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978-1-108-04298-7 - Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: De Principis Instructione Liber: Volume 8

Edited by J.S. Brewer, James F. Dimock and George F. Warner

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### Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

Despite a frustrated ecclesiastical career – his ongoing failure to secure the See of St David's embittered him – Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales, Gerald de Barry, c.1146–1220/23) composed many remarkable literary works, initially while employed as a royal clerk for Henry II and, subsequently, in semi-retirement in Lincoln. Eight volumes of his works were compiled as part of the Rolls Series of British medieval material. Volume 8, edited by archivist George F. Warner (1845–1936) and published in 1891, contains his *Liber de Principis Instructione*, a moral treatise including much invective against the Angevin court. Written while Louis of France – in whose support Giraldus composed a poem – was scheming to replace King John, the Latin text, in Giraldus' vigorous and anecdotal style, gives a vivid picture of contemporary politics, while the English introduction illuminates nineteenth-century interest in the period.

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# Giraldi Cambrensis Opera

VOLUME 8:

DE PRINCIPIS INSTRUCTIONE LIBER

EDITED BY J.S. BREWER,  
JAMES F. DIMOCK  
AND GEORGE F. WARNER



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He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be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

*Rolls House,  
December 1857.*

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# GIRALDI CAMBRENSIS OPERA.

VOL. VIII.

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## DE PRINCIPIS INSTRUCTIONE LIBER

EDITED

BY

GEORGE F. WARNER, M.A., F.S.A.,

ASSISTANT-KEEPER OF MANUSCRIPTS, BRITISH MUSEUM.

WITH AN INDEX TO VOLS. I.-IV. AND VIII.

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

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1891.

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## INTRODUCTION.



The seventh volume of this edition of Giraldus Cambrensis was announced on its appearance as the last. As, however, the *Liber de Principis Instructione* was still lacking to complete the full tale of his works, an eighth volume is now added, which, besides supplying this omission, includes a much-needed Index to the first four volumes, edited by the late Rev. J. S. Brewer.<sup>1</sup>

Like several others that have preceded it, the treatise above named has unfortunately survived in a single copy only, though it has not in addition suffered from the ravages of fire, like the *Speculum Ecclesie*, or from the loss of many of its chapters, like the *Liber de Gestis*. The volume in which it is preserved is Cotton MS. Julius B. xiii. in the British Museum. This is a small vellum folio of 173 leaves, the last 126 of which (ff. 48–173) contain the work in question. The earlier quires (ff. 2–40) are occupied by a series of chronological tables, which, after a few introductory paragraphs, give the succession of patriarchs, kings, emperors, etc., from the Creation downwards. Among them (ff. 19, 28) are two lists of popes, both of which end with Honorius II. (1124–1130), the second list being further continued in a later hand to the eleventh year of Innocent III., 1208. As, moreover, Lothair II. (1125–1137) figures as the reigning emperor, and Louis VI. (1108–1137) and Henry I. as kings of France and England respectively,

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<sup>1</sup> In using the index it must be remembered that it does not include the contents of vols. v.–vii., edited by the late Rev. J. F. Dimock, each of which has an index to itself.

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the date of composition must lie in or about 1130. The contents of ff. 41–47 are of a somewhat different character, consisting of brief notes of events, year by year, from the beginning of our era. In the present condition of the MS. they end in A.D. 249, but the last entry is cut short at the bottom of f. 47b, and the chronicle, when perfect, no doubt extended considerably further. At the top of f. 2, the first page of the text, is written, in a hand of about A.D. 1600, “*Epitomæ historię Rogeri Waldon,*” though on what grounds this title was inserted, and how much matter it is meant to cover, I am unable to say. The only Roger Walden of whom we possess any knowledge died Bishop of London in 1405, while the handwriting of the MS. down to f. 40 is of the latter part of the 12th century, and ff. 41–47 are at latest of the beginning of the 13th. As far as f. 27 the same tables are found in Harley MS. 1312, which is also of the 12th century; and as they there form a complete work, without the second table of popes and emperors included here at f. 28, they are probably distinct from the latter, as well as from the fragmentary chronicle that follows. In the *Catalogue of the Harleian MSS.* (1808) they are attributed, for some reason not stated, to Roger de Waltham; but the author’s identity is not more easy to determine under this name than under that of Walden. At the same time, there is no need to dwell on this portion of the Cotton MS. It is in fact more than a century older than the portion which contains the treatise of Giraldus here edited, and, except that it happens to be enclosed between the same covers, it has apparently nothing to do with it. From an inscription in a 14th century hand at the bottom of the first page,<sup>1</sup> it appears to have belonged to Deeping

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<sup>1</sup> “*Liber de prioratu Sancti Jakobi de Estdeping.*” At the end of the Register of Deeping Priory in Harley MS. 3,658 is a catalogue of the library (f. 74b.), in a hand of about the same date as this inscription, but this particular volume is not included.



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Priory, in Lincolnshire, which was a cell to Thorney Abbey; but there is nothing to connect the later MS. with which it is bound up with the same house, and the union of the two in one volume probably dates only from the time of Sir Robert Cotton.

As already stated, the *Liber de Principis Instructione* extends from f. 48 to the end of the volume. It is written in double columns, in a rather rough and ill-formed hand of about the middle of the 14th century. The headings of the chapters are in red, having first been minutely entered in the margin as a guide for the rubricator. The principal initials are in red and blue, ornamented with light scrolls and flourishes, and many of the smaller initials in the body of the text are of the same colours alternately. No general title is prefixed to the work, and the author's name is nowhere mentioned. This, however, "Gerardus Cambrensis," has been supplied in a charter-hand of the same period at the top of the first page, though for that matter the internal evidence renders it wholly superfluous. In the text of the manuscript there are serious defects. The scribe must have been at once a bad Latin scholar and a shockingly careless copyist. As may be seen from the footnotes, grammatical and other blunders of every kind abound, and care was not even taken to ensure that the rubrics agreed with the table of chapters prefixed to each book. In most cases the proper readings can be restored without difficulty, and have been introduced into the text; but there are a few passages too corrupt to be safely meddled with, and they have therefore been printed just as they stand in the MS.

Although no other copy of the work is known to have survived, some portions of it have been also preserved to us by other mediæval writers. The only one, indeed, who made direct use of it seems to have been Higden, who includes it in the list of his authorities under the author's name and the title "Vita regis Henrici Secundi

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“sub triplici Distinctione,”<sup>1</sup> and embodies numerous extracts from it in the text of his *Polychronicon*. These were in turn copied by the compilers Knighton and Bromton, who, however, did not follow Higden’s example in indicating the source from which they came.

The most valuable portions have also appeared in print in other forms. Extracts from the surviving MS. were first published in Bouquet’s *Recueil des Historiens*, etc., vol. xviii. (1822), pp. 121–163, edited by Dom Michel Brial. According to the preface these extracts were derived from a transcript furnished by the Abbé Pierre de Bettencourt. A fuller and more handy edition, with the title *Giraldus Cambrensis de Instructione Principum*,<sup>2</sup> was printed for the Anglia Christiana Society of London in 1846. This was edited, under initials, by the Rev. J. S. Brewer, and included the second and third of the three books complete, together with a short appendix of extracts from the first. In the present edition it was originally intended to give the first book, as well as the other two, without curtailment; and although, for reasons that will presently appear, this design has not been strictly adhered to, for all practical purposes the whole work may be regarded as now made available.

So far at least as regards the form which it ultimately assumed, and in which alone it has come down to us, the motive of Giraldus for publishing his treatise on the Instruction of a Prince is frankly avowed in the preface. It was directed, he there tells us, against the princes of his own time—in other words, against Henry II. and his sons—with a side-glance also at those prelates, or princes of the church, whose conduct was equally

<sup>1</sup> Rolls ed., vol. i. p. 24. The only other works of Giraldus which he names are the *Topographia Hibernica* and the *Itinerarium Cambriae*.

<sup>2</sup> Giraldus himself always uses the singular “Principis,” and it has accordingly been retained in the present edition.

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obnoxious to censure.<sup>1</sup> But this was not the intention with which he originally set out; and there is a marked difference in treatment between the first Book, or, to use his own term, Distinction, and the other two. Apart from the preface, which is obviously of late date, the first book is almost wholly didactic and academical, the chapters dealing one by one with the several virtues that go to form the perfect prince, but without any personal application. From an historical point of view therefore it is of little value, save indeed for the anecdotes and incidental allusions from which all the author's writings derive so much of their interest. Such, for example, in this book alone, are his stories of Edward the Confessor,<sup>2</sup> Louis VII. of France,<sup>3</sup> and St. Thomas<sup>4</sup>; and, again, his account of the manner in which Robert of Cricklade,<sup>5</sup> prior of St. Frideswide's, Oxford, convicted the Jews of falsifying MSS. of

<sup>1</sup> "Tales itaque principes tales-  
que prælati nostro nunc causam  
calamo donant," p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> p. 65. Giraldus calls him Robert only, but there is no doubt who is meant. He speaks of having himself seen him as an old man, the end of his career coinciding with the beginning of his own. There has been great uncertainty among writers as to his period. He is said to have succeeded Wimund as Prior of St. Frideswide's in 1130 or 1141 (Dugdale, vi. p. 135). It is more certain that he held the office in the time of Adrian IV. (1154-1159), who addressed a Bull to him as prior (*ib.* p. 147); and Kennett prints another Bull to him from the next pope, Alexander III., of uncertain date, but probably not before 1165 (*Paroch. Antiq.*, 1695,

p. 116). Sir T. D. Hardy dates his death in or about 1160, and adds that he "certainly died before Becket" (*Cat. Brit. Hist.*, ii. p. 291). This, however, is disproved by an interesting letter in which he describes his cure from a disease, contracted while he was in Sicily, by a visit to Becket's tomb (Robertson, *Mat. for Hist. of T. Becket*, ii. p. 97). As one Philip occurs as prior in 1180, he must have died before then (Dugdale, ii. p. 136). Among other works he wrote an abridgment of Pliny's Natural History (B.M., Royal MS. 15 C. xiv.) with a preface addressed to Henry II. Giraldus, it may be noted, does not say that he saw Prior Robert at Oxford; and it cannot therefore be inferred from this passage that he visited the university before the famous occasion when he recited his *Topographia Hibernica* (vol. i. pp. 72, 410; vol. v. p. li.)

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Josephus, and his narrative of the discovery and opening of the tomb of king Arthur at Glastonbury.<sup>1</sup> There is much, too, that is curious and suggestive in what he says on the ancient and modern laws and practice as to wrecks,<sup>2</sup> and on the enactments of the French penal code.<sup>3</sup> But with these and like exceptions, what interest the book possesses is mainly subjective. The author himself and his versatile powers have had full justice done to them in the preceding volumes.<sup>4</sup> It need only therefore be remarked here that more perhaps than any other of his writings this particular section of the Instruction of a Prince exhibits his scholarly side, throwing light on the nature and extent of the studies to which he was devoted,<sup>5</sup> and to which by his own account he sacrificed his chances of preferment. The method he adopts in it is somewhat peculiar. After a few sentences on the particular virtue under discussion, he proceeds to enforce it with a crowd of quotations, drawn indiscriminately from sacred and profane sources, and more or less loosely connected together. The familiarity he thus displays with the Vulgate, Fathers, and later theological writers is in itself remarkable; but it is nothing compared with the range of his reading in the Latin classics. From Plautus, indeed, to Boethius there is scarcely an author of any note who is not laid under contribution; and, although many of his quotations are inaccurate and not a few wrongly attributed, even this is so far in his favour that it suggests that he relied

<sup>1</sup> p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> p. 119. See also vol. iii. p. 136, where he is equally severe on the inhumanity of his own day. That others felt with him may be inferred from Richard's renunciation in 1190 of the royal right to wreck in favour of the saved and the heirs of the lost (*Gesta Hen.*, ii. p. 139).

<sup>3</sup> p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> See especially Mr. Brewer's preface to vol. i.

<sup>5</sup> "Nihil enim tunc ambiebat, nihil amplius habere volebat, quod studium ipsius, in quo fere semper assiduus et continuus erat, impediret," etc., vol. i. p. 87.

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more on memory (as he certainly did in citing the Vulgate) than on the aid of commonplace-books. At the same time he undoubtedly in some cases obtained his quotations at second-hand. He makes free use, for instance, of the *Moralis Philosophia* of Hildebert of Le Mans,<sup>1</sup> a work which, like his own, is largely made up of passages from the classics. But the predecessor to whom he was most indebted was Hugo Floriacensis, so called from the abbey of Fleury, of which house he was a member. Among other works the Fleury monk wrote a general chronicle commonly known as the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Of this compilation he issued two editions, both of which are still extant. The first, in four books and ending with the death of Charles the Great in 814, appeared in 1109. Immediately after, having found a copy of the *Historia Tripartita*, he recast his work with its aid and re-issued it in 1110, divided now into six books and brought down to 855.<sup>2</sup> From this second edition Giraldus borrowed without scruple, though, after the fashion of his times, he did not think it incumbent on him to make any acknowledgment. The full extent of his obligations may be estimated from the small type in which they are here printed, the latter part of the chronicle being embodied in his text almost entire. His extracts are mostly concerned with the Roman emperors and the early Carolingians, but they include also long passages treating of the Amazons, Scythians, and Parthians, and of Mahomet and the Saracens. As might be supposed, their relevancy to his subject is sometimes doubtful, though his idea evidently was to use the work as a mine of examples of good and evil rulers.

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 29, 31, 33, 35.

<sup>2</sup> See G. Waitz in Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.*, vol. ix. pp. 337 sqq.

I have used Rottendorff's edition,

U 61324.

*Hugonis Floriacensis . . . Chronicon*, etc., Münster, 1638, only the prologues and later matter being printed in the *Monumenta*.

b

The book thus consisting mainly of moral reflexions, interspersed with historical excerpts of little value, it became a question how it should be treated in editing. To print the whole of it intact as part of an historical series was almost impossible; while, on the other hand, if the Instruction of a Prince was to be included in this edition of Giraldus at all, it seemed advisable to present it as nearly as might be in the form in which it was issued by himself, rather than to suppress the first book altogether or to give a few isolated passages from it detached from their context. Under these circumstances I have compromised matters as best I could. Whenever a long string of Biblical texts occurs, I have given the references only, and in many cases I have done the same with classical and other quotations, indicating, if necessary, the nature of the omitted matter. Nothing, however, so far as I am aware, has been sacrificed which is of any importance, either in itself or in its bearing on the course of argument, and it will probably be thought that a good deal more might have been easily spared.

But before parting company with this first book, its date of composition and its relation to the two more strictly historical books that follow have to be considered. More than one account is given by Giraldus of the *Liber de Principis Instructione* in his other works. Thus in the list of his writings given in his letter to the chapter of Hereford he says of it,<sup>1</sup> “Post monita vero suscepta, grata plurimum et accepta, maturioribus studiis atque majoribus animum applicando, librum *de Principis Instructione*, multis auctoritatibus, tam philosophicis quam theologicis, per exempla pariter et præcepta studioso labore compaginatum, longisque lucubrationibus elaboratum, edere curavi”; and again in the *Catalogus Brevior*,<sup>2</sup> “Item, *Liber de Principis Instructione*, totiens promissus, fere inter

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 415.

! <sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 423.

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“ primos inchoatus, inter ultimos autem propalatus, diu nimium clausus et sopitus, quando tute prodire posset plurimis annorum curriculis tempus exspectans; liberaliter quidem et non livide legenti labor sua quoque laude non indignus.” Words almost identical with these last are used also in the *Dialogus de Jure Menevensis Ecclesie*<sup>1</sup>; while at the end of the same work the author further declares that he published the *De Principis Instructione* when he was about seventy years of age.<sup>2</sup> In all these passages, written quite late in life, he is obviously speaking of the complete work, and, as he was born in or about 1147,<sup>3</sup> its publication can be dated with some approach to exactness. There are other grounds too, besides the above statement, for fixing it in 1217, or soon after. Considering the nature of the references to king John, it could hardly have been issued before without risk, and there is internal evidence that in the only form in which it survives it did not see the light until he was safe in his tomb.

On the other hand, there was not the same reason for keeping back the first book, which is harmless enough. As Giraldus says above, although the work

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. p. 373, “ *Dialogus autem præsens, una cum libello De Principis Institutione toties promisso, diu nimirum valde diligenter atque latenter, hymalibus lucubrationibus crebris, juxta veritatem historicam et, quæ veris parcere non novit, severitatem elaborato, ideoque tam sero prodire in publicum et proferre caput denique vix auso, tanquam anno ætatis nostræ septuagesimo.*”

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Brewer (vol. i. p. x.) fixes his birth in 1147, “with a proba-

“ bility amounting almost to certainty,” relying on his own statement that on his first election as bishop of St. David’s in 1176 he was not yet thirty (vol. i. p. 41). Mr. Dimock (vol. v. p. lvi.) is less positive, Giraldus being notoriously inexact in his dates. Neither of them refers to the curious passage in the present work (p. 292), where, in narrating what happened to him at Paris on the night of King Philip’s birth in August, 1165, he says he was then about twenty.

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as a whole was published among the latest of his productions, it was begun among the earliest, and it is natural that he should allude more particularly to the book foremost in order. With so much in this that smacks of the schools, its inception might possibly date from his residence at Paris in 1177–1180, though hardly from his still earlier stay there from about 1165 to 1172. We need not, however, go back quite so far. If we exclude such juvenile efforts as the *Chronographia Metrica*,<sup>1</sup> his earliest known works are the famous two on Ireland, which were both written between 1186 and 1189. He might fairly therefore use the language he does of the *De Principis Instructione*, if it was not begun until about 1190, and in fact it would seem to have been mainly composed later even than this. From the way it speaks of Louis, heir of Philip of France, the preface now prefixed to the first book could hardly have been written before 1216; but this preface is not the original one. Another, which was evidently displaced to make room for it, but which the author was loth to let perish, is preserved in the collection he made of his choice pieces known as the *Symbolum Electorum*, and is for the most part printed in this volume for the first time.<sup>2</sup> Although, like the book to which it properly belongs, overcrowded with Biblical and other quotations (all of which I have not thought it worth while to reproduce), it includes much of curious interest for the author's biography. Beginning with a sharply drawn comparison of court and school, all to the advantage of the latter, he

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. pp. 414, 421.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, p. lvii. It is in MS. R. 7.11 at Trinity College, Cambridge, of the 13–14th cent. An extract from it, "Ad curiam igitur . . . locum illustrat," was given by David Powell in his Life of Giraldus prefixed to the edition of the *Itinerarium Cambria* in Cam-

den's *Anglica, Normannica*, etc., Frankfort, 1803, p. 817. This was reprinted from Powell by Mr. Brewer, *De Instr. Princ.* 1846, p. 184. In his edition of the *Symbolum Electorum* in this series he printed only the opening words, vol. i. p. 394.



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goes on to lament that he had been lured from one to the other by royal promises and blandishments, and reveals the measure of his hopes by the bitterness of his resentment at their frustration and at his treatment in general, which to a great extent, as he alleges, was due to his Welsh extraction. From the *Liber de Gestis*<sup>1</sup> we know that he was called to court and made a royal clerk or chaplain in 1184, but the date of his retirement, of which he proceeds to speak, is not so easily ascertained. Wharton<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Brewer after him fix it in 1192, while Mr. Dimock postpones it as late as 1196.<sup>3</sup> The time is roughly indicated here by his saying that he had spent about ten years<sup>4</sup> with Henry II. and his successor. This period, during which he received from his patrons, as he complains, nothing but barren vexations and unfulfilled promises, no doubt also includes his service with the queen-mother Eleanor<sup>5</sup> and John during Richard's absence in the East. In one of his letters<sup>6</sup> he speaks with more exactness of having been seven years at court. This, however, only proves that his stay was at least so long, as he is not alluding to his retirement, and there is nothing in the sense of the passage to show that he did not remain longer. Elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> in explaining how he came to retire to Lincoln, he tells us that he was diverted from going to Paris, as he at

<sup>1</sup> ii. cap. 8, vol. i. p. 57. The whole chapter (together with ii. 24, p. 87, and iii. 1, p. 89) may be compared with the preface from the *Symb. Elect.* He speaks of Henry's being at the time near the border for the pacification of Wales. This was in July, 1184, when Rhys ab Gruffudd made his submission at Worcester.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglia Sacra*, Pars ii. p. 374; and for Mr. Brewer, vol. i. pp. lvi. xcvi. Their only ostensible reason for naming 1192 is that he speaks of his retirement immedi-

ately after narrating matters occurring in that year.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. v. p. liii. note 2, where it is pointed out that in a letter written in the autumn of 1198 he speaks of having been then *two years* at Lincoln.

<sup>4</sup> "duo fere lustra," p. lvii.

<sup>5</sup> *Symb. Elect.*, in vol. i. pp. 203, 295.

<sup>6</sup> *Symb. Elect.*, in vol. i. p. 205, "sumptuosos septennalis obsequii in curia . . . labores."

<sup>7</sup> *De Gestis*, iii. 3, vol. i. p. 93.

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first intended, by the renewal of hostilities between Richard and Philip of France, which he had heard were terminated by a five years' truce. This points rather to 1194, when a truce, though for one year only, was made in July and annulled in September.<sup>1</sup> Richard being named personally, it must, one would think, have been after he returned from captivity, which he did in the previous March; and possibly there may have been some connexion between his return and the withdrawal of Giraldus, who, as a "familiar" at this time of John<sup>2</sup> and a bitter enemy of Longchamp, was not likely to be a *persona grata*. At the same time, it is quite possible that he merely alludes to Philip's threatened or actual hostilities during Richard's absence, and more especially to his invasion of Normandy in March-April, 1193.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, it is clear from this preface that the work was mainly, if not entirely, composed after Giraldus left court,<sup>4</sup> and no doubt during his studious seclusion at Lincoln, which lasted until 1199. There is, moreover, this much to be said in favour of an earlier date for his retirement than 1194, that even the third book is referred to as projected, if not in existence, in his *Vita Galfridi Archiepiscopi*. This work was almost certainly written in 1193, and in the course of it<sup>5</sup> he states that he refrains from giving particulars of the death of Henry II., as the subject will be fully treated in the *Liber de Principis Instructione*, "quem . . . studiosus animus edere proposuit."

But to return to the first book, one thing is tolerably certain from what we know of the author. As a moral treatise this is complete in itself, and, once written, he was not the man to keep it from the public without

<sup>1</sup> Hoveden, iii. pp. 257, 267. Much the same thing, however, occurred both in 1195 and 1196 (*ib* p. 301, iv. p. 34.)

<sup>2</sup> *De Gestis*, ii. 23, vol. i. p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Hoveden, iii. pp. 205, 206.

<sup>4</sup> See the passage on p. lix. beginning, "Porro quoniam satius est sero pœnitere."

<sup>5</sup> Vol. iv. p. 371.

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very good cause, having far too exalted an opinion of his own learning and literary ability. Mr. Brewer<sup>1</sup> argues that there were two editions of the whole three books, the passages reflecting, most severely on John, and in terms implying that he was already dead, being peculiar to the second edition. As will be seen lower down<sup>2</sup>, there is something to be said for this view; but we must then conclude that there were three editions altogether, since the first book appears to have been originally issued by itself. That this was so might almost be inferred from the discarded preface already noticed, but the final sentence in the book<sup>3</sup> hardly leaves room for doubt. After saying that he ends with the same words as Ecclesiasticus, Giraldus goes on in his high-flown style:—“But as for the two Distinctions following, which treat of the successes and glory of a certain prince of our own time, and of the after fall of the same prince in ignominy, these are not yet fully and finally written and polished, and it seemed advisable therefore that, while the tempest rages and gathers force, they should meantime remain in hiding and keep themselves from the touch, sight, and hearing of all, that so, existing as though they existed not, they may await a safer and serener season for going out into public, until the clouds and mists be dispelled and a brighter and clearer sun illumine the face of heaven and the surface of the earth.” Unless the book to which they are appended was issued in the first instance without the other two, these words have no meaning; whereas, if such was the case, they are just what Giraldus, who had a keen eye for effect, might have written to whet curiosity for the more exciting matter held in reserve. That this object, moreover, was attained we may infer from the phrase “toties promissus” which he several times applies to the complete

<sup>1</sup> *De Instr. Princ.*, 1846, p. xiv.<sup>2</sup> p. li.<sup>3</sup> p. 149. It is noticed neither by Mr. Brewer nor in Bouquet.

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work, for he was no doubt continually urged to fulfil his declared intentions. As to the date of this first and partial edition, we are left wholly in the dark. Those passages in the book which are obviously of late date were most probably inserted in the later complete edition; and no argument therefore can be drawn from the anecdote told of Louis when in England in 1216,<sup>1</sup> or from the still more interesting paragraphs on William of Scotland ending with advice addressed to his son Alexander, who succeeded him in 1214.<sup>2</sup> The only clue to the time of issue seems to lie in the epilogue, but whether the "tempest" there mentioned refers to the troubles of Richard's reign, as depicted in the *Vita Galfridi*, or of John's, or even to the more personal contest for the see of St. David's in which Giraldus was himself engaged between 1198 and 1204, it is impossible to say.

Passing on now to the second and third books we are immediately in a different atmosphere. Whether at the outset Giraldus contemplated more than the one book may be doubted; the preface in the *Symbolum Electorum* certainly gives no hint of anything beyond. Fortunately, however, for the interest of his writings, Giraldus had a passion for enforcing precept by example; and there was the further attraction here that, by selecting the most conspicuous figure of his own times, he could at once point his moral most effectively and pay off old scores of his own. It is easy therefore to understand how the later and more important part of the work came to be added, even if it did not enter into the original design. Its proper subject is fairly indicated in the passage last above quoted. Briefly put, it is the rise and fall—and more especially the fall—of Henry II., who is held up throughout for an

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<sup>1</sup> p. 133. This is very awkwardly interpolated between two anecdotes of his grandfather.

<sup>2</sup> p. 138.

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awful example of the Nemesis attending the neglect of the rules of conduct laid down for a prince in the book preceding.

For a task of the kind Giraldus was exceptionally well equipped. Born, as I have said, in or about 1147, he had lived all through Henry's reign, and was in the full vigour of his powers when it reached its disastrous close. He was brought into personal contact with him at least as early as 1176,<sup>1</sup> and from 1184 onwards he was formally attached to his court. He evidently knew him well, and had studied him closely.<sup>2</sup> He was equally well acquainted with his sons, including the bastard Geoffrey; and he lived on terms of easy familiarity with such prominent men in the state as Baldwin, the archbishop, and Ranulph de Glanville, the justiciar. He was no monk chronicling events as seen from the cloisters and mainly engrossed with the fortunes of his own house, but a secular clerk and a man of the world, of good blood, both Norman and Welsh, well versed in affairs, and of restless energy, moving within the immediate sphere of political interest, and in touch with the principal actors. And to these advantages of situation and surroundings he added others personal to himself. He had keen powers of observation, quick wit, and a ready pen; his faculties had been trained in the schools of Paris, then second to none, and his mind was richly stored with such learning as the age could furnish. Yet with all this his character was marred by grave defects. His egotism was unbounded. With a warm heart, generous instincts, and a real hatred of tyranny and wrong-doing, he was passionate, prejudiced, and vindictive. No one, king or subject, who crossed his schemes, or whom he chose to regard as his enemy, could hope for his good word, and his genuinely Celtic powers of invective were unsparingly wielded. Being

<sup>1</sup> *De Gestis*, i. 7, vol. i. p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> See the elaborate portrait of | him, p. 213, repeated here from the

| *Expugnatio Hibernica*.

what and where he was, it cannot be said that he made the most of his subject. Had he so chosen, he might have enriched posterity with a full history of Henry's reign, leaving the facts to convey their own lesson. Instead of this he has given us what from different points of view may be regarded as a political pamphlet or an historical tragedy, selecting and disposing his materials with the main object of heightening the effect and without much regard for chronological sequence. But, although as a history the work is fragmentary, discursive, and one-sided, it could ill be dispensed with. Excepting extracts from his other works and a long passage from the *Itinerarium regis Ricardi*, it appears to be quite independent, and many of its details are not recorded in any form by other authorities. Its interest lies in its personal anecdotes, its vivid episodes, and its revelations of character, and without it, due allowance being made for over-colouring, much of the picturesque side of the period would have been lost to us.

Over Henry's earlier years Giraldus passes lightly. He does little more indeed than enumerate the favours lavished on him by Heaven until he proved himself unworthy. Such were the opportune deaths of his actual and possible rivals, his subjugation of Ireland and the concessions he wrung from William the Lion, his vast continental dominions (to which, we are told, he aspired to add the imperial dignity),<sup>1</sup> and his universal fame as the greatest monarch of his time. But the keynote of the indictment against him is struck almost immediately. The foremost count in it is his marriage with Eleanor, the divorced wife of his feudal lord Louis VII. and, as is alleged further on,<sup>2</sup> the paramour of his own father Geoffrey. But this crime, which found its fitting retribution in the conduct of his sons, is only one out of many. His character generally is

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<sup>1</sup> p. 157.

| <sup>2</sup> See below, p. xlix.