

# THE CULT OF ST TRIDUANA IN SCOTLAND

Carole M. Cusack  
*The University of Sydney*

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

THE cult of the saints is one of the defining aspects of medieval Christianity. Its roots lie in late antiquity, when Christian reverence for the holy dead, especially those who had been martyred for the faith, combined with elements of the cult of heroes in ancient Greece and Rome, resulted in religious devotion to the saints and martyrs. In Peter Brown's words, the cult of the saints was 'about the joining of Heaven and Earth, and the role, in this joining, of dead human beings'.<sup>2</sup> Both the souls and the bodies of the saints were suffused with God's power, and saints were invoked as protectors of the community, patrons of trades and occupations, and healers of physical and spiritual ailments, as their physical remains could work miracles in this world. The devotional practice of pilgrimage developed as the fame of particular saints grew, and their tombs and reliquaries became sites of cures.<sup>3</sup> By the Middle Ages, the number of saints had grown exponentially, and the genre of hagiography was one of the most popular literary forms. Medieval devotion to the saints was a mixture of approved beliefs

<sup>1</sup> Thanks are owed to my research assistant Isabella Dewell, who assembled the notes and images on this topic during her work experience at the University of Sydney in October 2012. The research was first presented as a general lecture on Scottish saints to the Sydney Society for Scottish History on 15 October 2012. My gratitude is also due to Donald Barrett, my companion in Scottish adventures for more than twenty years.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 44–77.

and practices, which the Church promoted, and popular and folk beliefs and practices, with significant differences existing between ‘popular or local sainthood and official sainthood’.<sup>4</sup> Early medieval hagiography, relic cults, and pilgrimage were often attached to missionary figures who had brought pagan peoples to know Christ, though virgin martyr legends, and pseudo-historical and incipiently nationalist deployment of the life stories of holy figures were also popular.

This article examines the cult of St Triduana, an obscure saint associated with the healing of eye disease, in Scotland. Triduana, a maiden from Colossae, is linked to St Regulus (Rule), a Greek from Patras who allegedly brought the relics of the apostle St Andrew to Scotland in the fourth century. Regulus, guided by an angel in a dream, arrived at St Andrews in Fife, where the apostle’s relics were interred and a church built in his honour.<sup>5</sup> The so-called St Andrew sarcophagus, one of the town’s most impressive archaeological finds, was unearthed close to St Rule’s Tower, which was built in the eleventh century as part of a complex of buildings constructed to house the relics of Andrew, Scotland’s patron saint.<sup>6</sup> Modern scholarly opinion, however, attaches little historical validity to the tale of St Andrew’s relics being brought to Scotland, focusing more on literary sources and religious devotions that cemented the apostle’s role as patron in the imagination of medieval Scots.<sup>7</sup> The story of the altogether less documented Regulus and Triduana appears in Walter Bower’s *Scotichronicon*, which dates from the 1440s. This is important, as other authors linked Triduana to the semi-

<sup>4</sup> Andri Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 535.

<sup>5</sup> David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 424.

<sup>6</sup> Derek W. Hall, ‘Pre-Burghal St Andrews: Towards an Archaeological Research Design’, *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 1 (1995), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ursula Hall, *St Andrew and Scotland* (St Andrews: St Andrews University Press, 1994).

legendary missionary saint Boniface, also called Curetán or Curitan, as ‘one of two virgin abbesses to accompany [him] on his epic mission to Pictland’.<sup>8</sup> It is this connection that appears in Andrew of Wyntoun’s fifteenth century Middle Scots chronicle, which is contemporary with the *Scotichronicon*, and is later affirmed in the *Aberdeen Breviary*, compiled by Bishop Elphinstone in 1510.<sup>9</sup> The name Triduana is said to derive from Latin *triduanem ieiunium* (three day fast), and variants of her name at dedicated sites include Tredwell/ Tradwell, and Trøllhaena, (and its diminutive Trolla) in formerly Norse-speaking areas of Scotland. The saint’s feast is celebrated on 8 October.

There are eight dedication sites connected with St Triduana. The first four are: the King’s Chapel that adjoins the parish church of St Margaret’s Restalrig, Edinburgh; St Trolla’s Chapel, Kindtradwell, near Brora in Sutherland; the altar at Holy Trinity church in St Andrews which was dedicated to the saints Fergus and Triduana; and St Triduana’s church at Rescobie, named in the saint’s life as the location of her first nunnery, and where St Trodline’s Fair was held in the medieval era. The next two locations are Cairntradlin (the cairn of Triduana) which is ‘near the church of Kinellar in Aberdeenshire’, and a Banff placename, Cartrilzour.<sup>10</sup> Finally, in Caithness there is a site close to an old chapel and an Iron Age broch that is called Croit Trolla (Trøllhaena’s croft),<sup>11</sup> and the Orkney island of Papa Westray has a St Tredwell’s Loch, on which a named chapel, which was a pilgrimage destination, was the northernmost site of veneration of the saint. There are other passing

<sup>8</sup> Olivia Lelong and Julie A. Roberts, ‘St Trolla’s Chapel, Kintradwell, Sutherland: The Occupants of the Medieval Burial Ground and their Patron Saint’, *Scottish Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2003), p. 160.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. M. Turpie, *Scottish Saints Cults and Pilgrimage from the Black Death to the Reformation, c. 1349–1560* (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2011), pp. 27–28.

<sup>10</sup> Lelong and Roberts, ‘St Trolla’s Chapel’, p. 149.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Richardson, ‘Scottish Place-Names and Scottish Saints’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 7 (1905), p. 360.

mentions of Triduana in Scottish sources, like the 1518 record of the Hammermen's guild in Dunkeld, which lists the five patrons of the guild as 'St Eloi, St Erasmus, St Serf, St Triduana and St Kessog'.<sup>12</sup>

Many of these dedications are at sites that show evidence of occupation since the Iron Age, including brochs, and the presence of Pictish symbol stones. This likely strengthens her association with Boniface's mission, as Olivia Lelong and Julie A. Roberts conclude that 'these sites would seem to be further examples where local Pictish authorities chose a saint aligned with Rome for newly established chapels and churches as part of the swing towards Christianity in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries'.<sup>13</sup> This observation coheres with the research of Edward J. Cowan on the development of the St Andrew cult in Scotland. He accepts W. F. Skene's mid-nineteenth century argument that the cult of St Andrew was brought to Scotland by the Pictish king Angus mac Fergus (729–761), along with the saint's purported relics, from Hexham in Northumbria.<sup>14</sup> In this view, the legend of Triduana and Rule supports the developing connection between the Scots and the Greeks that is found in the tenth century *Pictish Chronicle*, and the oldest Scottish version of the legend of St Andrew, which dates from the twelfth century.<sup>15</sup>

### *TRIDUANA, LUCT AND MEDANA*

Whether Triduana is associated with the alleged arrival of Rule in 337 or with the mission of Boniface Curitan to the Picts in the seventh century, the narrative of her life after arriving in Scotland involves her living in a community of virgins at Rescobie,

<sup>12</sup> M. A. Hall, 'Of Holy Men and Heroes: The Cult of Saints in Medieval Perthshire', *The Innes Review*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (2005), p. 72.

<sup>13</sup> Lelong and Roberts, 'St Trolia's Chapel', p. 161.

<sup>14</sup> Edward J. Cowan, 'Myth and Identity in Early Medieval Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. LXIII, No. 176, Part 2 (1984), p. 126.

<sup>15</sup> Cowan, 'Myth and Identity in Early Medieval Scotland', pp. 123, 126.

Forfarshire, where she attracted the attention of Prince Nechtan, who proposed marriage. She fled from him to Dunfallandy in Atholl, but Nechtan pursued her. This hagiographical story is recorded in the *Aberdeen Breviary*. The servant who delivered the proposal told Triduana that the Prince was dazzled by her beautiful eyes. She replied, 'What he asks of me he shall obtain'. She then withdrew 'into a secret place [and] plucked out her eyes, transfixed them on a wooden pin, and held them out to the messenger, saying, 'Accept what your prince desires'.<sup>16</sup> This cooled Nechtan's ardour, and Triduana moved with her companions Emeria and Potentia to Lestalyrk or Restalrig in Lothian, then a village outside of Edinburgh, where she died and was buried.



St Margaret's Church, Restalrig, with the shrine of St Triduana in the foreground.  
Photographed by Anne Burgess and reproduced under Creative Commons.

<sup>16</sup>John Foster, 'The Legend and Shrine of St Triduana', *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 37 (1953), p. 763.

Audrey Beth Fitch, discussing female virgin martyr legends, notes that these saints are almost always depicted in iconography with the instruments of their death, like St Catherine and the wheel upon which she was broken, or with the body parts that were specifically mentioned in accounts of their sufferings, like St Apollonia, who 'had her teeth torn out before being killed so was depicted holding her teeth [and] was looked to for assistance with tooth problems'.<sup>17</sup> St Triduana follows this pattern, in that she is invoked in cases of eye disease and is associated with holy wells at which pilgrims sought cures for such afflictions. Holy wells play an important function in folk belief in medieval Catholicism as water, which was associated with baptism and transformation from the 'illness' of non-belief to the 'cure' of faith in Christ. Prior to the coming of Christianity to north and western Europe, water sites were generally named for and linked to pagan goddesses, which makes the connection between female saints and water sources understandable.<sup>18</sup>

The cult of Triduana is found only in Scotland and some scholars have suggested that the legend that depicts her plucking out her eyes and becoming associated with the cure of eye disease is copied from the myth and cult of the Sicilian St Lucy of Syracuse, the traditional patroness of eye cures who putatively died a martyr in 303 or 304 AD, during the persecution of Diocletian, and whose feast day is celebrated on 13 December.<sup>19</sup> It has long been acknowledged that the *vita* of Lucy (whose name, the feminine

<sup>17</sup> Audrey Beth Fitch, 'Power Through Purity: The Virgin Martyrs and Women's Salvation in Pre-Reformation Scotland', in Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (eds), *Women in Scotland: c. 1100–c. 1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Dominique Beth Wilson, 'Sacred Water: Pilgrimage to and Veneration of Holy Wells by Pagans and Christians in the British Isles', in Pamela O'Neill (ed.), *Exile and Homecoming: Papers From the Fifth Australian Conference of Celtic Studies 2004* (Sydney: Sydney Series in Celtic Studies 8, 2005), pp. 325, 330.

<sup>19</sup> J. Bridge, 'St Lucy', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910. At: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09414a.htm>. Accessed 16 November 2017.

version of the Latin male name Lucius, means ‘light’) is not historically verifiable, and Anthony K. Cassell claims that her link to light is independent of the tale that her eyes were torn out as part of the torture that preceded her death. Cassell argues that Lucy’s name connects her with light and sight, just as St Christopher’s name marks him as the bearer of Christ. He thinks that ‘her ‘severed eyes’ were merely an *ex-voto* representation, just as ancient Roman and Christian votives often take the form of an isolated—not dismembered—part of the body, an arm, a leg, an ear, a nose, for example, cured by heavenly intercession’.<sup>20</sup> It is true that early accounts from the fifth and sixth centuries make no mention of her eyes, but later accounts make her the object of unwanted romantic attentions from one Paschasius who admired her eyes. She reacted to this in literal obedience to Matthew 18:9, ‘and if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell’.<sup>21</sup> Thus Lucy’s eyes are in the same category as Apollonia’s teeth and Agatha’s severed breasts; merely a recognizable symbol attached to her martyrdom to inspire devotion in the Christian faithful.

St Triduana’s *vita* may be modelled on that of Lucy, though Lucy has also been prayed to in cases of ‘sore throat, epidemic diseases, dysentery, and any type of haemorrhage’.<sup>22</sup> However, the complexity of Triduana’s association with either Rule or Boniface opens up interesting possibilities; Boniface is also linked to St Medana, a young woman born in Ulster who allegedly fled from the attentions of a suitor in a boat that landed in Galloway. James A. Ross has reviewed the life of Medana, noting that her swain

<sup>20</sup> Anthony K. Cassell, ‘Santa Lucia as Patroness of Sight: Hagiography, Iconography, and Dante’, *Dante Studies*, Vol. CIX (1991), p. 72.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 9, *New International Version*. At: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18>. Accessed 16 November 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Ferdinand L. P. Koch, ‘Patron Saints of the Eyes: An Outline’, *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1945), p. 166.

followed her and ‘she took refuge in a tree, where in his presence she plucked out her eyes and cast them on the ground at his feet. A spring of water appeared and she washed the blood from her face’.<sup>23</sup> Thus, her story is basically the same as that of Triduana, though it is possible that she may be historically verifiable. Medana’s main shrines were at Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dumbarton, and there were also three in Galloway, including Kirkmaiden-in-Rhinns, which still exists. Additionally, a chapel of ‘St Monenna’ (a variant of her name) was situated between the Mercat Cross and the abbey at Scone. All these shrines appear to have been associated with wells; the three in Galloway were unusual, in that they were not fed by springs but involved sea-water.

Eye wells are rare, and there are obvious associations of water with the healing of eye disease that include the four interpretations proposed Peter B. G. Binnall. He suggested that: first, cold water is soothing to inflamed eyes; second, that the identification of baptism into the Christian church with sight and paganism with blindness confers holiness on water sites; third, wells may be function as an *oculus dei*, as in the myth of Odin’s sacrifice of an eye in order to drink from Mimir’s well in Scandinavian myth; and finally, the high incidence of creation through divine tears in various cosmologies including Japanese and Egyptian mythology, suggests water is a powerfully generative substance.<sup>24</sup> While the first of these arguments is irrefutable, though likely to produce only temporary relief, in the case of wells associated with Triduana, it is not possible to confirm any of Binnall’s other hypotheses.

<sup>23</sup> James A Ross, ‘A Patron Saint for British Ophthalmologists’, *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 38 (1954), p. 634.

<sup>24</sup> Peter B. G. Binnall, ‘Some Theories Regarding Eye-Wells.’ *Folklore* Vol. 56, No. 4 (1945), pp. 363–363. See also ‘Eye’, in Ami Ronnberg (ed.), *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images* (Cologne: Taschen, 2010), pp. 352–354.



*THE SHRINE OF ST TRIDUANA AT RESTALRIG,  
EDINBURGH*

The first historically verified account of the shine of St Triduana at Restalrig in Lothian is found in the charters of St Andrews in 1178. St Margaret's church was later distinguished in 1477 when it became the site of a Chapel Royal under the patronage of James III (1452–1488). James III built the two-storey hexagonal chapel beside the parish church as a shrine. The churchyard well was famed for the 'treatment and cure of eye afflictions, and had become a place of pilgrimage, with further royal grants in 1496 and 1527, from James IV and V'.<sup>25</sup> In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull that raised the church at Restalrig 'to a Collegiate church with eight Prebendaries under a Dean'.<sup>26</sup> References to the site are made until the mid-sixteenth century, when the poet David Lyndsay (1486–1555), in a poem decrying superstitious practices, confirmed the kirk at Restalrig was still a place of pilgrimage:

It was too lang for tyll discryfe  
 Sanct Francis with his woundes fyfe  
 Sanct Tredwells als there may be sene  
 Quelk on ane prik hath both hir ene ...  
 To Sanct Tredwell to mend their eine.<sup>27</sup>

At this point the Scottish Reformation was gathering momentum, and in 1560 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church called for 'the kirk at Restalrig as a monyment of idolatrie be raysit and utterly casten down and destroyed'.<sup>28</sup> St Margaret's church was promptly demolished, and the parish church of the area was moved

<sup>25</sup> Carole M. Cusack and Dominique Beth Wilson, 'Scotland's Sacred Waters: Holy Wells and Healing Springs', *Sydney Society for Scottish History Journal*, Vol. 16 (2016), p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> Foster, 'The Legend and Shrine of St Triduana', p. 764.

<sup>27</sup> Foster, 'The Legend and Shrine of St Triduana', p. 764.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, 'The Legend and Shrine of St Triduana', p. 764.

to South Leith. The lower level of the hexagonal shrine survived the destruction, and was later used by the lairds of Restalrig as a burial chamber.

Helen Brown has studied the reasons for the emergence of Restalrig as a wealthy and popular shrine in the fifteenth century. She notes that Triduana appeared in ‘several Scottish liturgical books of the mid to late fifteenth century’, with the cult at Restalrig being established in the 1470s but significant by the 1490s.<sup>29</sup> There is some record of the parish church from the twelfth century onward, and from the early fifteenth century the church and village of Restalrig were the barony of the Logan family, whose castle was on Lochend Loch. The interest demonstrated by James III in Restalrig may have included accompanying a papal legate on a pilgrimage there in 1486, as Hector Boece identifies the holy destination as Lestauream (which may be Lestalryk, a variant of Restalrig as noted above) in his *Lives of the Bishops of Aberdeen* (1522).<sup>30</sup> The first important mention of Triduana at the parish church was 1496 when James IV donated 20 shillings for masses to be said before the altar of ‘Sanct Triduane’.<sup>31</sup> By 1507 there is a chaplain of St Triduana in residence, and in 1510 the *Aberdeen Breviary* confirms the saint’s remains lie at Restalrig. By 1515, during the minority of James V, the care of the saint’s relics and altar was the responsibility of a prebendary.

Brown has also reviewed the evidence that connects the Triduana/ Tredwell/ Trøllhaena dedications and concluded that while these sites *may* reflect the cult of a single saint with the power to cure eye disease, ‘no real continuity between the cults is visible, and the mere possibility of their common origin is in itself

<sup>29</sup> Helen Brown, ‘St Triduana of Restalrig? Locating a Saint and Her Cult in Late Medieval Lothian and Beyond’, in Debra Higgs Strickland (ed.), *Images of Medieval Sanctity: Essays in Honour of Gary Dickson* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, ‘St Triduana of Restalrig?’, p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, ‘St Triduana of Restalrig?’, p. 51.

inconclusive'.<sup>32</sup> This sceptical scholarly assessment leans towards disaggregating the two Triduanas (that of Rule and of Boniface respectively) and Trøllhaena; however, as Brown's focus is the principal shrine at Restalrig, she stop short of this radical move. The *Aberdeen Breviary*, with its description of two miracles by which Triduana blessed a blind Englishwoman, seems to be a pivotal, though late, text that Brown examines as a possible source for the reason the shrine became popular and influential. The saint appeared to the Englishwoman in a dream and commanded her to journey to Restalrig, where her blindness was healed. Later when the woman's daughter is injured in a fall, the child 'is restored by virtue of the prayer alone, without pilgrimage to Restalrig'.<sup>33</sup> This pious tale may have increased Triduana's popularity and swelled the number of pilgrims to the church, but is insufficient to function as an 'invention' story that might, for example, justify the discovery or translation of the saint's relics.

In a doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Edinburgh in 2011, Thomas J. M. Turpie examined the most prominent Scottish saints' pilgrimage from the mid-fourteenth century to the Scottish Reformation. He identifies the main functions of the saints as assistance to the faithful, patronage, and political power. Turpie's focus is those saints that were identified with Scottish national or 'native' interest, and he argues that the *Scotichronicon's* linking of Triduana with Rule was part of 'the wider story of the foundation and development of the see of St Andrews', a possibly nationalist trend that culminates in the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>34</sup> The popularity of Triduana as part of this trend may connect to the high medieval propagation of the myth of the Greek origin of the

<sup>32</sup> Brown, 'St Triduana of Restalrig?', p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Iain MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle: A Hexagonal Two-Storeyed Chapel of the Fifteenth Century', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 96 (1962-1963), p. 251.

<sup>34</sup> Turpie, *Scottish Saints Cults and Pilgrimage from the Black Death to the Reformation*, p. 29.

Scots, which is associated with the legendary introduction of Christianity to Scotland, through the Greek saints Andrew (the country's patron saint), Rule, and Triduana.<sup>35</sup> It is also possible that, as Brown suggests, the similarity of her legend and cult to that of saints like Lucy, Agatha and Catherine, made her 'an eminently recognisable type of saint', one that held a perennial appeal for medieval Christians.<sup>36</sup> At any rate, her cult flourished in the last two centuries before the Reformation swept away such saints' lives, relics, and devotional pilgrimages as superstitions with no scriptural basis.



St Margaret's Well, Holyrood Park. Photographed by G. Laird and reproduced under Creative Commons.

<sup>35</sup> Cowan, 'Myth and Identity in Early Medieval Scotland', p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, "St Triduana of Restalrig?", p. 65.

*CONCLUSION*

Of the eight sites with dedications to Triduana listed above, only two churches are still in existence, and the altar of St Triduana and St Fergus at Holy Trinity St Andrews was destroyed during the Reformation. Thus the only site at which Triduana has a visible presence is Restalrig, where the ruined St Margaret's church was rebuilt in 1836, to a design by the architect William Burn (1789–1870).<sup>37</sup> The lower storey of St Triduana's Chapel, which adjoins the western bay of the parish church, also survived, and was renovated 1907 by Dr Thomas Ross (1839–1930). In 1859 construction of the North British Railway Depot resulted in the removal of 'a second hexagon ... the little vaulted house of St Margaret's Well ... which was dismantled and re-erected in Queen's Park'.<sup>38</sup> Restalrig's special relationship with Triduana is also evidenced in Giles Gilbert Scott's 1929 Roman Catholic church, which is dedicated to Ninian and Triduana.

During the nineteenth century David Wilson, in *Memorials of Edinburgh* (1891) proposed that St Margaret's Well had originally been dedicated to Triduana, on account of its reputed powers to heal eye disease and even blindness. Thomas Ross, who restored James III's hexagonal structure, originally believed it to be a chapter house, but came to interpret it as a chapel to Triduana constructed over a wellhead, due to the fact that the lower storey flooded. In a major study of the shrine, Iain MacIvor identified Ross's informant as Major George Logan Home of Edrom from a 1931 letter to *The Scotsman*, in which Home asserted that 'I then brought the old legend of St Triduana to the notice of the architect ... when her body was committed to the tomb a well of pure water sprang up from the ground, which has ever since been renowned

<sup>37</sup> Anon, 'St Margaret's Parish Church, Restalrig, Edinburgh', *Scotland's Churches Trust*, n.d. At: <https://scotlandschurchestrust.org.uk/church/st-margarets-parish-church-restalrig-edinburgh/>. Accessed 16 November.

<sup>38</sup> MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle', p. 250.

for its healing virtues to the eyes'.<sup>39</sup> MacIvor thinks that St Margaret's wellhead hexagon is a simplified miniature of the James III chapel and thus of later date, and that it is possible, though not likely, that the James III chapel is a wellhouse, albeit a badly designed one. The only comparable example he has found is the fifteenth century shrine to St Winefride in Holywell, North Wales, where the lower storey is a wellhouse and the upper storey a chapel.<sup>40</sup>



Plaque at St Margaret's Well, describing its original siting at Restalrig. Image reproduced under Wikimedia Commons.

<sup>39</sup> MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle', p. 257.

<sup>40</sup> MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle', p. 259.

This article has surveyed the cult of St Triduana: in terms of her historical existence, which seems to have no basis in fact; in terms of her connection with the healing of eye disease, which is better supported but generally does not involve the holy wells that other such saints are associated with; and in terms of her popularity as a Scottish ‘nationalist’ saint in the later decades of the Middle Ages, when her principal shrine and reputed site of her mortal remains, St Margaret’s church at Restalrig, received lavish patronage from Kings James III, James IV, and James V,



Historic Scotland plaque at St Triduana’s Chapel, Restalrig. Image reproduced under Wikimedia Commons.

supporting clergy and creating a lively pilgrimage culture for those seeking blessings and healing from the saint. In the twenty-first century St Triduana is entirely obscure, and the ecclesiastical buildings at Restalrig little visited, for all their historical and folkloric interest. This is partly due to the retreat of Christianity in British culture, partly to the lack of acceptance of Catholic-style religious practices in Scotland, and partly due to the construction of the North British Railway Depot, which greatly diminished the beauty of the church and its surrounds. The chapel is in the care of Historic Scotland, and few tourists, those pilgrims of the contemporary world, journey to encounter St Triduana.