, master of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity of Howeston "del Counte de Edneburk." Of this last Chalmers remarks:<sup>2</sup>—"At Houseton, East Lothian, there was of old a hospital, though the piety of its founder and the site of the foundation, be now equally unknown; as folly has changed the name of the place which was once devoted by wisdom." In a note he gives the master's name as it stands on the Ragman Roll, and quotes from *Rymer* (ii. 726), the fact that a writ was soon after issued to the Sheriff of Haddington directing the restoration of the property of the house, adding that in Bagimont's Roll the "magistratus de Howston," in the deanery of Haddington, is rated at £8, and that it subsequently appears as a provostry in the books of the Privy Seal. This is all for which this learned and laborious writer found authority, and he adds no more. He took no notice of Spottiswoode's suggestion that the place was Houstoun in Renfrewshire, said by him to have been founded in 1226. Both Dr Gordon and Mr Walcott repeat this erroneous statement; though the former seems to have suspected some error (*Monasticon*, iii. p. 292), which he could not explain. And so the matter would have rested but for the interesting discovery of the Berkeley charter.

This charter (as printed from Mr Peacock's transcript)<sup>3</sup> is as follows:—

Alexander Dei gracia Rex Scottorum omnibus probis hominibus tocius terre sue salutem. Sciatis nos concessisse et hac presenti carta nostra confirmasse donacionem illam quam Cristiana de Mubray sponsa quondam Rogeri de Mubray

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. xi. p. 98 (11th March 1886).

<sup>2</sup> *Caledonia*, ii. p. 508.

<sup>3</sup> I have not seen the original.

militis filia et heres quondam Bernardi Fraser militis, in legitima viduitate et libera potestate sua constituta, fecit fratribus Ordinis Sancti Trinitatis et Captivorum de domo que dicitur Gracia Dei, quam eadem Cristiana fundavit in Teritorio manerii sui de Huwystun, et de toto eodem manerio et de tota terra que vocatur Lynerynham, in tenemento de Huwystun, et de tota terra que fuit Hospitalis de Fortun, et de tota terra que fuit quondam Thome de Lessedwyn, in villa et in Teritorio de Fortun, et de tota terra de Crauchot. Tenendas et habendas fratribus predicti ordinis et eorum successoribus in perpetuum de dicta Cristiana et heredibus suis in puram et perpetuam elemosinam cum omnibus libertatibus et aisiamentis ad dictas terras pertinentibus adeo libere quiete plenarie et honorifice sicut carta predictae Cristiane eisdem fratribus exinde confecta plenius inde testatur. Salvo servicio nostro. Testibus Johanne Cumyn, Reginaldo le Chen, Symone Fraser, Ricardo Fraser, et David Brun. Apud Hadyngtun vicesimo sexto die Januarii, anno regni nostri vicesimo tercio [1271-72].

A fragment of the Great Seal in white wax is appended by a parchment slip.

This is an extremely interesting document in several respects. For it enables us to fix with approximate certainty the date of the foundation of the Trinitarian house of Houstoun, in the county of Edinburgh (which then included the constabulary of Haddington), the site of which is yet unknown, though perhaps it may now be discovered. It also gives the names of some of its possessions there, with the name of its forgotten foundress, the eldest representative of the Frasers. She gives it her whole manor of Houstoun, with the houses of her previous foundation there, called "the Grace of God," and land called Lynerynham, also lands belonging to the hospital of Fortun, Thomas of Lessedwyn's land in the vill of Fortun, and the land of Crauchot.

When the late Lord Saltoun compiled the valuable account of his family—*The Frasers of Philorth*—he could only say regarding Christiana's father, Sir Bernard Fraser of Fortun and Linton, although he ranked among the magnates of Scotland in the reign of Alexander II., that he was probably also first of Touch Fraser, and sheriff of Stirling in 1233, and that he died about 1249 *without descendants*. That he held considerable possessions and superiorities as a vassal of the Earls of Dunbar, which lay in Athelstaneford and Linton in East Lothian.

This charter supplies some more information. Sir Roger de Moubray, Cristiana's husband, seems to have been dead before 23rd January 1268-69,<sup>1</sup> and therefore her foundation charter must have been made within two years afterwards. She probably had no son, for Sir Geoffry de Moubray, the next head of the Scottish Moubrays, seems to have had none of these Fraser lands which Cristiana held, derived from her father. So he was probably a collateral relative of Sir Roger, if not a son by a previous marriage. Now, with the aid of Lord Saltoun's book, and the names given in the charter, I have consulted Blackwood's County Atlas of Scotland, with some success. The lands of East and West *Fortune* are in the parish of Athelstaneford. To the east, in the parish of Prestonkirk, East and West *Crawha* [Crauchot] are found. *Houston Mill* is marked on the right bank of Tyne water, in the same parish; and nearly opposite, on the left bank, is *Linton*, which seems a considerable hamlet. There or thereabouts must the lost site of Houston hospital be looked for.

Having thus, by this lucky discovery of Mr Peacock's, settled the true neighbourhood of Houston, where it may be hoped that efforts will be made to ascertain if no remains of buildings or local place names can be traced to fix the exact spot, some remarks may be made on one or two of the other Scotch houses of the Order. The head of Faile or Failfurd in Ayrshire, which seems to have been for some reason the leading house in Scotland, does not appear in the Ragman Roll. Spottiswoode, according to Chalmers (*Caledonia*, iii. 491), subdivided Failfurd into *three*, one a Cluniac cell of Paisley, the other two Trinitarians, being misled by the variations of its name, Faile, Failfurd, and Loch Fail. Dr Gordon says (*Mon.*, iii. p. 294):—"Failford founded 1252, by whom unknown. The principal of the house was styled 'minister,' and as head of the Order had a seat in Parliament." Mackenzie Walcott says the founder was Andrew Bruce. He also gives the names of five of the "ministers." I have not seen the reason why these were so styled, but the fact is undoubted. Readers of Blind Harry's *Wallace* may remember the curious story told there (Book ii. l. 288) about Thomas Rimour being at the Faile, and his intimacy with the "mynystir,

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of Documents (Scotland)*, vol. i. No. 2521.

quhilk was a worthie man," &c. It is likely most of the ordinary readers of the *Minstrel in Scotland*, if they remark this expression, conclude that it means the parish minister in the modern sense. Dr Jamieson does not notice this technical use of the word "minister," probably not knowing much about the Trinitarians. In his note on the passage he says, citing Spottiswoode—"This was a cell or priory of the Cluniacenses in Kyle, Ayrshire, depending on Paisley. The only notice of it in our history is that the prior in 1544 was one of those who hindered Dumbarton from being surrendered to the English when the Earl of Lennox was governor." There is a notice of a minister not named in Walcott's list, in the *Register of Panmure* (Appendix to Preface, p. clxiii). On 11th August 1413, William Wallace of Cragie grants leave to his cousin Alexander Ochterlony of Kelly, to dam the water of Kelly burn for his mill. The first witness is "Freir Andro of Cargil, minister of Fale." In the *Diocesan Registers of Glasgow*<sup>1</sup> there are several notices both of Faile and Houston. In 1504 the minister of Failefurd was provincial-general of the Order in Scotland. His name was Friar William Houson or Houston, the minister of Houston at the same date being Friar Thomas Dickson. The latter died before 7th April 1513, on which day the minister of Failefurd collated Friar Christopher Houson, a brother of his own house, to the ministry of the house of Houston.<sup>2</sup> The minister of Failefurd was also rector and vicar of the church of the Holy Rood of Bernewill near Ayr.<sup>3</sup> This was part of their endowment. There are some other notices in the above Registers, which seem to be all that at present are known to exist. Mr Peacock, the discoverer of the charter which has suggested these remarks, says, "that it has long been preserved among the records in the evidence-room at Berkeley, and he can but guess how it found its way from Scotland to Gloucestershire."

The following information which I have collected may possibly help such an inquiry. In the printed volume of the *Register of the Great Seal* for 1513-46, there is a charter (No. 2569) 8th January 1541-42, by which James V., from his devotion to the Holy Rood of Peebles,

<sup>1</sup> *Grampian Club* (1875), vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

confirms the donation made by *quondam* Lady Cristiana Mowbray, confirmed by *quondam* Patrick Earl of Dunbar, to the house of Houstoun, of three carucates of land in their own territory, also the lands of Lyngeam,<sup>1</sup> those of the hospital of Fortoun, with lands in the vill and territory of Fortoun which were Thomas de Lessiddoun's, and the lands of Cragach,<sup>2</sup> vic. Edinburgh, within the constabulary of Hadingtoun, with the annual rents and lands within the burgh of Hadingtoun—likewise the resignation of said house, which Master John Cantly, archdeacon of St Andrews, procurator for David Kinloch, minister of Houstoun, made, as also of the ministry of Houstoun, in the hands of Friar Nicholas, doctor of decretals, chief minister of the Order of the Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives, who accepted the same, to be perpetually united with the ministry of Peebles, and the donation by said minister of Houstoun thereof to Friar James Patersoun, minister of Peebles, his convent, and successors—all to be ratified by the Pope.

Thus Houstoun, with the lands granted by Christiana Fraser, and some additional property in the burgh of Haddington, merged at the above date in the Trinitarian House of the Holy Rood of Peebles, to which its charters would therefore be transferred.

The next volume of the Great Seal (1546–80) contains an entry (No. 3037) which shows that on 1st June 1558, Friar Gilbert Broun, minister of the church of the Holy Rood of Peebles, and his convent, in consideration of 600 marks paid towards the repair of their *house which had been burned by the English during the last war*, grants in feu farm to James Home in Dunbar, and his heirs, lands in and around Dunbar extending to 52 acres [minutely described]. There can be little doubt that the "Haly Rud" of Peebles suffered severely in the devastating raids made by the orders of the savage tyrant Henry VIII. on the Eastern and Border counties between the years 1542–47. If one of the Berkeleys was in the expedition which destroyed the Peebles house, he may have thus become possessed of the charter, with possibly other deeds. Thus, from whatever cause, the house of Houstoun was

<sup>1</sup> Evidently meant for the *Lymyngham* of the old foundation charter.

<sup>2</sup> The "Crauchot" of the charter.

blotted out of the list, by incorporation with that of Peebles, some time before the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

The estate of Houstoun in Linlithgowshire, where I was inclined at first to look for the site of the above religious house, from its close proximity to the shire of Edinburgh, seems from the *Great Seal Register* to have been lay property from an early period. At any rate, in 1526 it was the property of Sir James Hamilton of Fynnart, who was taken bound to build a mansion on it.<sup>2</sup> From him it passed to the King's familiar servitor George Steyll, in 1530.<sup>3</sup> From his widow Christina Wilson, it passed to his son and heir John Steill,<sup>4</sup> who sold it in 1546 to a John Hamilton.<sup>5</sup> The next owner was Matthew Hamilton, captain of Blackness Castle in 1548,<sup>6</sup> whose brother Robert seems to have transferred it before 1569<sup>7</sup> to a James Robertson, burghess of Linlithgow. His son, on 4th September of that year,<sup>8</sup> sold it to Master John Scharpe, advocate and burghess of Edinburgh, the ancestor, I presume, of the family who now possess it—the Shairps of Houstoun—a member of which was the late well-known Principal John Campbell Shairp of St Andrews University.

<sup>1</sup> Since this was in type, I see in the new volume of the *Great Seal Register* (1580-1593) a charter by James VI. on 17th August 1592 (No. 2156), granting to his familiar servitor Sir James Sandilandis of Slamannane and his heirs to the lands of Houstoun, with manor place and fishings, in the constabulary of Hadington and shire of Edinburgh, which had been forfeited by Andrew Wachope, junior, of Nudrie-Mersehall, and were held of the minister of the Corskirk of Peblis. These are clearly the Trinity friars' lands in question.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Mag. Sig.* (1513-46), No. 381.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 1224, 2628.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 180.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1883.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 957.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (1546-80), No. 133.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1861.