

## The Early Church in Ireland

(mor.ire)

### Part 1 - Paul and James in Ireland

In the article "The Early Church in Britain" of 30 September 1992, on pages 6 and 7, the author referred to the report by Frederick Haberman, (Ref 1 p.141), which tells of the twenty ninth chapter of Acts which is in the Turkish Archives at Istanbul.

Several paragraphs from the twenty ninth chapter of Acts give indications that St. Paul went to Britain. These are quoted below for convenience:-

"And Paul, full of the blessings of Christ, and abounding in the Spirit, departed out of Rome, determining to go into Spain; for he had a long time purposed to journey thitherwards, and he was minded to go from thence into Britain. For he had heard in Phoenicia that certain of the children of Israel, about the time of the Assyrian captivity, had escaped by sea to the "isles afar off" as spoken by the prophet, and called by the Romans Britain".

"And they departed out of Spain, and Paul and his company finding a ship in Armorica sailing into Britain, they went therein and passing along the south coast, they reached a port called Raphinus".

"And on the morrow he came and stood on Mount Lud; and the people thronged at the gate, and assembled in the Broadway, and he preached Christ unto them, and many believed the word and the testimony of Jesus Christ".

The writer of "The Early Church in Britain" indicated that he had been unable to trace a port called "Raphinus" on maps of Roman Britain. Recently he found a geographical reference to Ireland in the times of the Roman by Richard of Cirencester, (Ref 2 p.460 para. 13). This reference reads as follows:-

"13. The southern side of the island, (i.e. of Ireland), stretched from the promontorium Austriacum, or southern promontory to the Sacred promontory. Here lived the Ibernii, whose metropolis was Rhufina. Next was the river Dobona, and the people called Vodiae, whose promontory of the same name lies opposite to the Promontorium Antivestaeum in England, at about the distance of one hundred and forty five miles. Not far from there is the River Dabrona, the boundary of the Brigantes who have also the river Briga for their limit and whose chief town is called Brigantia".

A footnote on p.441 of Ref 2, explains that the Promontories Bolerium and Antivestaeum are Lands End and Lizards Point, (of Cornwall), respectively. In the Atlas of the Classical World, map 65 of Roman Britain, Lands End is shown as Belerium Promontory. (Ref 3 p.164). The Southern Promontory appears to be "Toe Head" and the Sacred Promontory appears to be "Carnsore Point". The distance from Lands End to Carnsore Point is "about 145 miles"!

The Vodiae must be a Roman name for an Irish clan but the Ibernii were the people named after Eber who was allocated the southern part of Ireland at the time of the Milesian conquest, Erimhon taking Northern Ireland. Eber, son of Ir was allocated Ulster, and Lugaidh, son of Ith, was allocated Corca Luighe. (part of Cork). (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.207). The Brigantes were the people of Lugaidh who later moved from the Cork area to the east in the area which became known as the Kingdom of Meath and Bregia. (Ref 4 Vol 3 p.719). The plains of the Brigantes became known as "Campus Brigantium" in Latin.

Dr Hoeh, (Ref 5 Vol 2 p.284), points out that the Epistle of James, (KJV), is addressed to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. Chapter 4v1 queries :- "From whence come wars and fighting among you?" Dr Hoeh states that "James wrote this book about 60 AD. (he was martyred about two years later according to Josephus). The world was temporarily at peace .....cowed by the fear of Roman military might. Just prior to AD 60 only two areas of the world were torn by war and civil fightings". "..... these two lands were the British Isles and the Parthian Empire".

Ireland was not taken over by Rome nor was there war between Ireland and Rome at that time. However, a violent civil war had broken out in Ireland. The Athach - Tuatha (latinised to Attacoti), who were believed to be the descendants of the Firbolg and others treated as servile and helot classes, had rebelled and overthrown the ruling Gaels. (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.292). Such was the chaos during this war that even the dates of the early Christian period are in confusion, Keating's dates being very different than those of the Four Masters. (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.290/293 & p294/297). Dr Hoeh comes to the rescue again by showing that Roderic O'Flaherty, who has the most reliable dates for Irish History, records the "interregnum" of the rebellion during 60-65 AD. (Ref 5 Vol 1 p.434)

James, son of Alphaeus, left Palestine twelve years after Christ's death. This was after James, the brother of John, had been martyred by Herod. (Acts 12v2). Cave (on page 148 of the History of The Apostles) states that James came to the Western parts of Europe and particularly into Spain (some add Briton and Ireland). (Ref 5 Vol 2 p.300/301).

It has already been seen that Peter, Paul, Simon Zelotes, Joseph of Aramathea and Aristobolis went to preach to the lost tribes in Britain. (See "The Early Church in Britain"). In fact, the twenty ninth chapter of Acts appeared to give Biblical confirmation of Paul's arrival in London but it was not possible to find "Raphinus". It now appears that this port is the Rhufina on the southern coast of Ireland reported by Cirencester.

According to Keating, the first recorded Christian in Ireland was Concohar MacNessa, King of Ulster. (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.287 and P.356). The second was Moran MacMaein, son of the Rebel King, Carbri Kincaidd. (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.292 & p.356). In AD 213, Cormac Ul-Fada, (of the house of Erimhon), became King of Ireland and ruled for forty years. He is listed as the third Christian in Ireland. (Ref 4 Vol 1 p.328 & p.356).

It is now apparent that "The Early Church in Britain" requires to be modified to take into the account the information revealed in this article. It is also apparent further research is necessary to ascertain whether there is or was a Mount Lud near Rhufina and whether the rivers mentioned by Cirencester can be identified. Obviously, it is also necessary to more specifically identify "Rhufina" with its Irish name.

#### Publication References

1. Tracing our White Ancestors by Frank Haberman. (Published by America Promise Ministries - 1989 - First Edition 1934).
2. Six Old English Chronicles Edited by J A Giles (including Richard of Cirencester) - Reprinted from the Edition of 1848, London by Ames Press Inc NY - 1968 - Library of Congress catalogue card number : 68-57866 .
3. Atlas of the Classical World edited by AAM van der Heyden and HH Scullard. (Published by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1967 - First printed 1959).

Publication References (continued)

4. The History of Ireland from the earliest period to the English Invasion by Geoffrey Keating -1629- Translated from the original Gaelic by John O'Mahony -1857 (Published by Irish Genealogical Foundation).

5. Compendium of World History by Herman L Hoeh. (Published 1962/63).

This article is issued as a free service research article to the Worldwide Church of God. A complementary copy of this article has been sent to Dr Herman L Hoeh. Prepared by Douglas S Morley - 5 August 1993 - Sydney - Australia.