

ART. VII – *The pre-Conquest Church in St Bees, Cumbria: a possible minster?*  
BY JOHN M. TODD

*Bega primum humile monasteriolum construxit in Cauplandia . . . ubi nunc  
sunt aliquot monachi Mariani urbis Ebor. & vulgo vocatur Sainct Beges.*

(First, Bega built a humble little monastery in Copeland . . . where now are  
some monks of Mary of the city of York, and it is commonly called St Bees.)

SO records William Dugdale in the first edition of the *Monasticon* (1655).<sup>1</sup> The story of Bega's monastery was probably current among the Benedictine monks at St Bees before their house was dissolved in 1539. The foundation date, 650, came later, possibly from Thomas Tanner (1695).<sup>2</sup> It would be a natural deduction from the medieval *Life and Miracles of St Bega*. The anonymous author identified Bega with the Begu, a nun of Hackness, who reported the death of Hilda of Whitby in 680.<sup>3</sup> Since Bede says that Begu had then been a nun for about 30 years, she must have taken the veil about 650.<sup>4</sup> The monastery founded in 650 thus passed into historical orthodoxy. The county historians and the later editors of the *Monasticon* happily accepted it.<sup>5</sup> And St Bees appears, under that date and without a reference, in Richard Morris's list of seventh-century churches.<sup>6</sup> The last and local twist in the tale was when the monastery became a nunnery. The earliest reference to that is in Edmund Sandford's manuscript collection of ill-remembered stories (c.1675); it got into print in Jefferson's *History and Antiquities* (1840), and so it remained in nineteenth-century directories and twentieth-century guidebooks, not excepting Pevsner's.<sup>7</sup>

The only known medieval source for these stories was the *Life and Miracles*. But neither the monks, nor Dugdale, nor Tanner, nor Sandford had read it very carefully, if at all. First, the anonymous author says – twice – that at St. Bees, Bega dwelt alone: *sedebat ergo solitaria, solitariam vitam ducens*.<sup>8</sup> In the thirteenth century, when he was writing, not only was there no tradition at St Bees that Bega founded a monastery, still less a nunnery, but there was a positive report that she did not. Secondly, the author's attempt to identify Bega with the Begu whom Bede mentions, was plainly a shot in the dark, based on the similarity of names. Any confidence that the author of the *Life* might have had independent evidence of Bega's identity evaporates when we find him appropriating not only stories that Bede told about his Begu, but also about a nun called Heiu, whom Bede knew to be a different person.<sup>9</sup> If Bega was not Begu, her story is cut loose from any evidence that Bega flourished in or about the year 650.

As we shall see shortly, there is other evidence that a church at St Bees existed before the Norman Conquest. It may or may not have had roots in the seventh century. It may or may not have been a community of secular priests, possibly monks, or very doubtfully nuns, but who founded it, and when, may be beyond our knowing. The purpose of this enquiry is to gather together the evidence for its character and date, with particular reference to the possibility that it may have been that hybrid form of community with a collective life but pastoral responsibilities, which some scholars term a minster. St Bees seems particularly well-suited for this study because of the unusual size of the parish, the annual payments received from

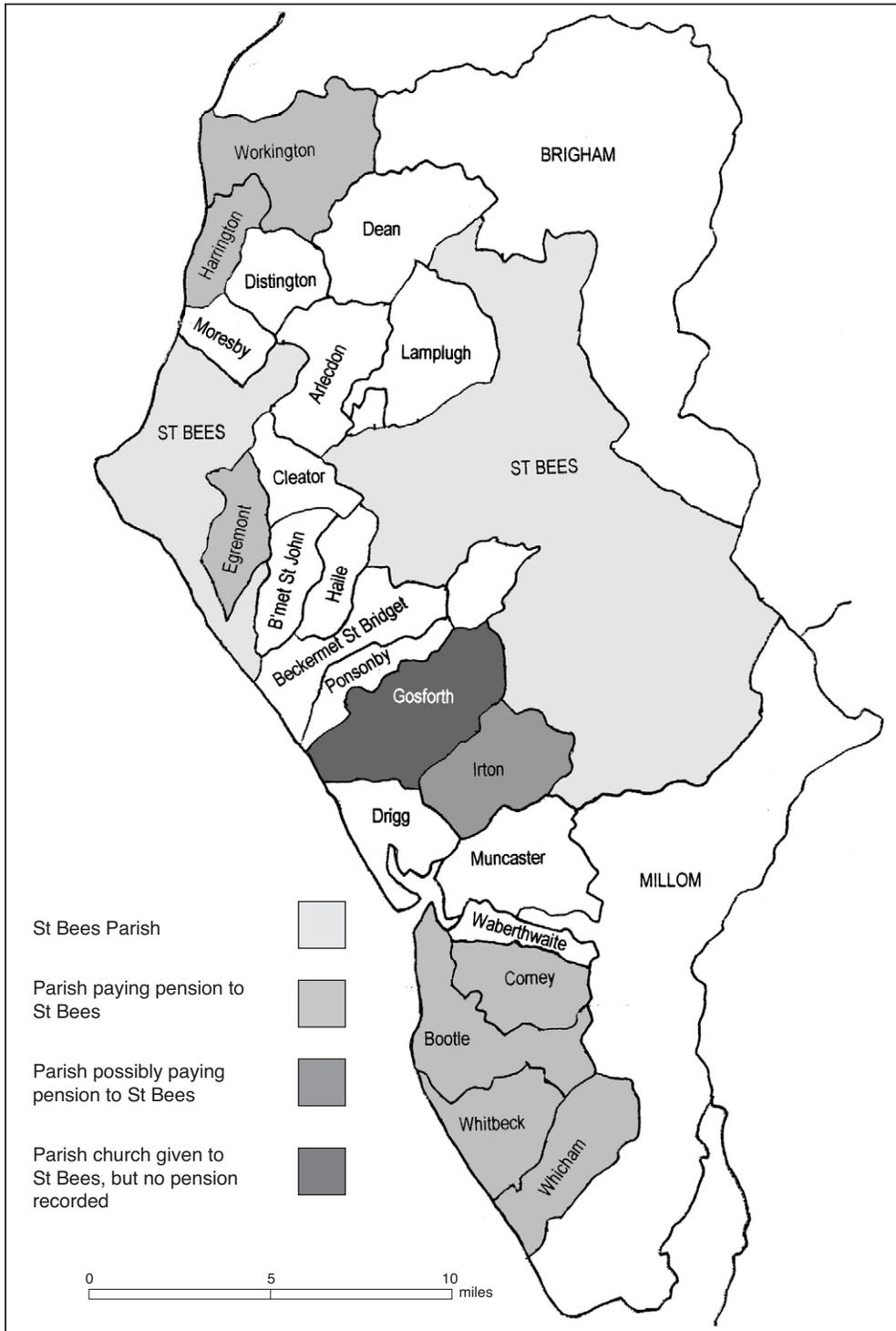


FIG. 1. Parishes in the Deanery of Copeland.

other parishes, the wealth of documentary evidence (all of which dates from the twelfth century onwards), and a certain amount of early sculpture found at the church.

### **Ecclesiastical organisation before the parochial system**

For seven hundred years, from the twelfth century to the nineteenth, the countryside and towns of Britain were parcelled into parishes whose boundaries hardly changed. As a general rule, each parish was a fixed territory from which tithes were paid to the parish church. It is not easy to make the imaginative transition to the more fluid situation of the early Middle Ages. Then, the term *parochia*, that we now translate “parish”, could refer to the sphere of influence either of a bishop, of a religious community, or of a church with a single priest. The community might be a community of monks living under a strict rule or a group of priests living in one place with some kind of common household.<sup>10</sup> Much of our information comes from Anglo-Saxon England, where the spread of the church in the recently-pagan kingdoms was from the top downwards. Here, it is not surprising that the church developed from central points like royal estates under the direction of kings and bishops. A few local churches are also known from the seventh century, and became increasingly prevalent from the ninth century onwards, as landed estates grew smaller.<sup>11</sup> By the eleventh century the spheres of influence of the larger institutions were contracting rapidly. The parochial system did not become fixed, however, until the mid-twelfth century. Much of the income of the church became channelled through tithes under the sanction of legislation. Tithes were a charge on the land, not on individuals. The boundaries that divided the parish of one church from another became crucial. If a boundary was moved, or a new parish created, one church would gain financially at the expense of another; and those who received tithes were most reluctant to see this happen.

In recent years, much scholarly effort has been expended in rediscovering the spheres of influence of the early religious institutions – or “minsters” as some, in search for a neutral word that is broader in connotation than “monastery”, have called them. The questions under debate have been the extent to which early minsters had pastoral responsibilities at all, and whether there was a “minster system”, a planned endowment of pastorally-orientated institutions throughout the land.<sup>12</sup>

Because of the scarcity of pre-Conquest evidence, the North-West of England has been somewhat neglected, although I have previously suggested some of the criteria that could be used to identify early churches in this area.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the size of the extra-large parishes of, for example, St Bees, Brigham, and Kendal, might imply that they are fossilised minster *parochiae*, whose constituent chapels failed to evolve into parish churches before the tithe system clamped down, so denying their independence until the nineteenth century.

### **St Bees church before the Normans**

William le Meschin founded the Benedictine priory between 1120 and 1135.<sup>14</sup> That

there was some church at St Bees before that is hardly in doubt. Part of a Hiberno-Norse cross stands in the churchyard on the north side of the church. Parts of four others have been found, of which only one now is visible. All date from the tenth or eleventh centuries.<sup>15</sup> It is unlikely that such crosses were placed in ground that had no church. Crosses of this era are seldom found apart from churches, and the fact that there are more than one of them makes it very unlikely that they were “preaching crosses” for missionaries before the church was built, whether or not single crosses were ever so used.<sup>16</sup>

The place-name of St Bees speaks even more strongly of an early church. Its earliest recorded form, in the Priory’s foundation charter, is simply *Cherchebi*.<sup>17</sup> In the later enrolment of King Richard I’s confirmation charter to St Mary’s Abbey York, granted before 1199, it appears as *Kirkebibeccoch*.<sup>18</sup> The meanings are “settlement by a church” and “settlement by Beghoc’s church”.<sup>19</sup> Such Scandinavian names containing *kirkja-byr*, Kirkby, are generally taken to mean that the Viking settlers found a church already at the place in question when they arrived.<sup>20</sup> Although the date and extent of their settlement is not free from doubt, it seems likely that seafarers were coming into the St Bees area in the first half of the tenth century.<sup>21</sup> St Bees church may therefore have been founded in or before the ninth century.

Given that the Benedictines were not building on a green-field site, what sort of a church did they come upon, and what rights and property went with it? Here we enter the realms of speculation, and it must be emphasised that there are no certain answers to these questions.

### **“Kirkby” as an indicator of status**

“Kirkby”, as we have seen, probably indicates a place with a church at the time of Scandinavian settlement. Some places with this element were, in the later middle ages, places of some importance. In south Cumbria, Kirkby Kendal was a borough, and Kirkby Lonsdale and Kirkby Stephen were market towns with urban characteristics. Winchester suggests that it may have been the importance of the churches in the last two places that attracted the markets.<sup>22</sup> Kirkby (the former name for Cartmel, or for a place near Ulverston),<sup>23</sup> Kirkby Ireleth and Kirkby Thore, Kirkby John in Newton Arlosh, and Kirkby Crossan probably in Stainburn near Workington, on the other hand, were less important – indeed, it is uncertain whether the last-mentioned place ever had a church.<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to argue from the names alone that “Kirkbys” were necessarily important centres, ecclesiastically or otherwise, before the Scandinavian invasions.

### **Centre of St Bega’s cult**

The Norman monks embraced the cult of St Bega that was expressed in the dedication of the church, and promoted St Bees as a centre of pilgrimage in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>25</sup> If the longer form of the name, *Kirkebibeccoch*, could be shown to be the name of the settlement on the arrival of the Scandinavians, then there would be reason to suppose that St Bees was then already a centre of the saint’s cult. As we have already seen, however, the saint’s name only appears in the

place-name towards the end of the twelfth century: the first name we encounter is *Cherchebi*. This must weaken the supposition that the cult is pre-Viking.

There is other evidence. A ring (supposedly Bega's), on which oaths were sworn in the twelfth century, was the chief relic preserved in the priory church.<sup>26</sup> As Alfred Smyth pointed out, and William Bell noted long before him, this bears the mark of a Scandinavian pagan practice: Vikings swore oaths on rings.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the thirteenth century *Life and Miracles of St. Bega* says that Bega's suitor – from whom she fled across the Irish Sea to reach St Bees – was the son and heir of the king of Norway.<sup>28</sup> However improbable this assertion may be as historical fact, it tends slightly to reinforce the notion that the Bega legend, as received by the monks of the Priory, was formed in the period of Scandinavian settlement, and not before. We cannot safely look beyond this veil to the possible shape of the cult at St Bees in Anglo-Saxon times.

### **A community of priests**

Most of the witnesses to the first charter of William le Meschin are followers of his.<sup>29</sup> At the end of the list come three names that are quite different: *Coremac Gille becoc*. *Gille* and *becoc* must go together, meaning “devotee of Bega”. Wilson believed that only one individual was represented by all three names – Coremac was the devotee of Bega.<sup>30</sup> But single names formed with *Gille-* or its cognate *Gos-* are quite common in Cumbria: Gillecrist son of Richard Brown,<sup>31</sup> Gilemor son of Gilander,<sup>32</sup> Gillemichel and Gilleandreas (both priests),<sup>33</sup> and numerous attestations by Gospatric son of Orm.<sup>34</sup> No original of the first charter survives, but in the cartulary copy the names Coremac and Gillebecoc are separated by a wide space with a point in it, similar to the spaces separating other individuals in the list.<sup>35</sup> The cartulary scribe thought they were two persons.

It goes a long way beyond the evidence to suppose that the two men who tag on at the end of the list were the two priests who already served the laity in the church of St Bega, and who were handing over to the monks from York. It goes even farther to suggest that they were the survivors of the community of priests who had served that church for at least two centuries. John Blair does, however, say that “the local roots of ancient minsters still proved oddly resilient”, and cites instances of pairs of priests holding former minsters at Thatcham in Berkshire and Bisley in Gloucestershire at the time of Domesday Book and later.<sup>36</sup>

### **A parish of unusual form**

St Bees parish (until 1854) was unusually large and strangely divided (see Fig. 1). The seaward part stretched southwards from the boundary of Moresby parish, including the ground where the seventeenth-century town of Whitehaven grew up, as far as Beckermet St John in the south. The inland part, detached from the rest, included the townships of Loweswater, Ennerdale, Wasdale and Wasdale Head, and Eskdale. Between the two parts lay other parishes: Arlecdon, Lamplugh, Cleator, Egremont, Beckermet St John and St Bridget, Haile, Ponsonby and Gosforth.

How did this situation arise? William le Meschin gave to St Bees church, among

other things, “its parish (*parochiam*) as it was proved by the testimony of respectable men, that is from Whitehaven as far as Keekle [Beck], and thence to its junction with the [River] Ehen, and by the Ehen to the sea”.<sup>37</sup> Although this is expressed as a gift, it can hardly be anything but a confirmation of what the church of St Bees already had. If the church already had a *parochia*, it must have existed before William came on the scene.

Most of the inland part of the parish is fell land, with small communities in the valleys. Most of this part was coterminous with the forest of Copeland as it was c.1200, the hunting ground of the lords of Egremont.<sup>38</sup> A later declaration by the Archbishop of York records that St Bees priory had been granted all the tithes throughout Copeland from the lord of Copeland’s demesne.<sup>39</sup> Part of this area, in Loweswater, had however already sufficient settlers to need a chapel. This had been separately granted to the priory by Ranulf de Lindsay and Hectred his wife before 1158.<sup>40</sup>

It is necessary to consider the possibility that these grants too were really confirmations. Was there once a time when the whole of central Copeland was one estate under the spiritual care of St Bees? Then, as local churches grew up among the communities along the coastal strip, the upland and the inland parts of St Bees became separated. If this was the case, the separation of Beckermet St Bridget is likely to have occurred before the tenth century, since there is ninth-century sculpture in the churchyard.<sup>41</sup> However, Winchester warns against this line of thinking – “It would be wrong to . . . claim that the upland forests had been bound to . . . mother churches from time immemorial. Until the Lake District valleys were settled, parochial boundaries were probably ill-defined”.<sup>42</sup> In other words, when Beckermet church was founded, upland areas may not have been assigned to any particular parish.

### **Payments from other parishes**

Seven or eight Copeland parishes paid fixed annual sums (“pensions”) to St Bees in the thirteenth century, and one other church was granted to the Priory, but no payment was recorded (Fig. 1). In other parts of the country a small surviving payment has indicated that the paying parish had once been part of a minster *parochia*. For example, when Whistley, in Berkshire, obtained parochial rights in 1089, it was agreed that half a mark annually should be paid to the Bishop of Salisbury as lord of Sonning, in whose *parochia* Whistley had formerly been.<sup>43</sup> The St Bees payments therefore need to be investigated.

In 1291, the parish church of Egremont paid 22 shillings annually to St Bees.<sup>44</sup> At the foundation, the site of Egremont fell within the *parochia* of St Bees, and the chapel of Egremont was explicitly mentioned as being within those bounds.<sup>45</sup> But William, parson of Egremont, witnessed a charter granted c.1250.<sup>46</sup> At some intervening date, possibly around 1200, Egremont was made a separate parish, and its boundaries show very clearly that it had been carved out of St Bees parish. Indeed, until the twentieth century, Egremont castle still lay within St Bees: a tongue of land extended to take in the castle, presumably so that the lords of the castle could claim that their parish church was St Bees. There seems no doubt that the annual payment from Egremont parish was to compensate the mother church for the loss of revenue

when Egremont was separated.

Seven parishes were not within the *parochia* of St Bees in c.1125, but later made, or may have made, annual payments. They were Bootle, Corney, Whicham and Whitbeck, Workington and Harrington, and possibly Irton. There are two possible scenarios underlying the payment. Either the parishes making payment had looked to St Bees for ministry and burial at some date before the foundation of the priory, and the payments acknowledged the former bond and compensated St Bees for lost rights; or else the churches had not once been dependent, but were granted to St Bees Priory at a time when lay people who took the profits of local churches were frowned upon by bishops and abbots.<sup>47</sup>

At the southern end of Copeland, in 1291 the four parishes of Bootle, Corney, Whicham and Whitbeck paid respectively to St Bees pensions of four, two, five and five shillings.<sup>48</sup> Godard de Boiville, lord of Millom, gave the churches of Whicham and Bootle with two messuages and all the parishes and tithes belonging to them: William le Meschin confirmed his gift at the foundation.<sup>49</sup> Corney church was a late-founded parish, presumably carved out of Bootle, which came into being between 1147 and 1153. Copsi, “lord and founder” of the church gave it to St Bees.<sup>50</sup> The original grant of Whitbeck is not in the *Register*. It is not uncommon to find that such outright gifts were not what they seemed: the rights of existing incumbents, the lay lord and even other religious houses remained to be sorted out. The practical arrangement was that the Abbot of St Mary’s York had the right of presentation to the benefice, and St Bees Priory received a fixed annual payment.

At the northern end of Copeland, Ketel son of Eldred granted to St Mary’s Abbey at York the church of Workington, to which was later added the chapel of Clifton in Workington parish. His successor, Gospatric son of Orm, granted the church of Harrington before 1154. The abbey’s rights in these churches was expressed in fixed payments of four marks (£2 13s. 4d.), two shillings and two shillings respectively, which were collected by the cell of St Bees.<sup>51</sup>

Just north of the Esk was Irton, a church with a ninth-century cross in its churchyard, possibly marking the site of an Anglian monastery.<sup>52</sup> The St Bees records show no dependency, but just before the dissolution of the small nunnery of Seaton in Bootle parish, the nuns claimed that they owed a pension of one shilling a year to St. Bees from their church of Irton.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, William, brother of Cicely countess of Aumale, gave to St Bees the church of Gosforth, to the north of Irton, and Roger of Pont L’Eveque, archbishop of York, confirmed the grant before 1181.<sup>54</sup> The advowson of the church, however, remained in the hands of the lords of Egremont and no pension to St Bees is recorded.

Nothing in the records suggests that the pensions to St Bees here noted pre-dated the gifts of the churches to St Mary’s, York, or to St. Bees. Where the charters mention the origins of the payments, they arise as part of accommodations between existing patrons, or incumbents, and the monks. In each case, although the church was nominally given to the monks, what they received was a fixed payment, and sometimes the right of presentation to the living. Moreover, the payments that normally indicate former dependency are a share of tithes or church-scot.<sup>55</sup> It is still possible to argue that, even although the charters never mention that the parishes had once been dependent, there must have been some relationship. Why else should nine out of the twenty-four parishes in Copeland be given to St Bees and to no other

monastery? But the answer would have to be that, at the time of most of the gifts, there was no other monastery in the area willing to receive the grants. (The Savigniacs – later Cistercians – of Furness and Calder did not seek that kind of endowment.)

### **A church with possible sanctuary rights**

A late insertion in the Register of the Priory gives the boundaries of the franchise of St Bega. Four points on the boundary are marked by stone crosses.<sup>56</sup> It is curious that the land does not correspond to the ancient boundaries of St Bees parish, since it excludes Coulderton, Middletown and Nethertown to the south, the tongue of land going up to Egremont castle, and the area of the later parish of Egremont.<sup>57</sup> Nor is it clear what “franchise” is meant, but we have to reckon with the possibility that it included rights of sanctuary for criminals, as James Wilson supposed.<sup>58</sup>

Sanctuary was intended to limit blood-feuds by giving the offender a refuge while the offence could be dealt with by fine and compensation.<sup>59</sup> Places of sanctuary were widespread in Indo-European lands, and were not peculiar either to “Celtic” peoples or to Anglo-Saxons. Kings defended sanctuaries with the force of royal law: in the law-code of King Alfred, sanctuary of three days for a royal monastery and thirty days for any consecrated church is prescribed. In the VIIth code of King Ethelred (1014), a scale of fines for violating different sanctuaries from a head minster down to a field church is set.<sup>60</sup> Kings limited rights of sanctuary and at times intervened in them: the risks of too many safe zones for criminals were obvious.

Certain churches in the north of England had particular sanctuaries with wide boundaries by local custom, notably Durham, Hexham, Beverley and Ripon.<sup>61</sup> So too did Wetheral Priory.<sup>62</sup> Wilson argued, reasonably enough, that St Bees Priory had rights of sanctuary by virtue of its being a cell of St Mary’s Abbey at York, which had all the dignities, liberties and free customs of the churches of St Peter, York, and St John of Beverley.<sup>63</sup> However, if the franchise of St Bees included the right of sanctuary, it may well have been older, since kings tended to reduce, not extend, such rights. The liberties of Hexham, Beverley and Ripon date from the seventh century: Ramsey’s was “of great antiquity”, as was that of Glastonbury.<sup>64</sup> Whether the liberty of St Bees included the right of sanctuary must remain uncertain. At Wetheral the boundary crosses are termed *grith* (peace) crosses, which would imply sanctuary, but that term is not used at St Bees.

### **Conclusion**

When I set out on this inquiry, I had hopes that an early minster at St Bees might be demonstrated with reasonable probability. The result, however, is greater scepticism than I had imagined.

On the one hand, we have found a possible plurality of clerics at St Bees just before the Benedictines took over, a place-name recording the cult of a saint who was said to have come over from Ireland in the seventh century, a church that appears to have been in existence before c.900, a church that had an uncommonly wide franchise or sanctuary area after the Conquest, whose parish then covered about a

third of the area of Copeland, and which had eight or nine more parishes partly dependent on it. Taking due notice of the “mays” and the “possiblys”, the impression grows that St Bees must have been one of those early centres of Christianity that some have called minsters. It was no ordinary parish.

On the other hand, much of the evidence crumbles if handled firmly. Coremac and Gillebecoc could well have been laymen. All the evidence of the cult of Bega – place-name, ring, and miracles – is no older than the twelfth century, although the cult itself does appear to be earlier. The franchise is recorded late, and the nature of the immunity is uncertain. The seaward part of the parish is certainly pre-Conquest, and that part of the parish is by itself larger than average; but the inland part may not have been attached to it until the twelfth century. It is as likely that the pension-paying churches owed their dependency to the ecclesiastical reform movement of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, as that they were the remains of a much larger minster *parochia*.

Either of these hypotheses is arguable, but the hard facts support the more sceptical approach. One thing seems certain: without more evidence, which would have to be archaeological, we cannot even speculate about a church at St Bees before 900. Indeed, in that period, there are more probable religious centres in the area. Waberthwaite, Irton, Beckermest and Workington all have pre-Scandinavian sculpture.<sup>65</sup> St Bees does not.

Clearly, there must have been substantial changes in lordship and in the church after 900. The earlier religious communities seem to have been robbed, burnt or faded away to the status of local churches. The extraordinary riches of tenth century sculpture surviving at Gosforth church – the cross and fragments of crosses, hogbacks, and “fishing stone” – imply a rich patron, although there is nothing to suggest that Gosforth was a centre of lordship at an earlier or at a later date.<sup>66</sup> We may speculate that some reassertion of Northumbrian lordship, or unknown power-struggle between Scandinavian settlers, might have shifted the tide of endowment from Gosforth to St Bees.<sup>67</sup> Such evidence as we have for the ecclesiastical importance of the latter centre does point to a period of growth starting round about the tenth century. It seems the most likely time for the ring-cult to have developed. To speculate again, did the Scandinavian invaders pick up the legend of the fugitive princess and favour her church, or was it the Northumbrians who praised the princess who fled from an unwanted Viking husband? Did an oath on the ring that was said to be Bega’s play a part in the negotiations between natives and incomers? During the period when Copeland, the “bought land”,<sup>68</sup> became a land of peace (whether the Vikings bought it from the Northumbrians or vice versa), was a religious community, presumably of secular priests, established at St Bees?

One can only speculate about the political situation in Copeland before the Norman Conquest, but such speculations at least remind us that the fortunes of different centres and churches may change dramatically. The evidence reviewed here tends to support the conclusion that St Bees grew in importance as a religious centre only after the Scandinavian settlement, and it was still growing when the Priory was founded. This seems to be in line with the findings of David Rollason for Northumbria. “How far a pattern of sub-diocesan organisation existed at all at that time [in the seventh and eighth centuries] is open to question, and it may well be that its development was the work of the ninth and tenth centuries and later”.<sup>69</sup>

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## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> R. Dodsworth and W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (London, 1655), 395. Dugdale cites Leland, *Collectanea*, vol. iii, 36.
- <sup>2</sup> I have not been able to consult Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, but the later editors of Dugdale cite this work: see W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, eds. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (London, 1846), vol. iii, 574.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Register of the Priory of St Bees*, ed. J. Wilson (Surtees Society vol. cxxvi, Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society Record Series vol. iii, 1915) [cited as *St B. Reg.*], 504-9 (Illustrative document no. I); also edited and translated by G. C. Tomlinson, *The Life and Miracles of Sancta Bega* (Carlisle, 1842), 13-23, 53-60.
- <sup>4</sup> *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 412 (Bk. iv c.23).
- <sup>5</sup> Hutchinson, vol. ii, 32; *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1846), vol. iii, 574.
- <sup>6</sup> R. Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology* (CBA Research Report 47, London, 1983), 36.
- <sup>7</sup> Edmund Sandford, *A Cursory Relation of all the Antiquities and Families in Cumberland*, ed. R. S. Ferguson (CWAAS Tract Series No. 4, Kendal, 1890); first noted in print in S. Jefferson, *The History and Antiquities of Cumberland* (Carlisle, 1838-42), vol. iii, 332-3; N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cumberland and Westmorland* (Harmondsworth, 1967), 183.
- <sup>8</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 503, 511.
- <sup>9</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 504-8, cf. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 406, 412; J. M. Todd, "St Bega: Cult, Fact and Legend", *CW2*, lxxx, 30-31.
- <sup>10</sup> I. B. Cowan, "The Development of the Parochial System in Medieval Scotland", *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. xl (1961), 43-4, reprinted in *The Medieval Church in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1995), 1-2. The pattern was not confined to Britain but applies, for instance, in Merovingian territory: see J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (London, 1950), 13-15.
- <sup>11</sup> F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Oxford, 1971), 148-157.
- <sup>12</sup> J. Blair, "Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book" in P. Sawyer (ed.), *Domesday Book: a Reassessment* (London, 1985), 104-142; J. Blair, "Minster Churches in the Landscape" in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (Oxford, 1988), 35-38; J. Blair, *Minsters and Parish Churches: the Local Church in Transition, 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988); J. Blair, "Anglo-Saxon Minsters: a topographical review" in J. Blair and R. Sharpe (ed.), *Pastoral Care before the Parish* (Leicester, 1992), 226-266; A. Thacker, "Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care" in Blair and Sharpe, *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, 137-170; J. Blair, "Debate: Ecclesiastical Organization and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England", *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. iv (1995), 193-212. For criticism of the "minster system", see E. Cambridge, "The early Church in County Durham: a reassessment", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. 137 (1984), 65-85; E. Cambridge and D. Rollason, "Debate: The Pastoral Organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church: a review of the 'Minster Hypothesis'", *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. iv (1995), 87-104; D. Rollason, "Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria" in B. Thompson (ed), *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, 1999), 59-74. A recent and balanced account of early parochial origins is in N. J. G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish* (Cambridge, 2000), 17-40.
- <sup>13</sup> J. M. Todd, "Pointers to Early Churches North of the Ribble", *Centre for North-West Regional Studies, Lancaster University, Regional Bulletin*, New Series No. 14 (2000), 12-18.

- <sup>14</sup> J. Wilson in *VCH Cumberland* (1905), vol. ii, 179; *St B. Reg.*, p. v.
- <sup>15</sup> R. N. Bailey and R. Cramp, *The British Academy Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Volume II: Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands* (Oxford, 1988), 145-147.
- <sup>16</sup> Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology*, 52-53; Cambridge, "Early Church in County Durham", 68.
- <sup>17</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 27 (no. 1).
- <sup>18</sup> *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (London, 1903-27), vol. iii, 116-7; *St B. Reg.*, 534 (no. IX).
- <sup>19</sup> A. M. Armstrong *et al.*, *The Place-Names of Cumberland* (English Place-Name Society, vols xx-xxii, Cambridge, 1950-2), 430-431.
- <sup>20</sup> G. Fellows-Jensen, "The Vikings' Relationship with Christianity in the British Isles: the evidence of place-names containing the element *kirkja*", *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress* (Oslo, 1987), 295-307; *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (Copenhagen, 1985), 34.
- <sup>21</sup> N. Higham, "The Scandinavians in North Cumbria: Raids and Settlement in the Later Ninth to Mid Tenth Centuries" in J. R. Baldwin and I. D. Whyte (eds.), *The Scandinavians in Cumbria* (Edinburgh, 1985), 37-51.
- <sup>22</sup> A. J. L. Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria* (Edinburgh, 1987), 124-125.
- <sup>23</sup> *Domesday Book: Yorkshire*, eds. M. L. Faull and M. Stinson (Chichester, 1986), 302a; contrast *The Yorkshire Domesday*, eds. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (Alecto edition, 1992), fo. 302.
- <sup>24</sup> Armstrong, *Place-Names of Cumberland*, 291, 436.
- <sup>25</sup> Todd, "St Bega: Cult, Fact and Legend", 23-29.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.
- <sup>27</sup> A. P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin* (Dublin, 1975-9), vol. ii, 267-70; W. Bell, "On the so-called ring-money . . .", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. viii (1864), 253-68. I owe the latter reference to the kindness of Clare Downham.
- <sup>28</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 500.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 (no. 1).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 note 3.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Lanercost Cartulary*, ed. J. M. Todd (Surtees Society vol. cciii and Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society Record Series vol. xi), 154 (no. 114).
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 385 (no. 346).
- <sup>33</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 115 (no. 87)
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, see index of personal names.
- <sup>35</sup> British Library MS Harl. 434, f. 10v.
- <sup>36</sup> Blair, "Secular Minster Churches", 139. It is worth noting that when the Priory was dissolved in 1539, two chaplains still served the laity of the parish alongside the monks (PRO, S.C.6/Henry VIII/7382).
- <sup>37</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 28-29 (no. 2).
- <sup>38</sup> Winchester, *Landscape and Society*, 26.
- <sup>39</sup> Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1846), vol. iii, 567.
- <sup>40</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 57 (no. 29).
- <sup>41</sup> Bailey and Cramp, *Corpus Volume II*, 54-56.
- <sup>42</sup> Winchester, *Landscape and Society*, 26.
- <sup>43</sup> R. Lennard, *Rural England, 1086-1135* (Oxford, 1959), 303.
- <sup>44</sup> *Taxatio Ecclesiastica . . . P. Nicholai IV circa A.D. 1291* (Record Commission, London, 1802), 308.
- <sup>45</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 29 (no. 2).
- <sup>46</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 295-6 (no. 282).
- <sup>47</sup> M. Brett, *The English Church under Henry I* (London, 1975), 141-8, 229-231.
- <sup>48</sup> *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 208.
- <sup>49</sup> *St Bees Reg.*, 31 (no. 3), 106-7 (no. 76).
- <sup>50</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 111-16 (nos. 82-87).
- <sup>51</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 234 (no. 212), 61 (no. 32), 572 (no. LXXII).
- <sup>52</sup> Bailey and Cramp, *Corpus Volume II*, 115-17.
- <sup>53</sup> *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, eds. J. Caley and J. Hunter (London, 1810-34), vol. v, 265.
- <sup>54</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 55 (no. 27), 146 (no. 107); *English Episcopal Acta 20: York 1154-1181*, ed. M. Lovatt (Oxford, 2000), 102 (no. 90).
- <sup>55</sup> Blair, *Minsters and Parish Churches*, 12-13.
- <sup>56</sup> *St B. Reg.*, 367-8 (no. 370).
- <sup>57</sup> A possible explanation, however, is that in the thirteenth century land outside the liberty represented a

substantial area of the demesne of the lords of Egremont (Winchester, *Landscape and Society*, 48-51). The document describing the bounds of the liberty may have been drawn up particularly in order to demarcate the liberty as distinct from the lands where the lords had jurisdiction.

<sup>58</sup> *St B. Reg.*, p. xxviii.

<sup>59</sup> D. Hall, "The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert" in G. Bonner *et al.*, (eds.), *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge, 1989), 425-436; W. Davies, "Adding insult to injury: power, property and immunities in early medieval Wales" in W. Davies and P. Fouracre (eds.), *Property and Power in the early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), 144-163.

<sup>60</sup> D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents c.500-1042* (London, 1955), 374-5, 412.

<sup>61</sup> Hall, "Sanctuary of St Cuthbert", 434-435.

<sup>62</sup> *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal*, ed. J. E. Prescott, (CWAAS Record Series vol. i, 1897) Appendix C, 490-492.

<sup>63</sup> *St B. Reg.*, xxviii.

<sup>64</sup> M. D. Lobel, "The Ecclesiastical Banleuca in England" in *Oxford Essays in Medieval History presented to Herbert Edward Salter* (Oxford, 1934), 122-124.

<sup>65</sup> Bailey and Cramp, *Corpus Volume II*, 2-3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-109.

<sup>67</sup> I am grateful to Angus Winchester for asking "What about Gosforth?"

<sup>68</sup> Armstrong, *Place-Names of Cumberland*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Rollason, "Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria", 74.