

Henry of Huntingdon, Theobald of Canterbury, and Rome

A historical review of the problem, and suggestions towards a future solution

THEOBALD of Bec was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury on 8 January 1139. Ecclesiastical tradition obliged him to go to Rome for the reception of the *pallium* – the symbol of his office – from the pope, Innocent II, which at this time included an invitation to attend the Second Lateral Council, or Tenth General Council, held from 4 to 17 April. The precise composition of the party that accompanied him, and in particular whether Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, the historian, was attached to it, has never been satisfactorily resolved. In this paper I shall summarise the historical progress of the attempts to solve what has become one of the last major issues associated with Theobald's tenure of Canterbury. In addition, in the absence of documentary evidence, I shall suggest a lateral mode by which the composition of the party that did go to Rome with Theobald may perhaps be approached.

According to Professor Saltman, the biographer of Theobald, Henry accompanied the party in lieu of Bishop Alexander 'the Magnificent' of Lincoln, who was subsequently called on by King Stephen to attend the Great Council at Oxford, about 24 June, during which he rebelled and after which he was arrested and imprisoned.¹ According to Richard of Hexham, a contemporary prior of the Augustinian establishment of St Andrew, the party left England 'post octavas Epiphaniæ', or 13 January, and comprised: 'Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, Ernulf, bishop of Rochester, Simon of Worcester, Roger of Coventry, and Robert of Exeter, and with them four abbots'.² But he also adds that Archbishop Thurstan of York sent Abbot Richard of Fountains to Rome 'both on account of the council and of some other private business'.³

The continuation of the chronicle of Florence of Worcester is the only other contemporary source for the composition of Theobald's party that has come down to us, and, while omitting the bishop of Rochester, provides us with the identity of one of the abbots: 'Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, Simon of Worcester, Roger of Coventry, Robert of Exeter, and Reynald, abbot of Evesham, having been unanimously elected, went, at the pope's command, to the shrine of St Peter'.⁴ Although a list of 400 bishops present at Lateran IV is extant, unfortunately no such papal document has survived for Lateran II, though at least 500 bishops attended from across Europe.

In his principal work, the *Historia Anglorum*, begun in about 1125 and continued through a number of recensions to about 1154, Henry of Huntingdon made no reference whatever to Lateran II, Theobald's departure, or his own alleged participation in the event. Indeed, his sole reference to Theobald concerns his consecration by the papal legate 'with the approval of King Stephen'.⁵ Henry of Huntingdon's presence at Rome has been derived from two statements, one made by himself and the other inserted into the chronicle of Robert of Torigny, first a monk at Bec Hellouin then, after 1154, abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel.

Henry visited Bec in January 1139 for the purpose of research, where he was allegedly shown a manuscript describing some of the early history of Britain and whose contents he adumbrated to a friend in a letter, subsequently (version four) introduced into the *Historia Anglorum* between books seven and eight. In the opening paragraphs of this letter Henry claims to have been shown the old manuscript 'when I

was on the way to Rome'; or, in Henry's original: 'Hoc tamen anno, cum Romam proficiscerer, apud Beccensem abbatiam scripta rerum predictarum stupens inueni'.⁶ A copy of this version of the *Historia Anglorum* became the model for a number of further recensions at Bec, into which Robert of Torigny inserted Henry's letter, adding some interpolations of his own: 'Hoc tamen anno [qui est ab incarnatione Domini MCxxx nonus] cum Romam proficiscerer [cum Theobaldo Cantuariensis archiepiscopo] apud Beccensem abbatiam [ubi idem archiepiscopus abbas fuerat] scripta rerum prædictatura stupens inueni'.⁷

It is difficult to see how the phrase 'cum Romam proficiscerer' can be translated as 'when I was on the way to Rome' [both Stephenson and Greenway] other than by *a posteriori* inflexion by those who have already accepted, uncritically, Henry's presence in Rome. The conjunctive preposition 'cum' may be employed only to conjoin subject and object, to give the sense 'together with', or better still in this context, 'in company with'. Henry's original does not make grammatical sense, and we may conjecture that Robert's interpolations were perpetrated in recognition of this as he attempted to clarify Henry's poor grammar in his copy. The combined text may therefore be translated with the sense that Henry of Huntingdon had been at Bec 'in company with those who were on their way to Rome'. In the absence of any other objections to Henry's presence in Rome, such a criticism may be thought intemperate; but, as shall become quite clear, the case for his presence there rests on nothing more than this phrase, in which case I suggest it must be examined afresh.

Before inserting the letter, Robert pre-empted his interpolations by stating: 'And this same Henry wrote the letter which I have mentioned ... being at the time at Bec, when he was on his way to Rome'.⁸ Apart from this, Robert mentions only that Archbishop Theobald was present in Rome. This is both a pity and curious, since Theobald had once been his abbot, but perhaps not unexpected for a chronicler on this remote, insular establishment.

Unfortunately, as with so much medieval history, reliance must be placed on negative evidence. Assuming for a moment that Henry of Huntingdon had been present at the council, how is his silence on this to be explained? One answer may follow a suggestion by Professor Partner, who believed that his marital status and inherited benefice made him a lifelong anti-reformist:

Henry's angry inability to accept that central issue of Gregorian reform, modified by a weary reluctance to state his objections openly, shaped his account of the introduction of reform to England with insinuation, slander, and prevaricating silence.⁹

Among the central issues to be debated at Lateran II were simony, inherited benefices, and married clerics, and the council would eventually declare invalid all current marriages contracted by those in major orders, as well as those by canons and lay-brothers; it should be noted that Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, was also a canon at Lincoln cathedral.¹⁰

If it is claimed that Henry's revulsion at certain aspects of the council prompted him to ignore it, surely by the same reasoning his interest in some other aspects would have encouraged comment. It is clear from his writing that he was genuine in his desire for ecclesiastical accord, and becoming increasingly exasperated with the reign of King Stephen. Would he have gone to Rome and ignored a council 'in large measure designed to celebrate the end of the papal schism of 1130' set to discuss 'the rival claims of King Stephen and Empress Matilda to the English throne',¹¹ simply on account of its – for him – unpalatable aspects? Why did he not simply concentrate on those issues he considered important while ignoring those he rejected as erroneous?

The suggestion is, then, that Henry of Huntingdon, as an opponent of some aspects of the council, exercised the most potent weapon at his disposal – the quill – by ignoring it, which to a historian would have represented the most extreme and subtle form of slighting. But in that case, why would he have attended at all? The notion that he had gone because commanded to do so will not do. According to the author of the *vita* of Christina of Markyate, her benefactor and close friend, Geoffrey of St Albans, was the first abbot to be chosen to accompany Theobald at a decision reached at the Council of Westminster, held from 13 to 24 December 1138, when Theobald's election was undertaken and confirmed.

Geoffrey raised no real objection to his election, says the St Alban's monk, but the noted anchoress was of a different view, and Geoffrey was content to abide by whatever decision she reached through prayers and visions, in this case consisting of an enclosure surrounded by high transparent fences in which Geoffrey was contained by the will of God. But whatever may have been the precise circumstances, Geoffrey was dispensed without obvious difficulty, 'and he who previously had been fated to set out on the journey now joined with the others who were to stay behind in discussing who should go'.¹² Richard of Hexham observed that at this time – well into the protracted dispute between King Stephen and the claim of his cousin Matilda to the throne of England – the king was reluctant to send more representatives of the church to Rome than those he listed 'on account of the troubles of his kingdom'.¹³ It is more likely, however, that the virtual civil war rendered royal and ecclesiastical commands not impossible to have rescinded; in any case, these decisions were reached by the members of the council through protracted discussion, and not by royal command. The monk of St Alban's makes this rather plain:

And since it seemed dangerous that in times when war was imminent all the prelates of England should leave the country ... certain ones, and they the more prudent, were chosen to undertake an embassy for themselves and the rest.¹⁴

Professor Saltman did not originate the notion that Henry of Huntingdon had attended Lateran II. Using the standard sources, Dr Mann had already suggested this, adding him to his figure of four bishops and four abbots.¹⁵ Somewhat later than Saltman, the editors of another standard work also claimed the party comprised four bishops, four abbots, and Henry of Huntingdon.¹⁶ Another stated that Theobald left with five other bishops and four abbots.¹⁷ In fact, if all the members of Theobald's party – supposed as well as actual; those already dismissed as well as those still to be discussed – are now listed in tabular form, apart from the archbishop himself, both the scale of the problem and the extent of the confusion become immediately apparent:

<u>Bishops</u>	<u>Abbots</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>See</u>
Simon of Worcester	Reginald of Evesham	—	Worcestershire	Worcester
Roger of Coventry	?	—	Warwickshire	Coventry
Robert of Exeter	?	—	Devon	Exeter
John I				
John II, from Sées	} ?	—	Kent	Rochester
John, bishop of Sées				
Nigel of Ely	Robert of Thorney	—	Cambridgeshire	Ely
Alexander of Lincoln	—	Henry of Huntingdon	Lincolnshire	Lincoln
—	Geoffrey of St Albans	—	Hertfordshire	Lincoln
Thurstan of York	Richard of Fountains	—	Yorkshire	York
—	Gilbert of Gloucester	—	Gloucestershire	Worcester

Dr Mann drew attention to what he called a ‘letter’ held in the British Library, registered by Jaffé,¹⁸ from Innocent II to Bishop Nigel of Ely dispensing him from attending the council. This is actually a copy of a bull inserted into the chronicles of Ely cathedral, extant in several manuscripts. We may examine the one Mann and Jaffé listed more closely. It bears the overall title *De Rebus Ecclesiae Eliensis* and is introduced by the slightly misleading marginal heading ‘Carta nig. Epc.’ After a lengthy preamble detailing Nigel’s activities, including his original petition to Rome, we do indeed read: ‘that you are much occupied with your affairs is accepted; therefore your and Abbot Robert of Thorney’s brotherhood, as regards the fast in order to be present at the council, is relaxed’.¹⁹

Professor Round, while dispelling the idea that either Nigel of Ely or his half-brother Alexander of Lincoln were at Rome, interprets another version of an Ely manuscript containing the same bull as indicating that Nigel sent envoys in his place.²⁰ Professor Blake, while accepting this, reckoned that these envoys – who cannot be identified – were, like Richard of Fountains, at Rome for additional business, and perhaps not even principally for the sake of the council.²¹ It should be noted that Round’s source was dated by him and Jaffé to after the council had concluded (17 April) and was therefore retrospective.

The case of Nigel of Ely raises an important point. It has never been sufficiently stressed that, in English pre-Reformation ecclesiastical tradition, a bishop is accompanied, where possible, by the primary independent Benedictine abbot in his diocese,²² and this in fact operated with Nigel and Robert of Thorney. Professor Knowles referred to Thorney as a ‘second rank’ monastery,²³ and while this may have been true nationally it was not the case in the see of Ely, with which it acquired close ties after the translation of Simeon of St Ouen from Winchester in 1081 as the first installed Norman abbot. Robert of Prunelai, previously a monk at Saint-Évroul and then prior of Noyon, became one of its more able and celebrated abbots, one who ‘enjoyed a reputation for his scholarship among learned philosophers in the schools of grammar and dialectic’.²⁴ In October 1109 the bishop of Ely became diocesan to Thorney when the bishopric was carved out of the vast see of Lincoln, and thirty years later the abbot was mitred and privileged to sit in the House of Lords.²⁵ Robert of Thorney would certainly have been the principal Benedictine abbot in Ely at the time of the council. When Nigel was dispensed, Robert’s dispensation followed automatically, as would be expected, since for what purpose would an abbot alone have been selected to attend without special cause? Bishop Alexander of Lincoln was similarly dispensed, and yet we are to believe that Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, was chosen to take his place.

There is even one more problem as far as Henry is concerned. Since the party did not return to England until the late summer, in order to attend the Council of Winchester in August, and assuming that he had been with it all the time, how has his seven month absence from his duties escaped the attention of both his ecclesiastical contemporaries and official records?²⁶ We know that he was at Bec, briefly, researching the *Historia Anglorum* at the behest of Bishop Alexander,²⁷ and for this reason may have been mistaken for a member of Theobald’s party, particularly once Alexander’s name had become known as one of the original selectees; perhaps he had even considered the possibility of joining the party, then changed his mind, and Robert of Torigny remained unaware that he did not go.²⁸

It was suggested by Saltman that Henry’s purpose in travelling to Rome was to obtain the papal privilege for Lincoln dated 28 April 1139.²⁹ But this is a slender basis for an assumption derived from an association of dates, and the privilege may just

have easily been pleaded on Lincoln's behalf by any member of the party, and probably more successfully by Archbishop Theobald himself. It is known that the party returned by the same route, staying at Bec for Whitsun (11 June), and was back in England by 29 August.³⁰ However, since Henry apparently witnessed the arrests of the bishops of Salisbury, Lincoln, and Ely at Oxford on 24 June, either he alone or the entire party must have returned to England by then. But there is no mention of Henry's presence at Bec on this assumed return journey.³¹

Henry's known presence at Bec is explained by his *Historia Anglorum* and need not involve Theobald at all. It is now considered likely that he did see an old manuscript (no longer extant), shown to him by Robert of Torigny, which he used for his work, and which he outlined in his epistle to his friend. Henry was as conscientious a historian as was the fashion in his day, and his having been at Bec at the same time as Theobald and his party in order to view a manuscript whose existence had been intimated to him is a simpler and more workable hypothesis than squeezing a Roman holiday out of some poor grammar and the mistaken conviction of an insular abbot.

The tenacity with which Henry's Roman journey is held has led to a curious historiographical paradox. Henry's often detailed and very lively accounts of so many historical incidents – for which he remains the only source – is always regarded as proof that he was present at the events described. Henry's own celebrated medieval truth-table – 'ipse ego oculis meis inspexi' – is taken as an honest attempt to convince readers that he had indeed witnessed certain events with his own eyes. It seems, therefore, that citing the *absence* of any reference to Lateran II as evidence that Henry had been there is a form of *credo quia absurdum est* that should not now unduly engage the attention of any investigator.

The resilience of the episcopal-abbatial tradition can be seen in the only certain example listed – that between Bishop Simon of Worcester and Abbot Reginald Foliot of Evesham. That these couplings did not necessarily consider the opinions of those selected is suggested by an interesting entry in the chronicles of Evesham, which states that at this time the abbot was not on good terms with his bishop. The dispute concerned the abbey's privileges and exemptions, obliging Reginald to petition Innocent II, and which prompted him to write a firm letter to his celebrated nephew, Gilbert Foliot, on the matter.³²

If Alexander of Lincoln had been selected and subsequently dispensed, which abbot might have therefore been selected and dispensed with him? If the tradition was maintained, either Ivo of Bardney or, more likely, Godfrey of Croyland become the principal candidates. Abbot Ivo was appointed by Henry I in 1134, while Abbot Godfrey was elected in December 1138 – in other words at the time of the council – then blessed by the papal legate, Alberic of Ostia. He had been prior of St Alban's, whose customs he transposed to Croyland,³³ and Geoffrey of St Alban's would certainly have known him. If we can believe the chronicler of St Alban's, as a selector he may well have been influenced by this personal knowledge. The natural choice of abbot to accompany Robert of Exeter, then, would have been Robert of Plympton, abbot of SS Mary and Rumon at Tavistock, who had been elected about 1131.

The case of Rochester was, and remains, far more problematical. A supposed protracted episcopal vacancy, evident in the interpolated 'Earnolfus' in the Hexham chronicle (Ernulf, bishop of Rochester 1115-24), led to difficulties identifying the bishop. Professor Poole took up the suggestion of John le Neve (1679-1741)³⁴ that John, a monk from the abbey of Sées in Normandy, had been elevated to Rochester between the known vacancy after the death of Bishop John on about 20 June 1137 to

the election of Bishop Ascelin, formerly prior of Dover, in 1142.³⁵ In reply, the Reverend Hunt proposed that the vacancy remained, but that Bishop John of Sées (1124-44) became episcopal administrator until 1142,³⁶ a view for many years considered demolished by Saltman in his biography of Theobald, who believed that a monk from Sées had indeed been appointed bishop by Innocent II before January 1139. As part of his evidence, Hunt cited the fact that Henry of Huntingdon, who ‘went to Rome in 1139’, did not mention a John II of Sées in his revised manuscript of the bishops of Rochester in his *De contemptu mundi*, which forms the eighth and last part of the *Historia Anglorum*. Saltman’s response was to point out that a historian who went to Lateran II without mentioning the fact could be forgiven for omitting the name of a bishop. Meanwhile, the eighteen-month vacancy, while considerably reduced from the five years previously supposed, was long enough for the contemporary Hexham chronicler to leave a space for the name, one subsequently incorrectly filled in.

However, more recently it has been demonstrated – and surely now conclusively – by Colin Flight that John, bishop of Sées, was in fact appointed episcopal administrator by King Stephen. The manuscript of the annals of St Augustine’s Abbey in Canterbury, in a sole surviving copy produced at Rochester, lists ‘Iohannes episcopus’ and ‘Iohannes episcopus Sagiensis’ as two consecutive and separate benefactors of Rochester.³⁷ Furthermore, the Rochester list of bishops, claiming the succession of John II to the position formerly occupied by John I (as used by Saltman), would appear to be both corrupt and dating to at least fifty years after the supposed succession.³⁸

Flight suggests that John, bishop of Sées, who was close to King Stephen and had been in England with him for two months in 1136, took over the administration left vacant by the death of his namesake when appointed to it by the king. Ordinarily, such an appointment was the prerogative of the archbishop (this, after all, would be one of the points of contention between Beckett and Henry II), but there was also a vacancy at Canterbury after the death of Archbishop William in November 1136, so Stephen exercised his supposed right and elected his friend from Sées. Theobald, however, did not appoint a new bishop on his accession to Canterbury, and Flight suggests that a further (and unexplained) vacancy followed for two or three years, when Rochester monks ‘felt obliged to postulate the existence of an imaginary bishop’ to endow some charters with legal foundation.³⁹

Flight’s closely-reasoned argument did not concern the composition of Theobald’s party, but how does it affect it? Clearly, the cause of Hexham’s confusion has now been determined, but equally clearly – if not now more so – the bishop of Rochester would not have been listed by him under those circumstances if he had not been selected, and his selection was not as curious as first it appears. Most politically active people in England were partisan in the struggle between the opposing factions of Stephen and Matilda, a partisanship that extended to chroniclers and ecclesiastics. What comes across in what is known of the selection is that the bishops and abbots either supported the king or were exceptions to the rule. The politically mercurial prince-bishops Alexander and Nigel were soon deselected, and of course rebelled, while of those who went none has not come down to us as especially involved in the dispute apart from Bishop John of Sées, who was a friend to the king, thus making the perfect candidate to represent the royal authority at a church council whose objectives were not solely ecclesiastical.

In 1139 the see of Rochester had no independent Benedictine abbeys from which to choose an abbot. In such a case, then, it would seem only logical to couple him with

Richard of Fountains, who might have been dispensed when Thurstan of York declared he wished to vacate his see, but who went to Rome with the new obligation to discuss his bishop's proposition,⁴⁰ at the same time conveniently able to accompany the bishop of Sées temporarily administrating Rochester.

Strictly speaking, the abbey of St Alban's was under Lincoln, whose jurisdiction stretched from the Humber to the Thames. If Christina's *vita* is seen as the medieval equivalent of a 'just-so' story, then Abbot Geoffrey's exemption may be supposed, at first, to have been connected with Bishop Alexander's dispensation, with no need to involve Henry of Huntingdon, or of course abbots Ivo and Godfrey. However, the vast tract of land under Lincoln included several important religious houses, and it is difficult to imagine Geoffrey having been selected before the unworldly Walter of Ramsey, who must rank as Lincoln's primary abbot.

Geoffrey's selection and subsequent deselection may have had another cause, based on his abbey's proximity to London. St Paul's cathedral, the seat of the bishop of London, was in considerable turmoil at this time. Following the death of Gilbert 'the Universal' in August 1134, there was a double election under the auspices of King Stephen, with Abbot Anselm of Bury narrowly defeating William the Dean in March 1136. Both parties petitioned the pope for a ruling. Anselm travelled to Rome first, but his journey was hampered by the papal schism that did not end until the resignation of Victor IV at the end of May 1138. William's party, arriving after this date, was more successful and succeeded in having Anselm's election quashed on the grounds that the dean's primacy had been usurped. However, William died before being able to take up his position, while Anselm slipped quietly back to his abbatial duties in Bury.⁴¹ The king's brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, was appointed administrator until Matilda selected Henry I's former chancellor, Robert 'de Sigillo', to fill the vacancy in July 1141.⁴²

There could not have been an abbot selected from London to accompany the bishop of London. Abbot Henry of St Peter's, Westminster, was a special case, Westminster Abbey being independent of any orthodox ecclesiastical structure in England, and by tradition ex-diocesan of the bishop of London. I suggest that the bishop of London had been selected to attend Lateran II and Geoffrey of St Alban's selected to accompany him. It was this turbulent vacancy, whose termination was erroneously anticipated by the electing body in December 1138, that enabled Geoffrey of St Alban's to be relieved of his responsibility with such ease, with perhaps a little guidance from a celebrated anchoress.

Professor Poole re-examined the manuscript letter by Theobald in the collection of John of Salisbury, which had previously been thought to prove Bishop Nigel's presence at the council,⁴³ concluding that the text referred to one of the abbots subsequently elevated to the episcopacy. This has since been disputed in the most recent edition of the letters, suggesting that the recipient was probably Robert Warelwast of Exeter, the only prelate from the original party who survived into the period of the letter.⁴⁴ The importance of this letter hinges on the passage 'because in the Lateran council at which we and you, brother bishop, were together', going on to mention 'the king's pressure' to which the bishop was then subject, and concluding 'but it is possible that you have deserved to be troubled with such questions of succession, since you are too much inclined to make illicit grants and substitutions in contravention of the canons'.⁴⁵

I accept Poole's suggestion that we are looking for an abbot subsequently raised to the episcopacy – there is no need to infer from Theobald's letter that he had always been a bishop – who had either become involved with Henry of Anjou before his

reconciliation with Stephen in November 1153, or was involved in a bitter episcopal succession while out of favour with either Stephen or Henry II. After 1148, the Cistercian pope, Eugenius III, openly opposed Stephen, and in 1152 he forbade Theobald to crown Eustace, his son and heir, by which time Theobald himself was leaning towards the Angevin house. The tone of the letter suggests royal pressure against a bishop due to the opposition Stephen was latterly experiencing from the church in England.

At this juncture the composition of Theobald's party as assessed so far may be put once again into tabular form:

Bishops

Abbots

Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury

Simon of Worcester
 Roger of Coventry
 Robert Warelwast of Exeter
 John, bishop of Sées

Reginald Foliot of Evesham
 ?
 Robert of Tavistock
 Richard of Fountains

Theobald was, of course, technically no more than a bishop, and this has led to some of the conflicting numbers given by scholars over the years, depending on whether they have regarded Theobald as such or not. My view is that the archbishop of Canterbury, as *primus inter pares*, would not have required his own abbatial representative. Richard of Hexham's loose implication that the abbot of Fountains was sent in addition to four other abbots also need not be taken seriously. A reading of the manuscript would suggest that this information came as an afterthought, and a not atypical lack of historical discipline ensured the rather clumsy addition.

None of these abbots qualifies as Theobald's recipient, however, and if church tradition was maintained then a Coventry abbot must be looked for. The medieval diocese of Coventry and Lichfield dates to 1100, and after its translation from Lichfield to Coventry comprised the five archdeaconries of Chester, Coventry, Derby, Salop, and Staffordshire. The three great independent 'Benedictine' houses in 1139 were: SS Mary & Modwin (Burton-on-Trent) under Abbot Geoffrey from 1114 to 1151; St Werburgh (Chester) under Abbot William from 1121-1140, an abbey colonized by monks from Bec Hellouin in 1092; and SS Peter & Paul (Shrewsbury) under Abbot Herbert from 1128 to 1140, an abbey colonized by monks from Sées in 1083.⁴⁶ It is possible that direct evidence in the form of indisputable documentary sources will now be forthcoming on this issue; but it is also possible that it remains to be found.

¹ Avrom Saltman *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, University of London (1956) p.14.

² J. Stephenson, *Contemporary Chronicles of the Middle Ages* (Llanerch Press Facsimile Reprint, 1988) pp.75-76; R. Howlett, *De Gestis Regis Stephani* in *Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, Rolls Series 82 vol.iii pp.176-77: 'Teobaldus quoque Cantuariensis archiepiscopus, et [Earnulfus] Rofensis, et Simon Wigornensis, Rogerus Coventrensis, Robertus Execestrensis, isti v. episcopi, et cum illis iiii. abbates, pro omnibus episcopis et abbatibus Angliæ ad idem concilium iverunt'.

³ Stephenson, *Chronicles*, p.76; Howlett, Rolls Series 82, vol.3 p.177.

⁴ J. Stephenson, *Florence of Worcester*, (Llanerch Press Facsimile Reprint, 1989) p.198; B. Thorpe, *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, Sumptibus Societatis (1849), Tom.ii p.114: 'Communi consilio electi, Theobaldus, Doroburnensis archiepiscopus, Simon Wigornensis, Rogerius Coventrensis, Rotbertus Exoniensis, Reinaldus abbas Eoveshamnensis, a papa jussi, tendunt ad limina Petri'.

⁵ Diana E. Greenway, *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon: Historia Anglorum*, (Oxford Medieval Texts, 1996), p.719. [Henceforth cited as Greenway *HA*].

⁶ Greenway *HA* pp.558-59.

⁷ Howlett, *Rolls Series* 82, vol.iv p.65, who discusses the implications of these interpolations; also in Greenway *HA* p.558, who does not.

⁸ J. Stephenson, *The Chronicles of Robert de Monte* (Seelys, London 1856; Llanerch Press Facsimile Reprint [repaginated], 1991), p.16 [hereafter cited as Stephenson, *Chronicles*].

⁹ Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainment: the Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*, University of Chicago Press (1977) p.41. This much was true, and it is amusing to observe the easy *schadenfreude* with which Henry of Huntingdon noted the scandal concerning Cardinal-Bishop John of Cremona, who after visiting England in 1125 espousing Gregorian reforms was himself surprised *in flagrante delicto* with a prostitute, though he had that very day consecrated the host. Henry believed enforced celibacy to be an error in that it would inevitably lead to a strictness of moral probity that few could endure, thus leading them to even greater sins. Henry's marital status is fully discussed by Partner and Greenway.

¹⁰ Raymonde Foreville, *Histoire des Conciles Œcuméniques*, Editions de l'Orante, (Paris, 1965), Tom.6 pp.90-92. For the canons of Lateran II in general, see *Conciliarum Œcumenicorum Decreta*, Centro di Documentazione Istituto per la Scienze Religiose (Herder, Bologna, 1862), pp.171-79.

¹¹ D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke, *Councils and Synods* (Oxford, 1981), vol.ii p.779. The probable confusion here with the earlier Council of Pisa (see p.8 n.1) is unimportant, since at Lateran II Innocent II did hear an appeal that Matilda had made against Stephen, charging him with perjury and illegally usurping the crown, which appeal he rejected, confirming Stephen as king of England and duke of Normandy.

¹² Charles H. Talbot, *Life of Christina of Markyate* (Oxford, 1959), pp.162-67. For a slight emendation of this passage, correcting the punctuation and making clearer the part played by 'Venerabilis Thomas' in the event, see M. Winterbottom, *Christina of Markyate in Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels, 1978), tom.105 p.286. It is interesting to note that this was not the first time Geoffrey had been dispensed from an obligation to travel abroad allegedly on account of Christina's influence, and nor would it be the last. The first was in 1136, and then again in September 1139, Talbot *op.cit.* pp.161-63.

¹³ Stephenson, *Chronicles*, p.76; Howlett, *Rolls Series* 82, vol.iii pp.176-77.

¹⁴ Talbot, *Christina of Markyate*, p.163.

¹⁵ Reverend Dr Horace K. Mann, *Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* (Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1925), vol.ix pp.61-62.

¹⁶ Whitelock, Brett, Brooke, *op.cit.* p.779.

¹⁷ Charles-Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles* (10th edition, Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1912), Tom.v, part i, livre xxxiii, p.738.

¹⁸ Pierre Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* [8028] p.889: 'Nuntias a tua': 'Nigello, episcopo Eliensi, significat, sese eum, multis negotiis occupatum, et Robertus, abbatem Thorneyensem, pro quo supplicaverit, "a concilii præsentatione" dispensare'.

¹⁹ British Library Cotton MS Titus A.I f.35 *et seq.*, 106-11: 'Innocentis episcopus servus servorum Dei venerabili fratri Nigello Eliensi episcopo salutem et apostolicam benedictionem ... Quoniam te occupatum multis negotiis esse acceptimus, ideo fraternitatem tuam et Robertum Abbatem de Tornea pro quo supplicasti a præsentationi concilii relaxamus'.

²⁰ John H. Round, 'Nigel, Bishop of Ely' *EHR* xxxi (July 1893): 'Nuntios a serenitate tua ad sedem apostolicam destinatus, industrios siquidem viros, benigna suscepimus, et super devotionem et amorem quam erga sanctam Romanam geris ecclesiam gratulamur' (British Library Cotton MS Tiberius A.VI).

²¹ E. O. Blake, *Liber Eliensis* (Camden Historical Society lxlii, 1962), Appendix E, and cc.65-67.

²² In 1140 there were twenty-five Cistercian abbots in England, eight Augustinian, and one Tironese, excluding alien cells and dependencies of Cluny. The Cistercian houses were run either directly under Cîteaux, or as daughters of dependencies. The tradition had little to do with the Rule of St Benedict, of course, but everything with the fact that the selected abbots represented ancient Saxon houses.

²³ Dom David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Oxford, 2nd edition, 1963), p.125.

²⁴ Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Marjorie Chibnall, Oxford, 1978), liber xi, vol.vi, pp.150-51.

²⁵ Reverend L. C. Young, *A Short History of Thorney Abbey* (Abbey Publications, 1970), p.9.

²⁶ The *Fasti Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ* (Diana Greenway, Institute of Historical Research, 1977), vol.iii *Lincoln*, p.27, where there is no mention of either his absence or any *locum tenens*. While this in itself is not conclusive, it forms part of the cumulative negative evidence suggesting that Henry was in Lincoln and not Rome..

²⁷ Arnold, *Rolls Series* 74, p.3. See also Lewis Thorpe's edition of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (Penguin, 1966), pp.16-17, the edition by Acton Griscom & R. E. Jones

(Longmans, Green & Co., 1929), part I, and the introduction to the variant manuscripts, edited by Jacob Hammer (Medieval Academy of America, 1951).

²⁸ It must be borne in mind that Robert's interpolations and commentary *followed* his having read Henry's epistle; they therefore do not constitute independent evidence, and I suggest they in fact represent nothing more than the repetition of an error, compounded by Robert's own misconception. That even these were rash may be seen from his obvious error when he came to date the incident.

²⁹ Saltman, *Theobald*, p.14; Greenway, *HA*, p.lv.

³⁰ Saltman, *Theobald*, p.15 n.2; Greenway, *HA*, p.lv.

³¹ Greenway, *HA*, p.lv.

³² W. Dunn Macray, *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham* (Rolls Series. 29), pp.99 & 112 n.1.

³³ William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (James Bohm, 1846), vol.ii p.101.

³⁴ *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (Diana Greenway, Institute of Historical Research, 1971), p.76.

³⁵ Reginald L. Poole, 'The English Bishops at the Lateran Council of 1139' *EHR* xxxviii (Jan. 1923).

³⁶ Reverend William Hunt *ante clii* (Oct. 1923).

³⁷ Colin Flight 'John II, bishop of Rochester, did not exist', *EHR* cvi (Oct. 1991), p.926.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.929.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.931.

⁴⁰ Howlett, Rolls Series 82, vol.iii p.177; Stephenson, *Chronicles*, p.76.

⁴¹ Radulph de Diceto, *Opera Historica – Chronicorum* (William Stubbs, Rolls Series 68, 1876), vol. i pp.248-52. See also John H. Round *Geoffrey de Mandeville* (London, 1892), pp.67-68.

⁴² *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (Diana Greenway, Institute of Historical Research, 1968), vol.i *St Paul's, London*, p.2.

⁴³ Poole, *EHR* xxxviii. In this letter, Theobald writes reproving the recipient for having violated one of the canons passed at the council: 'Non est relictus nobis dissimulandi locus, quia in concilio Lateranensi, cui nos et vos, frater episcopo, interfuimus, dominus Innocentio praesidente audivimus, vota talia, promulgato canone condemnari'. See John Allen Giles (who was responsible for the misascription) in John of Salisbury *Opera Omnia* (London, 1840), vol.i. (epistola lvi) p.59; also in Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, tom.199, col.36.

⁴⁴ Robert of Exeter died on 28 March 1155. The letter dates to the period 1153-61.

⁴⁵ W. J. Millor, S. J. & H. E. Butler, revised by C. N. L. Brooke, *The Letters of John of Salisbury* (T. Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1955), vol.i pp.9-10. The editors here confuse Gilbert Foliot with his uncle Reginald of Evesham. In addition, they believe that the letter could still have been written to Nigel of Ely, since 'it is far from impossible that Theobald made a mistake, and wrote to him thus believing that he had been at the council', *ibid.*, n.1. It is one matter to argue, as I have done, that Robert of Torigny may have believed that Henry of Huntingdon had gone to Rome because the two men never again met, but quite another to suggest that Theobald could have written 'cui nos et vos, frater episcopo, interfuimus' to a man with whom he had not travelled for seven months.

The editors also erroneously cite one of Gilbert's letters as evidence that he was at Lateran II with Theobald (lxxix in J. A. Giles, John of Salisbury *Opera Omnia*; J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, tom.190 cc.796-801). This surely is a misreading of Gilbert's clear reference to 1136 when, as a monk at Cluny, he was called to the papal court of Innocent II at Pisa to plead the cause of Matilda against Stephen: 'Non diu est quod audistis dominum papam Innocentium convocasse Ecclesiam et Roma conventum celebrem habuisse. Magnoilli conventui cum domino et patre nostro domino abbate Cluniacensi, interfui et ego Cluniacensium minimus. Ibi causa haec in medium deducta est, et ailquandiu ventilata. Stabat ab imperatrice dominus Andegavensis episcopus, qui cum causam ejus diligenti percurrisset oratione, contra ipsum quasi sub voce praeconia in communi audientia declamatum est'. The error is all the more obvious since Gilbert was not elected abbot of St Peter's, Gloucester, until 11 June 1139.

⁴⁶ Dom David Knowles & R. N. Hadcock, *The Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales* (Longman, 1971), pp.62 & 76.

Copyright: Roman Golicz ©1997 ©2007