



*Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1733 onwards and divers historical prospecting.*

*Editor: Mark Brandon: markandsuebrandon@outlook.com*

*WEBPAGE/BLOG: jot-and-tittle.com*

## A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 22

**M**IKE DEEMING WRITES:



1788 and 1789 were momentous years – the Bastille was stormed, the Bill of Rights (loosely based on Magna Carta) was tabled by Congress as an amendment to the US Constitution, the British fleet established the first colony at Sydney [Ed: originally called Stingray Harbour]. In England the Regency Bill was passed to enable the Prince Regent to assume office in the face of King George III's deteriorating mental health. Against this background, James Wyatt (pictured left) was invited to 'improve' the Cathedral by de-cluttering and renovation. He had shot to fame following the success of the Pantheon, built in 1772 in Oxford Street, and in consequence had been appointed surveyor of Westminster Abbey in 1776. To address Wyatt's proposals, the Cathedral was closed from October 1789 for three years. That was the context in which John Berry had written his infamous letter to a Mr Lloyd of Conduit Street, London, dated 16 June 1788 -

*Sir, This day I have sent you a Box full of old Staind and Painted Glass, as you desired me to due, which I hope will sute your Purpos, it his the best that I can get at present. But I expect to Beat to Peceais a great deale very sune, as it his of nowe use to we and we Due it for the lead. If you want Eney more of the same sorts you may have what thear his, if it will pay for the taking out, as it his a Deal of Truble to what Beating it to Peceais his. You will send me a line as sune as Posobl for we are goain to move ore glasing shop to a Nother Plase and thin we hope to save a greatt Deale more of the like sort, wich I ham your most Omble Servunt, John Berry.*

*According to another informant, whole cartloads of glass, lead and other rubbish were removed from the nave and transepts, and shot into the town ditch, then in the course of being filled up; whilst a good deal of similar rubbish was used to level the ground near the chapter-house.*

By 1793, the vast majority of windows in the Cathedral would have had clear glass quarries, with only the East window of the Trinity Chapel having the Reynolds' depiction of the Resurrection, some patterned glass in the West window, and of course the 'Moses and the Brazen Serpent' window above the Quire which had been installed in 1780 (after having been displayed in the Pantheon). The Chapter House remained untouched.

But 1788 was also the year of the birth of John Beare and, following Wyatt's death in a carriage crash in 1813, this signalled a 'renaissance' too in the Cathedral windows. As fashion changed in the later regency years, Beare was invited in 1819 to reglaze the great west window, recreating the

medieval glazing style. He used leftover glass from the Glaziers' workshop, and brought in glass from the Chapter House. He also bought glass in London, mainly C14 and C15 French glass removed from church windows in northern France after the French Revolution. So, for example, the central lancet has a range of imported images of saints and biblical scenes, with three shields from the Chapter House at the bottom, the 1506 Garter Arms of King Henry VII at the top, all enclosed by patterned glass from the window it replaced and from the workshop. The three shields are, of course, those of Eleanor of Provence (wife of King Henry III), King Louis IX of France (brother-in-law of Eleanor) and King Henry III, with King (Saint) Louis having the prominent position in the middle. The picture right shows the lancet in Beare's 1819 configuration - it was changed in 1920 when Mary Lowndes re-leaded and re-configured this window and created the Jesse window and accompanying lancet in the south nave aisle.



The Garter Arms of King Henry VII (pictured left) also give equal importance to the English lions and to the French fleur-de-lys. Furthermore, the garter carries the French legend 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'. This is all despite the fact that English control in France had shrunk by this time to just the city of Calais.

These windows presaged a transformation in the Cathedral's glazing that



took place in the nineteenth century, to recover from the influence of Wyatt, described by Pugin as Wyatt 'the Destroyer'. Beare's re-glazing was a magnificent achievement and his ledger stone in the nave near the font reflects this. It records that *In all the duties of public and private life, he was much and deservedly respected; and under his skillful superintendence as the Glazier of this Fabric, the Windows and the Western Front were arranged and set and those of the south end of the Great Transept executed by copying Specimens of the Ancient Glass of this Cathedral.* King Henry VII had a chapel built at the east end of Westminster Abbey for his resting place; Wyatt too was buried in the Abbey. But for John Berry, the letter writer, there is no known grave.

## QUORA

**T**he world's first epic Christian battle? The Battle of Avarayr of 451 AD was fought between Armenia and the all-powerful Sassanid Empire. Heavily outnumbered and outmatched, the Armenian Christians numbered around 60,000 commanded by the legendary supreme commander Vartan Mamikonian (Saint Vartan). The Sassanid Empire fielded around 220,000 men on the battlefield including Persian immortals, war elephants, and even Armenians that were loyal to the Zoroastrian Sassanid Empire.

Being the first Christian nation, religion meant everything for Armenians. The Sassanid Empire wanted to forcibly convert Armenia to Zoroastrianism using force and violence, which made Armenia rebel against the Sassanid Empire. The armies met on a river in an Armenian province called Nakhichevan, near modern day northwestern Iran. The Armenian Christians took Holy

Communion before battle, and the priests got on their horses alongside the elite knights, peasants, and even women and marched into battle.

The Armenians crossed the river and instantly charged the Sassanid Army. Vartan Mamikonian broke through the Persian right flank and his elite knights ripped through the enemy. The fighting was fierce, and the Armenians had the upper hand initially.

Vartan Mamikonian further charged the Sassanid centre, and the Persians had heavy casualties. But the Persians sent in many battalions of elite Medians, Armenian loyalists, and hordes of heavy war elephants that surrounded Vartan Mamikonian's elite Mamikonian and all of his knights fought to the death, and he was soon killed alongside 1000 other Armenian nobles. 3000 Persians died trying to kill Vartan Mamikonian.



To the surprise of the Sassanid Empire's Armenians on the battlefield, when their commander was killed, this triggered the Armenians to fight harder. Not even the charge of the heavily armoured Persian war elephants frightened the Armenians. The fighting continued and the river turned red as casualties were pushed to the river and mounted on both sides.

surprise, none of the battlefield fled or wavered was killed, but this instead to fight harder. Not even armoured Persian war Armenians. The Armenians and the fighting continued turned red as casualties

Soon though, the Persians overwhelmed the Armenians. Both sides had heavy casualties but the Sassanid Empire's casualties were considerably higher. The Sassanids won a pyrrhic victory, where the cost of the victory was so large that it was not worth it. The Armenians won a strategic victory by protecting Christianity, and every soul in Armenia rebelled against the Sassanid Empire after hearing the news of this battle.

Persians overwhelmed the Armenians. Both sides had heavy casualties but casualties were

Vartan Mamikonian's son Vahan Mamikonian (above, *Russia, public domain*) continued the rebellion and in 484 the Sassanid Empire capitulated to Armenia. Vahan Mamikonian and the Persian king Balash signed the Nvarsak Treaty which guaranteed religious freedom to Christian Armenians and even demolished all the Zoroastrian temples. Conversion to Zoroastrianism was restricted, Vahan Mamikonian was appointed governor of Armenia, and Armenia gained official autonomy unlike the other provinces of the Sassanid Empire.

The Battle of Avarayr (on May 26) is seen as a holy day and Vartan Mamikonian are canonised as a Saints in the Armenian Apostolic Church for protecting Christianity. The battle is extremely important because if it had not happened, then Christianity would not exist in Asia Minor/Caucasus, and maybe Armenia and Georgia would not exist.

The irony is that Zoroastrianism was the religion of the Magi. Its precepts included messianism, judgement after death, heaven and hell and free will, which of course influenced other religions. Their god was Ahura Mazda - the deity that protects light bulbs and cars perhaps!

## THE UNKNOWN CHARTER

Throughout the winter of 1214–15, means were sought to restrain the king and to preserve the peace. At some point, perhaps as early as July 1213, the Coronation Charter of Henry I had been brought into debate. Issued as long ago as 1100, this charter imposed limitations on the king's power to tax or compel his barons, including provisions on the Church, over widows and orphans, and in relation to testamentary and marriage rights.



The 'Unknown' Charter begins merely as a copy of Henry I's Coronation Charter. It then lists a series of additional clauses, beginning with the statement, 'King John concedes that he will arrest no man without judgment nor accept any payment for justice nor commit any unjust act.' In embryo, this supplies our first evidence for what was to develop into clauses 39 and 40 of Magna Carta. In the 'Unknown' Charter these clauses are followed by others set out as bargaining points between King and barons. Most, but not all, of these clauses subsequently found a place in Magna Carta. The 'Unknown' Charter, for example, attempted to limit the tax paid on knight service, known as *scutage*, and to ensure that the King could not summon his barons to serve in France, save in Normandy or Brittany. Neither of these points was adopted at Runnymede.

The document is named the 'Unknown' Charter because it was rediscovered in the French national archives in 1863 and not publicised in England until the 1890s, long after most of the other significant Magna Carta texts had entered scholarly debate. It perhaps travelled to France in 1215 or shortly afterwards, in the baggage of an English rebel, possibly with Master Simon Langton (d. 1248), the Archbishop of Canterbury's brother, a leading supporter of the barons and himself an employee of the French royal court.

Pic and article *courtesy of the British Library.*

## THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

In J&T No.74 I reported on a very interesting book on the Hansa Towns by Helen Zimmern (1889). I have got up to the Reformation which spelt the death-knell for the confederation as it set Catholic towns against Protestant ones and extreme Protestants against their milder bretheren.

The translation of the Bible and other works into the vernacular ensured that *the people began to realise that the blind submission demanded by the priests was by no means an integral part of Christianity.* Those in power felt less secure and especially *the arrogant and dissolute clergy* whose churches and monasteries were converted into almshouses and schools. The populace also recalled the towns' democratic beginnings.

Lübeck was the most conservative and reactionary city and refused to admit Protestantism. However the City lacked money due to the wars of Frederick and Gustavus. The guilds now refused their usual payments *until the municipality should permit the introduction of the evangelical teaching.* Shades of Magna Carta!

Below the Steelyard in London, home of the Hansa merchants (taken from Wenceslaus Hollar's *A True and Exact Prospect of the Famous City of London* engraving of 1646 - before the Great Fire of 1666). This was situated in Upper Thames Street which is also the location of the Vintners' Hall where I took my exams as an indentured apprentice.

