

= Henry Garnet =

Henry Garnet (July 1555 ? 3 May 1606) , sometimes Henry Garnett , was an English Jesuit priest executed for his complicity in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 . Born in Heanor , Derbyshire , he was educated in Nottingham and later at Winchester College , before he moved to London in 1571 , to work for a publisher . There he professed an interest in legal studies , and in 1575 he travelled to the continent and joined the Society of Jesus . He was ordained in Rome some time around 1582 .

In 1586 Garnet returned to England as part of the Jesuit mission , soon succeeding Father William Weston as Jesuit superior , following the latter 's capture by the English authorities . Garnet established a secret press , which lasted until late 1588 , and in 1594 he interceded in the Wisbech Stirs , a dispute between secular and regular clergy . He preferred a passive approach to the problems Catholics faced in England , approving of the disclosure by Catholic priests of the existence of the 1603 Bye Plot , and exhorting English Catholics not to engage in violent rebellion .

In summer 1605 Garnet met with Robert Catesby , a religious zealot who , unknown to him , planned to kill the Protestant King James I. The existence of Catesby 's Gunpowder Plot was revealed to him by Father Oswald Tesimond on 24 July 1605 , but as the information was received under the seal of the confessional , he felt that Canon law prevented him from speaking out . Instead , without telling anyone of what Catesby planned , he wrote to his superiors in Rome , urging them to warn English Catholics against the use of force .

When the plot failed Garnet went into hiding , but he was eventually arrested on 27 January 1606 . He was taken to London and interrogated by the Privy Council , whose members included John Popham , Edward Coke and Robert Cecil , 1st Earl of Salisbury . Imprisoned in the Tower of London , his conversations with fellow prisoner Edward Oldcorne were monitored by eavesdroppers , and his letters to friends such as Anne Vaux were intercepted . His guilt , announced at the end of his trial on 28 March 1606 , was a foregone conclusion . Criticised for his use of equivocation , which Coke called " open and broad lying and forswearing " , and attacked for not warning the authorities of what Catesby planned , he was sentenced to be hanged , drawn and quartered . He was executed on 3 May 1606 .

= = Early life = =

Henry Garnet (or Garnett) was born some time around July 1555 at Heanor in Derbyshire , son of Brian Garnet (or Garnett) and Alice (née Jay) . He had at least five siblings : two brothers , Richard and John , and three sisters , Margaret , Eleanor and Anne , all of whom became nuns at Louvain . Henry studied at the grammar school in Nottingham where , from 1565 , his father was master . Following his election as a scholar on 24 August 1567 , in 1568 he entered Winchester College , where he apparently excelled . His love of music and " rare and delightful " voice were complemented by an ability to perform songs without preparation , and he was reportedly also skilled with the lute . Father Thomas Stanney wrote that Garnet was " the prime scholar of Winchester College , very skilful in music and in playing upon the instruments , very modest in his countenance and in all his actions , so much that the schoolmasters and wardens offered him very great friendship , to be placed by their means in New College , Oxford . "

= = Rome = =

Garnet did not enter New College ; instead , late in 1571 , he left Winchester for London . There he worked for a legal publisher , Richard Tottell , as a proof @-@ reader and corrector . He often dined with Sir John Popham , who as Lord Chief Justice was to preside over the trial of the Gunpowder Plotters , men whose association with Garnet would eventually prove so fateful . Although Garnet professed to Popham an interest in legal studies , in 1575 he sailed for Portugal with Giles Gallop , to enter the Society of Jesus .

The two men travelled to Rome and on 11 September 1575 were accepted into the church at Sant 'Andrea della Valle . Garnet studied under the theologian Father Robert Bellarmine . Two of his

professors , Christopher Clavius and Robert Bellarmine , praised his abilities . He was ordained sometime around 1582 and stayed in Rome as a Professor of Hebrew , lecturing also on metaphysics and mathematics . He was also an English confessor at St Peter 's , but in May 1584 his academic career was curtailed when , perhaps as a consequence of a petition from the Jesuit superior for England William Weston , Father Robert Persons asked that he be sent to England . The Superior General Claudio Acquaviva , who saw Garnet as his successor , refused this request . He thought Garnet more suited to " the quiet life " than that which awaited him in England , but on 2 May 1586 he relented and allowed him to leave . Appointed superior for the journey , Garnet travelled with Robert Southwell , leaving for Calais on 8 May . He landed near Folkestone early in July 1586 .

= = England = =

After meeting the Jesuit superior for England William Weston at a London inn , Garnet , Southwell and Weston travelled to Harlesford , near Marlow , Buckinghamshire . Spending just over a week at the home of Richard Bold , they engaged in prayer and masses , and also took confessions . They discussed their mission in England , deciding to meet each year in February and August (later changed to Easter and autumn) . Weston also gave the two men details of Catholic houses that would shelter them .

Acquaviva had instructed that should anything happen to Weston , Garnet was to succeed him as superior in England , which he did when only days after leaving Harlesford , Weston was captured en route to London . Acquaviva had also given Garnet permission to print pro @-@ Catholic literature , and so early the next year he met Southwell in London to discuss the establishment of a secret press , which was probably located somewhere around a former Augustinian hospital near Spitalfields . It lasted until late 1588 and was responsible for A Consolatory Letter to All the Afflicted Catholikes in England , author unknown , and An Epistle of Comfort , by Southwell . From a friend 's window in Ludgate Hill , Garnet witnessed the November 1588 procession to a thanksgiving service at Old St Paul 's Cathedral , celebrating the failed Spanish invasion . Spain 's actions gave Garnet much cause for concern , " For when we thought that there was an end to these disasters by which we are already nearly destroyed , our hope was suddenly turned to sorrow , and now with redoubled effort the overseers are pressing upon us " . People were allowed to spectate from windows only if their loyalty to Queen Elizabeth I was guaranteed by the householder . In a letter to Acquaviva , Garnet said that many of his supporters thought that he was more concerned for the Queen than her Calvinist ministers . In light of the Armada 's destruction , he also wrote to the general to ask for advice on two versions of a proposed oath to allow Roman Catholics to swear their allegiance to the Queen . The government 's version required that Catholics reject the pope 's authority over Elizabeth , whereas the Catholic version proposed that they recognise her authority and " would wish with every effort to struggle to thwart and to fight to the death all those who will in any way endanger the life of her Highness " . The Privy Council rejected the latter .

Garnet 's first few years in England were spent meeting new priests in London , including John Gerard and Edward Oldcorne . Jesuits had been banished from England since 1585 , and if discovered they risked being charged with high treason . Avoiding pursuers was therefore a recurrent problem , and Garnet was almost caught on several occasions . As a result of an almost disastrous meeting at Baddesley Clinton in 1591 , when he and many others were almost captured together while renewing their vows , he reorganised the mission into eleven smaller groups , each assigned two weeks annually . Following Southwell 's capture in June 1592 , and the search of Anne Vaux and Eleanor Brooksby 's rented house in Warwickshire , he wrote to Acquaviva to ask for an assistant who could succeed him as superior . Henry Walpole was thus dispatched , but was captured on his arrival in December 1593 , and executed in York in April 1595 . Garnet believed that it was his duty to observe (in disguise) the executions of his fellow priests , so as to secretly administer the last rites , and he may have been present at Southwell 's execution at Tyburn in 1595 . The latter 's death was a significant blow for Garnet , who later wrote of the " intolerable burden of loneliness " he carried while in England .

In November 1593 Garnet travelled to the decrepit and decayed Wisbech Castle , requisitioned by the government in 1579 for the internment of Catholic priests . William Weston was held there . The castle 's inhabitants were supported by Catholic alms and lived a relatively comfortable existence ; Garnet was complimentary about Wisbech , calling it a " college of venerable confessors " . The following year he mediated in a dispute there between secular and regular clergy (the latter represented by the Jesuits) , which became known as the Wisbech Stirs . The argument was settled by the end of the year , but Garnet was concerned that reports of discontent at the Jesuit @-@ administered English College in Rome and tension between some Catholic English exiles in Brussels might undermine his efforts to stabilise the situation .

= = Gunpowder Plot = =

= = Introduction to Catesby = =

Garnet spent much of 1604 on the move , although few details of his travels exist . At Easter he reportedly gave a mass at Twigmoor Hall , the house of John Wright . In November he was with Anne Vaux (whose family he had been introduced to in summer 1586) at White Webbs near Enfield , renewing the vows given on the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady . On 9 June 1605 , he was to be found in a room on Thames Street in London , with Robert Catesby . In the midst of what Garnet later recalled was a seemingly casual conversation , Catesby asked the priest about the morality of " killing innocents " . Garnet replied according to Catholic theology , that often , during war , innocents were killed alongside the enemy . According to Antonia Fraser , Garnet may have thought that Catesby 's request was to do with him possibly raising a regiment in Flanders .

Garnet was not at all like Catesby , described by Fraser as possessing the mentality " of the crusader who does not hesitate to employ the sword in the cause of values which he considers are spiritual " . In contrast , Garnet believed that " things were best settled by submission to the will of God . " He was ebullient over King James 's succession to the English throne , and hoped there would be no foreign interference . Of the 1603 Bye Plot , revealed (with his blessing) to the Privy Council by two Catholic priests , he wrote that it was " a piece of impudent folly , for we know that it is by peaceful means that his Holiness and other princes are prepared to help us . " He exhorted that Pope Clement VIII instruct all English Catholics not to engage in violent rebellion , " quiete et pacifice " . It was a message echoed by Archpriest George Blackwell , who commanded his priests never to attempt any such thing , but it proved controversial ; early in summer 1605 Garnet reported to Rome that English Catholics had reached " a stage of desperation " .

The two met again in July at Fremland in Essex . Garnet told Catesby that he " wished him to look what he did if he intended anything . That he must first look to the lawfulness of the act itself , and then he must not have so little regard of Innocents that he spare not friends and necessary persons for the Commonwealth . " When Catesby offered to tell the priest more , Garnet declined : " I told him what charge we all had of quietness and to procure the like in others . " Garnet also spoke with William Parker , 4th Baron Monteagle , asking him " if Catholics were able to make their part good by arms against the King " , but Monteagle 's reply was vague . Author Alan Haynes suggests that Garnet may at that point have become marginalised .

= = Seal of the confessional = =

Garnet later claimed to have been ignorant of Catesby 's designs until 24 July , when he was approached by Father Oswald Tesimond . " An intelligent and thoughtful man " , Tesimond wanted his superior 's advice as Catesby had recently told him of his plan . As Garnet viewed Tesimond 's information as having been imparted under the seal of the confessional , he later claimed to have felt unable to warn anyone of Catesby 's plan . According to his own account , the two had a third meeting around 24 July . He read to Catesby a letter he had received from Persons , urging him to speak to the Pope before attempting any scheme , but fearful of being discovered , Catesby

declined . So Garnet wrote to Aquaviva , claiming to have prevented several outbreaks of violence , and of his suspicion that there was " a risk that some private endeavour may commit treason or use force against the King " . As he had done following the failed Bye Plot , he urged the pope to publicly warn against the use of force , attempting to hide his knowledge of the plot by suggesting that the warning be aimed at recusants in Wales . He also sent Sir Edmund Baynham to deliver the same message , and when Parliament was prorogued on 28 July , Garnet satisfied himself that the danger had been averted .

On 24 August he was at White Webbs near Enfield , with Anne Vaux , her sister Eleanor Brooksby , her nephew William Brooksby and his wife Dorothy . A few days later the group set out on a pilgrimage to St Winefride 's Well at Holywell in Wales . They travelled to John Grant 's home at Norbrook , then Huddington Court near Worcester , through Shrewsbury , and finally to Wales . About 30 people made the journey west , including Everard Digby and his wife , and their secret chaplain Edward Oldcorne , and Nicholas Owen . On his return from Wales , Garnet travelled with Anne Vaux to Rushton Hall , home of the recently deceased Thomas Tresham (father to Francis Tresham) . From there they travelled to Digby 's home at Gayhurst House in Buckinghamshire . Vaux was suspicious that so many horses were being collected at the homes of her friends and family , and confessed to Garnet her fear that " these wild heads had something in hand " . She asked him to speak with Catesby , but Garnet reassured her that Catesby was instead seeking a commission in Flanders . Garnet wrote a letter of recommendation for Catesby for that very purpose . When in October Vaux raised the issue once more , claiming that several women had asked her where they should retreat to once " the brunt was passed in the beginning of Parliament " , Garnet again mentioned Flanders , although Fraser suggests that Vaux 's questioning must have concerned him deeply .

= = = Arrest and imprisonment = = =

Garnet was at Coughton Court on 6 November when Thomas Bates brought news of the plot 's failure . Catesby wanted him to help raise support in Wales , where it was thought Catholic support would be more likely , but Garnet was horrified . In a letter to Catesby and Digby , he urged them to abandon their " wicked actions " and follow the pope 's advice . He spent weeks on the run but was eventually arrested on 27 January 1606 , at Hindlip Hall . There , for eight days , he and Fr . Edward Oldcorne (later beatified as the Blessed Edward Oldcorne) secreted themselves in a small , cramped space , unable even to stand or stretch their legs . They received sustenance from their protectors through a small drinking straw hidden within the building 's structure , but with no commode or drainage they were eventually forced by " customs of nature which must of necessity be done " to emerge from hiding , and were immediately captured . They were taken first to Holt Castle in Worcestershire , and a few days later to London . Garnet was still weak from his ordeal , and Salisbury therefore ordered that he be given a good mount ; his supplies were paid for by the king . The group was accompanied by a Puritan minister who " ranted at length without interruption " , but Garnet 's replies remained erudite , brief and clear ? much to the minister 's disappointment . On his arrival in London he was taken to the Gatehouse Prison in Westminster , already home to many Catholic prisoners , including his nephew , Father Thomas Garnet .

Garnet first appeared in front of the Privy Council on 13 February 1606 . Present were John Popham , Edward Coke , Sir William Waad , and the Earls of Worcester , Northampton , Nottingham and Salisbury . Superficially , they treated him with respect , removing their hats and addressing him as " Mr Garnet " , although they made fun of his relationship with Anne Vaux , claiming he was her lover , not her confessor . During his questioning he admitted some of his movements , and that he had received Catesby 's letter on 6 November , but he denied being involved in the plot , whose members he did not name . Garnet was convinced that his captors were interested only in the failed scheme and believed he might be able to clear his name , but the councillors also asked him about the doctrine of equivocation . His own treatise on this topic , one of the " heretical , treasonable and damnable books " found amongst Francis Tresham 's possessions , was laid on the council table before him . Although it condemned lying , Garnet 's treatise supported the notion that when

questioned , for instance , on the presence of a priest in his house , a Catholic might " securely in conscience " answer " No " if he had a " secret meaning reserved in his mind " . The occasions on which a Catholic might legitimately use equivocation , he supposed , were limited , but such replies could be taken as an example of insincerity or deviousness ? especially to the king 's council , who may not have wanted to see Garnet prove his case . The council 's view of equivocation was very different from Garnet 's . In their eyes , it was simple deceit .

The next day , Garnet was moved to the Tower of London , into what he described as " a very fine chamber " . He was afforded claret with his meals , though it took him some time to get bedding and coal for the fireplace . He claimed that Lieutenant of the Tower William Waad treated him well , although on the subject of religion his speeches became " violent and impotent " .

Garnet 's recent interrogation was only the first of many . Generally , his answers were carefully considered and demonstrated a passive resistance to his questioners ; the use of the rack was a distinct possibility , one which he answered with " Minare ista pueris [Threats are only for boys] " . What information he did give up was of limited interest only . His jailer , a man named Carey , was employed by Waad to gain the priest 's trust , offering to relay letters to his nephew in the Gatehouse Prison . Carey then placed Garnet into a cell containing a hole through which he was able to converse with Oldcorne , who was in a neighbouring cell . From " a place which was made for this precise purpose " , two government eavesdroppers were therefore able to record details of conversations between the two priests . Their communications were mostly innocent , although Garnet 's admission that on one occasion he drank too much wine was later used against him , along with other incriminating evidence recorded during their stay . His communications with his nephew , and Anne Vaux , were also intercepted . Most of these letters found their intended recipient , but not before they had first been read by Waad , who also kept Salisbury informed . Although Garnet told Vaux that the Council 's evidence constituted nothing but " presumptions " , insufficient for a state trial , early in March he confessed , possibly as a result of torture . Vaux too was arrested and interrogated twice , just as further questions were being asked of Garnet by the council and the king , the latter interested in his opinion on theological matters .

Despite his claims to have been horrified by Catesby 's plan , his declaration , which admitted that he had " dealt very reservedly with your Lordships in the case of the late powder action " , gave the government proof that he had prior knowledge of the plot , and in their view , he was therefore guilty of misprision of treason .

= = = Trial = = =

Garnet 's trial took place on Friday 28 March 1606 . He was taken to the Guildhall by closed coach ; an unusual method , considering prisoners were usually walked to trial , though the authorities may have had some concern about support from a sympathetic crowd . The trial began at about 9 : 30 am and lasted all day . In attendance were King James (hidden from public view) and several courtiers including Lady Arbella Stuart and Catherine Howard , Countess of Suffolk . Garnet was introduced with his various aliases , which included " Whalley , otherwise Darcy , otherwise Roberts , otherwise Farmer , otherwise Philips " . He was accused of having conspired with Catesby on 9 June 1605 to kill the king , his son , and to " alter and subvert the government of the kingdom and the true worship of God established in England " . He was also accused of having conspired with several others to blow up the House of Lords with gunpowder . He pleaded " not guilty " .

Speaking for the government , Edward Coke accused him of involvement in every treason since 1586 , the year he returned to England . According to Coke , the provincial superior was involved in the Main and Bye Plots of 1603 . He had sent Edmund Baynham to Rome to gain papal approval for the 1605 plot , and while at Coughton in November , had prayed " for the success of the great action " . Coke called Garnet " a doctor of five Ds , namely , of dissimulation , of deposing of princes , of disposing of kingdoms , of daunting and deterring of subjects , and of destruction " . His supposed inappropriate relationship with Anne Vaux was mentioned , but his adherence to the doctrine of equivocation proved extremely damaging . Francis Tresham 's deathbed letter , which claimed that Garnet had played no part in the so @-@ called Spanish Treason , was read aloud . Tresham

claimed not to have seen Garnet " for fifteen or sixteen years before " , despite government evidence that the two had met more recently . Garnet had not seen the letter and did not know that it referred to events before 1602 , not 1605 . He was unable to explain it , except by saying " it may be , my Lord , that he meant to equivocate . "

Statements regarding Jesuit @-@ encouraged plots against Queen Elizabeth were read to the court , as well as some of the plotters ' confessions . Garnet defended his use of equivocation with his own treatise on the doctrine . He had denied his conversation with Oldcorne as it was a secret , but said that in matters of faith , equivocation could never be lawful . When asked by Salisbury what he would do if the pope excommunicated King James , he " denied to answer " . His defence of equivocation was scorned by Coke , who called it " open and broad lying and forswearing " . As for Tesimond 's confession , the planned assassination had not at that point happened and so Salisbury said that Garnet could easily have alerted the government . Salisbury attacked the idea that it had ever been made under the seal of the confessional , and claimed anyway that Garnet could have warned the authorities after his more ordinary conversation with Catesby about the death of innocents ; the priest replied by saying that at the time , he did not understand the relevance of Catesby 's questions . The Earl of Northampton said , in Latin , " quod non prohibet cum potest , jubet " (what a man does not forbid when he can , he orders) . Garnet 's defence , that he had forbidden Catesby from proceeding , was futile .

The jury took fifteen minutes to decide that Garnet was guilty of treason . He was sentenced to be hanged , drawn and quartered .

= = = Execution = = =

The day after his trial Garnet made a new statement , which he hoped would clarify his dealings with Tresham . He also wrote to the king , reiterating his stance on violence against a rightful monarch . When the government lied and told him they had captured Tesimond , he wrote an apologetic letter to the priest regarding the nature of their conversation the previous year . He also wrote a final letter to Anne Vaux , on 21 April , relating his lack of fortune over the previous few months .

After about three months spent in the Tower , on Saturday 3 May 1606 Garnet was strapped to a wooden hurdle and taken by three horses to the churchyard of St Paul 's . He wore a black cloak over his clothes and hat , and spent much of the journey with his hands together and eyes closed . Present in the churchyard were the Sheriff of London , Sir Henry Montague , George Abbot and John Overal . When asked if he had knowledge of any further treasons , Garnet replied that he had nothing to say . He rejected any entreatments to abandon his faith for Protestantism , and said that he had committed no offence against the king . The only thing he thought he might be condemned for was for abiding by the terms of the confessional , and if by that action he had offended the king or state , he asked for forgiveness . The recorder announced that this was an admission of guilt , but Garnet reiterated his not guilty plea and continued to argue the point .

Garnet highlighted the date of his execution , 3 May , the Feast of the Cross , and reaffirmed his innocence . He defended Anne Vaux against claims that their relationship had been inappropriate . He then prayed at the base of the ladder , disrobed down to his long , sewn @-@ up shirt , " that the wind might not blow it up " , and mounted the ladder . He ignored a Protestant minister who came forward , replying to an objectionable member of the audience that he " ever meant to die a true but perfect Catholic " . Bishop Overal protested that " we are all Catholics " , although Garnet disagreed with this . He once again said his prayers , and was then thrown off the ladder . Before the executioner could cut him down alive , many in the crowd pulled on his legs , and as a result , Garnet did not suffer the remainder of his grim sentence . There was no applause when the executioner held Garnet 's heart aloft and said the traditional words , " Behold the heart of a traitor " . His head was set on a pole on London Bridge , but crowds of onlookers fascinated by its pallid appearance eventually forced the government to turn the head upwards , so its face was no longer visible .

A bloodstained straw husk saved from the scene of the execution and said to bear Garnet 's image

became an object of curiosity . It was smuggled out of the country into the possession of the Society of Jesus , before being lost during the French Revolution .

= = Writings = =

Garnet 's writings include An Apology Against the Defence of Schisme (1593) , an attack against church papistry in which he scolded Thomas Bell for supporting the occasional taking of Communion in the Church of England . This was followed by A Treatise of Christian Renunciation (1593) , which comprised a selection of quotations on what Catholics should be prepared to renounce for their faith , and The Societie of the Rosary (1593 ? 1594)

His defence of the practice of equivocation was published in A Treatise of Equivocation (c . 1598) , originally titled A Treatise against lying and fraudulent dissimulation . Equivocation was condemned by most of his contemporaries as outright lying , including William Shakespeare , who may have alluded to Garnet in Macbeth with the following line : " who committed treason enough for God 's sake , yet could not equivocate to heaven " .