

RODVLFII GLABRI
HISTORIARVM LIBRI QVINQVE

Rodulfus Glaber
The Five Books of the Histories

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
JOHN FRANCE

EIVSDEM AVCTORIS
VITA DOMNI WILLELMI
ABBATIS

By the Same Author
The Life of St William

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unconvincing kind. Now I was there, having travelled in the company of the abbot.¹ The pedlar said: 'An angel appears to me at night and he teaches and tells me all that he knows I wish to learn. He stays with me until I force him to go.' When we replied by asking whether he saw all this while he was awake or asleep, he added: 'Almost every night the angel snatches me from my bed without my wife's knowing; after a long conversation he leaves, saluting and embracing me.' We knew this for a polished and cunning lie, for this creature was no frequenter of angels, but rather a minister of treachery and evil.

8. The bishops, while celebrating duly the rite of consecration for which they had come, put the bones discovered by that cunning impostor in with the other relics of saints, to the great joy of both kinds of people² who had gathered there in large numbers. All this happened on 17 October.³ This date was chosen because the partisans of this pretended relic asserted that these were the bones of St Justus, who suffered martyrdom on that day in the city of Beauvais in Gaul. His head was taken to Auxerre, where he was born and bred, and is kept there. I, who knew the truth of the matter, treated what they said as rubbish.⁴ The more discerning recognized this as a trick and supported what I said. The following night some of the monks and other religious saw monstrous visions in the church, black Ethiopians coming out of the box in which the bones were kept and leaving the church. Although many men of sound judgement denounced the detestable invention as an abomination, the mass of the rustic population, corrupted by the pedlar, venerating the name of the unjust for Justus persisted for a long time in their error. We have recounted all this to give a warning against the many deceits of demons and men which abound all over the world, especially in springs and trees that are rashly venerated by the sick.

iv. *Raging famine throughout the world*

9. As 1033, the year of the millennium of the Passion of Christ approached, many men famous in the Roman world, veritable

² 'utriusque plebis' means, literally, 'of both peoples', but the sense is 'clergy and laity' (see p. 193), the two kinds of people.

³ The foundation-charter of S. Giusto di Susa is dated 9 July 1029 (Previté-Orton, p. 184), but the abbey was probably consecrated in the previous year: Bulst, p. 128.

⁴ Saint-Germain-d'Auxerre was certainly Glaber's mother-house: see above, pp. xxiv-xxv, xxix-xxx.

uiri in orbe Romano famosissimi sacreque religionis signiferi: Benedictus¹ uidelicet papa uniuersalis, ac rex Francorum, ut iam diximus,² Robertus; Fulbertus quoque Carnoti presulum incomparabilis, uir sapientissimus;³ necnon prenominate pater monachorum fundatorque cenobiorum eximius Willelmus, de quo etiam perplura forent dicenda utilia, nisi quod in libello quem de uita et uirtutibus illius edidimus prolata dudum fuisse noscuntur.⁴ Vnum restat tamen quod noui ibidem minime contineri. Migravit enim predictus pater a seculo ad beatorum requiem in Neustrie partibus, in Fiscamnense uidelicet monasterio, supra mare Occeanum constituto, quod a Rotomagense urbe quadraginta fere milibus distat; sepultusque est, uti tantum condecebat uirum, in loco optimo eiusdem ecclesie. Post aliquot uero dies contigit ut puerulus ferme decennis ualida confectus egritudine ad sepulchrum illius gratia recuperande sanitatis duceretur, ibique a parentibus dimissus decubabat solus. Qui subito respiciens uidit super eundem sepulchrum insidentem auiculam formam columbe preferentem; quam diu intuens obdormiuit. Dehinc leni expletus somno, euigilans ita se repperit incolumem ac si nichil egritudinis persensisset. Suscipiunt itaque leti parentes suum; fit omnibus commune gaudium.

10.⁵ Sequenti itaque tempore, cepit in uniuerso orbe terrarum fames conualescere ac interitus pene uniuersi humani generis imminere. Nam temperies aeris sic intempestiua effecta est ut nullius sationis proueniret tempus congruum, nec messioni precipue ob inundantiam aquarum foret oportunum. Videbantur enim inter se ipsa elementa pugnam discordie agere, cum procul dubio uindictam exercerent humane insolentie; assiduus enim imbris ita compluta erat uniuersa tellus ut in spacio trium annorum nulli repperirentur sulci utiles seminibus. Tempore quoque messis herbe agrestes atque infelix lolium⁶ totam operuerant superficiem agrorum. Modius quoque sementis, ubi maius proficiebat, reddebat in messe sextarium, ipseque sextarius uix referebat pugillum.⁷

¹ Benedict VIII, on whom see above, 3. Preface. 1 n. He died in 1024.

² Robert's death at Melun in 1031 has already been reported: 3. ix. 36.

³ Fulbert, bishop of Chartres (1006–28), one of the most learned men of the age, on whom see Behrends, *Fulbert*, especially the Introduction, pp. xiii–xlii (for dates see pp. xvii–xviii, xxi).

⁴ *The Life of St William*, printed below.

⁵ Hugh of Flavigny, p. 399, adopts this account of the famine, using the same opening

standard-bearers of the holy faith, ended their lives. Amongst them were Benedict,¹ the universal pope, Robert king of the Franks (to whose death we have already referred)² and that incomparable bishop and wisest of men, Fulbert of Chartres.³ The distinguished William, whom I have so often mentioned, father of monks and founder of monasteries, also died: a great deal could be told of him which would be very edifying, but this, as is well known, has already been done in the little book on his life and virtues that I issued.⁴ There is one story which I know is not told there. The holy father left this material world for the realms of the blessed in Neustria, at the monastery of Fécamp, which is set close to the ocean some forty miles from Rouen. As was only appropriate for so great a man, he was buried in the foremost place in that church. A few days later a little boy, about ten years of age, fell gravely ill and was brought to his tomb in the hope that he might thereby recover his health; he was left by his parents to sleep there alone. Looking around, he suddenly saw sitting upon the tomb a small bird which looked like a dove, and while watching it for some time he fell asleep. Awakening from that gentle slumber, he found himself in perfect health, feeling as though he had never been ill. His parents welcomed him back with joy, and all rejoiced.

10.⁵ Some time later a famine began to ravage the whole earth, and death threatened almost all the human race. The weather was so unseasonable that no season was suitable for the sowing of any crop, and floods prevented the gathering in of the harvest. It seemed as though the elements were warring amongst themselves, but for certain they were wreaking vengeance upon human presumption. Rain fell so continuously everywhere that for three years furrows for seed could not be properly driven. At harvest time weeds and 'infertile tares'⁶ had covered the surface of the ground. A muid of seed rendered at best only a setier, and a setier only a handful.⁷

words, mentioning grain sold at 60 sous a muid and 15 sous a setier, cannibalism, the selling of human flesh at Tournus, the monster near Mâcon with his 48 human heads, and the eating of white earth.

⁶ A phrase from Vergil, *Georgics*, i. 154.

⁷ Professor Philip Grierson has kindly furnished this note: 'The *modius* (Fr. *muid*) was a Roman measure of capacity (dry and liquid) reckoned as 16 sextarii and as a dry measure supposed to have been about 8.75 l. Charlemagne had tried to standardize it, for a clause in the acts of the council of Frankfurt am Main of 794 refers to the *modius publicus et noviter statutus*, but in medieval France the word was applied to such a variety of measures (Ronald E. Zupko, *French Weights and Measures before the Revolution. A Dictionary*

Ceperat enim primitus hec sterilitas ultionis in partibus Orientis; depopulando Greciam deuenit in Italiam, dehinc infusa per Gallias transiit ad uniuersos Anglorum populos.¹ Tunc uero constricta tota gens indigentia uictus, maiores ac mediocres fame pallebant cum pauperibus; cessit enim raptus potentum uniuersali inopie. Si (f. 41) quis^a ergo uictus uenundatus | repperiebatur, arbitrio uendentis pro libitu erat excedere seu accipere precium. Nam in plerisque locis fuit modii precium sexaginta solidorum, alias quoque sextarius solidorum quindecim. Interea post esum bestiarum et uolucrum, urgente fame acerrima, ceperunt homines preripere in cibum morticina queque ac dictu horrenda. Quidam uero fecere confugium euadende mortis ad radices siluarum herbasque fluuiorum; sed nequicquam; non ergo^b aufugium ire ultionis Dei, nisi ad semetipsum. Horret denique referre que tunc generi humano corruptiones acciderint. Heu! proh dolor! quod olim raro audiri contigerit, tunc rabida inedia compulit uorari ab hominibus humanas carnes. Arripiabantur autem uiantes a se preualentibus, menbratimque diuidebantur igneque decocti^c uorabantur. Multi quoque de loco ad locum famem fugiendo pergentes hospiciis recepti noctuque iugulati quibus suscepti sunt in cibum fuerunt. Plerique uero pomo ostenso uel ouo pueris, ad remota circumuentos trucidatosque deuorauerunt. Corpora defunctorum in locis plurimis ab humo euulsa nichilominus fami subuenerunt. Que denique rabiei insanies in tantum excreuit ut tutius moraretur solitarium absque raptore genus pecudum quam hominum. Nam ueluti iam in usum deuenire deberet carnes humanas comedi, quidam decoctas detulit uenundandas in forum Trenorchii, ac si fuissent alicuius pecudis. Qui deprehensus crimen flagitii non negauit, deinde, artatus loris, igne crematus est. Carnem autem illam² humo absconsam alter effodiens noctu comedit; pari modo et ille igne combustus est.

11. Est nempe ecclesia a ciuitate Matisconense tribus fere milibus distans, in silua Castanedi sita, sine plebe solitaria, sancto Iohanni dicata, iuxta quam locauerat quidam feralis homo tugurium, qui ibidem multitudinem transeuntium uel ad se diuertentium trucidans

^a quis *Ax*; quid *BD* ^b ergo *BAx*; est ergo *D*; *perhaps* est (*or* est enim) (*Winterbottom*) ^c decocti *D*; deoti *B*; deorum *Ax*

of Provincial and Local Units (Bloomington, Ind., and London, 1978), pp. 116–20) that only where cross-checking is possible can we infer what it was. The sextarius (Fr. *setier*) was a Roman measure of capacity defined as a sixth of a bucketful (congius) and treated as the equivalent of $1\frac{1}{3}$ Roman pounds (0.55 kg) of water or wine. As a liquid measure it

This avenging famine began in the Orient, and after devastating Greece passed to Italy and thence to Gaul and the whole English people.¹ This dearth pressed hard upon all the people; rich men and those of middling estate grew pallid with hunger like the poor, and the brigandage of the mighty ceased in the face of universal want. If food for sale could be found, the seller was free to raise his price at will. In many places a muid (of grain) cost sixty sous, and in others a setier sold for fifteen. After men had eaten beasts and birds, under the pressure of rampant famine they began to eat carrion and things too horrible to mention. Some tried to escape death by eating the roots of the forest and the herbs of the stream, but in vain, for there is no escape from the wrath of the vengeance of God except to God himself. It is terrible to relate the evils which then befell mankind. Alas, a thing formerly little heard of happened: ravening hunger drove men to devour human flesh! Travellers were set upon by men stronger than themselves, and their dismembered flesh was cooked over fires and eaten. Many who had fled from place to place from the famine, when they found shelter at last, were slaughtered in the night as food for those who had welcomed them. Many showed an apple or an egg to children, then dragged them to out-of-the-way places and killed and ate them. In many places the bodies of the dead were dragged from the earth, also to appease hunger. This raging madness rose to such proportions that solitary beasts were less likely to be attacked by brigands than men. The custom of eating human flesh had grown so common that one fellow sold it ready cooked in the market-place of Tournus like that of some beast. When he was arrested he did not deny the shameful charge. He was bound and burned to death. The meat was buried in the ground; but another fellow dug it up and ate it,² and he too was put to death by fire.

II. Some three miles from the city of Mâcon there is a church dedicated to St John; a lonely place, it is set in the forest of Châtenet. Nearby a wild man had built his hut, who preyed upon those passing by or calling at his hut, killing them to serve for his

remained at about this figure, a little less than one imperial pint, but in medieval France the word mainly represented a dry measure of one-twelfth of a muid, consequently varying with the size of the latter.⁷

¹ Cf. the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, E text s.a. 1032 (trans. D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas, and S. I. Tucker (London, 1961), p. 102): 'In this year appeared the wild fire, such as no man remembered before, and also it did damage all over in many places.'

² The meat that had been cooked.

in nefandissimum sumsit edulium. Contigit siquidem una dierum ut uir quidam cum muliere illuc diuertens ad hospicium paululum conqueuit. Dehinc, cum duceret oculos per angulos tugurii, prospexit detruncata capita uirorum ac mulierum atque infantium. Qui protinus palluit, egredi cupiens; sed pestifer ille possessor tugurii renitens ui manere compellebat. Sed ille, pertimescens mortis decipulam, preualuit concitusque ad ciuitatem cum uxore (f. 41^v) perrexit. | Ad quam ueniens quod compererat Ottoni comiti ceterisque ciuibus indicauit.¹ Qui protinus mittentes uiros quamplurimos qui rei ueritatem inquirerent, pergentesque uelocius reppererunt illum crudelissimum in suo tugurio cum quadraginta octo capitibus trucidatorum, quorum carnes ore beluino uorauerat. Quem deducentes ad ciuitatem in quodam horreo religatum ad stipitem, ut ipsi postmodum conspeximus, igne combusserunt.

12. Tunc etiam pertemptatum est in eisdem partibus quod nusquam comperimus quempiam fecisse. Effodiebant enim plerique albam humum argille similem, permiscentes quantum erat farine uel cantabri,^a exinde panes conficiebant, ut uel sic inediae mortis succurrerent; in hoc conficiendo spes tantum erat euadendi, sed profectus inanis. Tenebat igitur pallor et macilentia ora cunctorum, cutisque distensa inflatione in plurioribus apparebat; ipseque uoces humane, perexiles effecte, garritus morientium auium imitabantur. Tunc nichilominus e cadaueribus mortuorum, passim pre multitudine sepultura carentibus, lupi adescati post longum tempus predam cepere ex hominibus. Et quoniam, ut diximus, sepeliri singulatim ob multitudinem non quibant, constructa in quibusdam locis a Deum timentibus que uulgo dicuntur carnaria,² in quibus quingenti et eo amplius, seu quantum capere poterant, permixtim absque ordine proiecta sunt seminuda uel absque tegminibus defunctorum corpora; triuia quoque et agrorum succicia pro cimiteriis habebantur. Si qui uero auditu compererant quod melius haberent si ad alia transirent arua perplures in itinere deficientes moriebantur.

13. Deseuit enim in orbe terrarum, peccatis hominum exigentibus, predictae pestilentie clades in spacium trium annorum. Tunc in expensis egenorum distracta sunt ecclesiarum ornamenta

^a cantabri *France*; cantabro *BxLD*

unspeakable meals. One day a man and his wife called there and took a short rest. Looking around the corners of the hut the man observed the severed heads of men, women, and children. Instantly he paled and tried to leave, but the evil owner of the hut tried to make him stay. However, fearful of this fatal trap, he prevailed and fled with his wife to the city. Arriving there he told what he had seen to Count Otto¹ and other citizens. They sent a band of men to ascertain the truth; hastening thither, they found the cruel fellow in his hut, together with forty-eight severed heads whose bodies he had devoured with his beastly mouth. They took him to the city, tied him to a post in a barn, and, as we ourselves later saw, burnt him to death.

12. Then something was attempted in these parts which, as far as we know, had never been done before. Men dug out a kind of white earth, rather like potter's clay, and they mixed it with whatever they had of flour or bran in order to make bread and avoid death by starvation; it was their hope of salvation, but it was a vain one. Faces were pale and emaciated, and the skin of many appeared inflated with air; men's very voices, reduced to extreme thinness, piped like those of dying birds. None the less, wolves gorged themselves at that time on the corpses of the dead—which lay all around, too many to be buried—after a long interval once more preying on men. Because, as we have said, corpses could not be buried individually, owing to their numbers, in certain places God-fearing men built what are vulgarly called charnel-houses,² and into these were thrown corpses, five hundred, and indeed more if possible, at a time, all jumbled together without any order, half-naked and without even winding-sheets; crossroads and the edges of fields served as cemeteries. Of those who heard they could do better in another district, the majority died on the journey.

13. In order to punish the sins of men this terrible pestilence raged throughout the whole world for three years. For the benefit of the destitute, churches were stripped of their ornaments, and their treasures dispersed; indeed it was for this purpose, as can be

¹ On Otto-William, count of Mâcon, see 3. ii. 6n.

² A 12th-c. memorial in the form of a lantern-tower raised over a charnel-house survives at Fenioux near Saint-Jean-d'Angély (Charente-Maritime). Nearby is a beautiful 12th-c. church with fine Romanesque sculptures. Aspects of it are discussed by Conant, p. 162.

dispertitique thesauri, qui^a ob hoc in decretis patrum inuenitur ibidem primitus fuisse repositos,¹ sed quantum supererat uindictae iuste ultionis, excessit nimietas egenorum in plerisque locis thesauros ecclesiarum. Nam et ipsi famelici, nimia affecti inedia, si contigisset eos repleri cibo, distenti inflatione protinus moriebantur. Alii autem cibos manibus contrectantes, ori temptantes imponere sed conquiniscendo deficiebant, non ualentes explere (f. 42) quod cupiebant. Quantus | enim dolor, tunc quanta mesticia, qui singultus, qui planctus, quae lacrimae a talia cernentibus date sunt,^b precipue a uiris ecclesiastice religionis, episcopis uidelicet atque abbatibus, monachis et sanctimonialibus, simulque omnibus in commune utriusque sexus et ordinis Deum metuentibus, non ualet stilus quispiam explicare characteribus. Estimabatur enim ordo temporum et elementorum, preterita ab initio moderans secula, in chaos decidisse perpetuum atque humani generis interitum. Illud preterea stupore nimio permirabillimum, quoniam in tam clandestina diuine ultionis calamitate rarissime repperiebantur qui pro talibus contrito corde et humiliato corpore, ut expediebat, leuarent corda cum manibus ad Dominum sibi que subueniendum interpellarent. Tunc nempe Esaianum illud elogium nostro impletum est tempore quod dixit: 'Populus non est conuersus ad percutientem se.'² Erat enim in hominibus quedam duricia cordis cum ebetudine mentis. Et quoniam ille summus iudex et auctor totius bonitatis dat uelle rogare se, qui nouit quando debeat misereri.

^a *So B^Ax^D*
agebantur (p. 292)

^b *sint B; but cf. Vita, c. x habuere (p. 280), c. xii dabat (p. 288),*

¹ In general the medieval church believed that Christians should use their wealth to satisfy their needs, and to provide for the poor. The wealth of the church was seen as the 'patrimony of the poor', and the Fathers required that it be used for their relief. In the words of Ambrose, which were embodied in Canon Law, 'The church has gold, not to hoard away but to share out to help those in need': *Decretum Gratiani*, C. 12, q. 2, c. 70. This duty was especially laid upon the monk, who took an oath of poverty because his life was to be an imitation of Christ, who came into the world a poor man ('communis apparuit et pauper'): J. Leclercq, 'The Example of Christ' in id., *Aspects of Monasticism* (Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 55-70. The Rule of St Benedict required the monastic community to support the poor as an aspect of its general duty of hospitality: *Regula Benedicti*, ed. R. Hanslik, CSEL lxxv (Vienna, 1960), cc. 4-13, 14; 53-1; 66-3, 4. Monastic legislation reaffirmed these injunctions, notably that of St Benedict of Aniane: CCM

discovered in the decrees of the Fathers, that such wealth had been accumulated.¹ But too much just vengeance had to be taken, and the numbers of the destitute far outstripped the resources of church treasuries in many places. Some of the destitute were so greatly affected by the famine that even when they received food, they became distended and died immediately. Others took the food in their hands, but in the effort of raising it to their mouths, collapsed and died, for they lacked the strength to do what they wanted. How much misery and dejection there was, what sobbing, what complaint, what tears for those witnessing such things, especially amongst the clergy—bishops and abbots, monks and nuns—and more generally amongst the God-fearing of both sexes and orders! Mere written words cannot express it. It was believed that the order of the seasons and the elements, which had ruled all past ages from the beginning, had fallen into perpetual chaos, and with it had come the end of mankind. But what was more astounding than anything else was that it was very rare indeed for anyone, under the impact of this secret and divine vengeance, to raise his heart and hands unto the Lord as he should have done, with a contrite heart and humble body begging for His aid. One saw then realized in our time that prophecy of Isaiah: "The people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them."² For there was amongst men a certain hardness of heart and stupidity of mind. For the supreme Judge and Author of all goodness gives the desire to pray, and He knows when He ought to have mercy.

i, ed. K. Hallinger (Siegburg, 1963), p. 475. The foundation-charter of Cluny expressly enjoined charity to the poor upon its monks: Bernard and Bruel, i. 112. That this was taken seriously is evident from the emphasis placed upon Mayol's charitable actions by his biographer, Syrus (*PL* cxxxvii.745-80). In his shorter *Vita Maioli*, written at Romain-moûtier some time after 1033, and so not long after the events which Glaber reports here, Odilo described how the miseries of the poor had kept him awake at night. Inspired by St Mayol, he wrote the short *Vita* in an effort to raise money for the poor (*De Vita Beati Maioli abbatis*, *PL* cxlii. 943-5); J. Leclercq, 'St. Majolus and Cluny', *Aspects of Monasticism*, pp. 206-26. In the Cluniac Customaries the duty of dispensing alms to the poor is placed upon a special officer, the *Eleemosynarius*, whose function is quite separate from general hospitality, the task of the *Custos Hospitum*: W. Witters, 'Pauvres et pauvreté dans les coutumes monastiques du Moyen Âge', in M. Mollat (ed.), *Études sur l'histoire de la pauvreté* (Paris, 1974), pp. 194-5, 205-9.

² Isa. 9: 13.

v. *De pace et habundantia anni millesimi a Passione Domini*¹

14. Anno a passione Domini millesimo, memorate cladis penurias subsequente, sedatis nimborum imbribus, respectu diuine bonitatis et misericordie, cepit leta facies celi clarescere congruisque ethereis^a flare placidaque serenitate magnanimitatem Conditoris ostendere, telluris quoque tota superficies amicabiliter uirens frugum habundantiam funditus inopiam expellendo portendere. Tunc ergo primitus cepere in Aquitanie partibus ab episcopis et abbatibus ceterisque uiris sacre religionis deuotis ex uniuersa plebe coadunari conciliorum conuentus, ad quos etiam multa delata sunt corpora sanctorum atque innumerabiles sanctarum apoforete reliquiarum. Dehinc per Arelatensem prouintiam ac Lugdunensem, sicque per uniuersam Burgundiam usque in ultimas Francie partes per uniuersos episcopatus indictum est qualiter certis in locis a presulibus magnatisque totius patrie de reformanda pace et sacre fidei institutione celebrarentur concilia.

(f. 42^v) Quod etiam tota multitudo uniuerse plebis audiens, | letanter adiere maximi, mediocres ac minimi, parati cuncti obedire quicquid preceptum fuisset a pastoribus ecclesie, non minus uidelicet quam si uox emissa de celo hominibus in terra loqueretur. Terrebat enim uniuersos clades preteriti temporis, instabatque metus ne <non>^b adipiscerentur opulentiam future ubertatis.

15. Erat quippe descriptio capitatum digesta, qua continebantur tam illa que fieri prohibebantur quam ea que deuota sponsione omnipotenti Domino offerre decreuerant. In quibus potissimum erat de inuiolabili pace conseruanda, ut scilicet uiri utriusque

^a So *BAd*; ethereis (sc. auris?) substantivized?

^b Supplied by Winterbottom

¹ By the mid-10th c. the French monarchy had little effective power south of the Loire. By the last quarter of the century all public authority, including that of dukes and counts, was being threatened with annexation to the private honours and estates of the aristocracy and the church. For a detailed study of this process in one area see Duby, pp. 155–71. The violence and anarchy generated by the collapse of the public authorities forced the bishops of southern France to seek methods of protecting the persons and property of the clergy, the poor, and other vulnerable groups from the violence of the feudal aristocracy. They developed the notion of the 'Peace of God', under which Councils were held at which the aristocracy were asked to swear oaths to refrain from war, in the presence of great assemblies of the clergy and people which acted as moral pressure upon them. The first such councils were at Le Puy in 975 and Charroux in 989 or 990: H. F. J. Cowdrey, 'The Peace and Truce of God', *Past and Present*, xli (1970), 42–67. It is not possible to identify which Council or Councils Glaber was referring to in this passage because the account is 'chronologically telescoped': Cowdrey, p. 44. It may

v. *Peace and abundance mark the millennium of the Lord's Passion*¹

14. At the millennium of the Lord's Passion, which followed these years of famine and disaster, by divine mercy and goodness the violent rainstorms ended; the happy face of the sky began to shine and to blow with gentle breezes and by gentle serenity to proclaim the magnanimity of the Creator. The whole surface of the earth was benignly verdant, portending ample produce which altogether banished want. It was then that the bishops and abbots and other devout men of Aquitaine first summoned great councils of the whole people, to which were borne the bodies of many saints and innumerable caskets of holy relics. The movement spread to Arles and Lyons, then across all Burgundy into the furthest corners of the French realm. Throughout the dioceses it was decreed that in fixed places the bishops and magnates of the entire country should convene councils for re-establishing peace and consolidating the holy faith. When the people heard this, great, middling, and poor, they came rejoicing and ready, one and all, to obey the commands of the clergy no less than if they had been given by a voice from heaven speaking to men on earth. For all were still cowed by the recent carnage, and feared lest they might not obtain future abundance and plenty.

15. A roll divided into headings was drawn up, giving a list of all that was prohibited, and a record of what men had, by sworn undertaking, decided to offer to Almighty God. The most important of these was that the peace should be preserved inviolate so

well be, however, that Glaber was struck by the frequency of Aquitanian councils—of Charroux (1027–8), Limoges (1028), Poitiers (1029–31), and Bourges (1031)—coinciding with those in Burgundy at Verdun-sur-le-Doubs (1019–21) and Anse (1025): *ibid.* Glaber's account is especially valuable for the very clear picture it gives of the mechanics of the process and the way a formal record was kept, as indicated in para. 15. But it is the sense of revivalist exaltation, conveyed in para. 16, which stays most vividly in the memory. For the employment of the relics of saints in the Peace Movement see N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les Reliques des saints: Formation coutumière d'un droit* (Paris, 1975), pp. 223–5, and see above, pp. lxxix–lxx. Glaber's near contemporary, Adhémar de Chabannes, is also a very valuable source for the Peace Movement, as Cowdrey, pp. 45, n. 11, 49–50n. Glaber later refers, 5. i. 15, to the 'Truce of God', which sought to stop all violence at particular times, most notably on the Sabbath and special holy days. It had more limited ends and never seems to have generated the remarkable enthusiasm associated with the 'Peace of God'. Hugh of Flavigny borrows heavily from this chapter for the year 1033, using even the famous simile of the dog returning to its vomit from para. 17.

conditionis, cuiuscumque ante fuissent rei obnoxii, absque formidine procederent armis uacui. Predo namque aut inuasor alterius facultatis, legum districtione artatus, uel donis facultatum seu penis corporis acerrime mulctaretur. Locis nichilominus sacris omnium ecclesiarum honor et reuerentia talis exhiberetur ut, si quis ad ea cuiuscumque culpe obnoxius confugium faceret, inlesus euaderet, nisi solummodo ille qui pactum predictae pacis uiolasset, hic tamen captus ab altare prestatutam uindictam lueret: clericis similiter omnibus, monachis et sanctimonialibus, ut, si quis cum eis per regionem pergeret, nullam uim ab aliquo pateretur.

16. Plurima autem in eisdem conciliis constituta sunt que per longum duximus referre. Illud sane memorandum, quod omnibus in commune placuit qualiter omnibus ebdomadibus sanctione perpetua sexta die abstineretur a uino et a carnibus septima, nisi forte grauis infirmitas compelleret aut celeberrima sollempnitas interueniret; si uero effectio aliqua intercederet, ut hic tenor paululum laxaretur, tres proinde pauperes uictu sustentarentur. Tunc innuere sanitates patrate sunt infirmantium in eisdem conuentibus sanctorum. Sed et ne cui friuolum uideretur, in multis disrupta cutis discissaque caro crurium et brachiorum, nuper curuorum, erigendo in statum pristinum plurimus sanguis effundebatur. Quod utique in ceteris que dubitari^a poterant fidem prestabat. Quibus uniuersi tanto ardore accensi ut per manus episcoporum baculum ad celum eleuarent, ipsique palmis extensis ad Deum: 'Pax! pax! pax!' unanimiter clamarent, ut esset uidelicet signum perpetui pacti de hoc quod sponderant inter se et Deum: in hac tamen ratione ut, euoluto quinquennio, confirmande pacis gratia, id ipsum ab uniuersis in orbe fieret mirum in modum. Eodem denique anno tanta copia habundantie frumenti et uini ceterarumque frugum extitit quanta in subsequente quinquennio contigisse sperari^b non potuit.¹ Aliquis enim uictus humanus, preter carnes seu deliciosa pulmentaria, nullius erat precii: erat autem instar illius antiqui mosaici magni iubelei.² Sequenti uero anno, tercio et quarto, non minus prouenit.

(f. 43) **17.** Sed heu! pro dolor! humana denique stirps, | immemor beneficiorum Dei ab initio, prona ad malum, ueluti canis ad uomitum, uel

^a dubitari *France*; dubitare *BAxD*

^b sperari *Ax* (after correction?); spirari *BD*

¹ This could mean that the harvest of that year was greater than in the following five

that all men, lay and religious, whatever threats had hung over them before, could now go about their business without fear and unarmed. The robber and the man who seized another's domains were to suffer the whole rigour of the law, either by a heavy fine or corporal punishment. The holy places of all churches were to be held in such honour and reverence that if someone guilty of any crime fled there he would get off unharmed, unless he had violated the peace oath, in which case he could be seized before the altar and made to suffer the established penalty. All clerics, monks, and nuns also were to be given reverence, such that those travelling with them were not to be harmed by anyone.

16. Much was decided at these councils which we wish to relate at length. One matter worth remembering is that all agreed, by a perpetual edict, that men, except when gravely ill, should always abstain from wine on the sixth day of the week, and from flesh on the seventh, unless an important feast happened to fall on one of these days. If, for any reason, a man had slightly to relax this prohibition, he was to feed three poor men. Many sick people were cured at these gatherings of holy men. Lest any doubt this, let it be recorded that as the bent legs and arms were straightened and returned to their normal state, skin was broken, flesh was torn, and blood ran freely. These cases provided credence for others when doubts might have been conceived. Such enthusiasm was generated that the bishops raised their croziers to the heavens, and all cried out with one voice to God, their hands extended: 'Peace! Peace! Peace!' This was the sign of their perpetual covenant with God. It was understood that after five years all should repeat this wonderful celebration in order to confirm the peace. In that same year there was such a plentiful abundance of corn and wine and other foods that the like could not be hoped to be attained in the following five years.¹ All food was cheap except meat and rare spices: truly it was like the great Mosaic jubilee of ancient times.² For the following three years food was no less plentiful.

17. But alas! since the beginning of time mankind has ever been forgetful of the benefits conferred by God, and prone to evil; like a

put together, but the more natural sense would seem to be that another such could not be hoped for in five years.

² On the divine institution of the Jubilee through Moses see Lev. 25: 8-55.

sus lota in ceni uolutabrum,^{1a} irritum in multis fecere^b proprie sponsionis pactum, et, sicut scriptum est, 'impinguatus et dilatatus recalcitrauit'.² Nam ipsi primates utriusque ordinis in auariciam uersi ceperunt exercere plurimas, ut olim fecerant uel etiam eo amplius, rapinas cupiditatis. Deinde mediocres ac minores exemplo maiorum ad immania sunt flagitia deuoluti. Quis enim umquam antea tantos incestus, tanta adulteria, tantas consanguinitatis inlicitas permixtiones, tot concubinarum ludibria, tot malorum emulationes audiuerat? Insuper ad cumulum tanti mali, cum non essent in populo uel rari qui ceteros corrigentes talia redarguerent, impletum est prophete uaticinium quod ait: 'Et erit sicut populus, sic sacerdos'.³ presertim cum tunc in seculari potestate, tum etiam in ecclesiastica religione, totius regiminis persone constiterant in puerili etate; propter peccata enim populi contigit tunc illud Salomonicum quod ait: 'Ve tibi terre.'^{4c} Nam et ipse uniuersalis papa Romanus, nepos scilicet duorum, Benedicti atque Iohannis, qui ei precesserant, puer ferme decennis, intercedente thesaurorum peccunia, electus extitit a Romanis, a quibus exinde frequenter eiectus ac inhoneste receptus, nulla potestate uiguit.⁵ Et, ut iam superius taxauimus, ceteros tunc temporis ecclesiarum prelatos aurum potius uel argentum exaltabat quam meritum.⁶ Pro pudor! de his euidentissime Scriptura ait, immo os ipsius Dei: 'Principes extiterunt et non cognoui.'⁷

vi. *De confluentia populi totius orbis que ad sepulchrum Domini Iherosolimis facta est*

18. Per idem tempus ex uniuerso orbe tam innumerabilis multitudo cepit confluere ad sepulchrum Saluatoris Iherosolimis⁸ quantam nullus hominum prius sperare poterat. Primitus enim

^a Perhaps uolutabro (*Winterbottom*), cf. 2 Pet. 2: 22
^c Perhaps terra (*Migne*); cf. Eccles. 10: 16

^b fecere D; facere BAx

¹ Cf. Prov. 26: 11; 2 Pet. 2: 22.

² Cf. Deut. 32: 15.

³ Isa. 24: 2; Hos. 4: 9.

⁴ Eccles. 10: 16: 'Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child.'

⁵ Theophylact, son of Alberic III of Tusculum, became pope as Benedict IX (1032-45) in succession to his uncles Benedict VIII and John XIX, on whom see above, i. 3 n. Glaber here alleges that he was ten years old when he became pope, but later, at the end of the work (5. v. 26), says that he was about twelve. In fact there are grounds for believing that he was an adult when elected: Poole, *Studies*, pp. 203-4, 216-17; Herrmann,

dog returning to its vomit or a pig to wallowing in its mire,¹ in many respects they broke their own sworn agreements. Truly it is written: 'He had grown fat and thick . . . and kicked against the pricks. . . .'² The leaders of the clerical and temporal orders alike fell into avarice, and they resorted, even more than had formerly been their wont, to robbery to satisfy their lusts. Middling and lesser people followed their example and plunged into monstrous sin. Whoever before heard of so many incests, so many adulteries, illicit marriages between those of the same blood, shameless concubinage, and so much competition in evil? Moreover, to crown this peak of evil, there were none or very few amongst the people admonishing them and correcting these offences, so that the warning of the prophet was fulfilled: 'And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest.'³ Especially remarkable was the fact that supreme power in the church, as in the state, had then fallen to one of tender years; because of the people's sins was fulfilled the prophecy of Solomon: 'Woe to thee, O land.'⁴ For the Roman pontiff himself was a child barely ten years old, the nephew of the two who preceded him, Benedict and John. It was only because of his enormous riches that he was elected by the Romans, who often expelled him and then allowed him to make an ignominious return, so that he wielded no power.⁵ And, as we have already recounted, at this time all the other princes of the church owed their elevation to gold and silver rather than merit.⁶ For shame! quite evidently Scripture, or rather the mouth of God himself, says of them: 'Princes arose and I knew them not.'⁷

vi. *People from all over the world flock to the Sepulchre of the Lord at Jerusalem*

18. At this time an innumerable multitude of people from the whole world, greater than any man before could have hoped to see, began to travel to the Sepulchre of the Saviour at Jerusalem.⁸ First

Tuskulanerpapsttum, pp. 20–2, discusses the evidence and concludes that Benedict IX was a young man at his accession, but not a child as Glaber suggests.

⁶ Glaber has already bemoaned the prevalence of simony and corruption in the church, above, 2. vi. 11–12.

⁷ Hos. 8: 4.

⁸ Glaber goes on to mention the pilgrimage of Ulric, bishop of Orléans, and Robert, duke of Normandy (paras. 19, 20), and later records the death of Fulk of Anjou returning from his third journey to Jerusalem: 4. ix. 26.