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## **The Consecration of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol**

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THE CONSECRATION OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S  
ABBEY, BRISTOL

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THE transcription (with extensions) which follows is of a document contained in the Seyer Book of Deeds in the Bristol Museum. The parchment is approximately 8 by 4½ inches, but the upper half of the right-hand side has perished to a width of about three quarters of an inch. Fortunately, however, the only vital word lost can be restored: it is 'Johanne'. It is the name of John of Salisbury, whose biography is in the D.N.B. and whom Stubbs described in his *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History* as 'for thirty years . . . the central figure of English Learning'. A comparison of this document with one at Worcester, printed by R. L. Poole in the 14th Report (appendix, part VIII) of the Historical MSS. Commission, will reveal several common 'testes'. The Worcester document is dated 1173, and, says Poole, 'shows that John of Salisbury . . . held the office of treasurer of Exeter a year earlier than was previously known'. Seyer dated the Bristol document 'inter 1164 & 1175', but it must have been executed at almost, if not quite, the same time as the Worcester one. A 'terminus a quo' is provided by our knowledge that John was abroad from late 1163 or early 1164 until November 1170.

By the kindness of Mrs Rose-Troup I am able to point out that one of the 'testes' to these two documents, who is described by Poole as 'de Auc' and identified by him as probably a prebendary in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1145 and living in or after 1181 (see note *l.c.*) is almost certainly Robert de Anc, Aunk or Hanc, the most frequent form of the name. Great Aunk is in the parish of Clyst

Hydon and Little Aunk in Clyst St. Lawrence. Another 'testis', Peter de Mandeville, is thought by Mrs Rose-Troup to be a nephew of the great Earl of Essex. Peter frequently tests Exeter documents with Robert de Anc. Gilbert the chaplain is mentioned in a deed of St. Nicholas' Priory, dated 1162. A Gilbert the chaplain tested a grant by William fitz Gregory to Margam Abbey about 1170. Simon the archdeacon, Master Moyse, and Master Silvester appear together and in this order as 'testes' to an agreement between Richard, archdeacon of Wiltshire and the monks of St. Peter's, Gloucester, made in the presence of Roger, bishop of Worcester (*B.G.A.S.* xxxvii, 228). Silvester appears to have been cellarer of St. Peter's in the last quarter of the 12th century. Moyse also tests other Gloucester deeds and is probably to be identified with the rector of Yarkhill about 1210.

That Bartholomew was bishop of Exeter from 1162 to 1184 (*Stubbs, Reg. Sacr. Ang.*) opens a question of great interest to students of Bristol church history. Many years ago Mr I. H. Jeayes communicated to the *Transactions* (1888-9, xiv, 125) of our Society a portion of Abbot Newland's Roll, which states that the foundation of St. Augustine's began in 1140, that the building took six years, and 'so after in the yere of our lord M.C.XLVI Robertus Bishoppe of Worcet<sup>r</sup> Boniface Bisshoppe of Excet<sup>r</sup> Nicholas Bisshoppe of Landaf And Gregorie Bisshoppe of Seint Asse dedicate the church of the saide Monastery'. It is added that six canons were inducted by 'Alured Bisshoppe of Worcet<sup>r</sup>' on Easter day 1148. In the *Transactions* for 1890-1 (xv, 57) archdeacon Norris drew attention to the fact that the bishops were incorrectly named in Newland's Roll, creating a difficulty neither the archdeacon nor his friend precentor Venables could remove. 'Newland', he said, 'is doubtless right as to the Sees from which the five Consecrators came, but appears to have taken their names for that year from some

Bartholomaeus Dei gratia dilectus episcopus Exoniensis. Omnibus fidelibus ad quos praesens scriptura fuerit  
Hoc est uniuersitas uestra quod die qua uenabilis frater noster Rogerus Wigorniensis episcopus et nos ecclesiam  
Augustani de Bristoldo dedicaui. Ricardus comes nobilis uiri Willielmi comitis de  
mortuo pro et nobis sponte professus est quod nomine monachorum de sancto Iacobo de Bristoldo  
omnes ecclesias quas in Cornubria de feodo predicti comitis tenebat et nomine pensionis  
ecclesie unum aureum annuatim predictis monachis soluere tenebat. Ad hoc certi omnes  
causis presentis scriptura munimine et sigilla uestra impressione prestamus. Huius testibus  
de Sarum thesaurario Episcopi. Magistro Simon archidiacono Wigorniensis. Magistro morse. magistro  
de Anc. Giliberto capellano. magistro Siluestro. de mandauit. Galfridus Exoniensis.

erroneous lists. Smyth of Nibley . . . tells us . . . that the church was not consecrated until Easter Day, April 11th, 1148, when the Bishops of these four Sees (whom he does not name) were present'. 'There is some confusion about the date', says the v.c.H. (Glos. II, 75).

The small parchment now for the first time made public seems to offer a solution of the difficulty, but only on condition that we accept a date for the consecration considerably later than 1146. Bishop Roger's episcopate did not begin until 1164. This contemporary document—three hundred years older than Newland's Roll—says quite plainly that Bartholomew and Roger dedicated the church.

Now let us look at Newland's list beside the names and dates given by Stubbs :—

NEWLAND 1146	STUBBS 1164
ROBERT OF WORCESTER	ROGER
BONIFACE OF EXETER	BARTHOLOMEW
GREGORY OF ST. ASAPH	GODFREY
NICHOLAS OF LLANDAFF	NICHOLAS

The list upon which Newland depended afforded him the initials or perhaps the names of the consecrators, but he afterwards correctly retained the initials only. The coincidence of the identity of the initials in 1146 and 1164 is very striking.

Just how soon after the beginning of Roger's episcopate in 1164 the consecration took place cannot for the present be shown.

Across the existing abbey gate at Bristol is an inscription stating that the founders were Henry II and Robert Fitzharding. This inscription has either been regarded as a careless Renaissance restoration or as an attribution to the king of a pious deed he performed when prince (Nicholls & Taylor, *Bristol Past and Present*, II). Henry came to the throne in 1154 and the inscription can now be accepted as absolutely correct.

Two further small points may be mentioned. It was not until 1152 that Henry, Duke of Normandy, made over to Robert Fitzharding the estates of Roger de Berkeley, whereby Fitzharding was enabled to carry his work to completion. Lastly, the alleged duration of the first abbacy is suspiciously long; Richard ceased to be abbot in 1186, and, having been elected archbishop of Dol, died in Rome in 1188 (*Lives of the Berkeleys*, I, 55 n.).

#### THE CHARTER

Bartholomeus dei gratia dictus episcopus Exonie. Omnibus fidelibus ad quos presens scriptura peruenerit ? [Salutem ?] Nouerit uniuersitas uestra quod die qua uenerabilis frater noster Rogerus Wigornie episcopus et nos ecclesiam [sancti] Augustini de Bristoldo dedicauius picardus clericus nobilis uiri Willelmi comitis Gloecestrie<sup>1</sup> [me]morato episcopo et nobis sponte professus est quod nomine monachorum de sancto Jacobo de Bristoldo [illas ?] omnes ecclesias quas in Cornubia de feodo predicti Comitis tenebat. et nomine pensionis [de dictis ?] ecclesiis unum aureum annuatim predictis monachis soluere tenebatur. Quod ut certius omnibus [innotes]cat ? presentis scripti munimine et sigilli nostri impressione protestamur. Hiis testibus Magistro [Johanne] de Saresburie thesaurario Exonie. Magistro Simone archidiacono Wigornie. Magistro Moyse. Magistro Roberto de Anc. Gilleberto capellano. Magistro Siluestro. Magistro Petro de Mandauilla. Galfrido Exonie.

The seal of this document is missing.

<sup>1</sup> Succeeded his father Earl Robert in the autumn of 1147.