



Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

July 2023

"The will to do, the soul to dare"

Dear Faithful,

This month's bulletin is a little bit of an 'Orkney special' after my recent visit. The make-up of the Scottish people is generally assumed to be Gaels and Northumbrians. The influence of the Picts is poorly understood due to lack of study but the lasting mark made by the Vikings is very much in evidence on the Islands. Old Norse, (or Norn, as it was known), was beginning to be displaced before the annexation by the Scots in 1468, going through a period of bilingualism for around 300 years with the last speakers dying at the start of the 19th century. Quite a few words remain (including the ubiquitous 'peedie' [little]) with the only Gaelic word I heard there being 'partens' (crabs).

Since Orkney was a royalist stronghold, the rebellion against the tyranny of Cromwell began there but it was not successful. After the rout of the ragtag army assembled in 1652, Cromwell came to Kirkwall which was placed under military occupation. New taxes were introduced to pay for their keep. A Military Governor was appointed who sat on the bench with the Sheriff dispensing 'justice' to the people who came before them. Fortified batteries were erected by the 'Englishe' soldiers to defend Kirkwall's harbour. The kirkyard wall around the St. Magnus' Cathedral was pulled down and the wooden pews taken apart for construction materials.

Damage was further done inside the cathedral where the occupation troops' horses were stabled. Marble slabs covering the tomb of Bishop Tulloch which for years had been where Orcadians would pay their debts was taken apart. When he left, Cromwell ordered the Cathedral to be destroyed but his lieutenant, left behind to carry out the order, decided against it, which is why St. Magnus is the best example of a mediaeval Cathedral in Scotland. The 'Englishe' soldiers were not happy there as the

following account shows:

"Butt heere's enough of this, you may conclude
With mee, the people here are something rude,
Ill bred (except in breeding lice), ill made
And not too cleanly: butt it might be said...
Had wee nott conquer'd Orkney, Cromwell's
story
Had cleart noe more of honour in't, and glory
Then Caesar's; butt with this conquest fell
Under his sword, The fortune of Hell".

The 'Englishe' seem to have changed their mind in the meantime. Southern, Northern and other accents fill the streets of many of the islands while Orcadian, the lilted (slightly Welsh to my ears) accent is rarely heard. Probably, just as in the time of the Vikings, the population is slowly being displaced.

Despite its remote location, there is a traditional chapel on the island of Stronsay and the Mass of St. Magnus and St. Rognvald is still said daily.

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)



Upturned boat, converted into a simple dwelling next to the chapel on Stronsay



St. Ronald, THE CRUSADER



Having just returned from a brief visit to our Northern faithful in Inverness and Aberdeen, I was determined to write something about my week's stay on Orkney, replacing Fr. Nicholas Mary, who normally does this missionary work. The most obvious subject for an article would be the story of St. Magnus, the Patron of the handsome Cathedral in Kirkwall, but that has already been done back in April of 2019. Visiting the Cathedral, I was caught up in a tour of the building given by a secular guide. We were gathered at one of the two great pillars behind the sanctuary, where in 1919, workmen, checking the masonry during restoration work, discovered a small wooden box containing the bones of someone who had had his head cloven by an axe. The guide thought this was intriguing but was somewhat reluctant to draw the obvious conclusion.

The shrine of St. Magnus had been a centre of pilgrimage in the magnificent structure, started in 1137 by Magnus' nephew Rognvald. In around 1150 the relics of the new saint

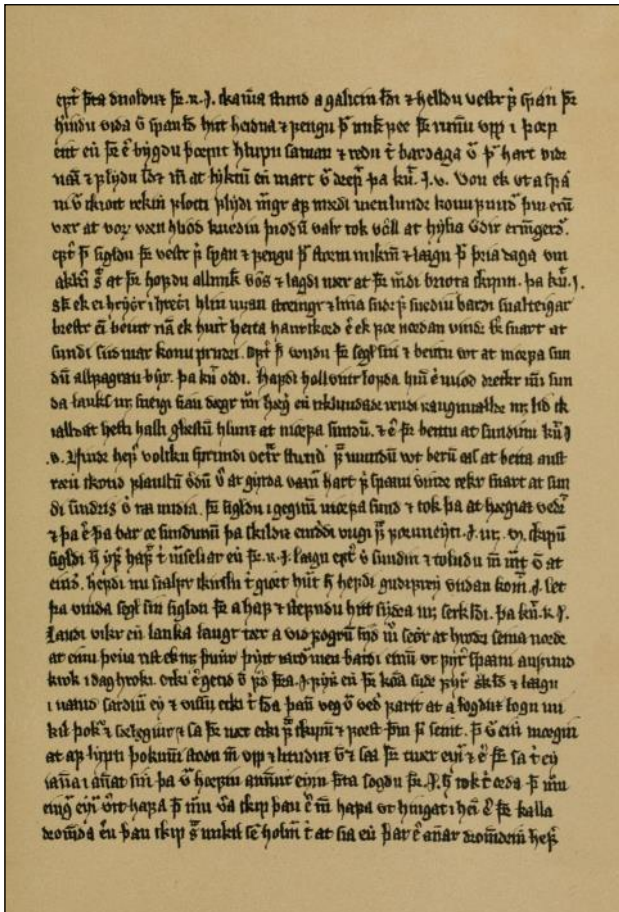
were brought here and entombed in a magnificent shrine which would have stood on this very spot. We don't know for certain what it looked like, but it would probably have been richly decorated with precious metals, gems, and beautiful craftsmanship, as befitting the tomb of a noble and a saint. In about 1230, the building was extended eastwards, and the shrine of Magnus was relocated to the far east end of the church. After the religious revolution of 1560, the shrine was dismantled. The bones of the saint disappeared, presumed destroyed. However, during the restoration works, it became clear that the bones of St. Magnus, far from being cast into the sea, which had been the fate of St. Andrew and practically every other saint with a shrine in Scotland, they had been hidden in this pillar, meaning people could still come in pilgrimage to the saint, though his shrine had been destroyed. The bones were placed back in the pillar in 1925 – the place now marked by a simple cross, the box that held them is kept in the museum across the road.

Though, through constraints of space, this detail was not included in the previous article, I was aware of the history. What I did not know was that in the similar pillar on the other side of the sanctuary, were the relics of that same Rognvaldr, the founder of the Cathedral, which had already been discovered in the 18th century.

Rognvaldr jarl Kali Kolsson was born on his father's extensive estates in East Agðar, Norway, around 1100 – the exact year is not known. His mother inherited estates in Orkney and her brother, Magnus, ruled half the Orkney earldom before his martyrdom, it is through her that Rognvaldr inherited the earldom. Considering the fate of his uncle, Kali, had to be extremely prudent in how he obtained his rightful inheritance. First, he assumed the name Rognvaldr, the name of a previous successful earl, which was sufficiently close to the Gaelic name Ragnall (anglicised as Ronald – for consistency I shall use the Norse name in this article). After an abortive attempt to gain his inheritance by force, (he had been designated co-ruler with Páll Hákonarson by King Sigurðr in 1129), he tried more (for Vikings) unconventional means. His father gave him the advice to “build a stone minster at Kirkwall more magnificent than any in Orkney, then you'll have (it) dedicated to your uncle the holy Earl Magnus and provide it with all the funds it will need to flourish. In addition, his holy relics and the episcopal seat must be moved there”. Orkney had had a

church (originally dedicated to St. Olaf) in Kirkwall, the Cathedral, however, had been in Birsa since 1102 (as a suffragan see of Trondhjem).

He finally assumed the earldom in 1135 and two years later began work on the building of the new cathedral and dedicated it to his uncle's memory.



Manuscript of the Orkneyinga saga in the original Old Icelandic

Of course, insofar as we have any historical records of the time at all, these are secular and the main source, the Orkneyinga saga, is poetry, though probably based on what was remembered from the time by an Icelander some 100 years later. Much like our secular guide in the Cathedral last month, the sources emphasize what seems to them to be important, particularly cultural references. Hence, although we know Rognvaldr's poetic and artistic accomplishments, little, if anything, is said about the sanctity of his life. This does not mean that there was no sanctity, only that those who wrote about him had no interest in it. Certainly, he was a very popular ruler and if he is principally known for building St. Magnus' Cathedral, the only other significant thing we know about his religious life is a pilgrimage made to the Holy Land in 1151. In the saga, this is presented more or less as an adventure story and, like most sagas, concentrates on the journey

itself, rather than on the visits to the holy places. Battles and feasting make up most of the five chapters in the Orkneyinga.

But each people is converted to Christ according to its culture. Writing and art contributions from the Celtic converts have enriched Christianity for centuries. The Vikings, with their history of adventuring embraced the concept of pilgrimage wholeheartedly. Rognvaldr is known as 'the Crusader' (his pilgrimage took place at the time of the Crusades), whereas the King, Sigurðr, is known as Jórsalafarer (Jerusalem journeyer). There is no denying the continuation of a cultural tradition which allowed even first generation converts like Thorvald (who had similarly gone to Jerusalem) to embrace wholeheartedly the new religion. Elements of pagan religious belief, as well as a tradition of travel and adventure and a spirit of competition amongst warriors, – whether warriors of Odin or of Christ, – allowed the Scandinavians to adopt Christian pilgrimage practices with an enthusiasm unparalleled in Western Europe. Their nearest competitors, the Normans, were themselves Vikings who had settled in northern France in the early 10th century. Considering the depth of the response which the call to the Holy Land found in the hearts of northern converts, it no longer need surprise us that cultural continuity played its part in the rapid evolution of 'Viking' pilgrimage. The battle-cry in Oláfs saga gives ample evidence of this transformation: "Forward! forward! champions of Christ, of the Cross, and of the king!"

Of his death we know that he was killed in Caithness after his return from the pilgrimage. The saga records (similarly 100 years later) "on the boulder where Earl Rognvaldr's blood had poured when he was killed, we can still see it, as lovely as if it had been newly spilt". He was canonised in 1192 by Pope Celestine III when his relics were moved to the Cathedral.



Mass Schedule

	Carl Luke	Glasgow	Edinburgh
Saturday 1 st July — Precious Blood (<i>1st Saturday</i>)		11am	11am
Sunday 2 nd July — 5 th Sunday after Whitsun		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 3 rd July	11am		
Tuesday 4 th July	7.15am		
Wednesday 5 th July	7.15am		
Thursday 6 th July	11am		
Friday 7 th July (<i>First Friday</i>)		6.30pm	6.30pm
Saturday 8 th July		11am	11am
Sunday 9 th July — 6 th Sunday after Whitsun		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 10 th July	11am		
Tuesday 11 th July	7.15am		6.30pm
Wednesday 12 th July	7.15am		
Thursday 13 th July	11am		
Friday 14 th July	7.15am		
Saturday 15 th July		11am	11am
Sunday 16 th July — 7 th Sunday after Whitsun		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 17 th July	11am		
Tuesday 18 th July	7.15am		
Wednesday 19 th July	7.15am		
Thursday 20 th July	11am		
Friday 21 st July	7.15am		
Saturday 22 nd July		11am	11am
Sunday 23 rd July — 8 th Sunday after Whitsun		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 24 th July	11am		
Tuesday 25 th July	7.15am		
Wednesday 26 th July	7.15am		
Thursday 27 th July	11am		
Friday 28 th July	7.15am		
Saturday 29 th July		11am	11am
Sunday 30 th July — 9 th Sunday after Whitsun		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 31 st July	11am		

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If you require any further information concerning one of these places, or need to talk to a priest e.g. in case of emergency for the Sacraments, please ring the phone number mentioned in contact details.