



The Latin Clerk

The Life, Work, and Travels
of Adrian Fortescue

Aidan Nichols



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Frontispiece: Adrian Fortescue at Letchworth: probably the last photograph taken of him; circulated after his death by his executrix, Ethel Elmes.

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Preface

I had long admired Adrian Fortescue, dedicating to his memory in 1992 the first, Edinburgh, edition of my *Rome and the Eastern Churches. A Study in Schism* (and the dedication of course remained in the second, San Francisco, edition of 2010). But the idea of writing something about him came to me when reading Janet Martin Soskice's page-turner, *Sisters of Sinai. How Two Lady Adventurers found the Hidden Gospels* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2009). I realised that some of the same elements found in her book were likely to be present in a study of Fortescue.

Firstly, here was someone fascinated by the Christian East and closely acquainted with it through travel. As a commentator on matters Oriental Fortescue combined romantic enthusiasm with political savvy and theological insight, a rather rare but (to me) attractive combination. Secondly, there was a Cambridge connexion — I liked that, as a resident of the city for twenty-five years — for as his diaries show, Fortescue was often in Cambridge, whether to meet dons, shop at Heffer's, or make a sacramental confession. Letchworth Garden City, his home for the larger part of his priestly life, was on the Cambridge to King's Cross railway, and still is, if you catch a stopping train. It is appropriate that perhaps the largest single cache of his letters is preserved in the Cambridge University Library. Thirdly, like Janet Soskice's 'Sisters of Sinai', Fortescue had a passionate concern with Christian antiquity. Listen to what he says — and the undertone of *pietas* in what he says — in so apparently unlikely a source as a Catholic Truth Society pamphlet on vestments. (He is speaking of the old Latin Mass, now celebrated under the somewhat exotic title, the 'Extraordinary Form'.)

If Ambrose or Augustine or Leo came back now they would find hardly a thing in our world intelligible. Our language, dress, manners, even food would be utterly barbarous and strange to them. And then, if they wandered into a Catholic church, there and there alone would they be at home. They would see the sacrifice they offered still shown forth in the same way. They

would recognize the prayers and understand the language that they used. And as they gazed from the barbarous clothes of the congregation to the altar they would see at least one man dressed as they were. They would recognize the *tunica talaris* [the alb] girt, the *lorum* [the stole], the *mappula* [maniple] on his left arm, and I think — I hope — that they would recognize that he wore over all a *planeta* [chasuble], as they had done. So the ghosts of the mighty men who spread the name of Christ throughout the dying Empire would know that, in spite of all changes, their Church still stands, after sixteen long centuries.

That reminds me of a fourth and last reason for wanting to write about Fortescue. Whereas Professor Soskice's 'Lady Adventurers' were Presbyterians, the relicts of Anglican clergymen, and rather enjoyed conversational opportunities to share with the Orthodox indignation at the enormities of Rome, this was a thoroughly Catholic subject, likely to be of use in my own lifetime theological project of accessing and making more available to others the riches of the Catholic tradition. Fortescue's attempts to show people — in both theory and practice — the best of the Church's liturgical patrimony is a good example of that. His love of the Christian East was strong enough for him to consider transferring, as a priest, to the Byzantine Rite (in later parlance, the Byzantine 'ritual church'), but he remained what he called himself: 'The Latin Clerk'.

It was never likely that the drama of Professor Soskice's narrative would be reproduced in my materials. Still, Adrian Fortescue's literary panache might, I thought, make up for the absence of so strong a story-line. I think so still, and he knew a great deal more about Christian history, Liturgy, and the contemporary condition of the Eastern churches than did the 'Sisters of Sinai', as well as surpassing them as a linguist. Syriac, which the ladies (or at any rate one of them) made their *forte*, was among his accomplishments, as bear witness citations — admittedly, these are brief — in that language from the *Chronicle of Edessa* and the *Hymn of the Apostle Judas Thomas* in his teaching notes from St Edmund's College, Ware. It seems to have been rather a Johnny-come-lately among his various tongues: a Notebook preserved in the Westminster Diocesan Archives claims assiduous study of Syriac in the last two years of the First World War, though he must have had an elementary knowledge before that date, for he discusses how best to render Syriac orthography in the preface to his *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, which dates from 1913. More conspicuously, Hebrew and Arabic were constituent elements in the *doctoratus completus* that gave him his sobriquet 'the Doctor' among the Westminster clergy, and he was able to practice a Syrian form of Arabic during his stay in the Middle East in 1906–1907. At that time he was still hopeful he might be considered a candidate for a chair of Oriental Languages at Vienna.

In its zest and many-sidedness, Fortescue's example of a priestly life is inspirational. His life was not without its difficulties: early bereavement, uncongenial postings, self-questioning as a pastoral priest, serious irritation at what he considered the excessive caution of Church authority in its attitude to scholarship, and, signalled poignantly at one point, the breakdown of friendship. And finally there was the cancer that took him to a premature death. But as the king (Fortescue would have considered him, rather, the Elector of Hanover) remarks to the queen in Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III*: no life is without its regrets, and none without its consolations.

For the help received in looking at original documents I am very grateful to Dom Aidan Bellenger, the Abbot of Downside; Father Nicholas Schofield, the Archivist of the Westminster Archdiocesan Archives, together with his assistants Claire Muller and Peter Kent, and to Nicholas Robinson of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, who located for me the Fortescue letters in the manuscripts collection of the Cambridge University Library. Alan Robinson of St Edmund's College, Ware, put into my hands a copy of a privately printed book, *Adrian*, by the late Mgr John R. McCarthy of East Cleveland, Ohio, which assembles a mass of materials — invaluable for Fortescue's family background — in a rather disorganized and altogether non-paginated way. He also allowed me to see, and handle, the wonderful Fortescue vestments and frontals, saved from decomposition at Letchworth by the efforts of Duncan Gallie, also of St Edmund's, Ware. It is excellent to see how well they are now cared for in the place where Fortescue taught seminarians in the last years of his life. Fergal Martin of the Catholic Truth Society kindly arranged for me to look at rare copies of Fortescue pamphlets published by the Society in the early years of the twentieth century, and the staff of the Society's headquarters in Vauxhall — Carlo Boi, Pier Paolo Finaldi, and Eddie O'Brien — went to considerable trouble to help me in my search. And I must thank too, of course, Professor Soskice for the stimulus provided by her delightful book. Finally, the author and publisher are extremely grateful to Josh Tidy, Curator of the First Garden City Museum at Letchworth, for permission to use photographic images made in connexion with the Museum's special exhibition about the life and work of Adrian Fortescue, which was mounted in 2008.

Blackfriars, Cambridge,
Ash Wednesday, 2011.

1. Background and Boyhood

Paternal inheritance

Adrian Fortescue belonged to a gentry family with strong clerical connexions in the Anglican establishment. His father, Edward Bowles Knottesford Fortescue (1816–1877), was born at Stoke-by-Nayland in Suffolk, the son of Francis Fortescue and Maria Fortescue, née Downing (her father, George Downing, was rector of Ovington and a prebendary of Ely cathedral).¹ Francis Fortescue (1772–1859) had taken Orders in the Church of England, as would his son. But thanks to the testamentary arrangements of his godfather he became a very wealthy man. A condition of the inheritance was adding ‘Knottesford’, the surname of his benefactor, to his own, and in due course it was passed down to the subject of this book. In 1823, the couple moved with (at that point) their two small sons, George and Edward, to the family estate, Alveston Manor,² then on the outskirts of Stratford on Avon, where Francis lived as a ‘squarson’, acting as rector of the parish of Billesley, some five miles from their home.³ Educated at home and then at Wadham College, Oxford, Edward Fortescue married, when 22, Frances Anne Spooner, the daughter of Archdeacon William Spooner, the rector of Elmdon (like Billesley, Elmdon was a Warwickshire village).⁴ The wedding, solemnized by his father, brought Edward valuable connexions. The bride’s aunt, Barbara Spooner, from a Birmingham mercantile family of Evangelical

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1. T. Fortescue, Lord Clermont, *A History of the Family of Fortescue in All its Branches* (London: Ellis and White, 1880, 2nd edition), p. 23.
 2. Now, one regrets to say, the Macdonald Alveston Manor Hotel.
 3. For most of my information about Fortescue’s father and grandfather, I am reliant on J.R. McCarthy, *Adrian. Adrian Fortescue, Cleric of the Roman Rite. A Biography* (East Cleveland, OH: McCarthy, 1999). As mentioned in the Preface, this book has not been provided with pagination. For indications of how his data were acquired, the author refers the reader to his unpublished dissertation of 1972 from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.
 4. T. Fortescue, Lord Clermont, *A History of the Family of Fortescue in All its Branches*, op. cit., p. 23. The elder William Spooner was Archdeacon of Coventry.

propensities, was the wife of William Wilberforce (1759–1833), the hero of the campaign for abolition of the slave trade.⁵ Frances's sister would marry Archibald Campbell Tait (1811–1882), who reached the pinnacle of Anglican achievement as archbishop of Canterbury. Her brother, William Archibald Spooner (1844–1930), Warden of New College, Oxford, was the hapless inventor of the 'spoonerism'.⁶ Among Frances's cousins was Samuel Wilberforce (1805–1873), later bishop in turn of Oxford and Winchester. In turn, Samuel Wilberforce was related by marriage to Henry Edward Manning (1808–1892), sometime archdeacon of Chichester and later to be archbishop of Westminster (their wives were sisters). Edward Fortescue was thoroughly wired in to the English Establishment. Possibly, given Tait's Caledonian origin, one should write 'British'.

He was made a deacon in 1838, the year he wed, and a priest the year following. Perhaps predictably, he served his title as curate to his father, who gave him responsibility for building a chapel of ease at nearby Wilmcote, hitherto a stronghold of Nonconformity and known to the history of English literature as the birthplace of Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother. Edward, strongly influenced when at Wadham by the Oxford Movement, made sure the new congregation was Tractarian in allegiance, but he was not to remain a Warwickshire curate for ever. In 1850, owing to the 'powerful recommendations of Lord Forbes and the Honourable Mr Boyle, Banker and Heir to the Earl of Glasgow' (so his father explained to the President of Magdalen College, Oxford, Martin Routh, a Tractarian sympathizer, 1755–1854)⁷ — Edward Fortescue was elected Provost of the newly founded Scots Episcopal cathedral of St Ninian at Perth (the first cathedral to be built by the Episcopalians, the foundation stone had been laid the previous year). The terms of the communication leave a strong impression that the canon-electors were swayed not least by the realization that the successful candidate was wealthy enough not to require remuneration. Though the proud father told Routh that Scottish Episcopalianism remained 'the most

5 R. Furneaux, *William Wilberforce* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), pp. 161–171.

6 R. Hayter, *Spooner. A Biography* (London: W. H. Allen, 1977), pp. 18–19.

7 A search for this letter (cited by McCarthy) among the Routh Papers at Magdalen College, Oxford, by the Archivist, Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, has proved fruitless. But Routh had a well-documented interest in the fortunes of the Scottish Episcopal Church, see R.D. Middleton, *Dr Routh* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 65–75. It is pertinent to the terms in which Francis Fortescue wrote to know that Routh had been the dedicatee of Newman's 1837 *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church*, the classic statement of the Anglican 'via media' between Protestantism and Rome, in R.D. Middleton, *Dr Routh*, op. cit., pp. xi, 138–139.

powerful bulwark and most effective testimony against the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome', in 1857 his son became chairman of the Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom, the aim of which was precisely to reconcile the Anglican and Catholic Churches — though the bishops of the Church of England shunned it, and in time the participation of Catholics would be forbidden. In July 1871 Edward Fortescue resigned as Provost of Perth, re-married at Marylebone Parish Church (his first wife had died in 1868), and in 1872, along with his new spouse, Gertrude Robins, was received into full communion with the Catholic Church. He had evidently met with travails in post.

[A]t Perth . . . Dr. Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of S. Andrew's, Dunkeln, and Dunblane, refused to worship in his own cathedral because he objected to the very mild ceremonial which had been introduced by Provost Fortescue and the Precentor, Mr. Henry Humble.⁸

More fundamentally, however, his change of religious allegiance had been prompted by the ringing clarity of the teaching on Church authority offered by the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) which defined the universal jurisdiction and doctrinal infallibility of the pope.

Conversion

The Provost's conversion was just the sort of thing Cardinal Manning of Westminster, an architect of the Ultramontane triumph at the Council, rather expected — and in the event was by no means wholly disappointed. '[A]fter a lull between 1855 and 1868 the stream of conversions began again. The peak period of this . . . movement lasted from 1869 to 1874 but a gradual flow continued throughout the century.'⁹ On the analysis offered by the historian of post-Reformation English Catholicism David Mathew, a sharp contrast pertains between 'Newman's converted disciples' and 'Manning's converts'. The former, 'drawn partly by affection for the Master', were, typically, dons and learned clergymen. The latter, 'assisted towards the Church by Dr Manning's clear rather arid arguments and forceful piety', were more likely to be members of the secular professions (unless they were hereditary peers or, even more abundantly, peeresses).¹⁰ If Mathew is correct in his generalisations, then Fortescue senior was something of a sport in his generation, a throwback to the 'Oakeley–Faber

8 P. Anson, *Fashions in Church Furnishing, 1840–1940* (London: Studio Vista, 1965, 2nd edition), p. 184.

9 D. Mathew, *Catholicism in England, 1535–1935. Portrait of a Minority: its Culture and Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1936), p. 210.

10 Ibid.

period¹¹. The son of this belated Tractarian convert was born on 14 January 1874, to a rather elderly father but a very definitely Catholic one.

In the period, the question of the possible (re-)ordination of married Anglican clergy simply did not arise. Instead, Edward Fortescue served his new Communion as an educator, becoming Principal of the school attached to the church of the Sacred Heart in Holloway (north London), where he also taught Latin and Greek. His closest Catholic associations, however, were with the Dominican friars at Haverstock Hill, only a mile or two from the school (both districts fringed Hampstead Heath). The Dominicans evidently appreciated their gifted (and wealthy) friend, responding with full liturgical honours — Solemn Vespers of the Dead, Matins of the Dead, a celebration of High Mass — to his sudden demise in August 1877 at the age of sixty-one. Apart from four sons and a daughter from his first marriage, he had left a young widow and three small children: Clara Mary Katherine, aged 5; Adrian Henry, aged 3, and Gertrude Raphael, aged ten months.

Mother and school

His widow, Gertrude Mary Fortescue, née Robins (1839–1886), came from a similar background to her husband.¹² The daughter of a clergyman, the Revd Sanderson Robins (his literary remains include an 1855 broadside *The Whole Evidence against the Claims of the Roman Church*), her grandmother, Lady Caroline Barham, had been the youngest daughter of the eighth Earl of Thanet. Like her husband to be, Gertrude Robins had gravitated towards the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England — not perhaps in its healthiest form, since she was for a while the prioress of a Benedictine sisterhood founded by the distinctly unbalanced Father Ignatius of Llanthony, otherwise Joseph Leycester Lyne (1837–1908).¹³ After breaking with her monastic mentor she moved for a time to a Scottish Episcopal sisterhood, the Community of St Mary and St John

11 Ibid., p. 209. The reference is to two Tractarian converts both named ‘Frederick’: Frederick Oakeley (1802–1880), on whom see P. Galloway, *Passionate Humility: Frederick Oakeley and the Oxford Movement* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1999), and Frederick William Faber (1814–1863), on whom see M.J. Wilkinson, *Frederick William Faber. A Great Servant of God* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2007).

12 Once again, the writer is indebted for the broad lines of Mrs Fortescue’s life to John McCarthy’s popularly presented summary in *Adrian* of his earlier research.

13 A. Calder-Marshall, *the Enthusiast. An Enquiry into the Life, Beliefs and Character of the Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne, alias Father Ignatius OSB, Abbot of Elm Hill, Norwich, and Llanthony, Wales* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962).

– also known as the Scottish Society of Reparation – which had its origins in an orphanage run by the widow of a Tractarian clergyman in Leith. In due course, the foundress, Elizabeth Ann McDowal White, transferred her foundation to Perth where she was assured of support from Edward Fortescue, who acted as its Warden.¹⁴ In addition to its laudable practical aims (the care of homeless children, Christian education, assistance to the parochial clergy), the Society took as its distinctive spiritual aim the ‘offering of reparative Adoration to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament on the Altar’,¹⁵ a sign of extremely ‘advanced’ opinions on Mrs White’s part. The historian of Anglican Religious life, Peter Anson, suggests the Warden may have got the idea of a community of ‘Adoration and Reparation’ while on holiday in France.¹⁶ In any case, there seems little doubt that, unlikely as it seems, this is how Adrian Fortescue’s parents met.

Mrs Fortescue was by no means poorly off. Already provided for in Edward Fortescue’s will, in 1878 she inherited the estate of the last Earl of Thanet. She moved to Maitland Park, Haverstock Hill, an address which lay within the bounds of the parish (as it would become¹⁷) attached to the Dominican priory of Our Lady of the Rosary and St Dominic, in Southampton Road, where a memorial chapel to her husband was eventually erected. The question of a Catholic education for her son naturally presented itself to his surviving parent. Despite her Dominican connexions (the English Province’s ‘apostolic school’, then at Hinckley in Leicestershire, was not, in this period, outstanding), Mrs Fortescue sent her only boy to the Jesuit preparatory school at Boulogne-sur-mer from 1883 to 1885, transferring him in that year to the school established by Cardinal Manning’s ‘Oblates of St Charles’ in Bayswater.

A matriarchal regime

Mrs Fortescue did not live long to enjoy her inheritance, dying at the age of 47 at Boulogne where she had taken a house, no doubt, in the first instance, to be near her son. Adrian, now 12, was taken into the household

14 P. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister. Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1955), pp. 446–449.

15 Ibid., p. 447.

16 Ibid., p. 448, footnote 1.

17 The parish system proper was only introduced into the post-Reformation Catholic Church in England in 1918. Earlier, there were ‘missions’, with missionary rectors rather than parish priests: M.V. Sweeney, ‘Diocesan Organization and Administration’, in G.A. Beck, A.A. *The English Catholics, 1850–1950* (London: Burns and Oates, 1950), pp. 116–150, and especially at pp. 119–122.

of an aunt, sited not too inconveniently so far as his schooling was concerned in the south of London, at Wimbledon. Katherine Robins had been an Anglican nun at Clewer, near Windsor, the mother house of the Community of St John the Baptist, founded 1852, one of the most successful examples of Catholic-minded Anglicans heeding the ‘call of the cloister’.¹⁸ She had left the sisterhood and become a Roman Catholic, and was now looking after her elderly mother, across the road from the Jesuit church.

It does not sound like an ideal environment for a young lad. Oscar Wilde’s remarks in *The Importance of Being Ernest* notwithstanding, the loss of both parents before one’s teenage years must count as a misfortune rather than carelessness. The exclusively female nature and (one suspects) unremittingly devout tone of the Wimbledon household must have produced at times its *longueurs*. Perhaps Adrian Fortescue’s decision to present himself for the priesthood was partly a desire to find a substitute parent in the Church — a Church which, though describing itself as ‘Holy Mother’, was very definitely patriarchal, rather than matriarchal, in structure. True, he did not give the impression of someone who had suffered serious emotional damage. But it may be significant that, by the demanding standards of priestly obedience in the period, his resilience in uncongenial situations was comparatively low.

The next stage

In October 1891, though a candidate for Manning’s archdiocese (it was the last year of the Cardinal’s life), Adrian Fortescue entered the Scots College at Rome.¹⁹ It seems an unusual choice. Perhaps there was no room

18 P. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, op. cit., pp. 304–317.

19 The principal biographical details are given in J.G. Vance and J.W. Fortescue, *Adrian Fortescue. A Memoir* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1924). Downside Archives, IX AF, Box B, ‘Notebook’, contains a chronology based on Fortescue’s correspondence with ‘Mrs Squire’, presumably his sister Clara Fortescue, who married George Frederick Squire in 1902, though I note that his master of ceremonies at Letchworth was named F.G. Squire. Westminster Diocesan Archives, Series 20, Box 22, includes a Notebook containing year by year summaries of his life and work, based, presumably, on the diaries but including material from the otherwise missing exercise-book notes on his extended Oriental journey of 1906–1907. A useful chronological table is provided in M. Davies (ed.), *The Wisdom of Adrian Fortescue* (Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books, 1999), pp. 78–85. Davies’s book is a collection of Fortescue’s articles on the Liturgy (prescinding from those on non-Western rites) as published in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* (but shorn of much of their scholarly apparatus), preceded by an essay that is substantial but, like McCarthy’s book, unprovided with references on Fortescue’s life and work.

at the Venerable English College when he applied, or possibly it was thought appropriate for the son of a former clergyman of the Scottish Church, even if Edward Fortescue *had* been an English import to a Protestant cathedral. His son would show no subsequent interest in Scotland – but an absorbing interest in a priestly life, and in everything that was beautiful in the culture of the Catholic Church.

2. The Formative Years

Beginning at the Scots College

The Pontifical Scots College in Rome had been founded in 1600 to educate students for the Catholic priesthood disabled by the sweeping acts of the 1560 Reformation Parliament from training at home.¹ It was centrally located in the Via delle Quattro Fontane, not far from St Mary Major, in a newish building, supposedly the work of the distinguished architect of the reconstructed basilica of St Paul outside the Walls, Luigi Poletti (1792–1869). It seems more likely, however, that Poletti did a rough sketch of the façade and left the rest to minions in his office.² From the beginning, its students attended the Collegio Romano (later the *Gregorianum* or ‘Gregorian University’), which was in easy walking distance. This continued to be the case even after the Society of Jesus ceased to be responsible for running the College, at the time of the Society’s temporary suppression by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. All in all, it must have been, for a seventeen year old Englishman, an unusual experience — Italy, the Scots, papal Rome, all three factors utterly new to him. Fortunately for the historian, Fortescue decided to keep a diary.

The diaries — mostly in Latin when Fortescue is in Rome or England, chiefly in German when, in 1894, he moved to Austria, occasionally straying into Greek, and periodically returning to English, with the odd dash of Arabic — are an invaluable resource for his formative years as an ecclesiastical student. (They are no less useful for his early years as a curate or priest-in-charge of missions whose ‘rectors’ were, for whatever reason, otherwise engaged, and likewise, if more patchily, for his time as parish priest of Letchworth, which is when he really made his mark). Squeezed into the intervals of a non-negotiable study schedule (so the diaries attest), Fortescue’s time at the Scots College was sensibly divided

1 Its history is told in the essays collected in R. McCluskey (ed.), *The Scots College, Rome, 1600-2000* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000).

2 R. McCluskey, ‘Tribulations, 1820–1922’, in *ibid.*, pp. 67–107, where McCluskey wrote laconically: ‘Indubitably the building could never be acclaimed an architectural wonder’, p. 85.

between music-making, familiarizing himself with the Roman churches, attending some of the great ceremonies, and making excursions to local beauty spots: the Pincio, the Borghese gardens, Lake Albano, Tivoli, as well as exploring the Roman catacombs. It was a healthy mix for a well-rounded yet ecclesiastically strongly committed young man who was also a keen and often humorous observer.

Rhythm of Roman life

The diary for 1892 gives us a typical picture, and rather more fully than some of its successors. In January 1892 he heard Mass on St Agnes's day at Sant'Agnese in the Piazza Navona ('music ghastly'), and was intrigued by the blessing of lambs' wool for the weaving of metropolitans' pallia. '[A]t the end of Mass they put two lambs in baskets on the altar, incensed them (which made them cough), blessed them and sent them on their way'³. On the day following, 22 January, he attended Cardinal Manning's Requiem, which was celebrated by the bishop of Portsmouth at San Silvestro, the 'English-speaking' church (Manning had died on 14 January), and on 3 March, the anniversary of the Pope's coronation, he watched Leo XIII, wearing the tiara, processing through the Sala Ducale. Despite these spectacles, he was not much affected by *Romanità*. In his Innsbruck years, possibly under the influence of the prevailing sentiment in the Dual Monarchy, he was inclined to think the post-Revolutionary expansion of the role of Pope and Curia to be on balance a bad thing. Discussing with his fellow Innsbruck student Karel Mosterts, a Westphalian a good deal more Ultramontane than himself, he could not agree with him on the advantages of 'the growth of my Lord Pope's power'.⁴ (We shall hear more of this theme in due course.)

By contrast with these solemn ceremonies, 11 March records a visit to a cakeshop, while on 17 March he is playing rounders in the Borghese gardens (strenuous outdoor activities play a big part in the diaries). On 5 April, sketching, he notes the flora of the Roman spring, and a fortnight or so later, the 'glorious views' obtained from riding on mule-back in the neighbourhood of Rocca di Papa, in the Alban hills.⁵ His strongly developed visual aesthetic sense would in due time be put to good use as a parish priest in the planning of his church, St Hugh at Letchworth, including such telling details as the calligraphy of its church notices and the design of vestments and altar fabrics worthy of Catholic worship.

3 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Agenda 1892', entry for 21 January, 1892.

4 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1899', entry for 20 September, 1899.

5 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Agenda 1892', entry for 20 April, 1892.



Adrian Fortescue at the Pontifical Scots College, Rome.

His Oriental interests were already emerging in his first year in Rome. On Holy Saturday, he attended the Armenian liturgy at San Niccolo di Tolentino and ‘got much blessed bread’,⁶ while a couple of months later he was talking to Greeks at the Collegio Greco about their Liturgy (first in Latin, then in French), and learned from them that ‘the best liturgical books are those published at Venice by schismatics’, i.e. by the Orthodox.⁷

A few days later he has a class on plainsong (a lifelong passion) with the chaplain of the German church, Santa Maria dell’Anima. On 28 June we find him at St Peter’s saying a *de profundis* for the last Stuarts at the monument by Canova. Fortescue’s Jacobitism was probably exacerbated by the atmosphere of the Scots College, with its tribunes for the exiled royal family, portraits of Cardinal York as Henry IX and I, and occasional requiem Masses for the Stuart kings or pretenders. But it appears to have been in his background, judging by a reference in Newman’s correspondence to his grandfather Francis as hailing from a ‘nonjuring’ family.⁸ (The Non-Jurors were High Anglicans who had gone into schism rather than break their canonical oaths of allegiance to James II, dethroned in the 1688 ‘Glorious Revolution’.) Quite possibly, the embers of a hereditary Jacobitism had been fanned by his father’s experience of Scottish Episcopalianism which, as a dissenting body, held no brief for the House of Hanover — or, later, Saxe-Coburg — over against the Stuarts. At any rate, his allegiance emerges clearly in the diaries, where White Rose Day (10 June, anniversary of the birth of the Old Pretender in 1688) is generally marked. The entry for the death of Victoria records (in Latin) the passing of ‘an elderly lady commonly taken to be the Queen of England’.⁹ The habit of mind persisted. In 1920 he wrote to the typographer Stanley Morison (1889–1967), who was both Pacifist and Socialist, ‘I also am a radical. I want the restoration of our lawful dread Sovereign, King Robert I and V; and I am with anyone who is against the descendants of George Elector of Hannover’.¹⁰ In reality, everywhere in England the principal Mass was followed by a sung versicle and prayer for the de facto monarch: this was an obligation in the wake of the first Catholic Relief Act in 1778.

6 Ibid., entry for 16 April, 1892.

7 Ibid., entry for 21 June, 1892.

8 F.J. McGrath, FMS (ed.), *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman X* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 313. Newman claimed to Jemima Mozley that Francis Fortescue had been ‘taught secretly Catholic doctrine and practice as a child’.

9 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, ‘Diary 1901’, entry for 27 January.

10 Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 9812/D/90, Letter to S. Morison of 29 January, 1920.

Despite his muscular Christianity (the extent of which would only become plain on his Levantine tour in 1907), Fortescue's cocktail of interests, and enthusiasms, might have raised eyebrows among his own contemporaries — not to speak of later periods in English Catholicism, such as that introduced by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).

Vacationing

Back in England for the summer vacation, he continued to record a balance of activities. Staying with his Oxford relatives in Bevington Road, a rather grand North Oxford address, he spent a good deal of time rowing and canoeing, but also lunched with the Jesuits at St Aloysius and was 'shriven'. Regular recourse to the sacrament of Penance was obviously important to him (from Letchworth, his only enduring parochial home, there were frequent visits for the purpose to Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge, across the diocesan border into Northampton). For aesthetic stimulus, he used his Oxford stay to look out the Turner water-colours at the Taylorian Institute.

Fortescue's reading, as noted in the diaries, as well as his choice of what to visit in museums and galleries, show how much he appreciated the eye and mind of both John Ruskin (1819–1900) and J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851). It is a reasonable speculation, from the qualities of his prose descriptions, drawing and painting, and photography, that these writers taught him to observe the cut of stone, the quality of colour, and the composition of a scene. At the end of July 1892 he read Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*,¹¹ and in mid-August was making headway with the multi-volume *Modern Painters*.¹² His artistic enthusiasms were, however, by no means confined to the closely associated duo of Turner and his loyal critic. Back at his aunt's house in Wimbledon, what he enjoyed on a July visit to the Royal Academy were the large-scale figure paintings, mostly on classical subjects, of Frederic Lord Leighton (1830–1896), one of the Titans of Victorian art, whose work, largely neglected today, was inspired by the masters of the Italian Renaissance. On St Dominic's day (old style, i.e. 4 August), he assisted at Mass at the Dominican priory in

11 Originally published in 1849, this work 'became immensely influential – compulsory reading for young architects and a key element in the Gothic revival', K. Jackson, *The Worlds of John Ruskin* (London: Pallas Athene, 2010), p. 53. The seven 'lamps' were sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory and obedience: all relevant to Fortescue's ethos.

12 Published in five volumes between 1843 and 1860, it was instrumental in securing Turner's reputation, as the sub-title of the first volume signals: 'Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters'. In later volumes Ruskin espoused the equally controversial cause of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Haverstock Hill (customarily, as on this occasion, sung by the Franciscans, so he records), and on 16 August was in attendance at the pro-cathedral for the canons' reception of Manning's successor Herbert Vaughan (1832–1903) as archbishop-elect — very properly so, since he was an ordinand of the diocese.

But not all was diversion. In the vacations he had been studying Modern Greek, which would stand him in good stead for subsequent journeys in the Near East and reportage of contemporary Orthodoxy. On returning to Rome in October, via the scenic route over the Simplon Pass, his first act on arrival was to buy a Greek catechism at the bookshop of the College of Propaganda Fide. That must have seemed a far cry from his September stay in his father's old haunts around Alveston Manor, where at one Warwickshire village he 'went over the church with the Vicar; feigned to be Highdutch [sic] and spoke Latin; explained joke to him afterwards'.¹³ This is still a boy, then, albeit a highly sophisticated boy.

Towards Austria

Informed by one of the Scots College students that the rector had asked him to look out for a 'private friendship' between another student and Fortescue, he confided to his diary, 'How happy I shall be, when I leave this and all its Jesuit ways'.¹⁴ He would soon have his wish so far as leaving Rome was concerned, though he was not to be out of the hands of Jesuits. Quite early in what, for the Roman faculties, was the new school year, he was required to send a Latin letter from the rector of the Scots College to the 'regens' of the Canisianum, the Jesuit-run theologate at Innsbruck (founded 1858), asking about a place and accommodation for the year that followed. Perhaps realizing how little time he had left in Rome, his visiting and sketching of churches, gardens, architectural monuments, now intensified. The work on the chant was at any rate maintained (he introduced the College to the new Solesmes versions of the Advent tract *Attende Domine*, and the Benediction hymn *O Salutaris*). At the same time, he was reading Dante assiduously (another lifetime interest) and giving that reading a context in mediaeval history.

It was noted posthumously in the *Memoir* written by his cousin in collaboration with a priest-colleague:

Dante had kindled his enthusiastic devotion early in life and Dante, as ever, had led out and beyond the *Divina Commedia* to splendid vistas of history, art, and literature. Dante had led him to Virgil and Plato. Dante, too, had led him to Boethius, to whose *De consolatione philosophiae* he gave the last years of his life.¹⁵

13 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1892', entry for 15 September, 1892.

14 Ibid., entry for 12 November, 1892.

15 J.G. Vance and J.W. Fortescue, *Adrian Fortescue*, op. cit., p. 19.



An example of Fortescue's fine drawing and composition skills. Bookplate designed for J.G. Vance.

He was also enjoying Kipling, whose stories of the Raj, newly minted,¹⁶ could not have shed much in the way of direct light on the thesis of his philosophical doctorate at the *Gregorianum*, namely: that ‘the power of the soul and its essence are really mutually distinguished’.¹⁷ He passed the — far more comprehensive — oral part of the examination on 25 June 1894. On 2 May he had been at the Collegio Greco for its patronal feast, day, fêting St Athanasius the Great on whom he would write in *The Greek Fathers*.

It was his last term in Rome, where life cannot have been altogether easy under a College rector known to be awkward and unpredictable. There was some suggestion that James Campbell’s kidnapping by bandits at the College’s villa at Marino, when a younger man, had left him a traumatized personality. If so, this was not taken into account in the cruel lampoon by Frederick William Rolfe (‘Baron Corvo’, 1860–1913) in his evocation of life at the College in the 1904 novel *Hadrian VII*. The gifted but unstable (and subsequently revengeful) Rolfe had been expelled as unsuitable just eighteen months before Fortescue’s arrival.¹⁸

On 19 July he returned to Wimbledon for a summer of walking and drawing in Hampshire and Kent, and visiting the London galleries, before setting out again on 12 September on a leisurely journey of two and a half weeks to Innsbruck via The Hague and Utrecht, Mainz and Munich. His fundamental seriousness was shown, however, by the way the language of the diary transmutes into German as early as 1 October.

The reason for the move was to follow up philosophy at Rome by frequenting Innsbruck for theology, including Hebrew (Latin and ancient Greek, taught at school, were already well in hand). The choice of Innsbruck for English seminarians, though not common, was by no means unknown as late as the mid 1980s.¹⁹ The pattern Fortescue had established for himself was maintained in relocation to the Habsburg lands (where his *Meldungsbuch* issued by the Theological Faculty of the ‘kaiserlich und königlich Universität zu Innsbruck’ gives his name as ‘Adrian Knottesford-Fortescue’).²⁰ There was a great deal of outdoor activity — sledge-riding to

16 *Plain Tales from the Raj*, Kipling’s first major work of prose fiction, was published in 1888.

17 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, ‘Diary 1894’, entry for 29 May, 1894.

18 A.J.A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo. An Experiment in Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1934] 1966); A.S. MacWilliam, ‘Fr Rolfe and the Scots College, Rome’, *Innes Review* 21 (1970), pp. 124–139; B. Sewell, ‘Frederick William Rolfe at the Scots College’, *ibid.* 26 (1975), pp. 20–26.

19 Information provided by the Revd Francis Selman, of the Catholic diocese of East Anglia.

20 Westminster Diocesan Archives, Series 20, Box 18, *Meldungsbuch*.



Adrian Fortescue at the Canisianum in Innsbruck, Austria.

Natters, a village south of Innsbruck, in February 1895 on the monthly 'excursion day', as well as what sounds a demanding Eastertide trip through the Bavarian Alps, with accompanying descriptions of weather and mountains.

Ruskinian diversion and the future apostolate

While in England again for his first summer vacation from Austria, in the summer of 1895, he travelled up to the Lake District, swimming in Derwentwater and rowing on the lake during a stay at Keswick. The summer entries of the diaries of the Innsbruck years show there was much drawing, and matching prose description of architecture, especially on visits to the English and French cathedrals, and, not unconnected with these, more reading of Ruskin (he noted Ruskin's enthusiasm for Amiens, of which the 1897 diary has a long descriptive entry).²¹ He discovered the art historian Philip Hamerton's life of Turner.²² (Given his calligrapher's love of the clear line he probably sympathized with Hamerton's negative animadversions on Turner's innovatively impressionistic paintings from the 1840s: they 'belong not merely to a period of decline but to a state of senile decrepitude'.²³)

But he was also preparing himself for his future apostolate at home, reading for instance, in October 1897, lives of the English martyrs on whom he would later lecture in London; notably the Redemptorist T.E. Bridgett's lives of Fisher and More;²⁴ Dom Bede Camm's life of the Welsh Benedictine martyr, John Roberts,²⁵ and, for good measure, John Morris's biography of Becket.²⁶ He evidently considered this cluster of martyrs who died in conflict with the English crown for the sake of a wider, international, papally centred but not homogenizing Catholicism, to be co-constitutive of

21 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1897', entry for 20 September, 1897.

22 P.G. Hamerton, *The Life of J.M.W. Turner* (London: Seeley, 1895, 2nd edition).

23 Cited in J. Lindsay, *J.M.W. Turner. A Critical Biography* (London: Cory, Adams and Mackay, 1966), p. 192.

24 T.E. Bridgett, C.S.R., *Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England and Martyr under Henry VIII* (London: Burns and Oates, 1891); idem., *Life of Blessed John Fisher: Bishop of Rochester, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and Martyr under Henry VIII* (London: Burns and Oates, 1890).

25 B. Camm, O.S.B., *A Benedictine Martyr in England: Being the Life and Times of the Venerable Servant of God Dom John Roberts, O.S.B.* (London: Bliss, Sands, 1897).

26 J. Morris, *The Life and Martyrdom of St Thomas Becket* (London: Burns and Oates, 1885, 2nd edition).

English Catholic identity, and thus of the version of the Christian Gospel he was to represent to his fellow-countrymen. 'In England', he would later write in a piece of his controversial journalism, 'Catholics are English in the natural order, just as we are Catholics in the supernatural order'.²⁷ The combination of patriotism and confession, expressed in lucidly rational prose, would become one of his hallmarks.

²⁷ 'Guests of the Nation', *The Tablet* for 2 October, 1915, p. 427.

3. Ordination and First Steps in Priesthood

Advance to Orders, apologetics, and animadversions of a liturgical kind

Fortescue was of course getting ready for Major Orders. The locations selected for his Ordination are rather surprising: Darmstadt, in the grand duchy of Hessen-Darmstadt, for the diaconate, and the south Tyrolean city of Brixen (now Bressanone, in the Italian region of Alto Adige) for the priesthood. The probable explanation is factors of convenience, based on the circumstance that his fellow-seminarians included candidates for the dioceses concerned. His diaconal ordination took place in July 1897, when he marked the date in Greek with the words *Megalê Hêmêra* ('great day!');¹ his priesting followed on Passion Sunday, 1898, which that year fell on 27 March. Home to celebrate his first Mass, he received from his aunt a fine chalice that, having learned the expression from German-speaking Catholics, he called a *Primizgeschenk*.² This would doubtless have been used in his first Masses — at the Jesuit church in Wimbledon, his aunt's parish, and in the Fortescue chapel in the Dominican priory on Haverstock Hill.

On a visit to the Oxford Fortescues, he argued with an Anglican Ritualist to whom he presented the choice of *either* the living voice of the Catholic Church *or* private judgment, a foreshadowing of his later polemics, plotted through the pages of various London periodicals, not least the *Tablet*, then in its strongly orthodox phase under the long editorship (1884–1920) of J.G. Snead-Cox (at the time, the weekly was the personal property of two successive archbishops of Westminster).

In May he received faculties from the bishop of Brixen to hear confessions, and, presumably as a 'thank you' for the training and sacramental ordination received, presented to the 'Convict', i.e. the student residence of the *Canisianum*, 'a red chasuble that I have given . . . it is made by Anglican nuns of East Grinstead according to my own design'.³ Passionate commitment to

1 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1897', entry for 22 July, 1897.

2 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1898', entry for 1 April, 1898.

3 Downside Archives, IX AF, Box D, 'Diary 1899', entry for 21 May, 1899.

excellence in everything concerned with the Liturgy of the Church went hand in hand with acerbic criticism of what did not meet his own high standards.

Fortescue's criticisms of much in the setting and the performance of the Liturgy, as he saw it on his travels in Italy, Austria-Hungary and elsewhere, discourage us from thinking all was necessarily well in this period in the worshipping life of these countries, at any rate so far as externals were concerned (and for the liturgical signs, externals count). On holiday in Tuscany in the spring of 1899, he noted of Easter at Fiesole 'all the holy week ceremonies here unspeakably badly done',⁴ and as for some of the Baroque churches visited in Hungary in the summer of that year, they were 'full of tawdry, broken and very dirty gild (sic) woodwork'.⁵ His diaries themselves are not always a work of literary art (they were not intended for publication), but vivid descriptions of Romany villages in Slavonia show he had not lost the capacity for writing evocative English prose.

Whitechapel, Arts and Crafts, and commitment to scholarship

The usual leisurely summertime return to England (in 1899 via Ulm, Strassburg, still a part of the German Empire, and Paris), and lazy days spent cycling around the Oxfordshire countryside (in many ways, Fortescue's manner of life was that of a moneyed and cultured undergraduate), came to an abrupt if hardly unexpected end when Cardinal Vaughan informed him in the closing days of September of his first appointment in the archdiocese. The first of a number of 'fill-ins', he was to be the chaplain of the German church in Whitechapel (Sankt Bonifatius, in Union Street), until such time as a German priest could be found. Originally linked to the Bavarian embassy, the church was now supported — at any rate in theory — by the German imperial government together with the Austro-Hungarian emperor. It was not a typical charge, but neither was it atypical in facing Fortescue with some of the practical problems of maintaining a church or chapel and a priest's house where, on both counts, things had been allowed to slide. He noted that the dire financial condition of the place (in a letter of 15 February 1900 he reports 'the creditors were about to sell up the mission'⁶) was only equalled by the fearful dirt. It cannot have been a terribly encouraging start to the exercise of priesthood (in more recent years, ecclesiastical superiors have usually given greater thought to immediately post-Ordination assignments), and the entries for the last months of the dying year show a variety of reactions on Fortescue's part.

4 Ibid., entry for Easter, 1899.

5 Ibid., entry for 19 July, 1899.

6 Westminster Diocesan Archives, Box AGD, Letter to Hamilton Macdonald of 15 February 1900.