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978-1-108-04273-4 - *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon: Volume 1: From the Foundation of the Monastery Until the Norman Conquest*

Edited by Joseph Stevenson

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Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon

Originally published in 1858, this two-volume chronicle covers approximately 500 years, from the seventh-century foundation of Abingdon Abbey to the accession of Richard I in 1189. Editor Joseph Stevenson (1806–95) claims that its value is less as a detailed history than as an illustration of England's journey from barbarism to civilisation. Although ostensibly a record of the fortunes of the Benedictine monastery, it is a rich source of not only local but also national and international history. In his prefaces to the Latin text, Stevenson discusses the manuscript sources as well as the context of the monastery's development. He goes on to describe the influence of Christianity and the monastic system on such areas as agriculture and commerce. Volume 1, which ends at the Norman Conquest, consists largely of the monastery's title deeds, with a sketch of the circumstances under which each grant was executed.

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VOLUME 1:
FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY
UNTIL THE NORMAN CONQUEST

EDITED BY JOSEPH STEVENSON



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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

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THE CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS
OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY, UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

ON the 26th of January 1857, the Master of the Rolls submitted to the Treasury a proposal for the publication of materials for the History of this Country from the Invasion of the Romans to the Reign of Henry VIII.

The Master of the Rolls suggested that these materials should be selected for publication under competent editors without reference to periodical or chronological arrangement, without mutilation or abridgment, preference being given, in the first instance, to such materials as were most scarce and valuable.

He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be formed from an accurate collation of the best MSS.

To render the work more generally useful, the Master of the Rolls suggested that the editor should give an account of the MSS. employed by him, of their age and their peculiarities; that he should add to the work a brief account of the life and times of the author, and any remarks necessary to explain the chronology; but no other note or comment was to be allowed, except what might be necessary to establish the correctness of the text.

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The works to be published in octavo, separately, as they were finished; the whole responsibility of the task resting upon the editors, who were to be chosen by the Master of the Rolls with the sanction of the Treasury.

The Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, after a careful consideration of the subject, expressed their opinion in a Treasury Minute, dated February 9, 1857, that the plan recommended by the Master of the Rolls "was well calculated for the accomplishment of this important national object, in an effectual and satisfactory manner, within a reasonable time, and provided proper attention be paid to economy, in making the detailed arrangements, without unnecessary expense."

They expressed their approbation of the proposal that each chronicle and historical document should be edited in such a manner as to represent with all possible correctness the text of each writer, derived from a collation of the best MSS., and that no notes should be added, except such as were illustrative of the various readings. They suggested, however, that the preface to each work should contain, in addition to the particulars proposed by the Master of the Rolls, a biographical account of the author, so far as authentic materials existed for that purpose, and an estimate of his historical credibility and value.

In compliance with the order of the Treasury, the Master of the Rolls has selected for publication for the present year such works as he considered best calculated to fill up the chasms existing in the printed materials of English history; and of these works the present is one.

*Rolls House,
December 1857.*

Carta adelfund regine pelakinge.



pena telemoli
na. laca iupit
ne post sup al
tate lre quae m
telmouu donan
offine. lru care
subleptio h.e.
Rognate imp
pena dno
mo iha i. Ego

adelfund regina do laugiette
meritoru ann consensu meoz
senozu conatens donabo cup
pulisio fidelissimo munstro aliq
telluris partem mee pte pra
tant id: tram. xx. maneriu in
loco qui dr lakinge p eum hum
obvenera atq: penuna placabi
li h.e. mille quingentis solidis
argenti & auri ul quingens cen
tum sicis ut huc possideat qm
vni uniat pfruatitq: noluntra
re ip suem illis annuig: die
libam relinqr autunq: uoluit
in sempitna potestatem hereditate
q: ppetuam. Et h donatio pua lan
no domute in casu anomis. dec. lx.
viii. indictione. j. Et dam in papini
omnibz scali potestarchz in noies
patis rihz i spe sci. H iusticia mu
olara suane. hnt rchz sublebeum
ly r consensuoz quoz nonia
post recitata onle cubu rchz
Ego archelred rex occidentaliu
saxonu consensu & subleptis. j.
Ego delstend epes & subleptis. j.
Ego Wilfare dux & subleptis. j.

Ego cadwll dux & subleptis. j.
Ego wictand dux & subleptis. j.
Ego muicel dux & subleptis. j.
Ego delstend filii regis & subleptis. j.
Ego ofpald filius regis & subleptis. j.
Ego adelfund dux & subleptis. j.
Ego wictand dux & subleptis. j.
Ego abhuad abbas & subleptis. j.
Ego delstend abbas & subleptis. j.
Ego aqverht. munst & subleptis. j.
Ego fordrad munst & subleptis. j.
Ego burgred munst & subleptis. j.
Ego adelfund regina & subleptis. j.

Edmundus princeps **De feorber**
edru familiaat de lade **sa am**
rogne uicior dedit d r baren mare am
rdom abend monachis bnd ad fin
moly ulla q fivm r sa apllar possit
uoluntate in casu re regne p care
auctoritate qm p tate regna ei fidat.
et sup lca ulla. p hnt i cartu qm
si atare domi abbend insignias omi



in dno q hnt
icade in parte
ip regne atella
tioe. cui care h e
notificatio. **Carta litle de regine
de feorber sa.**
Rognate imp
amerto filio
di & saluatioe
mundi qui se
pua regit & alta totusq: telluris
orbem post ope r umbatione con
epi noneq: su sp ex sacian llimo p
filiens in quimis alno. tuis iumpo
cuncta optempant celestia. treme
q: iustria r formidant infernalina.

Colla ville de floze lespa



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Dag & Son, Lith to the Queen.

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CHRONICON

MONASTERII DE ABINGDON.

EDITED

BY

THE REV. JOSEPH STEVENSON, M.A.,

OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM, AND
VICAR OF LEIGHTON BUZZARD.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY'S
TREASURY, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

VOL. I.

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY UNTIL THE
NORMAN CONQUEST.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND ROBERTS.

—
1858.

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P R E F A C E

TO

THE CHRONICLE OF ABINGDON.

§ 1. THE present work has been selected for publication as presenting, within a narrow compass, materials for the history of a great subject. Not only does it abound with minute information of local interest, but, what is far more important, it exhibits a type of the monastic system as it prevailed in our own island, and gives us a standard whereby to form an estimate of its capabilities and its resources. We see how the idea was worked out and reduced into practice, for here it assumes a form, tangible, precise, and definite. An authentic record of the youth and manhood of a large Benedictine abbey is laid open to our inspection; here we may read of its sayings and doings; its thoughts, wishes, and feelings; its affections and its antipathies; its hopes and its fears. We trace the progress of its fortunes, propitious and adverse, the steps by which it gradually gained its large extent of real and personal property, and secured for itself exemption from the common law of the land.

The Chronicle of Abingdon: its general value;

a 2

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And, lastly, we may inform ourselves of the mode in which it dealt with the wide possessions and the vast influence which, through good report and evil report, it succeeded in acquiring.

its impar-
tiality;

§ 2. This narrative possesses one important recommendation, it comes before us in no questionable shape. When it was penned there existed no temptation either to suppress or to pervert the truth. It was written by a monk, within a monastery, and intended for the inspection of none but the inmates of the same establishment. No necessity had then arisen to plead for the continuance of observances which were gradually losing their hold upon the people, or to defend the wisdom of theories which daily were growing obsolete. The affections of the layman still sided with the monk; the precincts of the abbey were still holy ground;¹ and popular opinion still proclaimed that it was a holy and a wholesome deed to dedicate the best that one possessed "in pure and perpetual alms to God and the blessed ever-Virgin Mary, and the house of Abingdon and the monks there serving God for ever."

its truth-
fulness;

§ 3. As there existed no antecedent inducement to deal unfairly with the truth, so there is no internal evidence that the truth has been unfairly dealt withal. The compilers of this narrative, whoever they may have been, have executed their labour with commendable singleness of purpose. Their intention was to record the history of their own monastery, and to that object they have religiously confined themselves. Guiltless of every attempt to produce effect, and devoid of all artistic skill, they have told what they had to tell

¹ Excepting in such instances of political disorganization as described, pp. 485, 486, 493, 494.

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like unpractised writers, but, like honest men, dully, but truthfully. The value of the book is materially enhanced by the absence of those very qualities which lend a charm to writings of a different character. It is satisfactory to find here, not the speculations of the theorist, nor the deductions of the philosopher, nor the dreams of the poet, nor even the carefully balanced periods of the historian, but an unvarnished narrative, strung together, to the best of his ability, by an honest compiler of materials and a truthful chronicler of events.

§ 4. The structure of the narrative is singularly inartistic. The earlier portion of the work, that which terminates with the Norman Conquest, may be described¹ as a transcript of the title-deeds of the monastery, arranged (professedly) in chronological order, and connected by a sketch of the circumstances under which each grant was executed. Up to this point the documentary evidence preponderates over the narrative; but after the accession of William the First, the process is reversed, charters are more sparingly introduced, and original matter becomes more prominent. The period of history embraced by the whole work may be calculated at five hundred years,² commencing with

its scope, and sources of its information.

¹ The author himself (p. 487) describes the nature of the work to which he addressed himself. It was his object, he tells us, to write a history of the lands and possessions which the early kings and queens, and their retainers, as well during the times of the Angles as the Danes, have given in pure and perpetual alms to this house of Abingdon, and confirmed the same by their charters. He further undertook to introduce, each into its

several place, the charters of the donors, whether kings or other benefactors. The same plan was to be adopted in treating of the fortunes of the monastery after the arrival of the Normans (p. 489).

² The year 652 is considered by the author as the starting-point of his history, as he tells us that the earlier portion of it, from Ceadwalla to William the Conqueror, embraces a period of 414 years (p. 487).

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the foundation of the monastery, which, according to Bishop Tanner, dates from about the year 675, and ending with the accession of King Richard the First in 1189.

Documen-
tary evi-
dence,

§ 5. My remarks upon the first of those sources of information to which I have just alluded, the documentary evidence incorporated in this history, need not be extended to any length in this place, since in the Appendix to the second volume, the reader will find a chronological list of the whole of these instruments, viewed especially with reference to their authenticity. It may be sufficient for my present purpose to remark, in general terms, that we should be cautious how we pronounce against the truthfulness of a charter upon such testimony as that afforded by works like the present history. Here, as elsewhere, it is not safe to decide upon secondary evidence; and this Chronicle, as far as its charters are concerned, is nothing more. The copy, as we here have it, may possibly be carelessly transcribed; numerals and names, the principal data on which to form an estimate, may possibly be corrupted; difficulties and doubts may hence arise which would be removed on the production of the original instrument. This portion of the inquiry, however, as has already been stated, shall receive a fuller investigation hereafter.

how dealt
with by the
author.

§ 6. It becomes important for us to ascertain the degree of accuracy which the author has exhibited in dealing with these documentary materials, and this in two points: (1.) as regards their arrangement, and (2.) as regards their transcription.

(1.) Respecting their arrangement.

He has arranged them according to date, not according to subject-matter, but without any strict chronological accuracy; a rough classification under reigns being

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considered sufficient for the object which he had in view. But here several grave errors have been committed. For example: he has confounded Ethelbald,¹ King of Mercia, with Ethelbald, King of Wessex, who lived a century later. Under the reign of Edward the Elder² we have a charter granted by his namesake, the Confessor. A grant executed by Ethelred,³ the brother of Alfred, is attributed to King Eadred. Other instances might be cited; but these are enough to show that the author had not studied, as carefully as he ought to have done, the historical bearing of the documents which he undertook to illustrate, and which formed the very basis of his history.

(2.) Respecting their transcription.

Fortunately we possess the means of testing the author's accuracy on this point, for the originals of several of the documents which are transcribed into the present work are still extant, probably the very instruments which he had before him. Eight⁴ of

¹ See p. 38. This mistake is the more remarkable, since in committing it the author has departed from the correct arrangement and chronology of the earlier duplicate copy of this history, which exhibits this instrument in its proper place, and under its proper date. See the note at p. 40.

² See p. 53.

³ See p. 134.

⁴ They are as follows:—

Original Charter, Augustus ii. 44, printed in the present vol. p. 145.					
“	“	43,	“	“	194.
“	“	33,	“	“	200.
“	“	41,	“	“	213.
“	“	45,	“	“	227.
“	“	40,	“	“	239.
“	“	39,	“	“	340.
“	“	38,	“	“	368.
“	“	48,	“	“	388.

The last of these is excluded from the calculation, because it is a transcript of the end of the twelfth century, or possibly of the thirteenth.

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these are preserved in the Cottonian Library. There are besides, in Archbishop Parker's collection of manuscripts at Cambridge, carefully executed transcripts of nine¹ others, made apparently from originals or contemporary duplicates which were extant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but with the fate of which we are unacquainted. Thus a comparison of these originals, or of authentic copies of originals, with the transcript as given in the Abingdon Chronicle becomes practicable in seventeen instances. This comparison has been made and the variations have been recorded. The details may be seen as specified below; but the general result is calculated to impress us with a favourable opinion of the accuracy of our copyist. Mistakes sometimes do occur, variations frequently; but they are neither more abundant nor graver than might fairly be expected under the circumstances, and it may be affirmed that in general the transcriber has dealt honestly and conscientiously with his records.

No remarks are necessary in this place respecting

¹ These transcripts are as under:—

MS. CCC. Camb. CXI. No. 100, p. 171, printed in the present vol. p. 60.				
"	"	88, p. 139,	"	79.
"	"	94, p. 155,	"	151.
"	"	90, p. 145,	"	162.
"	"	91, p. 147,	"	175.
"	"	96, p. 161,	"	197.
"	"	98, p. 167,	"	323.
"	"	99, p. 169,	"	373.
"	"	101, p. 175,	"	388.

These transcripts, executed in a bold and distinct hand, and with great care, were made by Robert Talbot (misnamed Henry by Nasmyth, Catal. MSS. C.C.C. pp. 126, 128, who here follows Wanley, Catal. Codd. Anglo-Saxon. p. 150), who was prebendary of Norwich from A.D. 1547 to 1558. (Hardy's *Le Neve*, 11, 497.) Talbot states upon more than one occasion that he obtained the originals from Dr. Owen, a physician (pp. 151, 162, 197, 323, 388.) He seems to have employed himself in illustrating that portion of the Itinerary of Antoninus which relates to Britain. See MSS. Parker, Cl. p. 145 and CCCLXXIX. No. 7.

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the documents which are of a date subsequent to the Norman invasion.

§ 7. The information afforded by these documents is no less varied than important. They supply details for which we should search in vain among the pages of the professed historian. For instance, they illustrate the ecclesiastical and political history and institutions of the kingdom; the social condition of the people; the progress of agriculture; the tenure and descent of property, real and personal; the development and operation of the law; the growth of the constitution; and the relative position of the king and his nobility, and of both in regard to the commons. Upon all these topics, and many others, they afford hints, brief and incidental indeed, but from that very circumstance all the more trustworthy, and assuredly too precious to be neglected by those who aim at understanding the early history of their own country.

Information to be derived from this source; general,

§ 8. For the local information which they supply these instruments are especially valuable, and they will yield a rich harvest of authentic information to the topographer and county historian. It was customary to embody into the charter, if it conveyed landed property, a description of the property so granted, the limits of which were marked out by metes and boundaries with such precision as to admit of a ready identification at a future period. For the purpose of affording a greater facility of description, by the introduction of local names, these boundaries were for the most part drawn up in Saxon, although the body of the document were in Latin. They mark out the land so granted by certain well-known objects, whether natural or artificial, thus supplying a copious vocabulary of the most remarkable objects in the peculiar locality to which they relate.

and local.

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Charters,
how se-
lected by
Kemble.

§ 9. By far the larger portion of such of these documents as relate to the ante-Norman period of our history was printed some few years ago by that accomplished antiquarian the late J. M. Kemble, in his *Collection of Anglo-Saxon Charters*.¹ While I bear willing and hearty testimony to the value of this work, I cannot but add that the republication of such of these documents as relate to the history of Abingdon is highly desirable. Mr. Kemble dealt with his subject rather as a philologist than as an historian, and was concerned with it as it affected language more than as it influenced history. Where more than a single copy of a charter existed, he thought that he was justified in framing for himself a text gleaned from these several sources, without enabling his reader to separate the variations of diction and spelling derived from each. Thus his text is an eclectic text, such possibly as is found in no single manuscript. And more than this, it is partly conjectural; for having decided, upon philological grounds, what ought to have been the orthography at any given period, he reduced the whole style of these various documents to this one uniform standard.

Objections
to that
system.

§ 10. If any one were authorized to adopt this method of dealing with such obscure materials as are the bulk of the *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, that individual was Mr. Kemble; for his familiar acquaintance with the language and literature of our Teutonic forefathers invested with no light authority any conclusions at which he might arrive. But here we do not want conclusions. What we want, in such publications as these, is materials from which to draw conclusions. We ask to have the opportunity of consulting the

¹ "Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici, opera Johannis M. Kemble." 6 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1839-1848.

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documents as they stand, even if it be at the expense of those inconveniences of a grave nature¹ by which Mr. Kemble tells us we shall be encountered “in printing the copies as they are given in chartularies,” such as the Abingdon Chronicle.

§ 11. In this publication a different system has been adopted; and one which in the present condition of our knowledge, both as regards philology and diplomatics, presents greater advantages. It leaves untouched the unity and integrity of the document, and at the same time secures to the reader the means of ascertaining the source whence each variety of diction and spelling has been derived. The text is given from that manuscript which appears to be most trustworthy on the whole; and the various readings, from whatever authorities derived, are added at the bottom of the page.

§ 12. I am now led to make a few remarks upon the purely narrative portion of the work, from which, in fact, it derives its claim to be regarded as an historical production. As might naturally be expected, this is for the most part a record of the fortunes of the Monastery of Abingdon, but not exclusively so,

¹ They are thus enumerated:—“First, we should have been met by a repulsive mode of spelling, or rather with various and inconsistent modes of spelling, bearing no resemblance to that of the periods to which the documents belong; next, where two or more copies were used for the settlement of a text, we must have admitted inconsistent modes of spelling into one and the same document.”—See Cod. Diplom. Introduction to vol. i. pp.

cxiv. cxv. But “various and inconsistent modes of spelling” do continually occur, even in those charters which have been reduced by Mr. Kemble into “one consistent form.” Thus, in Ch. xxvii. we have Eadric and Aedric: in xxxii. Aethelred and Aethilred: in xxxvii. Uuythred and Uuithred; Kinigytha, Kyngytha, and Kni-githa: in xl. Uuigtred and Uuihtred: and so in nearly every page throughout the work.

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for, interspersed therewith, we have much interesting information connected with the general affairs of the kingdom. The earlier portion is wanting, the manuscript being unfortunately mutilated at the beginning, but it commences with an account of the introduction of Christianity into Britain by the instrumentality of Faganus and Duvianus and the conversion of King Lucius. The way is thus paved for the arrival of the Irish monk Abbennus, to whom the King of the Britons made a grant of the larger portion of Berkshire, whereupon he founded a monastery called after his own name, the "Mount of Abbennus," or Abingdon.

and the
Saxon and
Norman
periods.

§ 13. The arrival of the Saxons introduces us to Ceadwalla, whose conversion, journey to Rome, and death are then described. The accession of Ina next follows, with whom commences the series of charters, to which reference has already been made. The history of the other Saxon kings up to that of Edward the Confessor is touched upon in succession, sometimes more passingly, sometimes more fully, as occasion was afforded by the extent or the paucity of their gifts to the monastery. Connected with this is interwoven the biography of the successive abbots, more especially of Ethelwold, the great protector and ornament of the foundation, whose history is introduced at some length, but so confusedly as to be unintelligible, and to make it necessary to print in a connected form the original narrative from which these selections have been made.¹ As we draw near

¹ It is printed, for the first time, in the Appendix to the second volume, from the unique manuscript in the Imperial Library at Paris. The same extracts as those given in the text, and in a form

equally fragmentary and unsatisfactory, are embodied in a copy of the Chronicle of Florence of Worcester in the Lambeth Library. See Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, 1, 164, 165.

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the period of the Norman Conquest these biographical sketches increase in extent and interest; after that event, it is from them that the narrative derives its chief value.¹ On the accession of William the Conqueror a new leaf is turned in the history of the monastery, and from this point its ascendancy was on the wane. Gifts of lands and privileges cease, and the abbot and brethren have enough to do to hold their own. The history becomes the record, on the one hand, of the assaults to which they were exposed by their aggressive feudal neighbours, and on the other, of the measures which they adopted to protect themselves from this spoliation. It concludes with the accession of Richard the First to the throne, an event from which they appear to have anticipated favourable results.

§ 14. The author's style, though not exempt from The barbarous words, and a faulty construction, is upon author's style, authorities, and candour. the whole somewhat in advance of that of the generality of the writers of his own period. He shows an acquaintance with Ovid, Seneca, Juvenal, and Virgil, and by the phraseology which he employs he gives us to understand that he had read the classical writers² with some degree of care. He had at his command the earlier chronicles³ of his monastery, and they

¹ Before the Norman Conquest the incidents which are related with the greatest detail have reference to Rethun, Ethelwold, Siward, Ethelstan, Sparhafoc, and Orderic; and after that event by Athelhelm, Rainald, Faricius, Vincentius, Ingulfus, Walchelin, Roger, and Alfred.

² See the Index. I have not succeeded in ascertaining the source whence he derived the couplet,—

“Qui, tentans partes Cnutonis fundere bello,
Multorum mentes conscivit ferre juvamen.”

It is apparently adapted from some early authority; but, if original, it affords a satisfactory instance of the writer's command of language.

³ As at pp. 120, 443. Yet he does not seem to have called into requisition two sources of information with which, as an inmate

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doubtless furnished him with much of his knowledge of events anterior to his own age. He has the candour to admit his ignorance¹ of some incidents respecting which he would gladly have been communicative; and he retains our confidence by remarking, that under such circumstances it is the duty of an historian to be silent.²

The work
in two
forms.

§ 15. Two copies of the "Historia Monasterii de Abingdon" are extant; both are deposited in the Cottonian Library in the British Museum (Claud. B. vi., and Claud. C. ix.), both written in double columns upon vellum, in folio, and of the thirteenth century. The second of these (Claud. C. ix.) is the earlier in date by about half a century, and contains what may be styled the first edition of the work. A specimen from one of its pages is to be seen opposite the title-page of the second volume; and a corresponding illustration from the handwriting of Claud. B. vi. will be found in this volume. The entire work was afterwards revised, and in many parts rearranged and rewritten, and in its improved form transcribed into the second of the manuscripts to which we have referred. A comparison of the two narratives show that both of them derived their materials from a common source. In various respects the earlier text is much more compressed than the latter, long passages having been added on the revision of the work; yet, sometimes the reverse

of Abingdon, he must have been familiar; namely, the copy of the Saxon Chronicle (Tiberius, B. i.), known as the Chronicon Abben-doniae (see Hardy's Introduction to Petrie's Monumenta, § 177), and the copy of the Annals of Florence of Worcester, already referred to (§ 13. note¹.)

¹ Verum cujus infortunii malum ac talis eventus lapsus inopinati,

quibus ex causis acciderint, nil veri aut relatione dignum ad nos-tram pervenit notitiam, p. 120.

² Qua de re utilius pariter et honestius fore dijudicavimus super hujusmodi desolatione ad præsens sapienter tacere, quam quicquam in medium producere quod nec verum esse nec verisimile de facili possit comprobari, p. 120.

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is the case. In Claud. B. vi. many charters have been inserted, and in some instances others are given in a more perfect state than they are to be found in Claud. C. ix. In this latter manuscript the Saxon boundaries are omitted in the body of the charter (while they occur in their proper place in Claud. B. vi.), but they are thrown together at the end of the volume. The names of the witnesses in the first instance were generally abbreviated in number, sometimes entirely omitted; while, on the revision of the work, this defect was carefully supplied from the original documents.

In the second portion, from the year 1066 to the death of Abbot Roger, the two manuscripts correspond more closely than they did throughout the first division of the work. Here, upon a comparison of the texts, we have to remark two short additions derived from Claud. C. ix., and a few omissions and transpositions.

§ 16. The text adopted in the present edition is that of the revised and improved copy (Claud. B. vi.), appended to which are given, at the bottom of the page, such various readings as have been derived from a collation with Claud. C. ix. Where this second copy furnishes matter which does not occur in the former manuscript, this additional material has been carried into the text, and is distinguished by being printed within brackets. It will be seen at the first glance that in the Saxon Charters several grammatical blunders present themselves; the reader must not be startled either by noticing their frequent occurrence, or that they pass unchallenged. They are harmless from their very obtrusiveness, for they provoke detection. In the narrative portions of the work this rule has been slightly modified; so far, that is to say, as to admit of the correction of a few obvious mistakes, either by way of suggestion in a foot note, or by insert-

The text,
how
formed.

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ing the true reading, furnished by the second copy, into the text, and throwing the faulty one to the bottom of the page. Yet this has never been done without notice being given. Many conjectural emendations will doubtless present themselves to the reader of this history; but it forms no part of the duty of an editor to obtrude upon the public those which have occurred to himself.

§ 17. It has been already stated that these two¹ manuscripts are deposited in the Cottonian Library. One of them (Claud. B. vi.) was known to Camden as early as 1607; for in the edition of his "Britannia" published in that year are given a few extracts² from a "Vetus Liber Abbendonensis," which correspond with this manuscript. These passages do not occur in the earlier editions. That it was at that time in the possession of Sir Robert, the founder of the library, is probable; that he had added it to his invaluable collection before his death, in 1631, is clear, as some directions to the binder, written by him upon one of the fly-leaves, are still extant. While in his custody it was well known to Ussher, Dodsworth, Dewes, and other antiquaries of that period. The earliest distinct notice of the second text (Claud. C. ix.) is supplied by some extracts³

¹ No other copies are known to be, or to have been, in existence. Dugdale, indeed, in his *Monasticon* (iii. 37. ed. Ellis,) gives the account of the foundation of the Monastery of Burton-upon-Trent (verbally the same with the passage at p. 411 of this volume), with the intimation that he had it "ex libro MS. Abbendonensi quondam penes . . . baronem de Fenton," which might seem to imply the existence of a second copy; but the reference to the

folio of this Fenton manuscript, whatever that designation may mean, shows that it is identical with Claud. B. vi.

² These passages relate to the descriptions of Abingdon (p. 3 of the present volume) and Seouchesham (p. 6.)

³ See Tanner's *Notitia*, p. 11, note (*), quoting, as from this source, the passage "Mons Abbendonix ad septemtrionalem," &c., which occurs only in this second copy. See the present volume, p. 1, note (*).

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made from it by Brian Twyne, an Oxford antiquary, who died in 1644.¹

§ 18. In the formation of the Index of Places considerable difficulty has been experienced in arriving at a conclusion as to the admissibility of a large proportion of the local names mentioned in the Saxon boundaries. Are they Proper, or only Descriptive? But in deciding this question, it has been my wish to err rather on the side of unnecessary comprehension than of unjust exclusion. The Index.

§ 19. And lastly, I have to tender my grateful thanks to the Rev. T. B. Wilkinson and the Rev. J. Fenwick, Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for the facilities which, through their kindness, and at some considerable inconvenience to themselves, I enjoyed while collating the transcript of the Abingdon charters bequeathed to the Library of that College by Archbishop Parker. Conclusion.

JOSEPH STEVENSON.

8th December 1857.

¹ Wood's *Athenæ*, iii. 108, ed. Bliss.

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