

**THE  
ROYAL TOMBS**

**OF  
DUNFERMLINE**

**BY**

**E. HENDERSON, LL.D., &c.**



**DUNFERMLINE:  
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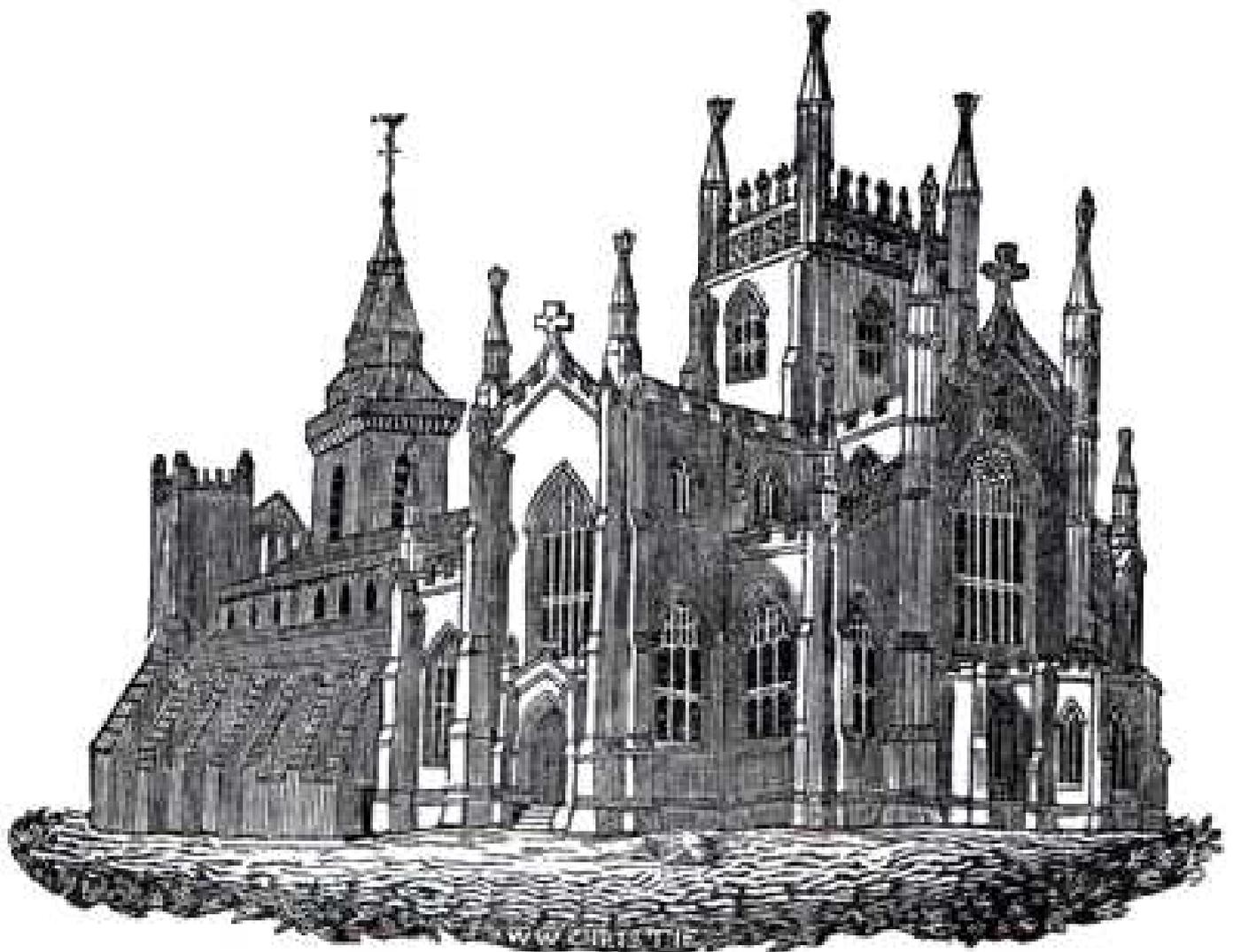
The following pages on “THE ROYAL TOMBS AT DUNFERMLINE,” are compiled from the fullest newspaper extracts of Dr Henderson’s notes on the subject. The want of diagrams to show the sites of the royal tombs and altars, forced the Author, we understand, to adopt the “repetition mode” in his “Proofs” and other illustrations. We have now the pleasure of giving the article in a separate form and we trust that it will meet with the approbation of the public.

Journal Office,  
Dunfermline Nov. 1856.

The compliments on the other side were from the publishers to the Author.  
Dr Henderson gave me this pamphlet about 1869 –  
George Robertson  
Dunfermline

Before being in pamphlet form these notes of Dr Henderson appeared in the Dunfermline Journal at that time a monthly publication by W. Clark High Street, Dunfermline.  
G.R.

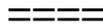
**THE ABBEY, OR CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,  
CITY OF DUNFERMLINE**



(LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM SCOTORUM.)

# THE

## ROYAL TOMBS *at* DUNFERMLINE



In our paper of 25th May we\* inserted a letter on ‘the Royal Scottish Cemetery at Dunfermline,’ by M. G. Surenne, F.S.S.A. Since then, several of our contemporaries have published extracts from the papers on ‘the Royal Tombs at Dunfermline,’ by Dr E. Henderson, of St Helens. As the subject is one of great historical, as well as local interest, we give the following from the fullest account we can find. From a perusal it will be seen that it is now nearly 300 years since the Royal Tombs at Dunfermline were destroyed, and that hitherto, tradition has been in error when pointing out the site of the ‘LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM’ of history.

‘Within the hallowed walls of Dunfermline Abbey were interred the mortal remains of eight Kings, five Queens, six Princes, and two Princesses of Scotland. Their once magnificent tombs have long since disappeared, not a vestige of them remains to point out the site of the ancient original “LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM.” Tradition from time immorial, has pointed to a spot, now under the floor of the north transept of the present modern church, as being “the sacred ground” where the royal remains were deposited.† why does tradition point to this place? Probably because there lay here – uncovered until the year 1818 – six extraordinary large flat gravestones, arranged in two parallel rows; and as it was long the popular belief that there were *only* six kings interred in the Abbey, very likely at some remote period an inference was drawn that these ‘*the six kings*,’ and thus in process of time tradition would pint to these stones in this place as being the undoubted ‘LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM.’

\* Scotsman

† These large stone were placed here between the years 1250 and 1560. Probably they indicate the last resting-place of Abbots, or of Erles, Baronyis, or other grete personygis,’ who had in their life times given large donations, and bequeathed gifts of land to the Abbey. In 1807, the learned antiquarian, the late Sir John G. Dalzell, searched this spot for royal remains. In 1842, Dr H, thoroughly convinced Sir John that no royal remains were ever deposited here.

But never did tradition commit a more serious error. For ages tradition has been pointing to this spot as the royal burial-place, all the while tradition has been pointing to a *myth*, for the royal tombs were not here, the site of the ancient 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM' was not in this place – it was before the altars in the Church of the Holy Trinity. Previous to 1250 this *traditionary site* of the royal tombs *was entirely in the open air*, at some distance from this church and its altars.

In the year 1834 the writer was in Dunfermline, and he carefully examined the traditionary site of the royal tombs, and compared it with several important but hitherto over-looked facts recorded in history. After mature consideration, he came to the conclusion that this traditionary site *had no connection with the royal bury-place*; and also that there must have been *two distinct places of royal sepulture, at two different periods of time*, within the walls of the Abbey. The first series of royal interments, commencing with Margaret in 1093, were deposited before the ALTARS of the Church of 'THE HOLY TRINITY,' and that the second series, beginning with Alexander III, in 1285, were deposited in the new eastern church, finished in 1250.

The writer thinks he will place this beyond dispute, and also show that the ancient Church of 'the Holy Trinity' still exists in the western edifice of Norman architecture, now known as the 'auld kirk;' and consequently, that in front of its altars was the sacred locality selected by Malcolm the Third and Margaret his Queen, as the 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM' for Scotland.

The church at Dunfermline was founded by Malcolm III (Canmore) about the year 1075. Being a Culdean establishment, it was dedicated to 'The Holy Trinity,' and was likewise ordained to be the future place of royal sepulture for Scotland. This old church of 'The Holy Trinity' had a least *two altars*, viz. - THE HIGH ALTAR, and THE ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS. These two altars, and these two only, are all we find mentioned in ancient deeds, charters, or other historical records, as being in this church. Before 'THE HIGH ALTAR' of THIS CHURCH were interred, Edgar in 1107, Malcolm Canmore, exhumed at Tynemouth and deposited here about 1115, Alexander I, in 1124, David I, in 1153 and Malcolm IV, in 1165; and before 'THE ALTARE OF THE HOLY CROSS' were interred, Margaret, Queen of Malcolm Canmore, in 1093, and her three sons, Princes Edward, Etholrade, & Edmund, in 1093, 1094, an 1105 respectively. These are well ascertained facts, resting on undoubted authority. This church of 'The Holy Trinity' was raised to the dignity of an abbey by David I, and was consecrated in 1150.

The year 1250 introduces us to an entirely new era in the history of the Church at Dunfermline. In 1250 a splendid new church, in pointed gothic, with lantern tower, transepts, and 'ladye aisle,' was built to the

east end of the Church of 'The Holy Trinity,' forming along with it, an immense ecclesiastical pile, stretching in length from east to west 276 feet. In 1250, the name, 'Holy Trinity,' as applied to the old western portion became extinct. The old church of the 'Holy Trinity' this year became a noble vestibule to the then new building joined to it on the east, and from this period to the year 1560 was called '*The Vestibule,*' sometimes '*The outer Church,*' and sometimes '*The Nave,*' as by the force of circumstances it had actually become. The new eastern edifice was very frequently called the 'Qwere' (choir), and sometimes 'The Psaltery,' and the united buildings were known by one name viz. 'Dunfermline Abbacie.' In 1250 the old church of 'The Holy Trinity,' now become the *outer church or nave*, was dismantled of its religious furniture, and the crosses, altars, images, and relics were transferred to the new building, where the daily service were now performed, accompanied by a powerful organ, supposed to have been the first introduced into public worship in Scotland. And in this same year (1250) A NEW HIGH ALTAR was erected in the new eastern edifice, in 'Supra Choir.' It was before this second site, this new second High Altar, in the choir of the EASTERN CHURCH, that the Earls, Barons, Burgesses, &c. of the kingdom swore fealty to Edward I, on 22nd July 1290. It was to the south and west of this new second High Altar where the remains of Alexander III were deposited in 1285, and near to the same second High Altar the remains of Elizabeth, Queen of Robert Bruce, were interred in 1327, and in the year 1329, directly in front of the ALTAR, in 'Medio Chori,' were deposited the remains of the immortal hero of glorious memory, KING ROBERT THE BRUCE. The pulpit of the present modern church stands nearly on the site of the *second* high altar. Hitherto historians have made sad blunders when describing the royal tombs; hitherto, they have always spoken of one high altar only, and thus making it appear as if the whole of the royal remains were deposited before or around the same altar on the same site. Henceforward, therefore, let it be known, that Dunfermline Church had TWO HIGH ALTARS, AT TWO DIFFERENT PERIODS, and on TWO DISTINCT and DISTANT SITES, viz.- From 1075 to 1250 the high altar was in the Church of 'THE HOLY TRINITY;' and from 1250 to 1560, the second high altar was in the New Church on the east finished in 1250.

Since the discovery of the remains of King Robert the Bruce on 17th February, 1818, the site of the second high altar has been placed beyond the possibility of a doubt. Fordun, in the Scotichron, xiii. 13, says, that King Robert Bruce 'was interred at the monastery of Dunfermline, *in the middle of the choir, with due honour;*' and again, in Scotichron, xiii. 20, &c. we find that King Robert was magnificently interred *under the high altar* of the church at Dunfermline; and Barbour says he lies 'in a fayr

tumb intil the quer.’ Therefore, the precise spot where King Robert lies being known, it will be evident from the fore-going that this spot where he lies is in the MIDDLE OF THE CHOIR, under or before the HIGH ALTAR. As before noted, the site of the present pulpit: King Robert lies a few feet to the west of it. Previous to 1818 there was a raised place at this spot, a kind of dais with a few steps in front – the second high altar stood on it. Since the site of the second high altar has been determined by the tomb of Bruce, discovered in 1817, let us now determine the sites of THE OLD OR FIRST HIGH ALTAR, and ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS, in the Church of ;THE HOLY TRINITY,’ It is evident, in the first place, we must settle beyond dispute THE SITE of this church of ‘THE HOLY TRIITY.’ The following historical facts are well known, but have never before been brought to bear on the question, ‘Where was the site of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline?’ The following historical facts are well known, but have never before been brought to bear on the question. ‘Where was the site of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline? The following proofs will shew, and for ever set at rest, that the Church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline, founded about 1075, the place of original sepulchre of royalty, still exists, and is the same building now called ‘*The Auld Kirk.*’

PROOFS – SHEWING THAT THE ORIGINAL ‘CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY’ is IDENTICAL WITH THE ‘AULD KIRK,’ &c.

Proof 1st, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called ‘The Auld Kirk,’ is the original church of ‘The Holy Trinity,’ the place of royal sepulture from A.D. 1093 to 1250:-

Take a walk round this fine old building – look at its splendid western door, massive walls, semicircular arches, spiral and zigzag circular columns, lofty vaulting, &c. – in what age did such a style of architecture prevail? Its style is Norman; and we learn from history that the Norman style of building was first introduced into Scotland shortly after the conquest in the year 1066, and that such a style prevailed comparatively for a short time only; that in 1140 it was entirely disused, and superseded by the light elegant Gothic. It is known beyond all dispute, that the building at Dunfermline commonly called ‘The Auld Kirk,’ is of NORMAN ARCHITECTURE; hence, it must hae been erected between the years 1066 and 1140; - we find no Norman erections founded in Scotland after 1140, ‘The Auld Kirk’ is therefore the original church of ‘The Holy Trinity,’ founded by Malcolm III and Margaret, his queen, about the year 1075, and in which we must seek the ‘LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM,’ or place of royal sepulture, from 1093 to 1250.

Proof 2nd, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called 'The Auld Kirk,' is the original church of 'The Holy Trinity,' the place of royal sepulture from 1093 to 1250:-

As formerly noticed, the Church of 'The Holy Trinity' at Dunfermline was consecrated in the year 1150; also, that in 1250 a splendid new church was built to its walls on the east, the united building, forming an immense edifice, was called 'Dunfermline Abbey.' In 1249-50, Robert of Keldelath, Abbot of Dunfermline, applied to Pope Innocent IV, for permission to *consecrate the new church*. The Pope refused the Abbot's request – mark well what follows – because the old walls of the consecrated church of 'THE HOLY TRINITY' were *still standing*, and had been made to *join* and *unite* with the *new church* on the *east*; therefore the Pope did not think it necessary that the eastern addition should be consecrated. From this little incident notice we learn, 1<sup>st</sup>, That the Church of 'The Holy Trinity' at Dunfermline was in existence in 1250; 2nd, that it has been *joined* to and made to *unite with* the walls of the new church then built on the east of it. Now, we find that this Church of 'The Holy Trinity; was standing in 1250, forming the western portion of Dunfermline Abbey. This Church of 'The Holly Trinity' was Norman in its architecture – and as no Norman churches were founded in Scotland for a hundred years prior to 1250, it is evident that this Norman church is the same Church of 'The Holy Trinity' built about 1075. This old building has long been called 'The auld Kirk,' and is now serving a second time as a vestibule, outer church or nave to the modern church of 1818 on the east. The original Church of 'The Holy Trinity; is therefore identical with 'the Auld Kirk' of the present day; and, consequently, it is in this auld kirk that we must look for the original 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGILUM' from 1093 to 1250.

Proof 3rd, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called 'The Auld Kirk,' is the original church of 'The Holy Trinity,; the place of royal sepulture from 1093 to 1250:-

Both Fordun and Winton give full particulars of 'the *translation of St Margaret* in 1250. In this year Margaret, queen of Malcolm Canmore, was canonized, and it was resolved that 'hir precious remains' be exhumed and deposited 'in amore honourable place' *in the then newly erected edifice*. The remains of St Margaret were accordingly exhumed from *the spot* before the ALTAR of the 'Holy Cross,' in the church of 'THE HOLY TRINITY,' where they had lain for 157 years, and taken to the deposited in a splendid tomb in the 'Ladye Aisle' of the then new eastern church. The plinth stones of this tomb are still to be seen (now) in the open air east end of the present church. These plinth stones indicate the site of St Margaret's *second* resting place – they shew where her remains were TAKEN TO, but no historian venture to state where they

were TAKEN FROM, or in other words, they have failed to point out the SITE OF HER FIRST RESING-PLACE.\* This will appear the more astonishing when we find both Fordun and Winton almost defining the very spot! The following has hitherto been entirely overlooked in connection with the *first* and *second* graves of St Margaret: - Fordun, Vol. 2nd p.83, and Tytler, in the 2d vol. of his History of Scotland pp.375-6, says, 'The body of St Margaret WAS REMOVED with much ecclesiastical pomp FROM THE OUTER CHURCH WHERE SHE WAS ORIGINALLY INTERRED, to the choir near the High Altar. The procession of priests and abbots, who carried the precious load on their shoulders moved along to the sounds of the organ and the melodious songs of the choir, singing in parts.' Here we have the name 'OUTER CHURCH,' (which implies that the eastern part was the INNER CHURCH.) and, as previously mentioned, the old church of the Holy Trinity' became, and was used as an 'OUTER CHURCH' or vestibule to the new edifice adjoining on the east, when it was opened in 1250. Hence, St Margaret was exhumed and TAKEN from THE OUTER CHURCH, which has been shown to be 'the Auld Kirk' of the present day; and as the principal altars were usually situated near the eastern end of churches, it is evident that the site of St Margaret's first tomb was somewhere near the *east end* of the *auld kirk*.\*

Proof 4th, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called 'the Auld Kirk,' is the original church of 'the Holy Trinity' – the place of royal sepulture:-

Winton, in noticing 'the translation of St Margaret,' makes use of a word which at once shows that the outer church of Fordun is the opposite of the '*bene*' of Winton; or in other words, *bene*, as used by Winton, signifies INNER – THE INNER CHURCH. Speaking of taking up the body of St Margaret 'the haly queene.' Winton in his Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland, vol. I page 380, say:-

'Hyr cors thai tuk wp, and bare BENE.'

To understand 'bene.' Let us take up a position near the east end of the 'Auld Kirk,' and we will at once see how naturally Old Winton speaks, whilst defining this locality viz. - They took the body out of the grave in the 'AULD KIRK,' and carried it BENE through the 'qwere' of the new building of 1250 – '*through the new quire*,' and deposited it in the lady aisle at the east end. The new church of 1250 was by far the most elegant portion of the edifice. BENE, or ben, is a very significant homely scotch word, and means the best apartment of the house- 'BUT' is a secondary or inferior apartment to a Bene. Margaret was taken – not 'BUT,' she was

\*Note at the end

taken BENE to *the best place*, or as Forum expresses it, ‘to a situation contiguous to the High Altar, esteemed the most *sacred and honourable*, where the solemn services were now daily performed.’ The words of Winton and Fordun may be joined together and made to explain without a contradiction: - viz. they took the body of St Margaret from the OUTER CHURCH (or auld Kirk), where she was originally interred, and BARE HER BENE through the *new choir*, to her new grave in the lady aisle, as shown in Proof 3rd.

The word ‘BENE,’ or *Ben*, used by Winton, comes to our aid in refuting the *traditional* site of the royal tombs, in the north transept of the present new church, viz. - If we stand in ‘*the auld kirk*,’ (the outer church,) and look eastward, in the direction of ‘*the old traditional site of the royal tombs*,’ of course we will look Ben – that is, the *traditional* site is ben; now, had St Margaret’s original grave been ben at this *traditional* place, Winton would never have said she was taken *ben*, for this place is *ben* already from the outer church. But Winton says she was taken ‘*ben*:’ and of course taken *ben* past *this place* on her way to her second place of sepulture in ‘*the Lady aisle*.’

This is another convincing proof that ‘Auld Kirk’ is the original church of ‘THE HOLY TRINITY,’ the place of Royal Sepulture from 1093 to 1250, and that tradition has been in error in pointing to ‘*the traditional place*’ as the site of the early royal tombs.

Proof 5th, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called ‘THE AULD KIRK,’ is the original Church of the ‘THE HOLY TRINITY,’ the place of Royal Sepulture, from 1093 to 1250:-

At the commencement of this paper notice was taken of the traditional site of the royal tombs under the large flat stones in the north transept of the present modern church, and that it had no connection whatever with the place of Royal sepulture. This will become evident, after reading and considering the following:-

As previously noticed, the plinth stones of the second tomb of St Margaret are still to be seen (now in the open air), at the east end of the present church.\*

\* This spot marks the site of “the Ladye Ayle” in ‘Supra majus altare,’ i.e. the Lady aisle above the great or High Altar. On the upper plinth stone are eight slight circular hollows. The same ‘vague tradition’ which has so long pointed to the six large flat gravestones in the north transept of the present church as being the place of the royal tombs, comes to this stone and informs us that these circular indentations mark the place whereon candlesticks stood with their wax-lights, which were kept continually burning on this tomb! We must again reject this ‘tradition,’ and point out the origin of these eight circles. The origin is very simple, viz. – they are merely the marks of the base of eight columns – of ‘eight slender shafts of shapely stone’ – which once supported the shrine erected over this once celebrated tomb. ‘Tradition’ is also wrong with respect to ‘candlesticks.’ The Abbey charters and deeds never make mention of

Margaret was taken from her first tomb, before the ALTAR of THE HOLY CROSS, in the Church of THE HOLY TRINITY, and deposited in this spot, let us measure the distance from these stones of St Margaret's tomb to 'the traditional royal burial place under the floor of the north transept of the present church,' the distance between them will be found to be 58 feet, which is the distance St Margaret would be carried by 'the procession' at her translation (on the supposition that the traditional site is correct) which we will shew it is not; for on the occasion of the translation' of St Margaret 'a gret companye' congregated and took part in 'the great companye' congregated and took part in 'the procession of the translation,' and as has already been noticed (in Poof 3d). Speaking of the multitude assembled to take part in the translation, Winton says –

‘The Thryd Alysaundyr bodyly  
Thare wes wyth a gret companye  
Of Eryls, Byschapys, and Barounys,  
And mony famous persownys;  
Of Swynt Andrewys there wes be name  
The Byshope Davy of Barnhame  
Robert of Kyldeleth syne  
That Abbot wes of Dunfermlyn,’ &c.\*  
Wint. Cron. Scot. Vol. 1. p.380.

This ‘gret companye’ went along, keeping step with the sounds of the organ, and the melodious songs of the choir, singing in parts – all this implies that St Margaret was carried a considerable distance; and also that

candle-sticks, but merely lights, not kept burring on, but ‘before the shrine of the St blessed Margaret,’ &c. This same ‘indefatigable tradition’ is active in another place not far distant, and we fear is in error a third time viz.- ‘tradition’ says, that the site of the thorn tree in the centre of the north churchyard marks the grave of the mother of Sir William Wallace. This is a “pleasing idea,” but has no other support than this ‘vague tradition.’ And when we find ‘tradition’ walking over these sacred precincts, making so many serious errors, we must be cautious in receiving what it says here, even although it may be ‘old and pleasing.’ We rather incline to think that the thorn tree in the north churchyard is merely the site of Dunfermline ‘Sepulchral,’ or ‘Weeping Cross.’ Such crosses were quite common before the Reformation in 1560; at this period they were all wept away, and the ‘Gospel tree,’ or Gospel thorn,’ planted on their site. In the olden time, persons of mark were never buried in ‘northern churchyards,’ – that is, at the BACK of the church – such was set aside ‘for the very poor and the unknown;’ hence we cannot allow ourselves to think that the renowned Wallace would bury his mother in such a place. If buried in Dunfermline, we may rest assured that her remains lie in ‘an honourable place,’ with ‘the great and good,’ within the Haly-Fane.’

† In this procession we find King Alexander III in person, along with seven Bishops, seven Earls, sixteen Barons, and other ‘famous personys.’

some considerable length of time was occupied in the imposing ceremony. How could this have been done in the short space of 58 feet? How could a great multitude walk in procession and keep step with the measured notes of the organ and songs of the choir, in a space or distance of 58 feet? It is altogether impossible; moreover, it is likewise as impossible to conceive or understand 'THE OUTER CHURCH' of Fordun, or the 'BENE' OF WINTON, FROM THIS TRADITIONAL PLACE, AS SHOWN IN LAST Proof, this *traditional* site is not borne out by these words. Therefore, let this *traditional spot* be henceforth and *for ever rejected* as being the original 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM.' Or Royal Burial Place. Let us leave *this traditional place* and proceed to the 'Auld Kirk,' THE OUTER CHURCH, from any part of which, to the plinth stone of St Margaret's tomb east of the session-house, will give a *distance amply sufficient* for 'a gret companye' walking in procession in steps 'to the sounds of the organ and songs of the choir.' This will again be alluded to after we fix the site of St Margaret's original grave *before* 'THE RWDE ALTAR.' In the meantime, enough has been said to show that 'the *traditional site*' near had any connection with the royal burial place, and that it is in the 'Auld Kirk,' the original church of 'THE HOLY TRINITY,' where we will find the 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM' from 1093 to 1250.

Proof 6th, That the western part of Dunfermline Abbey, now called 'THE AULD KIRK' is the original church of THE HOLY TRINITY, is the place of Royal Sepulture from 1093 to 1250: -

In September, 1849, whilst some digging and repairs were being made in the floor pavement of the 'THE AULD KIRK,' near the 'EAST END,' in the vicinity of the Graditorium or Old Altar Steps, at the ornamental columns before alluded to, two remarkable stone coffins were found; one contained a prepared leathern skin or shroud, which had been wrapped round the body in mummy fashion, laced on the breast, and closely stitched with a strong thong on the back from the neck to the heels, and along the soles of the feet; within were found the fragments of a bone and a little hair of a dark colour; the other stone coffin contained large and undecayed bones. These stone coffins were found in the very locality we have pointed out in 'the proofs,' viz – in 'THE AULD KIRK, at its EASTERN END; and it is evident from what Winton says – this spot, where the coffins were found, was in front of the Altar of the Holy Cross – (The Rwdē Awtre, *i.e.* the Rood Altar), and no doubt they contained the remains of Princes Edward and Ethelrede, sons of Malcolm and Margaret, who were interred near their mother, in front of *this altar*. This is another convincing and satisfactory proof of this place being the site or locality of

the *original* LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM. Winton, speaking of Malcolm, Margaret, Edward, and Ethelrede, says:-

Be-for the Rwde Awtare, wyth honoure,  
SCHO was layd in haly sepulture,  
Thare hyre Lord was laid alsua,  
Edward the fyrst, and Ethelrede.

Win. Cron. Scot. Vol. II pp.271-2.

‘PROOFS’ indisputably show, that the old ‘CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY’ at Dunfermline is still in existence, and is identical with ‘*the auld kirk*’ of the present day.

*That in this church, in front of its HIGH and ROOD ALTARS, was the original LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM of Scotland from 1093 to 1250; and that ‘the traditionary site’ (now in the north transept of the present church,) has no connection whatever with the place of royal sepulture. These facts being established, let us now proceed to fix the sites of the HIGH and ROOD ALTARS, in this old church between A.D. 1075 and 1250 and consequently the original LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM OF HISTORY.*

#### ‘THE HIGH,’ or ‘GRATE ALTAR.’

The site of the High, or ‘Grate’ Altar, (perhaps without exception,) was always near the extreme eastern part of the church, therefore there is every reason to conclude that the *original* HIGH or ‘Grate’ Altar stood near the eastern end of this old church, somewhere near the junction of the old and new churches, near the present central entrance, just before stepping into the new building – say about 20 feet east from the top of the flight of long stone steps by which we ascend from the pavement of the old to the new church, at the east end. These stone steps are on the site of the old GRADITORIUM; these steps were in front of, and led up to the *old* HIGH or ‘Grate’ ALTAR. Therefore, at the EAST END of THE AULD KIRK about 20 feet east from the top of the old GRADITORIUM, stood the old HIGH or ‘Grate’ ALTAR of the CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY at Dunfermline.

#### ‘THE ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS.’

The Holy Cross Altar (Sanctæ Crucis), sometimes by the hold historians called ‘The Rwde Awatare,’ or Rood Altar. The site of this Altar is open to conjecture; yet not withstanding we think its position may be determined with considerable accuracy. BEFORE, or in FRONT of this Altar, “St Margaret’ was originally interred in November of 1093; it

is therefore of great importance that the site of the Altar of the Holy Cross be distinctly shown. The site of the Holy Cross is distinctly shown. The site of this Altar is open to conjecture, we must approach the discussion of its probable site with caution, and carefully weigh any historical record which either directly or indirectly may bear upon the subject. The attention of the reader is therefore solicited to the following observations:

In ancient times, 'in the days of the abbaye,' the south aisle of the present 'auld kirk' was called 'THE ROOD AISLE,' and kirk' was called 'THE ROOD AISLE,' and immediately above it was 'THE ROOD LAFT; we therefore think it extremely probable, that the Rood Altar was situated on this, 'THE ROOD *side*' of the church, near the eastern termination of 'THE ROOD AISLE,' for the following reasons, viz.:- Fordun, in noticing the interment of King Edgar in 1107, says, 'Edgar was buried in the Church of Dunfermline, *before* the GREAT *or* HIGH ALTAR, *near his* FATHER, MALCOLM,' (vide Fordun, v. 35.) From this it is quite evident that Edgar was buried *before* the High Altar, and Malcolm III, not exactly *before* it, but *nearly* so. Winton says that Malcolm was interred *before* 'the *Rwde Awatare*.' Compare these two statements – Malcolm III was interred *near* the front of 'THE HIGH ALTAR,' and *before* 'THE ROOD ALTAR;' this evidently shows that these two altars were in very close *proximity* – so much so, that Malcolm's tomb may be said to have stood in *front of both altars*. The tomb of Malcolm, therefore, appears to have stood near the right angle of the lines joining these two altars. Such point answers to a spot near the *south zig-zag column, a little to the south of the middle of the old Graditorium steps*. Suppose this spot to have been the site of Malcolm's tomb – *nearly before the High Altar*, then this *spot* was also *before* 'the Rood Altar,' which shows that 'the Rood Altar,' or *Altar of the Holy Cross*, stood in the *Rood Aisle*, between the southern zig-zag and *plain column*, where Margaret was undoubtedly originally interred.

Now let us test these two spots, viz. – *Malcolm's tomb*, standing a few feet north-west of the *south zig-zag column*, and *the tomb of Margaret*, between *this zig-zag column*, and the *plain one* on the west of it. But how can we, after such a lapse of time, *test* these spots. Not a vestige of these tombs have been seen for nearly *three hundred years*; and it is now *six hundred and six years* since these altars were removed. Very fortunately there is a circumstance connoted with 'the translation of St Margaret in 1250, which may be held as a *test*, and will be brought to bear this locality presently. In the first place, it is evident that 'the procession at the translation of St Margaret,' in 1250 moved from *west* to *east*; therefore, if St Margaret's original grave was near the plain column west of the *south zig-zag one*, it is evident that 'the procession' would have to go up the *Graditorium*, and pass the *High Altar* on its way to 'the Ladye

*Aisle;* we have evidence that ‘the procession’ on its way did pass ‘*the High Altar;*’ this at once shows to a certainty that the original grave of St Margaret was to the *west* of the grave of Malcolm. Winton informs us, that when the chest containing St Margaret’s remains was being carried by the procession, they *approached ‘the tomb of Malcolm, near the front of the High Altar,’* when ‘*a fayr mirakil was sene;*’ viz. the chest turned so heavy that it had to be set down. ‘Amid the awful wonderment,’ it was suggested by a bystander that the bones of her husband Malcolm should be also exhumed. Acting on this suggestion,

‘Thai twk wp the bodie  
Of hyr Lord that lay thair-by  
And bare it bene until the qwere,’  
Wint. Oryg. Chron. V.i.p.383.

Without farther obstruction! Of course we have nothing to do with ‘*the fayr mirakil;*’ but in connection with it, it is evident that ‘the translation procession,’ on its way from *west to east, approached the tomb of Malcolm before the High Altar;* from thence it proceeded *eastward;* it went on ‘*bene until the qwere*’ to ‘the Lady Aisle’ in ‘Supra Magus Chora,’ and in its way would, as a matter of course, sweep past ‘*the traditional site*’ of the royal tombs – thus again showing that this ‘*traditional site*’ had never any connection with the place of royal sepulture.

Recapitulating, and carefully considering these old historical records, we come to the following conclusions, viz., - 1st, That shortly after ‘the translation procession’ had been in motion on its way *eastward,* it *approached the tomb of Malcolm III standing nearly in front of the High Altar,* which clearly shows that the tomb of Malcolm was to the *east* of St Margaret’s original place of interment. 2nd, That *the tomb of Malcolm* being thus *east* of St Margaret’s first grave, *the High Altar* was also *east;* and as Malcolm’s tomb was *nearly* in front of the *High Altar,* and that of St Margaret before ‘*the Rood Altar,*’ it is obvious also, that the site of the *High Altar* was to the *east* of, ‘*the Rood Altar.*’ And 3rd, As before noticed, Fordun records that Malcolm was interred nearly in front of ‘*the High Altar,*’ and according to Winton, before ‘the Rood Altar,’ Hence the sites of ‘the Altar of the Holy Cross, (or Rood Altar,) in the original church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline, stood on or near the sites we have determined, viz. – THE HIGH ALTAR stood in the extreme eastern part of ‘the Auld Kirk, a few feet eastward of the spiral columns (near the middle entrance into the present modern church), and that the ‘ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS’ stood near the west end of ‘*The Rood Aisle,*’ probably near the south wall of the kirk, between the south zig-zag

column and the plain one on the west. Near this plain column St Margaret lay 157 years,\* and also near this plain column, a few feet north-east of it, stood the tomb of Malcolm. This plain column is *before the High Altar* site; and if *the Rood Altar* stood near the south wall of the church, between the columns just mentioned, then it would also be *before the Rood Altar*. And as shown in 'Proof 6th,' *near this plain column*, in 1849, were discovered, in stone coffins, some fragments of the remains of Princes Edward and Ethelrede, sons of Malcolm and Margaret, who were interred near their mother, before the 'Rwde Awtare' at this spot. Hence, the original LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM of Scotland, from 1093 to 1250, was in the space between the spiral columns on the east, and the two *plain columns* on the west of the zig-zag ones, occupying a space of at least 35 feet from east to west, by 20 in breadth (between the columns), in which space, previous to 1560, 'stood in rows the enceinte tombes of royaltie.'

Let us apply another *test to this spot* – the original grave of St Margaret. In 'Proof 5th,' we discard the traditionary site of the royal tombs on the north transept of the new church, *partly* because of the very short distance of 58 feet intervening between it and St Margaret's second grave – being a distance insufficient for a 'grate companye' walking in procession with measured step to the sound of the organ and songs of the choir. From the *plain column* west of the south zig-zag one – the spot near where St Margaret was interred – to the plinth stones of her second tomb at the east end of the session-house of the present modern church, the distance is 185 feet – a distance amply sufficient for the 'grate companye' taking part in 'the translation,' as mentioned by Winton – a distance quite sufficient for a large procession walking ben with measured step to 'the sound of the organ, and the melodious songs of the choir, singing in parts,' as recorded by Fordun – a distance sufficient for a 'grate companye,' of at least 200 persons walking three abreast, as common in religious processions of old.

All these recorded *incidents* and *tests* satisfactorily show that St Margaret's 'first resting-place' was in front of the Rood Aisle, before the Rood Altar, near the plain column, west of the south zig-zag one, east end of 'the auld Kirk' – which 'east end' is the original 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM,' ordained by Malcolm III and Margaret his Queen, when 'the auld Kirk' was built in the name of 'The Holy Trinity' in A.D. 1075.

\* James VI appears to have specially venerated this part of 'the auld kirk;' here for many years was his seat (or king's laft) in the kirk, previous to his ascending the English – and hard by he built a royal vault for himself and family. His being so partial to this spot probably arose from knowing it to be the site of the old Rood Altar, and where the sainted Margaret was originally interred.

And as previously shown, this ‘auld Kirk’ because an ‘*outer church*’ to a new eastern edifice finished in A.D. 1250 – that in this new edifice a *New High Altar* was erected, the space before and around which became a SECOND SEPULTURÆ REGIUM, for here were interred Alexander III on th south of this new High Altar – Robert the Bruce in front of it, in the middle of the choir – and north-east of it, Elizabeth, Queen of Robert Bruce, as already mentioned\*

At the Reformation in 1560, Dunfermline Abbey and its shrine, tombs, crosses, relics, and images, were destroyed and the greater part of the buildings razed to the round. Lindsay in his Chronicle, vol. 2d, p. 555, says,

‘upon the 28th March 1560, the wholl lordis and barnis that war on thys syde of Forthe, passed to Stirling, and be the way kest down the Abbey of Dunfermling.’ ‘The lordis and barnis’ were armed with a general order or warrant which in ‘their mistaken zeal’ they appear faithfully to have done ‘their taske til ye leter,’ viz.-

‘To our traist friendis, - Traist friendis, after maist hartly commendation, we praye you to fail not to pass incontinent to the Kirk of Dunfermline and tak doun the hail imagis thereof, and bring them forth to the kirkyard, and burn them openly, an sicklyk cast doun the altaris and purge the kirk of all kynd of monumentis of idolatrye. And this ye fail not to do as ye will do us singulare emplesair, and so commitis you to the protection of God. (Signed) ‘AR, ARGYTKE,

JAMES STEWART.  
RUTHVEN.’

‘Fail not, bot ye tak guid heyd that neither the dasks, windocks nor durris be ony wayis hurt or broken, either glassin wark or iron wark.’

\* During the existence of this new edifice ‘ a greate many altairs and chapils ware erectit intil it, als a manye relicks an imagis, an pictarlis, ware adid for the aduratione of the faythfil.

The following is a tabular view of the royal interments in Dunfermline Abbey:-

#### KINGS.

Duncan II .....1095	David I ..... 1153
Edgar.....1107	Malcolm IV .....1165
Malcolm III.....1109	Alexander III .....1285
Alexander I .....1124	Robert Bruce .....1329

#### QUEENS.

Margaret .....1093	Elizabeth .....1327
Isabella .....1120	Annabella .....1403
Margaret .....1274	

#### PRINCES.

Edward .....1093	Alexander .....1280
Ethelrade .....1105	David .....1280
Edmond .....1099	Robert .....1602

#### PRINCESSES

Christina .....1356	Matildas .....1366
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For these royal interments, *vide* Fordun, Barbour, Boece, Winton, Haile's Annals of Scotland, Abercrombie's Mart. Acts, Saxon Chron., Chron. Melros., Chron. De Lanercost, Hay's Sacra Scotia, Carte de Dunf., &c. &c.

Several of the above royal interments are recorded in history, without specifying the exact place, or before which altar; in such cases the sites are left to conjecture. But we may safely conclude that the following royal remains were deposited at the east end of 'the Auld Kirk' in the vicinity of the ornamental columns, viz. – DUNCAN, EDGAR, MALCOLM III ALEXANDER I DAVID I and MALCOLM IV with QUEENS MARGARET, consort of MALCOLM III, ISABELLA, Queen of Alexander I. MARGARET, Queen of Alexander III also, Princes EDWARD, ETHELRADE, EDMOND, and ROBERT; these were all interred in the church of 'the Holy Trinity,' which has been shown to be 'the Auld Kirk;' and in the New Eastern Church, opened in 1250, lie interred ALEXANDER III. ROBERT the BRUCE; with Queens ELIZABETH, consort of Robert Bruce, and ANNABELL, Queen of Robert III as already shown.

Besides the royal interments, Dunfermline has in keeping the ashes of men who were 'great in their generation and men of renown.' The following are a few of the most conspicuous, viz.-

Several Abbots and other celebrated Functionaries of the Abbey; also, Malcolm Earl of Fife; Andrew Bishop of Caithness; the Earl and Countess of Athol; Thomas Randolph; Earl of Moray (the great Randolph of Bannockburn renowned, he lies not far from St Margaret's tomb); Robert Duke of Albany, Governor of Scotland; Robert Henryson, 'poet and schoolmaster of Dunfermline;' Robert Pitcairn, Secretary of State; David Ferguson, (Dunfermline's first Protestant minister), William Schaw, 'Maister of the Wark' (to the Abbey); Elizabeth Wardlaw, authoress of the celebrated poem, 'Hardy Canute;' Rev. Ralph Erskine; Rev. Thomas Gillespie, &c. Well may the City of Dunfermline be proud of having the ashes of so many of the great and good in keeping.

IN CONCLUSION, it may be remarked that the Abbey of Dunfermline, after its destruction on 28th March 1560, lay long in ruin. The western part, which seems to have entirely escaped the wild fury of 'the Reformers' in 1560, was repaired and fitted up as a Protestant place of worship about 1562, and again in 1598-1603, by James VI when it underwent extensive repairs. In 1816 this old church was so uncomfortable and ill adapted for worship, that it was determined to have a new building erected on the east, as had been done before in 1250. A new church was accordingly founded in 1818, and opened for public worship in the end of 1821, which bears no resemblance to its magnificent predecessor; and as already noticed, 'the Auld Kirk,' the original church of 'the Holy Trinity,' has since 1821 been serving a second time as an *outer church* or *nave* to a *second* eastern edifice.

At a comparatively small cost a neat column might be erected at the east end of the Old Church, on the steps of its ancient Graditorium, with an inscription telling the visitor that here and around this sacred spot was the original 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM' from 1093 to 1250, and that here were interred the following Kings, Queens, &c. &c.; and directly in front of the pulpit of the new church another column indicating that here and around this spot was the SECOND 'LOCUM SEPULTURÆ REGIUM' FOR 1250 TO 1560, AND HERE WERE INTERRED &C. &C. If this was done we would hear no more unpleasant reflections about the royal tombs: Dunfermline would in future be exonerated from blame and apparent apathy respecting them, and the sacred building would command the proper respect and reverences of the passing traveler.

