

ORTHODOX ENGLAND

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What the Orthodox Church Is

*From the Holy Fathers:
St Comgan*

*Lullingstone: A Fragment of Roman
Christian Britain*

An Irish Miscellany

*Orthodoxy Shines Through
Western Myths:*

*The Formation of a Persecuting Society
A King's Pledge*

and much more . . .

Vol 16, Number 3
March 2013



ORTHODOX ENGLAND VOL. 16 NO. 3

www.orthodoxengland.org.uk

A Quarterly Journal of English Orthodox Reading

March 2013

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Published with the blessing of the Very Reverend Mark, Archbishop of the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland of the Church Outside Russia.

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Publication dates: 1 September, 1 December, 1 March, 1 June.

Editorial: WHAT THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IS

Introduction

WE Orthodox belong to the civilizational world of the Orthodox Church, called Orthodox Christendom or, for short, Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is a realm which is independent, with a history different to that of others, East and West. It is a set of values made incarnate in a way of life. Indeed, to try and practise Orthodoxy without the Incarnation is to water it down, to sterilize and castrate it, making it into a mere 'idea', unfit for purpose. Orthodoxy is always embodied, whether Russian, Romanian, Greek, Georgian, Arab etc. We live according to the living Tradition that begins with Christ. Thus, Rome is still with us, at first in New Rome (Constantinople) which lasted over a thousand years after the fall of the much less important and much smaller Old Rome and its peripheral Western provinces, then in the huge territory of Third Rome, centred in Moscow, where it still is today.

What the Orthodox Church is not

We are not Western or Eastern, Roman Catholics / Protestants or Muslims. We do not dislike any of these, but we are not of them. Unlike Roman Catholicism, Islam and Protestantism, which are all 'religions', Orthodoxy is not a 'religion' and we are not 'religious'. Those who approach the Orthodox Church as a religion are mistaken. It is not some mere idea or human belief, deno-

mination or religious system, not some 'mere Orthodoxy'. We owe nothing to outsiders for our essence, for our inner spiritual core, we have no essential ties to anyone else. Unlike the West, there was no 'Fall of Rome', 'Dark Ages', 'Feudalism', 'Middle Ages', 'Renaissance', 'Reformation', 'Counter-Reformation' or 'Enlightenment'. Instead, we continue as we always have, our beliefs and values remaining rooted in Christ.

An Invitation

Orthodoxy does not protest, it witnesses. This is hard to do because it requires sobriety, patience and humility, the consciousness that all is in God's hands, in His Providence, in His Love. This is why most do not enter Orthodoxy, the Church. Indeed, if you are not prepared to 'witness' (in Greek to be a 'martyr'), to follow the path of 'martyrdom', to pay the price for our God-granted freedom, then you are not ready to be Orthodox. If you wish to join us, you have to accept us wholly, as a way of life, as a set of values. If you can give up your excess baggage of cultural prejudices, conceits and delusions, because you know that that is what they are, then come and join us. If not, then you are not spiritually ready for Orthodoxy and you must wait; otherwise you will only cause yourselves unhappiness and even spiritual harm.

Fr Andrew

From the Holy Fathers: ST COMGAN

ONCE St Comgan met a farmer, who grew the finest soft fruit in the west of Ireland. But he had the two laziest sons in the region. They spent all day drinking and chatting with their friends, and never helped their father. The old man said to Comgan: When I am dead, weeds will destroy my fruit bushes and my sons will starve.

Comgan said to the two sons: 'I have heard on good authority that there is treasure in the field where the fruit bushes grow. It is enough to feed and clothe you for the rest of your lives'.

It was now September. The two brothers went to the field and began searching for the treasure. They dug round every fruit bush, working from dawn until dusk in the hope of finding a casket of gold. By March they had dug half the field, and found nothing. 'Keep digging, said Comgan; I promise that if you do not find treasure by July, I will share half of my income with you. But if you find treasure, you must share half with the poor'.

So the two brothers continued to dig, turning over the earth so that not a single weed survived. In July Comgan came to the field, and exclaimed: 'I see you have found the treasure'. 'Where?' asked

the brothers. 'Look at the bushes', Comgan said, 'they are heavy with luscious fruit'.

From then on the two brothers worked hard in the field. Each year they sold half the crop and gave the rest to the poor. And, as Comgan had said, they had enough to feed and clothe themselves for the rest of their lives.



Once Comgan heard about a miser, who owned a fabulous collection of jewels. The miser kept the jewels in a safe. Comgan called on the miser, and said: 'I hear you have a fabulous collection of jewels. Would you allow me to see them?' The miser replied: 'That would be a pleasure. I haven't looked them myself for many years, so I too shall enjoy seeing them'. The rich man opened the safe, took out a gold box and carefully placed the box on a table. He unlocked the box, and lifted the lid. Both Comgan and the miser stared with open mouths at the diamonds, rubies emeralds, and sapphires which it contained. The miser dipped his hand in the box, and let the precious stones run through his fingers. Then after a few minutes he closed the box, and returned it to the safe.

'Thank you for giving me those jewels', said Comgan. The miser replied: 'I haven't given them to you; they belong to me' Comgan said: 'I have had as much pleasure as you from looking at them. So there is no difference between us – except that

you have the expense and anxiety of buying and looking after them'.

That day the miser gave away one jewel to every household in the town. There were just enough – with one left over for himself.



Once a young thief, who was extremely successful at his wicked occupation, came to Comgan and confessed that his conscience was troubled. He expected Comgan to order him to desist from thieving at once. But to his surprise Comgan said: 'I want you to find other young men and teach them how to steal as successfully as you. Steal only from the rich and give to the poor – keeping enough to feed and clothe yourselves'. The young thief did as Comgan proposed, gathering a small army of other young men. They began to steal gold and silver from all the forts and big houses in the region, giving what they had stolen to the poor. They were so skilled at thieving that they were never caught.

Finally, in despair, the rich people came to see Comgan, and pleaded: 'Go and speak to these young thieves and urge them to stop. You are the only person they respect'. Comgan answered: 'I shall tell these thieves to stop at once – if you promise to use your wealth for the good of all'.

In this way the region enjoyed a period of justice and honesty, such as it had never known before.

LULLINGSTONE: A FRAGMENT OF ROMAN CHRISTIAN BRITAIN

JUST near the village of Eynesford in Kent can be found Lullingstone Roman Villa. Built in ad82, enlarged in 150 and used for another 300 years, it was burnt down in the 5th century. In the early English period the ruins of a Roman temple-mausoleum on the site of the Villa were incorporated into a Christian chapel (Lullingstone Chapel) that existed at the time of the Norman Conquest, one of the earliest known chapels in the country.

The occupants were later Romanised Britons, but firstly wealthy Romans, among them Publius Helvius Pertinax, at one time governor of Britain. The son of a freed slave, Pertinax was born in 126 and was eventually commissioned as an officer in the Roman Army. After various postings he





Publius Helvius Pertinax

received a number of promotions and went on to be governor of Moesia, Dacia (now part of Romania), Syria and, between 185 and 187, Britain.

After returning to Rome, he became a senator and was said to have been involved in the plot to assassinate Emperor Commodus in 192. After the murder of Commodus, he was proclaimed Emperor in 193, but his reign lasted just 87 days before he was killed by a cohort of 300 soldiers who stormed his palace, furious at his austerity measures. Two sculpted marble busts found in the cellar at Lullingstone may be those of Pertinax and his father-in-law, Publius Helvius Successus.

The site was first discovered in 1750, when workers dug post holes through a mosaic floor, but no systematic excavations were made until the 20th century. In 1939, a blown-down tree revealed scattered mosaic fragments. The Villa was excavated between 1949 and 1961 and the ruins

Below: The Chi-Rho fresco with the Greek letters Alpha and Omega from Lullingstone Villa, which contains the only known Christian paintings from the Roman era in Britain



themselves were preserved under a specially-designed cover in the 1960s, when the Villa ruins were opened to the public.

The most remarkable remains in the Villa are the paintings and mosaics. One room of the building had been used as both a pagan shrine, and, later, as a Christian chapel. The original pagan shrine room was dedicated to local water deities. In the 4th century the room above the pagan shrine was converted to Christian use, with painted plaster on the walls, including a row of figures of standing worshippers and a characteristic Christian Chi-Rho symbol. Some of



Above and right – the figures of worshippers praying at Lullingstone

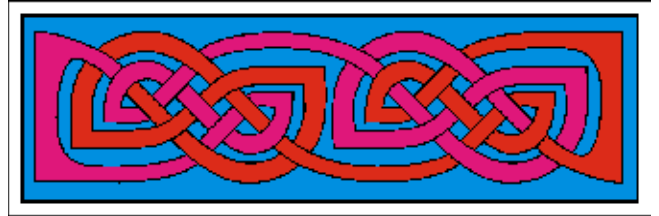
the paintings are now on display in the British Museum.

The evidence of the Christian house-church is a unique discovery for Roman Britain and the wall paintings are of international importance. Not only do they provide some of the earliest evidence for Christianity in Britain, they are almost unique – the closest parallels come from a house-church in Dura Europus in Syria. We cannot help recalling that Pertinax had been posted to Syria before becoming governor of Britain.





Remains of the house-church in Dura Europus in Syria



The Villa Preserved

HOW DID IRELAND BECOME CHRISTIAN?

Regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by Roman arms have received the religion of Christ

Tertullian, c. 200 (Def. Fides)

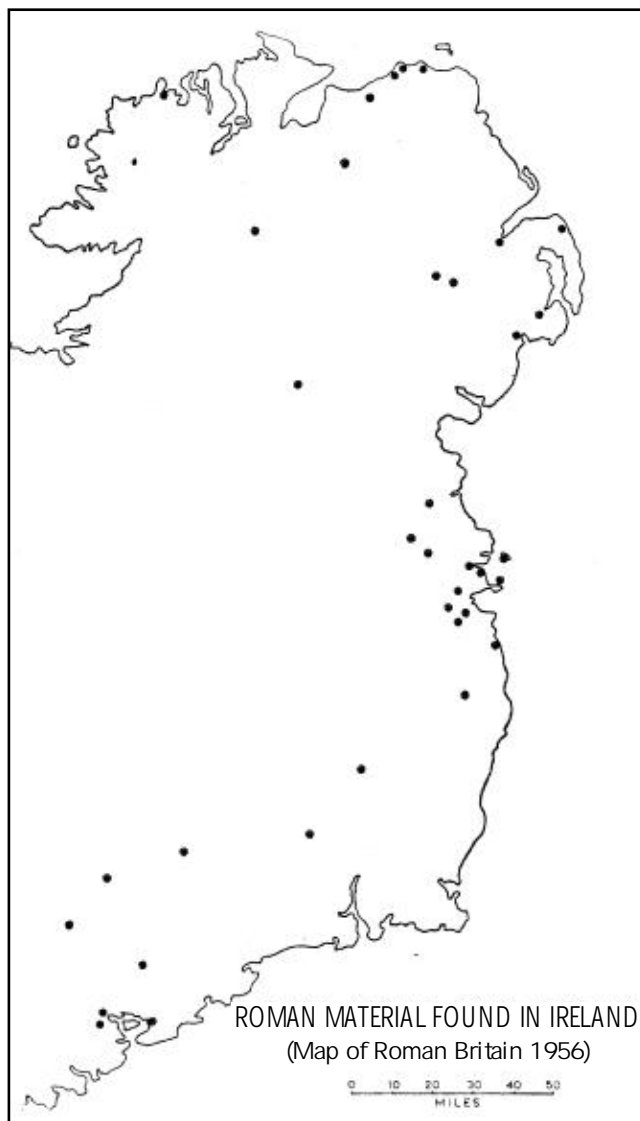
Introduction: A Mystery

ONE of the mysteries of insular history is how Ireland became Christian and how it preserved high standards of Latin learning, when that learning had all but disappeared elsewhere in Western Europe. After all, the Faith could not have got to Ireland via the Romans, for they never invaded or settled permanently there. On the other hand, from Roman coins and other vestiges found by archaeologists all around the port areas of southern, eastern and northern coasts of Ireland, it is clear that there were trading (as well as raiding) contacts, especially with Roman villas in what is now south Wales. These Roman objects date from as early as the first century AD.

Romano-Britain

Thus, it may indeed be that the first Christians in Ireland were traders and others from what is now Wales, who converted some of the Irish to their Romano-British Orthodoxy, no later than the fourth century, perhaps earlier. They would have visited south-east Ireland, opposite what is now Wales. And, after pressure from Germanic settlers in the east of Britain, the west, what is now Wales, had become the centre of the old Roman learning in the former province of Britannia. This was especially thanks to Welsh spiritual renewal from Gaul, principally through the influence of St Germanus of Auxerre. It was he who had great influence on St Ninian, St Patrick and also St Illtud. Indeed, it was the red Roman dragon which, preserved, became the national emblem of Wales.

This may not have been a case of 'Welshmen' taking the Gospel to Ireland, but Irish who had lived in 'Wales' taking it back themselves. It is recorded that Irish had settled in south-western Wales, now Dyfed, from as early as the fourth century. This we know from stones inscribed with the Ogham script of south-eastern Ireland, place-names and legends about the fourth-century migration of a tribe called the Deisi from south-eastern Ireland. These Irish settlers may well have taken elements of Roman-British Christian culture back from Caerleon, the place of martyrdom of



Sts Aaron and Julius, and from Roman Christian landed gentry in Gwent and Glamorgan to Ireland.

Some say that St Declan of Ardmore, the first to bring Christianity to the Waterford area in the first half of the fifth century, had been prepared for this mission in Wales. This influence is also clear from the monastery of St Cadoc and his disciple St Illtud, a disciple of St Germanus of Auxerre and teacher of St Gildas and from the preservation of Latin names like Dubricius, Justinian and Paul Aurelian in Wales. Certainly the school of St Illtud on Caldey Island must have played a considerable influence in Ireland through St Finnian of Clonard, St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, St Brendan of Clonfert

and St Columba. But that was later, in the sixth century.

Other Early Influences

However, it is a people called the Corcu Loirdge, living in the south of Ireland, who are claimed to have been the first to receive Christianity. And this was perhaps not from Wales – but from much further away. In the area where they lived, near Garranes and Garryduff, sherds of Mediterranean pottery have been found and glass fragments from Garryduff are Coptic. And if pottery had arrived, why not also Christianity, and if so, then why not also monasticism? Was not Ireland for long the only place in Western Europe outside Italy where there was some knowledge of Greek?

Christianity from Wales, from the Mediterranean or from Egypt? The story is even more complex. For we also know that refugees crossed the seas from south-western Gaul, Aquitaine, and made their way to southern Ireland. These were students from schools in Bordeaux and other cities of south-west Gaul, who brought their culture and the last echoes of Latin learning with them. This fact is recorded by an anonymous author early in the fifth century; only a few years after the Romans had abandoned Britannia in 409–410.

Their style has been detected in the early poets of Leinster and must have come from these early fifth century refugees, fleeing the barbarian invasions in Gaul. It seems that many of the rhetoricians of Gaul attached themselves to the native chieftains of southern Ireland and even Britain at the time, but especially Ireland, which was safer. And they could well have been responsible for the Christianity which existed in southern Ireland at that time, well before St Patrick, who in any case was only active in the north of Ireland.

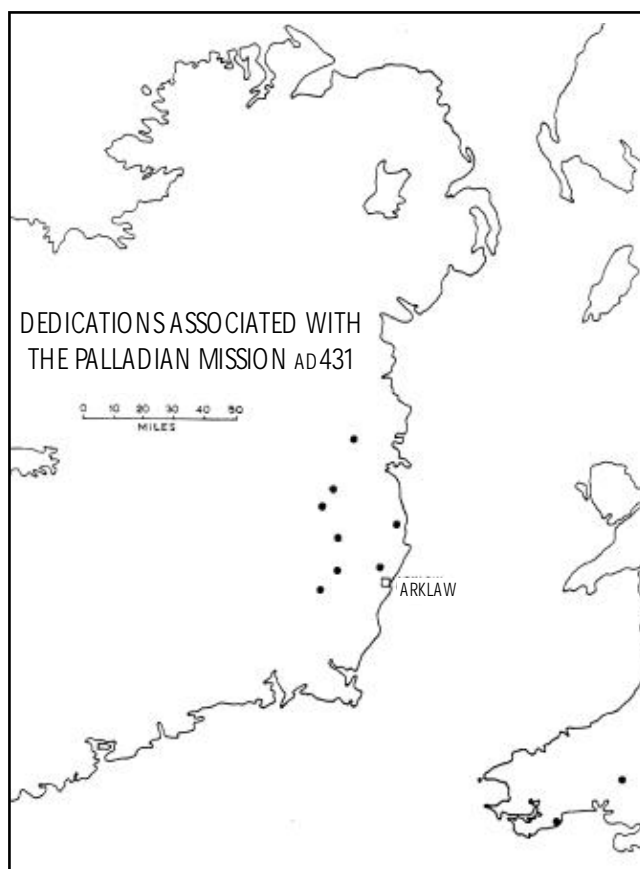
There is more, for links of Ireland with Spain are also clear. Writing in the fifth century, the Spanish Orosius speaks of a city in Galicia (a Celtic name), in north-west Spain, which he calls Brigantia (another Celtic name), which had a direct relationship with Ireland. An Irish artistic design of the period called the marigold design must have reached Ireland from Spain or else southern France, for it is most characteristic of Visigothic art in Spain. (Later, there would be a Celtic emigration to Galicia, with 'Welsh' founding the monastery of Santa Maria de Bretonia (of the Britons) in Galicia, with their own bishop, called Mailloc. British

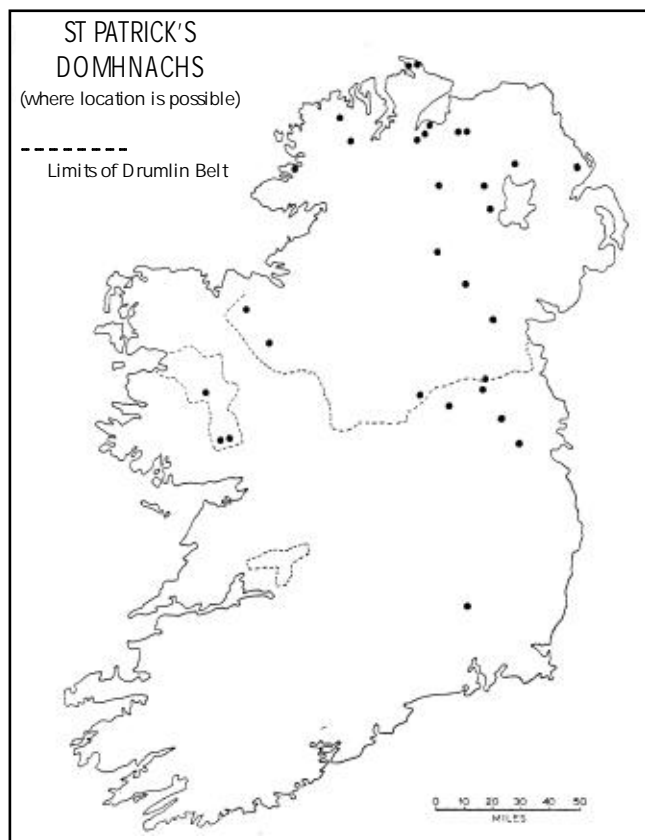
bishops were recorded there in the sixth and seventh centuries. This see existed until at least 900). Further afield, we also know that Spain had contacts with North Africa, whose church was still very active throughout the fifth century.

In any case, whether from Wales, the Mediterranean, Gaul, Spain, Egypt or from them all, by this time a number of Christian loan-words had appeared in Irish. There were *Cresen* (Christian), *domhnach* (church, from the Latin *dominicum*) and *cruimther* (priest). Significantly, the word for bishop had not yet appeared. This Christianity, existing well before St Patrick, seems to have spread fairly extensively through the south and east of Ireland and knowledge of this must have reached Gaul and then Rome. This lies behind the mission of St Palladius, sent to Ireland by the saintly Pope Celestine († 432).

The Roman Missions: St Palladius and St Patrick

The future St Palladius was most likely the deacon of Bishop Germanus of Auxerre, who, probably both came to Britain as part of the anti-Pelagian mission in 429. Indeed, Bishop Palladius most probably came to Ireland by crossing from Britain (south-west Wales). An ancient tradition says that he landed near Arklow in south-east





Ireland in 431. This is quite possible, for this area was in close contact with western Britain nearby and Bishop Palladius came to work with those 'already believing in Christ'. He is said to have founded three churches in his very brief time there – although after less than a year he either died or else went elsewhere. Three other bishops from Gaul, Secundinus, Auxilius and Iseminus, either came with him or else soon after him. In any case, their names are also associated with the south-east and midlands of Ireland, as well as with south-west Wales, from where they must have crossed.

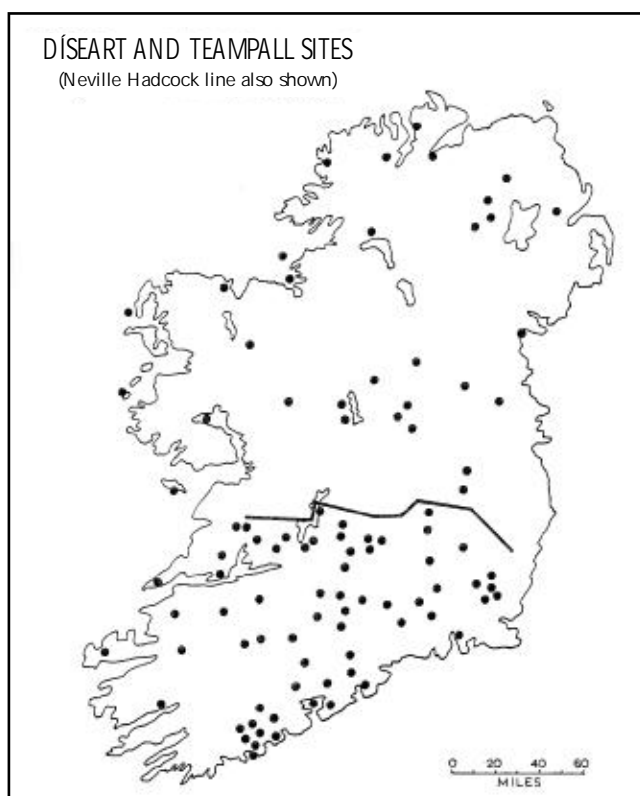
It is in this context that we must now speak of the famous mission of the Romano-British St Patrick (c. 385 – c. 461), which, we believe, came from northern Britain, perhaps under the influence of St Ninian († 450?). (It seems that later St Finnian of Moville was also to be much influenced by the monastery founded by St Ninian at Whithorn). In any case, Patrick's home seems to have been just south of Hadrian's Wall, near Whithorn. (The town of Ravenglass is a particularly strongly supported suggestion). Brought up as a nominal Christian, his grandfather a priest, his father Calpurnius a deacon, his mother called Concessa, and with the Roman name of 'Patricius', Patrick took classic Romano-British Christianity, renewed from Gaul, to Ireland in 432. His mission, sent after the death or departure of St Palladius,

was to lead to the conversion of the north and east of Ireland, with its centre at Armagh. Certainly, Bishop Patrick went where none had gone before him. The (Christian) dove was indeed stronger than the (Roman) eagle.

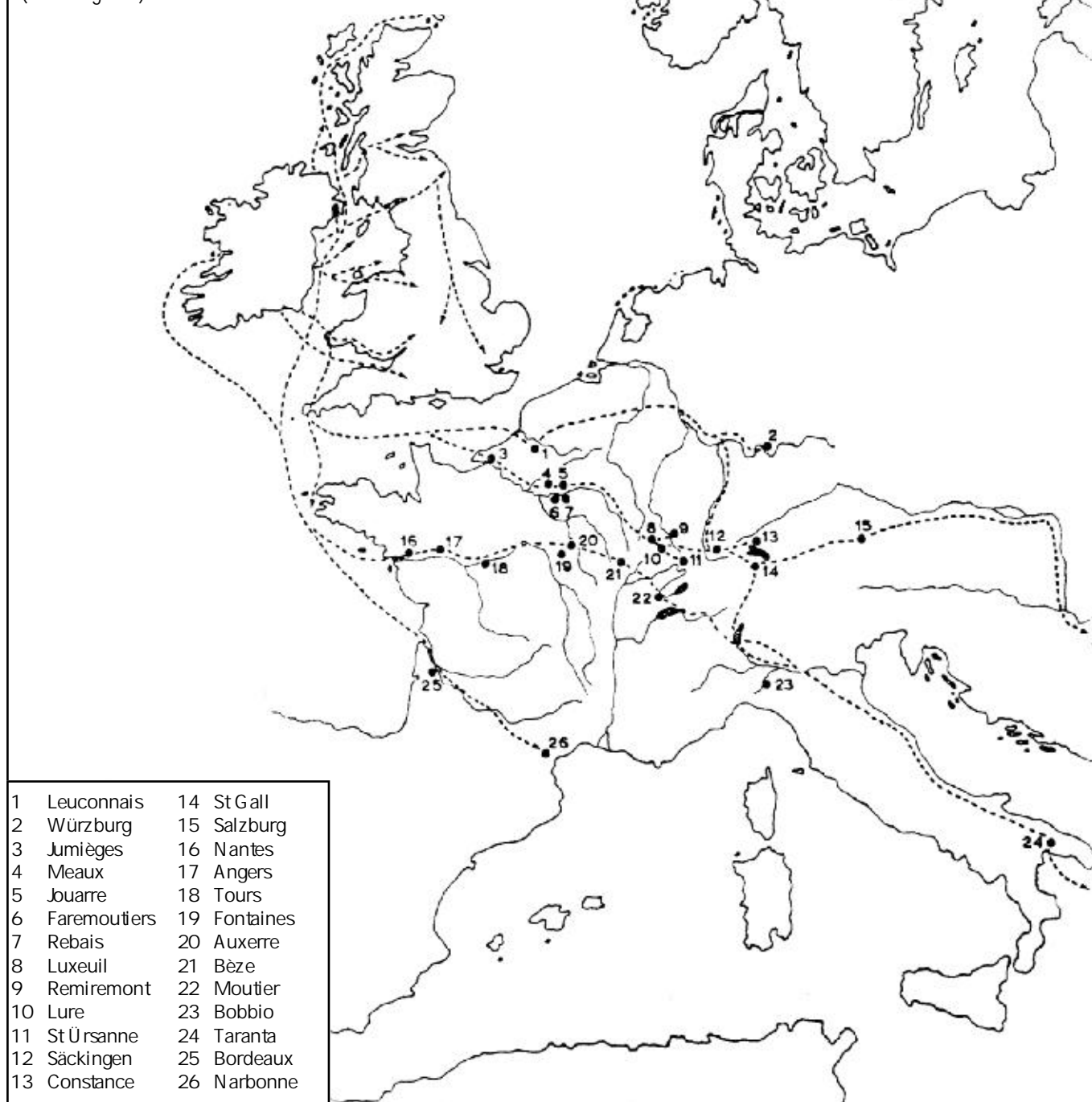
That St Patrick had gone to Auxerre under St Amator and then St Germanus, by whom he was ordained, seems highly likely – his life says as much. Whether perhaps he also went to the Tours of St Martin or the Lerins of St Honoratus, we cannot be certain. However, there is no doubt that after him his mission was much influenced by the ascetic movement from Egypt, strong in Gaul and come to Ireland via Gaul. After St Patrick, Armagh became a great monastic centre. St Patrick's importance is clear inasmuch as he, and not those who had gone before him, came to be thought of as the Apostle of Ireland. This must be because his mission opened the way to the great Irish monastic and missionary figures who followed him in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The Advent of Monasticism

In the early fifth century monastic influences poured into southern Gaul, and from there into Ireland. These came from the Desert Fathers of Cyrenaica, Egypt and Palestine. It was their influence which came to the West, to Gaul first, shaping St Martin of Tours († 397) and St John



IMPORTANT CENTRES IN EUROPE AT WHICH IRISH SCHOLARS
FOUNDED MONASTERIES OR MADE SETTLEMENTS 5-8 CENTURIES AD
(after Fitzgerald)



Cassian († 433). St Martin became extremely popular in Ireland and his life was translated in the Book of Armagh, having reached Ireland before 460. This was not a one-way movement. In the mid-fourth century the first Bishop of Toul in eastern France had been an Irishman called Mansuetus († c. 350). It is known that one of the earliest, greatest and most learned Abbots of Lerins in southern Gaul was a 'Briton'. This was Faustus, Abbot of Lerins from 433 and then Bishop of Riez near Aix († c. 490). It seems likely that this centre,

where lived the Church Father St Vincent of Lerins, was a major source of inspiration for the Irish liturgy and monastic life. Two other British bishops are recorded in Gaul from this period, Fastidius (c. 425) and Riocatus (c. 475).

The essentially Egyptian ascetic movement took deep root in southern Gaul, as is witnessed to by St Cassian of Marseille, St Prosper of Aquitaine and later by St Gregory of Tours. It then spread to Tours on the River Loire, from the mouth of which Ireland is one sea-journey away and where Irish

ships and trade were often reported. Seeking the desert, islands, caves and hills, Ireland and anywhere else that had not been affected by the Roman Empire (the Channel Islands, the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, parts of Wales and Scotland) would have been ideal destinations for these ascetics. Eventually, these 'papar' (fathers) would be drawn to the Orkneys, the Shetlands, in about the year 700 the Faeroes, certainly by the early ninth century, Iceland and, perhaps, even further afield.

There seems to have been direct influence from Egypt too. The record of St Angus the Culdee also says that a group of seven monks came to Ireland from Egypt directly, and in search of learning. Only this can explain the Coptic-type illustrations of the Book of Kells and the bindings of Gospel books found recently in Irish bogs. This provincial Coptic style was later taken to Iona and from there to England, where it can clearly be seen in the Lindisfame Gospels or those of St Chad. And from both Ireland and England this semi-Coptic style was taken to the Continent.

Thus, certainly, there seem to have been direct contacts between the North African and Mediterranean world and southern Ireland. Many sites in Ireland have the prefixes Disert (desert) and Teampall (temple). It is thought that these may represent the earliest sites of habitation of hermits. The word 'desert' is linked directly with the east and not indirectly with those influences entering Ireland via Gaul. From the map, it is clear that the 'deserts' predominate in the south of Ireland. Egyptian influence can also be seen, for example, in the physical layout of monasteries, in fasting and in other ascetic practices, such as the importance of the Saturday night vigil service, which survives in the Russian Orthodox Church to this day.

Conclusion: Fusion and Mission

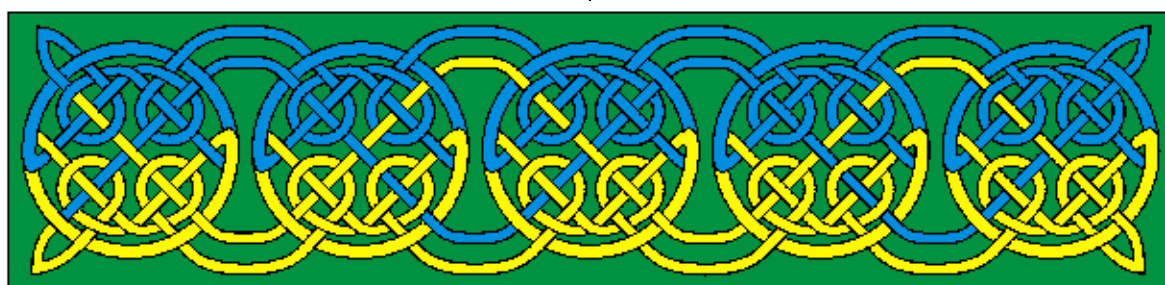
With all these influences from Romano-British Wales, Gaul, Spain, North Africa, Egypt, the 'East', St Ninian's Whithorn and St Patrick in the north of Britain, it is interesting to see their fusion in central

Ireland. It is precisely this fusion which created the great Irish monasteries of the sixth and seventh centuries. Two figures stand out: St Enda of Aran († c. 530) and, above all, St Finnian of Clonard († 549), called 'Teacher of the Saints of Ireland'.

These merged the learning of the Latin-named St Patrick from northern Britain, the influence on St Finnian of Moville of the monastery founded by St Ninian at Whithorn and that of the Romano-British Sts Dubricius, Cadoc, Gildas, David and especially St Illtud from western Britain, with the ascetic currents from Egypt and Gaul. Austerity was combined with learning in Ireland. Legend says that 3,000 monks and twelve high bishops of Ireland came from St Finnian's teachings and example. Whatever the exact truth, the story of his appointment of the 'Twelve Apostles of Ireland' appears to suggest that his spiritual children and spiritual descendants in general did spread the Gospel throughout Ireland and from there to Scotland (St Columba), much of England (Northumbria and the Midlands) and from there to continental Europe (St Columban).

However, if the main characteristic of monasticism in the east is the desert, in the west it is the island. No more suitable place for this development can be found than the archipelago of the British Isles and it is above all the Irish or the Irish-inspired who populated them, whether on Aran and Inishmore (St Enda), Inishmurray (St Laserian), Scattery, (St Senan), Inishbofin (St Colman), Skellig Michael, Isle of Man (St Maughold), Iona (St Columba and St Adamnan), Rona (St Ronan), Barra (St Finbar), the Flannan Islands (St Flannan), Inch Cailleach (St Kentigerna), Inch Kenneth (St Kenneth), Inch Murrin (St Mirin), Bardsey (St Cadfan), Caldey (St Dyfrig), Barry Island (St Barrog), Ynys Seiriol (St Seiriol), Bass Rock (St Baldred), Lindisfame (Holy Island) and Inner Farnie (St Aidan, St Cuthbert) and scores of other holy islands.

All the Saints of Ireland, pray to God for us!



AN IRISH MISCELLANY

The Three Orders of the Irish Saints

ACCORDING to the eighth-century 'Catalogue of Irish Saints', the first order of the Irish saints is 'very holy', the second order 'holier' and the third order 'holy'.

The first order, 350 in number, derives from St Patrick, consists of bishops who founded churches, is Roman-inspired, continues until about the year 543 and shines like the sun.

The second order derives from St Enda of Aran and St Finnian of Clonard and it consists mostly of priests and monks living in community with only a few bishops. It is ascetic, monastic, missionary and learned, remote from Roman disciplines, continues until the close of the sixth century and shines like the moon.

The third order lasts until 664, it is the order of the culdees or anchorites, who are mainly hermits, priests and only occasionally bishops, who mainly live in lonely places, especially on lonely islands, and it shines like the stars.

St Brendan and Voyaging

THE second chapter of the 'Voyage' tells us plainly what St Brendan's motive was. It was no other than an attempt to discover the whereabouts of Paradise. St Brendan conceived the idea of voyaging in quest of Paradise, when he was in his cell, three thousand feet up on the top of Brandon Hill near the Bay of Tralee.

No such sea view can be had in the British Islands and he saw it in all its varying moods: at early morning when the glory of the sun was first diffused over its wide reaches; at midnight when the stars swept round the pole; at evening when the setting sun seemed a road of living gold to the Fortunate Islands where the sorrows of earth never enter, and peace and beauty dwell for ever. It was a dim tradition floating down the stream of time, for, with curious unanimity, the poets of Greece and Rome spoke of these Islands of the Blessed as located somewhere in the Western Ocean. The same idea has taken hold of the Irish imagination; the existence of an enchanted land was believed in by the fishermen of the western coasts of Ireland, who would pick up vegetation brought by currents from the unknown Caribbean on their shores. They used to say: 'It is seen from Aran once every seven

years, as Brendan saw it in olden times, like a fairy city on the far horizon's verge'.

Monastic Ireland produced many voyagers besides St Brendan the Navigator. By all accounts, their sails were seen on every sea, known and unknown, charted and uncharted, from Egypt to Iceland. When, in the eleventh century, the Norwegians landed in Greenland, they learned from the Eskimo that to the south of the country beyond the Bay of Chesapeake, 'white men might be seen clothed in long white robes who marched singing and bearing banners in their hands'.

One of the most interesting monuments of early Irish scholarship is Dicuil's geographical survey, *De Mensura Orbis Terrarum*, written in the beginning of the ninth century. Dicuil gathered his information from all sorts of sources, but he makes no secret of the fact that he was indebted, above all, to the sailor monks of his own Ireland, for information that contradicted the statements appearing in standard works. Speaking of the Nile he says: 'Although we never read in any book that the Nile flows into the Red Sea, yet Fidelis told me how certain monks from Ireland who went to Jerusalem on pilgrimage sailed up the Nile for a long way'.

These pilgrims also saw the 'Barns of Joseph', or the Pyramids, the base of one of which Fidelis measured and found to be four hundred feet in length. This same Fidelis was anxious to examine the spot where Moses entered the Red Sea, in hope of finding vestiges of Pharaoh's chariots, but the others being in a hurry would not wait. Elsewhere Dicuil tells us that a certain trustworthy monk had assured him that he had reached the Faeroe Islands by sailing for two days and nights in a vessel manned with two benches of oars. Dicuil adds: 'We have never found any author who mentions these islands'. And again: 'It is now thirty years since certain monks who stayed in the Orkneys told me that, at certain times, the setting sun at eventide merely hid itself, as it were, so that there was no darkness even for a moment'.

When danger was especially great, the holiest and most innocent monk on board would be called upon to intercede for the rest. With all the authority behind him, the abbot would command the winds and the waves, as Another had done before him. He would preach to the unruly elements and recite the Psalter over them, after the fashion of

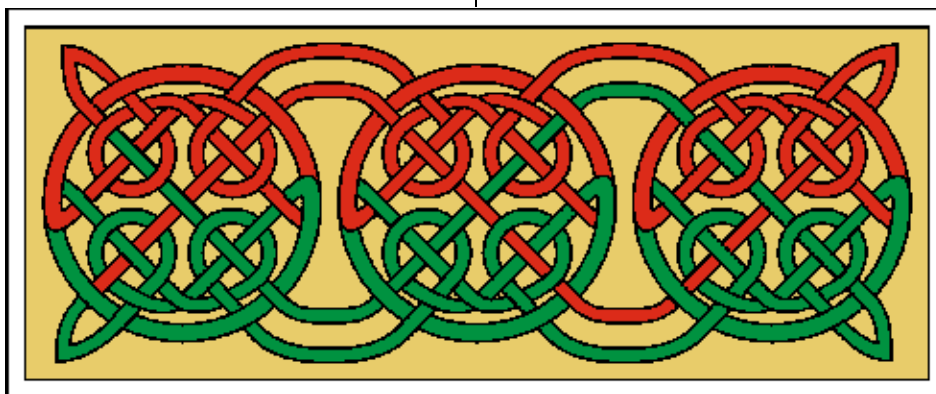
Columbus who calmed the frenzy of the ocean by reading to it the first chapter of the Gospel of St John: 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made'.

St Columba's followers were less ambitious than Brendan. There is no evidence that they ever set out with any hope of landing upon the shores of Kingdom Come. But they did voyage here, there and almost everywhere in search of the ideal monastic site. In this way they discovered the island of St Kilda, made contact with the Shetlands, the Faeroe Isles and even Iceland itself according to some. Until almost modern times, the Calvinist inhabitants of St Kilda, which is the most western portion of our continent, kept the feast of St Columba by handing over all the milk of that day to the governor for free distribution to the poor. When the Norwegians landed in the Faeroe Islands

they found traces of the presence of the Irish monks in the form of Irish books, crosses and bells. As for Iceland, it is asserted that its first Christian place of worship was dedicated to the Dove of the Church.

Longevity

ONE of the greatest ascetics, St Kevin, died at the age of 120. St Ciaran of Ossory and St Brigid were centenarians; St Brendan, St Carthage, St Gall and St Mochua were very nearly so, the latter failing only by twelve months. St Comgall governed his community for fifty years three months and ten days, reposing in his ninetieth year. St Colman of Dromore was ninety-four, St Canice was eighty-five, St Maelrubius was eighty. Sts Columba, Brigid and Columban lived out the allotted span of three score years and ten.



TWO CHURCHES

St Brigid of Kildare's Church,
as it was c. 650.

I MUST not omit the miracle which took place at the time of the repairs to the church where rest the bodies of Bishop Conlaed and the virgin St Brigid. They are placed in elaborate shrines, to the right and left of the decorated altar, are splendidly bedecked with gold and silver, jewels and precious stones and have gold and silver crowns hanging above them.

As the numbers of the faithful of both sexes grew, the church was extended, both in area at ground level and in height projecting upwards, and was adorned with frescoes. It has three altars in it, separated by frescoed walls, under a single roof that spans the larger building.

In the eastern part, a screen with the cross extends from one wall to the opposite wall,

adorned with icons and covered with linen. In its ends are two doors. Through the southern door the bishop enters with his regular choir and those deputed to celebrate the rites and sacrifices to the Lord. Through the other door, in the northern part of the screen with the cross, the abbess enters with her virgins and faithful widows to enjoy the feast of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Another wall extends from the eastern part as far as the screen with the cross and divides the paved floor of the buildings into two equal parts.

The church has many windows, and on the south side an ornamented door, through which the priests and the faithful people of the male sex enter the church, and another door on the north side, through which the congregation of virgins and faithful women enter. So in one great basilica a large number of people may pray with one heart to Almighty God, in different places according to

their orders and ranks and sexes, with walls between them.

When the workmen set on its hinges the old north door, through which Saint Brigid used to enter the church, it could not cover all the newly constructed opening ... unless a quarter were added to the door's height. When the workmen were deliberating whether to make a new and larger door, or whether to make an icon and add it to the old door ... the leading craftsman of all Ireland gave wise advice, to pray that night to the Lord, with Saint Brigid. Next morning the old door covered the whole opening.

Cogitosus, Vita Brigit, 35.

Sigbald's Church at Lindisfarne,
as it was c. 800.

SIGBALD the abbot built a church worthy of God in honour of the holy Mother and for her habitation beneath the heavens. At its heart is an altar, set about by wonderful icons, adorned in

jewels and yellow gold and faced with shining silver reliefs and engraved figures: for bright indeed are the souls of the saints and their heavenly dwelling places. It is crowned with flowers when the holy Gift is placed in its tabernacle.

Painted on the western end of the church are the resplendent angels, God's servants who fill heaven with beautiful music. All the saints hover along the middle level of the church, filling it with their presence at all times. They descend like snow in response to the prayers of the faithful, and they always protect them with their holy merits, as they press forward to receive the palm of eternal life.

The church is full of lights overhead, which shine to our delight and joy. There is a gleaming golden chalice, which Sigbald consecrated to the holy Mother: it is covered in precious stones and is etched in silver, which catches the light. The roof is protected with lead and copper bells are rung by the monks in sweet music.

Ethelwulf – De Abbatibus

ORTHODOXY SHINES THROUGH WESTERN MYTHS (9)

The Formation of a Persecuting Society; Power and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250

OLDER Western scholarship on Church history is not generally of much use to Orthodox. Most of it is simply anti-Orthodox and therefore anti-authentic Christianity, even openly boasting of its 'Judeo-Christian' and not Christian civilisation. The anti-Orthodox prejudices of such scholarship, when it mentions Orthodoxy at all, come simply from the fact that history is 'written by the winners', and even despite the First World War, up until the Second World War most Western scholars thought that the West had won.

It is different today, when the near-millennial crimes of the West are visible to all and nobody any longer listens to the voices of ecclesiastical institutions which moulded the last thousand years of Western history – they are clearly compromised. Interestingly, contemporary secular scholarship, which in its ignorance of Orthodoxy cannot in any way be accused of being pro-Orthodox, is an excellent source for Orthodox to understand what went wrong with the West. We can understand

how, by renouncing the Orthodox Christian Faith in its anti-Trinitarian and anti-Christic filioque heresy, its former Church became a series of isms, Catholicism, Protestantism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism etc, which have bred modern-day secularism and will eventually lead to the end of the world.

In the following article, the latest in a series taken from various works of secular scholarship, we have selected extracts from a religious scholar. These are from *The Formation of a Persecuting Society; Power and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250* by the historian Professor R. I. Moore, Blackwell, Oxford (fourteen editions between 1987 and 2000). These extracts seem to illustrate abundantly the modern post-Orthodox deformations of Western culture which originally began with the spread of the new *filioque* culture behind the Papacy.

Although ominously threatened for nearly three centuries before, under Charlemagne, these deformations were not definitively implemented

until the eleventh century. The date of 1054 is thus seen to be symbolic of the very real spiritual fall which took place in Western Europe in the eleventh century. In the year 1000, the fall had by no means been certain. In 1054 it was. And it is that fall which has defined the subsequent history of not just Western Europe, but the whole world. But let the learned author speak:

Pp. 4–5. Systematic persecution begins in the West in the eleventh century, whatever the prejudiced historians of the past may claim.

But in the West, far from being 'normal' in mediæval society, it (religious persecution) faded away with the Roman Empire, and did not reappear until the eleventh century; even then, as the first chapter will remind us in detail, it became regular and established only gradually during the next hundred years or so. Of course it might be argued, and is almost universally assumed, that this is because there were no heretics in the mediæval West before that time, and that if there had been they would have been persecuted. As we shall see in chapter 2, neither of those propositions is so obvious, or so simple, as it sounds. But even if they were true it would remain the case that the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw what has turned out to be a permanent change in Western society. Persecution became habitual. That is to say not simply that individuals were subject to violence, but that deliberate and socially sanctioned violence began to be directed, through established governmental, judicial and social institutions, against groups of people defined by general characteristics such as race, religion or way of life; and that membership of such groups in itself came to be regarded as justifying these attacks.

The victims of persecution were not only heretics, but lepers, Jews, sodomites, and various other groups whose number was added to from time to time in later centuries. There is no need to list them here. Historians have been assiduous in chronicling and analysing the appalling records of the inquisition of the later middle ages, the witch hunters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth, and numberless others. But though tremendous labour, often of immense distinction, has been devoted to particular persecutions, relatively little attention has been paid to persecution as such, as a general phenomenon, and none at all, as far as I know, to its origin in these centuries. One of the reasons, no doubt, is that for so many of its greatest historians,

who grew up before the First World War and died before the Second, liberty and progress went hand in hand. If societies progress away from persecution its approach does not require explanation: persecution is a feature of barbarous societies which civilization leaves behind. That confidence could hardly survive far into the twentieth century. But its replacement by the correspondingly pessimistic conviction that persecution is a normal component of the human condition is the result of the same historical error, the familiar one of failing to identify change by taking too short a view. Whether we choose to see the epoch since 1100 as one of progress or decline, to step back a little further is to see that around that time Europe became a persecuting society.

Pp. 12–13. Persecution begins 1022.

In the eastern (*sic*) empire the death penalty for heresy was prescribed only for a few very remote sects and applied on a handful of occasions. In the West in 383, Priscillian of Avila, suspected of Manicheism was handed to the local prefect for punishment in spite of the protests of Bishop Martin of Tours, and executed on a charge of witchcraft. Priscillian's accusers were excommunicated by Ambrose of Milan and Pope Siricius, and he remained not only the first Western European to be burned as a heretic (though not, it is emphasized, accused as such) but the only one before fourteen of the higher clergy and more respectable laity of the city of Orleans were burned at the order of King Robert I of France in 1022.

Pp. 18–19. Heresy 'became the Policy of the Church' (*sic*) in the eleventh century because of the 'Gregorian' Revolution.

... The currents of heresy were therefore swept up in the far broader and faster streams of reform, which from the middle of the century turned the church and half of Europe upside down. In Milan the Patarnes could drive priests from their churches, denouncing them as ministers of Satan and their orders as invalid. They could defy the archbishop for a generation in the name of apostolic purity as they defined it, with the full support of the papacy, and therefore without entering the list of those whom posterity usually discusses as heretics. In Flanders, Ramihrdus of Cambrai could preach that the priests had forfeited spiritual authority through their worldly corruption, refuse to confirm the good faith of his statement of orthodox doctrine by accepting the sacrament from

any of the bishops, abbots and clerks who interrogated him on the ground that all of them were simoniacal or unchaste, and be hailed as a martyr by the pope when the bishop's servants burned him for his refusal. Heresy did not disappear in those years as is sometimes said: it became the policy of the church.

The Growth of Popular Heresy

As the Gregorian revolution lost its zeal and began to come to terms with the world again, heresy reappeared with greater vigour and again in two guises, though very different ones from before. On the one hand, as after every revolution, were those who thought that the reform had been betrayed, had failed to keep faith with the uncompromising ideal of apostolic poverty and dissociation from the corruption of secular power which Leo IX, Cardinal Humbert and Gregory VII and their emissaries had carried to so many corners of Europe. On the other, less commonly at first but increasingly important as the twelfth century wore on, were those who rejected, not only the achievement, but the goal of the Gregorian reform, the ideal of a hierarchically organized church which claimed the right to intervene in every area of life and thought. There were many throughout the twelfth century whose views might be described in one of those two ways, especially the first, but who because of their station or conduct were never arraigned as heretics.

P. 29. The beginning of Anti-Semitism: Hitler was born in the eleventh century.

The Emergence of Anti-Semitism

the change which took place in the next century and a half (= eleventh and twelfth) is vividly expressed by the scene in the *Song of Roland* (*lines* 3658–71) which shows Charlemagne revenging the death of his friend by the destruction of the synagogues of Saragossa along with the mosques, and the forced conversion of the worshippers in them. It is quite out of keeping with the historical Charlemagne, but not with the northern French world of the eleventh century in which the *Song* was written. The first general indication of the changing atmosphere came in 1010–12, with a series of attacks at Limoges, Orleans, Rouen, Mainz and elsewhere, after a rumour that the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem had been sacked on the orders of the Prince of Babylon. In 1063 several

Jewish communities in south-western France were attacked by knights on the way to fight the infidel in Spain; the archbishop of Narbonne earned a papal rebuke for leaving his Jewish quarter open to them, whereas the vicomte protected his on the other side of the City. These episodes foreshadowed the massacres of 1096 in the Rhine cities and at other points on the route of the first crusade.

The magnitude of the atrocities associated with the first crusade cannot be estimated precisely. Rouen is the only French city which is known to have been the scene of a massacre, but both Christian and Jewish sources say that there were others. There, according to Guibert of Nogent, the crusaders herded the Jews into a certain place of worship, rounding them up either by force or by guile, and without distinction of age or sex put them to the sword.

P. 67. Intolerance and persecution become general from the eleventh century on.

The parallels in the development of the persecution of heretics, Jews and lepers are very striking. There were differences, but in each case although persecution was rigorous in theory it did not occur in practice until the beginning of the eleventh century and remained intermittent until its end; in each, rising hostility became sharply apparent in the middle decades of the twelfth; and in each a comprehensive apparatus of persecution was worked out towards the end of the twelfth century, codified by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (for lepers the Third of 1179), and perfected by the middle of the thirteenth century or soon after ...

... That three entirely distinct groups of people, characterized respectively by religious conviction, physical condition, and race and culture, should all have begun at the same time and by the same stages to pose the same threats, which must be dealt with in the same ways, is a proposition too absurd to be taken seriously. The alternative must be that the explanation lies not with the victims but with the persecutors. What heretics, lepers and Jews had in common is that they were all victims of a zeal for persecution which seized European society at this time. This suspicion is strengthened by the further question which it raises, namely whether the groups from which the persecuted came were in fact as large and as distinctive as they were believed to be – by considering, in other words, the possibilities that heresy, leprosy and Jewishness lay with beauty in the eyes of the

beholders, and that their distinctiveness was not the cause but the result of persecution ...

Pp. 68–70. The source of persecution is in Roman centralization.

Variety of religious opinion exists at many times and places and becomes heresy when authority declares it intolerable. In the early middle ages this seldom happened. Once Arianism had faded away there is no evidence of the preaching to the laity of doctrines which the Church found it necessary to prohibit. Certainly nobody now believes, as some twelfth-century writers did, that the teachings of ancient heretics like Mani and Arius had remained dormant among the peasantry to break out again with renewed vigour in the age of the crusades. We are more inclined to agree with Adelman of Liege, writing in 1051, that 'even their memory had rotted away'. Among churchmen themselves, especially during the 'renaissance' of the ninth century, there were disagreements over questions of liturgy and occasionally theology which sometimes spilled over into accusations of heresy. But these remained individual conflicts which did not reverberate beyond the arguments that gave rise to them or stimulate the creation of any mechanisms to deal with them, just as the similar disputes among the intelligentsia of the later period, such as the charges of heresy against Abelard or Gilbert de la Poree, did not impinge upon the growth and development of the persecution of popular heresy which was described in the last chapter.

The structure of the Western Church itself in the early middle ages was one which permitted, and was bound to permit, a much greater variety than would later be thought consistent with the maintenance of Catholic unity. It had not yet developed the means, or, some would say, the inclination, to demand uniformity of worship and practice throughout Western Christendom. Each bishop ruled his diocese as the heir and successor of the patron saint who was usually said to be its founder. Rome enjoyed a general though far from unchallenged pre-eminence, but no universally acknowledged authority to intervene in diocesan or provincial affairs. Its precepts were by no means generally supposed to enjoy greater standing or authority than was accorded by custom. Indeed the papal reform of the eleventh century was precisely, in one of its most central aspects, a struggle to impose Roman authority over local tradition. The most familiar but not untypical example is that of Milan, whose clergy claimed the traditional

authority of St Ambrose for their 'customs' of paying for their benefices, marrying and maintaining a distinctive liturgy – customs which the impassioned reformers denounced as the vilest of heresies.

These circumstances did not make it impossible that 'heresy' might have been identified and pursued, as indeed it began to be before the papal reform was under way. Churchmen did not forget the threat which had been posed by the great heresies of antiquity, and continued to agree on the necessity of denouncing them and guarding against their revival. It would be carrying scepticism too far to imagine that a substantial movement among the eighth-century laity in opposition, let us say, to baptism or the unity of the trinity would have passed unnoticed or unrebuked. Nevertheless, any comparison of the prevalence of heresy in the high middle ages with the lack of it in the earlier period must make a substantial allowance for the greater sensitivity of the more centralized structure to the manifestation of dissent.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the part which the Church itself played in turning dissent into heresy.

Pp. 84–85. How the West turned against the Jews, forcing them into money-lending or enslaving them into feudalism.

In the Carolingian period and immediately after it (= the ninth and tenth centuries) there is nothing to suggest that Jews were particularly associated with usury. Indeed the Jews of the Maconnais frequently found themselves obliged to resort to money-lenders and mortgage their land to them. It is only after the first crusade that the identification of Jews with money-lending begins to appear. In prohibiting the burial of usurers in Christian cemeteries the second Lateran Council of 1139 both repudiated usury as un-Christian, and acknowledged that many of its practitioners were Christians. It was in lamenting this fact that St (*sic*) Bernard of Clairvaux, in the 1140s, seems to have been the first to use the verb *judaizare* in the sense of 'to be a money-lender', rather than 'to advocate or make converts to Judaism' – a sense which, in another sign of the times, there was no longer need to express, as there had been from time to time in the eleventh century. Nor was the change a sudden one. It is clear that the largest and best connected money lenders in England, nationally and internationally, were Christians until as late as 1164, when Henry II seems to have transferred his

business rather abruptly to Jews, for reasons which remain unclear; his contemporary Pope Alexander III was another substantial customer of Christian usurers, including Englishmen and Flemings. As R. B. Dobson has observed, 'Jews probably replaced Christians less because they were offering a new economic service than because they performed a well-established service more efficiently than their Christian competitors'. But there is no doubt why they set out to do so. As the Jew in Abelard's Dialogue (c. 1125-6) put it

'Confined and constricted in this way as if the world had conspired against us alone it is a wonder that we are allowed to live. We are allowed to possess neither fields nor vineyards nor any landed estates because there is no-one who can protect them for us from open or covert attack. Consequently the principal gain that is left for us is that we sustain our miserable lives here by lending money at interest to strangers. But this just makes us more hateful to them who think they are being oppressed by it'

The fate of the Jewish landowners and cultivators of the early eleventh century is not recorded, but is obvious enough. The subjection of alodial proprietors to serfdom by sheer force in the middle and later decades of the eleventh century, especially in north-western Europe, is now quite familiar.

Pp. 88-89. The eleventh-century turning-point.

Neither can the development of persecution during the eleventh and twelfth centuries be accounted for simply by reference to changes in the number, quality or nature of the victims. If in the case of heretics and lepers it is often hard to distinguish reality from perception that of the Jews is decisive, because it shows not simply a veil of ignorance between antiquity and the high middle ages, but a clear change of direction after about 1000. The balance of the evidence is quite firmly that between the seventh and the tenth centuries Christian authority in Western Europe treated Jews notably less harshly than it had done before or would do again; that the Jews were assimilated into Christian society to a considerable degree; in some respects right up to that the assimilation was continuing - in some respects right up to the twelfth century; and that it was reversed by the growth of persecution. The long agony of European Jewry therefore (and this is a conclusion that runs

counter to venerable traditions in Jewish as well as Christian historiography) has not perhaps its most distant origins but certainly its direct and major causes in events that took place in western society in and around those two centuries.

P. 118 and p. 123. How the rich and mighty manipulated the people into taking part in their persecution.

At Mainz, the townspeople at first supported the Jews against the crusaders, though some of them joined in the killing and looting later; at Worms the Jews handed their valuables for safekeeping to their Christian neighbours when they heard of the killings; at Cologne they went to gentiles for refuge. The motives of the crusaders themselves are not entirely clear, and some were doubtless personal: Emicho of Leiningen, whose army carried out the first attacks, was apparently somewhat unbalanced. But a prominent objective was undoubtedly supplies and loot, inevitably demanded by a large but poorly organized and unprovisioned army on the march, and another, for some of the leaders at least, was the protection money which their threats and previous deeds enabled them to extort from Jews on their route.

The York massacre of 1190 also appears, on the excellent authority of Roger of Hoveden, to have had its origin in a conspiracy by local notables to liquidate their debts along with their creditors. We have already noticed that the hangings at Bray-sur-Seine the next year were inspired by the military interest of Philip Augustus in asserting his presence there, and the burnings at Blois twenty years earlier by court intrigue apparently ignited by jealousy of the Count's Jewish mistress, Polcelina ...

... In short, despite the simple piety which we are encouraged to imagine at the heart of everyday life in the Europe of the cathedrals, and despite the invidious position which Jews unquestionably occupied in its political and financial structures, it seems necessary to conclude that heretics and Jews owed their persecution in the first place not to the hatred of the people, but to the decisions of princes and prelates.

P. 144. Accusations and persecution against minorities were merely methods of self-justification for the new regime after the Western Schism.

Accusations of heresy arose in the eleventh-century West in the context of political rivalry, and

they continued to serve similar purposes in various contexts and at various social levels; in the 1160s, for instance, Lambert le Begue complained that he had been accused of heresy by fellow priests who were afraid that their own slackness and greed would be shown up by his vigorous and successful parochial ministrations, and there is every reason to think that his complaint was justified. But increasingly from the beginning of the twelfth century onwards the suspicion and accusation of heresy among the population at large was used as a means of suppressing resistance to the exercise of power over it, and of legitimizing the new regime in church and state; heightened vigilance for moral and physical health served the same ends. Before the century's end the new regime was in place.

Pp. 150-153. The cause of Anti-Semitism was in the ruthless jealousy of the eleventh-century élite who had seized power.

As so often in these pages we have reached a point where speculation outruns present knowledge. A good deal could probably be added by patient collection from the Christian sources, and still more by their integration with the rich Hebrew sources of the twelfth century which remains manifestly imperfect in contemporary scholarship. Nevertheless, it is hard to evade the conclusion that the urgent and compelling reason for the persecution of Jews at this time – a persecution, as we have seen, which reversed the previous and well-established tendency to integration between the two cultures was that they offered a real alternative, and therefore a real challenge, to Christian *literati* as the advisers of princes and the agents and beneficiaries of bureaucratic power. The papal court itself was using Jewish advisers in the eleventh century, and the papal household continued to be managed by Jews throughout the twelfth.

In contemplating this possibility, which runs so strongly counter at least to gentile pre-suppositions about the nature of early mediæval society, it is necessary once again to remember how revolutionary were the times with which we are concerned. In the middle of the ninth century Bishop Amolo of Lyons said that Jews won more converts than Christians because the rabbis preached so much better than Catholic priests. Conversions to Judaism continued to occur well into the eleventh century; their cessation is another indication of the turn of the tide of intolerance rather than of any great improvement of the

Church's power to outface the intellectual attractions of Judaism. And up to the eleventh century and beyond the comment of J. M. Wallace-Hadrill on Amolo's words remains applicable: 'It is only when we grasp how frail was the hold of organized Christianity and how various its practices that the reaction to Judaism makes sense'. The religious reforms of the twelfth century, its intellectual renaissance, its elaboration of the procedures of law and government, represent in sum not only the establishment of a new regime, the transition from a segmentary to a state society of which we have made so much, but with it the imposition of a high culture, defining, uniting and perpetuating a dominant élite across the breadth of Latin Christendom. As always, the establishment of the high culture demanded the ruthless elimination of its actual and potential rivals. And of these the greatest was Judaism...

... They (the Jews) would have been fully capable of taking the place to which the clerks aspired as the brains and muscles of the bureaucratic regime. That was a truth too dangerous for propaganda. On the contrary, it must be concealed as completely as possible. Christians (*sic*) stole the property of Jews, and murdered their children, desecrated their holy places and demanded their conversion by force, and therefore invented a mythology which owed its plausibility to the nightmare that one day the Jews might do as they were used to being done by. Equally, and for the same reasons, since Jews were in fact better educated, more cultivated and more skilful than their Christian counterparts legend must reduce them below the level of common humanity, filthy in their persons and debased in their passions, menacing Christian society from below, requiring the help of the powers of darkness to work evil far beyond their own contemptible capacities. For all those who were to be persecuted, we have seen, it was necessary first to create an identity. In the case of the Jews it was even more necessary to destroy one. In that respect as in others the persecuting society began as it would continue.

Nothing would be achieved by replacing one simplistic explanation of the appearance of persecution in mediæval Europe – that it was an inevitable, or at least a natural, response to the growth of real and perceived dangers – by another – that it was a device to secure power in the hands of an emerging and corrupt clerical class. That would presume, with a complacency that the most superficial reflection could not defend, that evil

consequences arise only from evil actions, and evil actions only from evil intentions. It would also imply, equally indefensibly, that the depiction of the intellectual and institutional developments of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the preceding pages, and of the men who brought them about, is complete. On the contrary, the contribution of the ideas, actions and institutions mentioned here to the formation of what we have called the persecuting society was only one aspect, and one which was not always accepted without challenge or hesitation, of some of the profound and spectacular innovations which made this period a turning point in European history, the period when, for better and for worse, the continuous history of modern European society and achievement begins. It was perhaps the most general and the most indispensable characteristic of the innumerable changes which made up that transformation that they involved a very much deeper and more pervasive penetration of society by the culture and institutions of the literate minority. That fact is

implicit in all the labels for the period with which our textbooks abound. Whether we choose to emphasize its idealistic aspects by writing of 'the re-ordering of Christian life' or 'the renaissance of the twelfth century', or prefer to stress the assertion and definition of social hierarchy and the expansion of governmental power in 'the age of chivalry', 'the revival of monarchy', and 'the twelfth-century revolution in government' is largely a matter of taste, though like all expressions of taste it reveals our values. It is the argument of this book that however that tremendous extension of the power and influence of the literate is described, the development of persecution in all its forms was part of it, and therefore inseparable from the great and positive achievements with which it is associated. Whether they might have taken place without it is quite another question, and one which, perhaps thankfully, historians are not called upon to answer.

A MEDIAEVAL CATHOLIC 'BISHOP' IN ENGLAND: HENRY LE DESPENSER

Introduction

TO read mediaeval history can sometimes make you wonder why the revolt of the Reformation took so long. The corruption of mediaeval religion is striking. The aristocratic élite who not only exploited Western European peoples, fostering enmity between them which resulted in wars every century and then culminated in two 'World' Wars, also exploited Orthodox people. An example of this is to be found in the life of Henry le Despenser, a 14th century Bishop of Norwich, an aristocrat by birth, a churchman by career and a murderer by inclination.

Despenser's Early Years

The le Despenser family was descended from the lords of Gomiecourt in north-eastern France and Henry's grandmother was a grand-daughter of the 'Anglo-Norman' Edward I. Henry was born around 1342, the year that his father was killed at the siege of Vannes in Brittany. He and his three brothers all grew up to become soldiers, indeed, his eldest brother, Edward, was reputed to be one of the greatest knights of his age. In 1353 (as an eleven-year-old boy) Henry became the canon of

Llandaff and a year later a canon of Salisbury. By nineteen he had become the rector of Bosworth and by 1361 a master at Oxford, studying civil law. He was ordained, aged 20, in 1362 and by 1364 he had become Archdeacon of Llandaff. In 1369 Henry fought together with his eldest brother for Pope Urban V in his war against Milan. It is said that he also spent many years 'crusading', that is, slaughtering Orthodox and others, in Lithuania. Finally, in 1370, then aged 29, Despenser was appointed Bishop of Norwich by papal bull and consecrated in Rome.

The Suppression of the Peasants' Revolt

In 1380 the preacher John Ball had asked, 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who then was the gentleman?' The downtrodden and overtaxed peasants of England (the taxes were squandered in futile wars in France) dreamed of a fairer world, where they had thrown off serfdom. During the struggle for freedom in 1381 against over 300 years of ruthless aristocratic Norman oppression, people from Kent and Essex marched to London and occupied the Tower of London. The fourteen-year-old Plantagenet King Richard II, who had promised to agree to the demands of the peasants, met the

people outside the city, where the leader of the people, Wat Tyler, was killed. The quest for freedom ended and the King's promises were all broken. 200 people, including John Ball, were hanged.

However, the search for freedom had spread through the underground 'Great Company' to other parts of England, including to the Diocese of Norwich. The people there were led by a poor dyer from the cloth-making village of Felmingham in north Norfolk, Geoffrey Litster, later dubbed 'King of the Commons'. They moved across the north and east of the county, urging freedom. Over the next few days, joined by some gentry, they converged on Norwich and other local towns. Norwich, then one of the most important cities in the realm, was freed by Litster and his followers. Some of them went to Yarmouth and destroyed records of serfdom; other freedom fighters moving across north-east Norfolk and destroyed taxation documents. Under the firm leadership of Litster there were many incidents of the restitution of property against feudal injustices across the county and there was very little crime or looting.

Despenser heard news of the rising while absent at one of his manors. He hurried to Norfolk with a small company of armed men. His followers grew in number on the way and he soon had a considerable force under his command. There he found the people entrenched and defended by makeshift fortifications. At North Walsham, some 15 miles north of Norwich, the 'Bishop' himself led the assault and overpowered his enemies in hand-to-hand fighting. He slew or captured many, including the people's leader, who was hanged, drawn and quartered soon afterwards. The sadistic Despenser personally supervised Litster's murder. In the following months he proceeded to deal with other freedom fighters in his Diocese. The cruelty with which he put down the people made him highly unpopular in Norfolk and the following year a plot was organised to murder him. But the scheme was betrayed by one of the conspirators and the plotters were slain by the authorities.

The 'Norwich' Crusade of 1383

Soon after this Pope Urban proclaimed a 'crusade', choosing Bishop Despenser to lead a campaign against the followers of the antipope Clement VII in Flanders. The crusade was essentially to promote national economic and political interests. Pope Urban granted Despenser extra-



A 14th century carving of Despenser

ordinary powers for the fulfillment of his mission and a 'plenary indulgence' to those who took part in or gave support to the slaughter. The arrogant and petulant King Richard II ordered the crusade to be published throughout England. The bishop and his men 'took the cross' at St Paul's Cathedral and in February 1383 Parliament gave Despenser the subsidy which it had granted the King to wage war in Flanders.

The army landed at Calais in May 1383 and proceeded to attack various towns which soon fell to them and put to flight a Franco-Flemish army. Despenser was then persuaded by his followers to besiege Ypres, which was to prove the turning point of the 'crusade'. He was unwilling to attack the city, but some of his allies and officers insisted that Ypres be taken. The inhabitants of Ypres were well prepared for a siege by the time the English and their allies arrived in June. The siege was a

total failure and in August Despensers abruptly decided to abandon the siege, leaving his allies to continue on their own. After further defeats by the French, at the end of October the remaining crusaders returned across the English Channel.

His Career after 1383

Soon after returning from Flanders, the Bishop was impeached in Parliament. The Chancellor accused him of not mustering his troops at Calais as had been agreed, not recruiting enough armed men, refusing to make clear who his military leaders were, deceiving the King by not allowing a secular lord to command the expedition to Flanders and disbanding his forces prematurely. All Despensers' arguments against these charges were refuted. He was blamed for the failure of the expedition and ordered to repay any costs taken from money gained from the French.

Despensers' fall from grace did not last long. Following Scottish incursions into England, it was decided that the 18-year-old Richard II should lead an army into Scotland, marking the start of his military career. In 1385 every magnate of consequence, including Despensers, joined the immense army that advanced north with the King. The Army reached Edinburgh, which was sacked, but then retreated back to England. This was his last military campaign. Despensers continued to be controversial after his fighting career was over, mainly because of the sadistic methods he used to maintain control over the laity and monastics in his diocese and his Cathedral. He always defended the entrenched Establishment, which he represented, against the proto-Protestant Lollards as passionately as he defended his privileges.

The Desecration of the English Cathedral of North Elmham

There was a small English cathedral at the remote village of North Elmham, designed for the Bishops of East Anglia at the centre of extensive episcopal estates. The Normans, however, typically wished to concentrate their religious and temporal power in secular centres, and in 1075 a church council decreed that henceforth Bishops must henceforth establish themselves in substantial towns. The Cathedral at North Elmham therefore became an estate chapel although it was still used as a burial place for the surrounding country. Bishop Despensers took a liking to it, and decided to convert it into a hunting lodge, fortified, of

course, against the local peasantry. Ironically it was this sacrilegious use of it that preserved its foundations to the present day. Despensers had a moat dug around it, cutting through its eastern apse, and made the ancient walls into an undercroft to support his new building. The historian S. E. Rigold, M.A., F.S.A., writes '... the bones of the Faithful Departed were irreverently disturbed in making his ditches and garderobe pits. No appropriator at the Dissolution of the Monasteries behaved more sacrilegiously than he. Quantities of deer-horns and pottery, some bearing his arms, and including gargantuan jugs, testify to Elmham's short reign of riot, in which he restlessly altered the building several times. After his death ... no later bishop seems to have touched the place, as though it were accursed, and relics of a later age are negligible in quantity. But it is known that manorial courts continued to be held there.'

Fighting the Lollards and his End

Since 1381 there had been a growing fear of popular piety, called 'Lollardy', among the political elite. The Lollards had first appeared in the 1370s and had briefly found favour with the upper classes, but in 1382 power was given for the authorities to detain 'heretics' and examine them in a Church court. During the second half of his reign Richard II became steadily more determined to maintain the religious Establishment and acted increasingly harshly to suppress the Lollards. His cousin, successor and assassin, Henry IV, went even further, introducing the death penalty for heresy and possession of a Bible.

Despensers took active steps to maintain his power in his own Diocese, as was recorded: 'He swore, moreover, and did not repent of what he said, that if anyone belonging to that perverse sect should presume to preach in his diocese, they should be taken to the fire or beheaded. Consequently, having understood this, no one belonging to that tendency had any desire to embrace martyrdom, with the result that, up to now, the faith and true religion have remained unaffected within the bounds of his episcopal authority' (Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*).

In 1399 Despensers, continuing his political intrigues, was among those who stood by Richard II, following the landing of Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV) in Yorkshire towards the end of June. He was arrested for refusing to come to terms with Henry. The following year, he was implicated in the 'Epiphany Rising' or assassination plot

against Henry, but was later pardoned. He died in 1406 and was buried in Norwich Cathedral, detested by the common people for his cruelty, arrogance and pride. 150 years later Norfolk would become a centre for Protestantism and dissent. Despenser is undoubtedly one of the main figures responsible.

Conclusion

The future Henry IV had spent 1390 supporting the unsuccessful siege of the partly Orthodox city

of Vilno (then, as now, capital of Lithuania) with his 300 fellow knights. During this campaign he had bought captured Lithuanian princes and apparently brought them back to England. Henry's second expedition to Lithuania with a small army in 1392 brought financial benefits to these crusaders, but despite the efforts of Henry and his English companions, two years of attacks on Vilno proved fruitless. In this he had been preceded, if we are to believe some accounts, by Henry le Despenser, oppressor of Orthodox and English peasants alike.

FROM A LETTER TO AN INQUIRER

FOLLOWING our conversation, I am writing to say how important it is to understand that the Orthodox Church is very different from anything else. If you were to join the Church, you would be making a great step in your life. I would not want you to merely join the Orthodox Church – that is, without becoming, and so remaining, Orthodox. This can happen when Anglicans come to the Church, imagining that it is just another branch of Christianity with icons, an unusual rite and without priestesses. Sadly, I have seen this so often, indeed there are little, inward-looking, marginal groups like this, but they are not taken seriously inside the Local Orthodox Churches.

As you probably know, the Anglican Branch Theory has been rejected by the Orthodox Church. The Church believes that there is no Church or sacraments outside the Orthodox Church. There are only the vestiges and the sacramental forms of the Orthodox Church, which have lingered on over the 1,000 years since Western Europe broke away from the Church. Once you have joined the Orthodox Church, you cannot have communion outside the Orthodox Church and prayer with heterodox is not allowed. Of course, this does not exclude normal friendly contacts, but that is another story.

As for your membership of the Rotarians, I am very concerned by any association with them. They are a para-masonic organisation and masonry, at the top, is ultimately Satanism. I urge you to leave them.

I hope that you will extend your experience of Orthodox worship. Our parish is typical of tens of thousands of Orthodox churches worldwide. If it may seem 'different', this can only be because you

have not experienced Orthodoxy as it is lived in reality by the masses. If you have only been to X, you certainly do need to acquire experience of normal Orthodox worship, either with us or elsewhere.

Do you know how to make the Orthodox sign of the cross correctly and do you understand it? The Orthodox sign of the cross was kept by the West until the 14th – 15th century, until it was changed to the wrong way round, that is, left to right.

By the way we do not wear the cross on the outside of our clothing, but inside next to our hearts. We certainly do not wear wooden crosses, especially large ones. This seems to us like showing off, as if we have some psychological problem. In general, we are discreet. Faith is inside us.

Do beware of long hair and long beards among laymen. This is always a sign of spiritual delusion and I have seen several convert catastrophes among such people. Look around you in church. People are normally dressed, there are no excesses and laymen only rarely have beards at all. Generally speaking, if you see a layman with long hair and a long beard, you can be sure that he is a convert who still has not understood the inner nature of Faith and identifies only with the outward look of monastics, who are under obedience, which he is not. Such people may be pretentious and full of themselves. 'I know nothing, but I will tell everyone everything'. This is the exact opposite of the humility, which Our Lord is calling us to.

With my very best wishes for your possible future integration into the Orthodox Church and Faith.

OPINION PAGE

An Independent American View

Roger Busbice, a lifelong educator and historian, served as the Archivist and Historian of Louisiana's Old State Capitol from 1992 through 1995. He was one of the founders and directors of Louisiana's independent teachers' organization and he has been active in conservative and constitutional efforts for more than forty years. The author of numerous articles, he is currently an instructor of history for the LSU Lagniappe Program.

'Globalization' is the term now used to describe what some optimists call a 'coming together' or 'practical unification' of the world in regard to economic systems, transportation, communication, electronic technology, education, and, to an unprecedented degree, political 'co-operation'. It implies shared values in the area of economic growth, education, environmental concern, and human rights. Theoretically, globalization benefits wealthy countries because it creates new markets and supplies natural resources for them and benefits poor countries because it provides them increased employment and modernization. The reality is decidedly different.

Globalization has been made possible by a world-wide acceptance of 'unbridled free trade' as the planet's governing economic principle and, importantly, by the continuing urbanization of human society. Significantly, globalization has benefitted from the revolution in electronic technology and communications. The Internet, and associated resources, has enabled corporate businessmen, investment bankers, and upwardly-mobile politicians in London, New York or Sao Paulo to communicate instantly with their counterparts in Beijing, Tokyo or Nairobi. For the first time in human history, individuals, companies and governments can act and react to economic developments and crises as soon as they occur. Whether these crises are genuine or whether they are self-generating and self-serving is another question.

Globalization has resulted in the creation and expansion of massive corporations and the 'culture of prosperity and expectation'. It has supposedly helped establish an awareness of environmental problems and dangers (many of which are a direct result of globalization itself); and an awareness of basic human rights pertaining to employment, marriage, political participation and civic

By Roger Busbice



responsibility. It has brought millions of people in developing countries into an ever-expanding workforce that, while temporarily increasing prosperity in the Third World, has actually embraced crime, indifference, and authoritarianism. Again, reality interferes with suppositions: Globalization leads not to environmental concern or human rights but to spoilage and slavery.

Because the origin of globalization lies in large-scale and unlimited corporate-dominated 'free trade', international agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which unites the United States, Canada, and Mexico economically; the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) which may similarly unite the United States with impoverished Central American republics in basic economic matters; the European Union (EU) which has gone beyond economic cooperation into the realm of possible, and disastrous, political unification; and many other similar 'associations' throughout the world have become prominent. These power-groupings have, in fact, proved to be of greater benefit to their poorer members than to the wealthier nations, which have traditionally guided the association process. Worldwide, many once-poor countries, such as China and India, are becoming prosperous and powerful because of the economic security created by the development of technology-based businesses and government-protected corporations. The World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank provide uniform rules, regulations and requirements, which control international and inter-governmental loans and financial obligations. These economic organizations and institutions are determined to enhance, and exploit, the poorer nations at the expense of nations in the First World. They boast that a 'levelling' of the world economy will bring equality and mutual wealth, while ignoring the obvious results of mega-capitalism in countries where governments are routinely bought by corporations, and of state socialism where dictatorial government is, in fact, the corporation¹.

It is, indeed, painfully obvious that globalization inevitably leads to a soul-destructive urbanization, which weakens traditional rural societies, threatens environmental stability, and attacks the fundamental values of western civilization. Small towns and farms fall victim to the growth of corporations and the inevitable spread of

poisoned cities and bland materialistic suburbs. Giant super-stores replace 'Mom and Pop' groceries and 'development' destroys fields, forests, and historic landmarks. Tradition is swept aside in the name of progress. As a 'progressive' character in Saul Bellow's novel *Mr Sammler's Planet* indicates, 'Roots are a peasant concept. Roots are going to disappear'². In a way, globalization could be described as a war of the imagined future against the stability of the past, or more simply, a war of the mechanized and soulless city against the countryside.

The strongest opposition to globalization naturally comes from those who sense they have the most to lose: Farmers, blue-collar workers, small town merchants and social and religious traditionalists all know that their world of family, church, and community – and the 'sense of place' it has provided – is likely to be destroyed, or greatly weakened, in the name of growth and greed. In France, farmers destroy a fast-food restaurant because they believe it to be a symbol of the globalized economy which threatens them; in the United States, factory workers justifiably worry about their jobs and their families as industries abandon their own employees and shift operations to Mexico; in Russia, voters endorse authoritarian rulers, often former communists, who promise state-sponsored security rather than the competition of the genuine home-oriented free market; and in Greece radical anarchists seek the destruction of a society which they equate with corporate indifference³.

Perhaps the most prescient statements regarding the perils of globalization can be found in the writings of the early twentieth century Catholic Distributists who, in large part, based their beliefs on the actual, not the supposed, words of the great free enterprise economists such as Adam Smith and the dedicated Christian advocates of social justice such as Pope Leo XIII: Every living soul should seek to own real property – land, a house, or even, nowadays, a condominium – and should seek to be truly part of a positive community where trees, gardens, shared beliefs and shared traditions abound and learning is encouraged⁴. Fairness, hard work, faith and honesty, not the accumulation of excessive wealth, should ideally be the governing principles. Individual ownership of property, and its proper stewardship, would mean that prosperity could be 'distributed' within the community without creating anonymous or indifferent corporations. Service to God, not wealth, would and should be the ultimate goal⁵.

Citizens of the community should acknowledge the sacred stewardship of the land and, if possible, work on, or inside, their own property, citizens should buy needed goods and services from the small businessmen and businesswomen in their own community, and educators and members of the clergy should defend and promote the values and the traditions of both the Founding Fathers of the Republic and the early Church Fathers (but, of course, within the framework of the Constitution in this country). Economic transactions should be small enough to be comprehensible and should be an exercise in co-operation with citizens supporting each other through genuine person-to-person free enterprise⁶. In such a community, citizens in every walk of life should be acquainted with one another: whether teachers, policemen, doctors, or clergymen; whether craftsmen, labourers or farmers. For communion is the goal, not isolation. The 'culture of prosperity' would be replaced by a culture of quiet contentment. The Distributists believed that no human being should want, or seek, the paternal hand of government to provide for him or her, nor should any human being desire wealth beyond his or her actual needs or the appropriate comfort level of his or her family. Most importantly, such a society would be based on tradition and universal natural rights, not on co-ercion.

The Distributists and their allies included G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Peter Maurin, Englebert Dollfuss, as well as the Southern Agrarian writers such as Donald Davidson and Andrew Lytle and a host of others. They believed that 'small is beautiful' as a concept is not a fad or a cliché but a way of life; that true independence means true liberty; and that technology should not govern but should serve. Neither Right nor Left, it is a simple philosophy, simply capable of saving the world.

1. Wallach, Lori and Michelle Sforza. *The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization*, Seven Stories Press, 1999 (pp. 13–15)
2. Bellow, Saul. *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1970 (p. 224)
3. Georgakas, Dan. 'Hell No, We Won't Pay: Uprisings in Greece', *Fifth Estate*, Fall, 2011 (pp. 29–30, 32)
4. Belloc, Hilaire. *The Essential Belloc*, St Benedict Press, 2010 (pp. 145–147, 151, 153)
5. Belloc. *Ibid.* (pp. 156–160.)
6. FINCA fund-raising letter, Fall, 2011 promoting low-cost loans to poor, would-be entrepreneurs

A KING'S PLEDGE: A HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE



IN the name of the Holy Trinity, I promise three things to the Christian people, my subjects:

Firstly, that God's Church and all Christian people within my dominions shall experience true peace.

Secondly, that I forbid robbery and all crime to every class of people.

Thirdly, I promise and order laws based on justice and mercy, that the gracious and merciful God may forgive us all our sins.

The duty of a Christian king is to judge no one corruptly, to defend widows, orphans and strangers, and to abolish immoral marriages. He must drive out those who practice magic, and who murder their kin, or commit perjury. He must feed the needy, and have old and experienced men for his counsellors, appointing honest servants. He will be answerable on the Day of Judgement for the crimes of his servants done in his name.

(The Old English Coronation Order)

