

1. Sources of evidence

- (a) Written history
- (b) Surviving church fabric
- (c) Surviving monuments

2. Written History. Contemporary or near-contemporary records

- (a) Bede's Ecclesiastical History. The comprehensive edition with valuable notes and an exhaustive index is that brought out by Charles Plummer in two volumes in 1896 under the title Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica. It is still available in reprints (two volumes in one). I give references to this in the form H.E., ii, 6 to denote Bede, Hist. Ecclesiae Book ii, chapter 6. For an English translation a convenient source at present is No.479 in Everyman's Library (The Venerable Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation). Since this and all other standard editions are set out in the accepted division into books and chapters, it is possible to use Plummer's index in conjunction with the "Everyman" English translation. More accurate English translation (but only of parts of H.E.) is given in D. Whitelock English Historical Documents (London, 1955).
- (b) The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The Chronicle occasionally mentions items of church history such as the death of a saint, a bishop, or an archbishop; or the building or destruction of a church. The best edition of the Chronicle is that brought out recently by Professor Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1961). I give references in the form A.S.C. 653 to denote an entry under the year named.
- (c) Lives of saints. In particular, for Repton important evidence about the existence of an abbey in the later years of the seventh century and the nature of the abbey is given in Felix's Life of St Guthlac ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956). This is one of our earliest contemporary records, having been written by a monk Felix at the request of King Aelfwald of the East Angles (c. 713-749).

3. Surviving Churches

The most comprehensive list yet published is given in H. M. Taylor and Joan Taylor Anglo-Saxon Architecture (Cambridge, 1965). Churches are there listed in alphabetical order in the body of the book. In addition there are maps at the front and back; and Appendix D lists the churches by counties. Even this comprehensive list is proving incomplete, for there have already been found a further nine to be added to it.

The north-west Midlands are not rich in surviving Anglo-Saxon churches, but an article on recent discoveries at Caverswall, Ilam, Stafford, and Tamworth is to appear in the 1966 volume of North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies.

4. Surviving monuments

The outstanding Mercian sculptured crosses of the Anglo-Saxon era are the twin crosses at Sandbach and the great round cross at Wolverhampton. Perhaps the most remarkable collection of sculpture from this era is in the church of Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire. For references to these sculptures, see :

- A. W. Clapham English Romanesque Architecture before the Conquest (Oxford, 1930), or
- T. D. Kendrick Anglo-Saxon Art (London, 1938)
- Later Saxon and Viking Art (London, 1949)

Although Staffordshire is not rich in surviving Anglo-Saxon churches, it is rich in Anglo-Saxon crosses, and these are not only of the usual rectangular-shafted form but also of a cylindrical shafted form that is special to the Peak District and the west of England.

- (a) Round-shafted crosses. These are to be found at Alstonfield, Chebsey, Heaton, Ilam, Leek, Swythamley, and Wolverhampton.
- (b) Rectangular-shafted crosses. These are to be found at Alstonfield, Checkley, Eccleshall (fragments), Ilam, Leek, Rolleston, and Stoke-on-Trent.

5. Notes on the Conversion of Mercia

Bede records (H.E. iii, 21) that Christianity was brought to the Middle Angles by Peada, son of Penda (King of Mercia c. 626-654). Peada married Alchflæda, daughter of Oswy (Christian King of Deira 641-670 and king of all Northumbria 654-670), and he was baptised by bishop Finan of Lindisfarne at a place called Ad Murum (probably Heddon-on-the-Wall). He brought back with him to Mercia four priests Cedd, Adda, Betti, and Diuna. The first three were Angles and Diuna was a Scot. (The conversion of the Middle Angles under Peada is independently recorded by A.S.C. under 653).

After Penda's defeat by Oswy in 654, Oswy ruled over Mercia for three years, and Diuna was made first Bishop of the Mercians and Middle Angles. (H.E. iii, 21) Bede does not give the date of Diuna's consecration. The succession of bishops is given by Bede, (H.E., iii, 21 and iii, 24), but usually not their dates, which have to be deduced from other evidence. Peada was king of the Southern Mercians, under Oswy (H.E., iii, 24); he was treacherously killed at Easter three years after Penda's death (i.e. in 657) (H.E., iii, 24); and he was succeeded by his brother Wulfhere under whom Oswy's overlordship was thrown off so that Mercia became independent (H.E., iii, 24).

Except for the dates and the note on Jaruman the following details about the first six bishops are given in H.E., iii, 24 :

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|-------------------------|--|
| Diuna (c. 656- c.658)   | Died and was buried among the Middle Angles  |
| Ceollach (658-9)        | Quitted the episcopal see and returned to Scotland to which nation both he and Diuna belonged.   |
| Trumhere (c.659- c.662) | An Englishman, but taught and ordained by the Scots Abbot of Gilling.  |
| Jaruman (662-667)       | Bede tells in H.E., iii, 30 how Jaruman was sent by Wulfhere to reconvert the East Saxons when they had lost their faith after a pestilence. |
| Chad (669-672)          | See details in Section 6.  |

## 6. Notes on St Chad

Although Chad (Ceadda) held the bishopric for less than three full years (669-672) he undoubtedly had great influence over the whole of the vast area of his diocese. Its great size may be emphasized by noting that out of it the following dioceses were later carved: Hereford (c.676) and Worcester (c.680) in the south and west; Lindsey (678) and Leicester (679) in the east; and Chester (1541).

- (a) Chad was one of four brothers (Chad, Cedd, Celin, Cynebil) all of whom were priests. He and Cedd became bishops (iii, 23)
- (b) He was a disciple of Aidan (Bishop of Lindisfarne) (iii, 28)
- (c) He studied in Ireland in his youth (iv, 3)
- (d) He was consecrated bishop of York by order of king Oswy (iii, 28). This was in 664 (v, 24)
- (e) He was sent to be consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury but when he arrived in Kent the see was vacant by the death of Deusdedit. He went to Wessex and was consecrated there by Wini and two British bishops (iii, 28).
- (f) Archbishop Theodore (who arrived in England in 669) rebuked Chad for the irregularity of his consecration, but accepted the humility of Chad's reply and himself completed the consecration in the proper manner (iv, 2).
- (g) From (d) and (f) it follows that Chad held the Bishopric of York for five years although in v, 19 Bede says three. (See also Plummer's note on p.324 of his second volume on this contradiction.) At this stage Chad went into retirement at the monastery founded by his brother Cedd at Lastingham (iv, 3 and v, 19).
- (h) When Wulfhere asked Theodore to provide a bishop in succession to Jaruman Theodore asked Oswy to allow Chad (then in retirement at Lastingham) to be appointed. He was made Bishop of the Mercians and of the people of Lindsey (iv, 3). (Everyman's edition, p. 166, wrongly translates "Lindisfarorum" and says that he was made Bishop of the Mercians and Lindisfarne.)
- (i) It was Chad's custom to go about his work on foot; Theodore commanded him to ride; and when Chad was still unwilling he lifted him on to a horse (iv, 3).
- (j) Wulfhere granted Chad land of fifty families to found a monastery at a place called Ad Barvae (probably Barrow-on-Humber). (iv, 3).
- (k) He fixed his see at Lichfield where he died and was buried by St Mary's church. His bones were later translated into St Peter's church where miracles were performed at his tomb (iv, 3).
- (l) His tomb was a wooden monument like a little house, covered, with a hole in the end, through which people put in their hands and took out some of the dust inside. They put this in water to make a drink that healed sick people or animals (iv, 3).

## 7. Note on Repton

- (a) Felix's Life of Guthlac (ed. B. Colgrave, pp. 83, 85) records that after the 24th year of his age Guthlac received the tonsure in the monastery at Repton under an abbess named Aelfthryth. A.S.C. records Guthlac's death in 714, and Colgrave gives evidence pp. 2 and 4 that it was before 699 that he was at Repton. It is therefore clear that there was a house of monks and nuns there at the close of the 7th century.

/(b) A.S.C. records

- (b) A.S.C. records the death of Aethelbald king of Mercia in 757 and his burial at Repton. He was murdered at Seckington near Tamworth.
- (c) A.S.C. records that the (Viking) army wintered at Repton in 874 and went away in 875.

8. Note on Breedon

Both Bede (H.E., v, 23) and A.S.C. record that in 731 Archbishop Brihtwald died and was succeeded by Tatwine, of the province of the Mercians, having been a priest in the monastery called Briudun.

9. Note on Tamworth

- A.S.C. 913. In this year Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians went with all the Mercians to Tamworth and built the burgh there in the early summer.
- A.S.C. 918. In this year ... she peacefully obtained control of the burgh at Leicester ... and also the people of York promised that they would be under her subjection, but very soon after this she died 12 days before midsummer in Tamworth.
- A.S.C. 926. In this year King Athelstan and Sihtric King of the Northumbrians met at Tamworth on 30 January and Athelstan gave him his sister in marriage.
- A.S.C. 943. In this year Olaf took Tamworth by storm.