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978-1-108-04687-9 - *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani, qui saeculo XVmo floruerunt*:

Volume 1: *Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede*

Edited by Henry Thomas Riley

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Rolls Series

Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or *The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, usually referred to as the 'Rolls Series', was an ambitious project first proposed to the British Treasury in 1857 by Sir John Romilly, the Master of the Rolls, and quickly approved for public funding. Its purpose was to publish historical source material covering the period from the arrival of the Romans to the reign of Henry VIII, 'without mutilation or abridgement', starting with the 'most scarce and valuable' texts. A 'correct text' of each work would be established by collating 'the best manuscripts', and information was to be included in every case about the manuscripts used, the life and times of the author, and the work's 'historical credibility', but there would be no additional annotation. The first books were published in 1858, and by the time it was completed in 1896 the series contained 99 titles and 255 volumes. Although many of the works have since been re-edited by modern scholars, the enterprise as a whole stands as a testament to the Victorian revival of interest in the middle ages.

Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani, qui saeculo XVmo floruerunt

Between 1863 and 1876, the Rolls Series published several works from or about the abbey of St Albans, edited by Henry Thomas Riley (1816–78) under the rubric 'Chronica monasterii S. Albani'. This two-volume contribution, covering the later fifteenth century, appeared in 1872–3. Volume 1 focuses on a text from MS. Arundel Coll. Arm. III, recording events from 1451 to 1461, the first ten years of the second abbacy of John Whethamstede. It is important for its references to early battles in the Wars of the Roses. Riley argues that this version of Whethamstede's records was prepared by a compiler with a strong political agenda against one of Whethamstede's senior monks, who had been a candidate for the office of abbot and was eventually elected in 1476. The volume includes an introduction, a detailed summary of the content, and English side-notes to the main Latin text.

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Registra quorundam
abbatum
monasterii S. Albani,
qui saeculo
XVmo floruerunt

VOLUME 1:
REGISTRUM ABBATIAE
JOHANNIS WHETHAMSTEDE

EDITED BY HENRY THOMAS RILEY



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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

27923.

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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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ITERUM SUSCEPTÆ;
ROBERTO BLAKENEY, CAPELLANO, QUONDAM ADSCRIPTUM.

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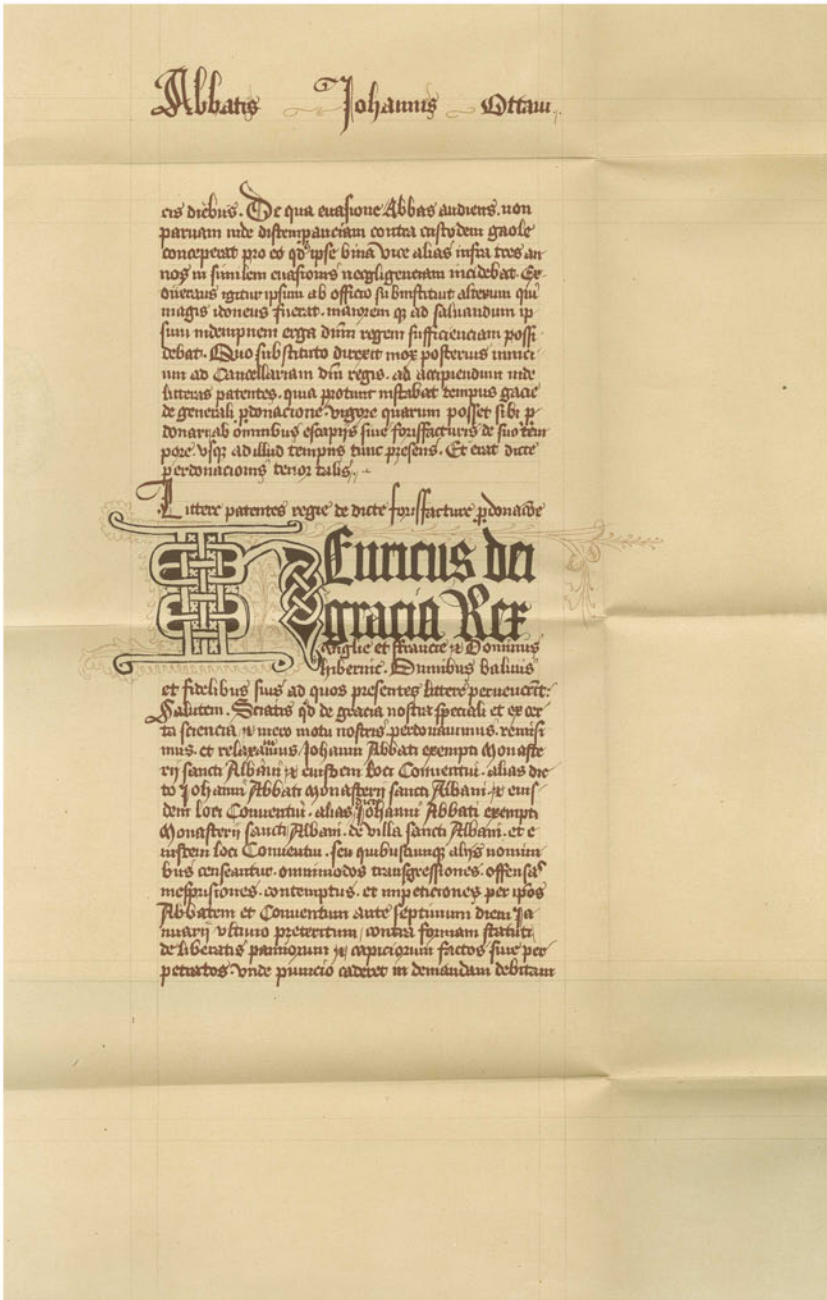
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Wotton, Brocks, Day 2, 5m, Lib. London, N.C.

MS. ARUNDEL. III. College of Arms.

Latter half of the 15th Century.

(See p. 290)

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CHRONICA MONASTERII S. ALBANI.

REGISTRA QUORUNDAM ABBATUM MONASTERII
S. ALBANI, QUI SÆCULO XV^{MO}. FLORUERUNT.

VOL. I.

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ABBATIS MONASTERII SANCTI ALBANI,
ITERUM SUSCEPTÆ;
ROBERTO BLAKENEY, CAPELLANO, QUONDAM ADSCRIPTUM.

EDITED

BY

HENRY THOMAS RILEY, M.A. CAMBR. & OXF.

AND OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE volume which contains the History of the first ten years of the Second Abbacy of John Whethamstede, Abbot of St. Alban's, now for the first time published in its entirety, is a moderately sized folio, Number III. in the Arundel Collection of Manuscripts at the College of Arms, containing 193 leaves of vellum, two of which are left blank at the end; with four fly-leaves of parchment at the end, and two of vellum at the beginning. A religious treatise, entitled "*Consolatio peccatorum contra peccatum desperationis*," and written in a later hand than the rest of the Manuscript, occupies folios 176b-184b, and folios 190b-191b.

Description of the Manuscript from which this account of the Second Abbacy of John Whethamstede is derived.

The Manuscript is rich in reminiscences of its former possessors. On the outer, or first, of the two fly-leaves at the beginning, is written, in modern Gothic characters, — "Blakeney, Robertus, Capellanus Domini Thomæ Ramryge, Abbatis;" and below it, in Roman capitals, — "Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis," — "Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy upon us." Below this, neatly drawn in pen and ink, is the figure of a ram, with one mitre suspended above him, and another resting upon his "ridge," or back; a canting device, in allusion to the surname of Thomas Ramridge, Abbot of St. Alban's for about thirty years, his Abbacy beginning in the year 1492. Below the ram, a small figure of a lion rampant is drawn.

Former owners of the Manuscript.

We find another former possessor of the book in the person of ¹ Lord William Howard, of Naworth, the

Lord William Howard, a

¹ See the Introduction to the *History* of Thomas Walsingham, in this Series, Vol. I. Introd. p. x.

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[More information](#)former
owner.

“Belted Will” of the North, in Queen Elizabeth’s days. At the head of the commencing page of the work is written, in his well-known neat and legible hand,—“William Howarde;” and, at the foot of the page, the same name; with “1589, pr. 20s.,” the small price at which he had had the good fortune to buy it, added. On the outermost of the fly-leaves at the end of the volume, is written, in modern Gothic,—“Dompnus Robertus Blakeney, monachus Sancti Albani,” and below, in a somewhat more recent hand,—“Andreas Leventhorp.”

Condition
of the
volume.

The volume is in good condition throughout; being stoutly bound in what were probably its original wooden boards, though covered afresh with leather at a comparatively recent date.

Scope of
the present
Introduc-
tion.

The present Introduction will be limited to the consideration of the question of the authorship of this work; a detailed examination of its contents being reserved for the Introduction to the succeeding Volume, the closing one of the Series of Chronicles of St. Alban’s.—

The Manu-
script attri-
buted by
some to
Robert
Blakeney.

In the last century, the compilation now under notice seems to have been, by some at least, attributed, as a matter of course, to Robert Blakeney, whose name has been already mentioned, as a former possessor of the book. Speaking in reference to the volume, Newcome says, in his *History of St. Alban’s* (p. 402):—“In the time of [Abbot] Ramridge lived Robert Blakeney, who compiled the last ten years of Wheathampstead’s Life, in good classical Latin;” adding, by way of Note,—“The book is in the Library at the Herald’s College, and fairly written.” In another passage, also (p. 344), he refers to it, as being “Registrum Roberti Blakeney.” In accordance with this authority, the book has been styled,—“The Register of Robert Blakeney, Chaplain of Abbot Ramryge,” in the late Dr. Nicholson’s *Guide to the Abbey of St. Alban*, a little work compiled at a comparatively recent date.

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Beyond the fact, as already stated, that Robert Blakeney's name is written on two fly-leaves, one at the beginning, and the other at the end, of the volume, there is no reason whatever for assigning its authorship to him. He was not a member, not a novice even, attached to the society of St. Alban's in ¹ 1480, and the time when he was Chaplain to Abbot Ramridge would probably be about the year 1515; ² whereas the Manuscript itself bears evident marks of having been written at least forty years prior to that date. As already mentioned, the name "Andreas Leventhorp" is found on the same fly-leaf with that of Robert Blakeney, and the authorship of the volume might with almost equal propriety have been ascribed to him.

A series of extracts from this Manuscript was published by Thomas Hearne in the year 1732, under the ³ title of *Johannis Whethamstede Chronicon*; it being evidently his impression, that it was a compilation made under Abbot Whethamstede's supervision, if not by his own hand. The compiler, again, of the printed Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts at the College of Arms, published in 1829, seems to have had no doubt on the subject, and attributes not only the authorship of the work, but even the hand-writing of it, to Abbot Whethamstede. The following are some extracts from his detailed account (p. 5) of the volume:—

"This valuable Manuscript is the handwriting of Abbot Whethamstede. . . . His former ⁴ Register

¹ Under which year, a list is given of the inmates of the Abbey, on the occasion of its Visitation by John Esteney, Abbot of St. Peter's, Westminster, in the Register of Abbot William Walingforde, MS. Rawlinson (II.), 332.

² During the preceding century, there were several members of the Abbey of St. Alban's having

"Blakeney" for their surname; natives, probably, of the fishing-town in Norfolk, so called.

³ For an account of this publication by Hearne, see p. 437 of the present Volume.

⁴ Alluding to the compilation by Amundesham, already published in the present Series.

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of the “ is still preserved in the Cottonian Library, Claudius
 Arundel “ D. I.; but this, which is more beautiful, was pur-
 MSS. at “ chased by Lord William Howard, who has written
 the College “ many ¹ notes in the margins. The first page is su-
 of Arms, “ perbly illuminated, and the chief letter contains a
 the hand- “ portrait of the author, seated in his Abbatial chair,
 writing “ The writing is very fair, but the book has no other
 even of the “ illumination. The beauty of the writing decreases
 Manuscript “ towards its close, when this venerable father, having
 attributed “ lived ² above a century, complains of the dimness of
 to Abbot “ his sight in the most affecting manner, and was com-
 Whetham- “ pelled to desist.
 stede. “ The learned have not failed to appreciate this
 “ manuscript. Hearne extracted all the historical mat-
 “ ter, and published it in the volume accompanying
 “ Otterbourne. . . . Newcome has also extracted
 “ thirty pages (344–374) of his *History of St. Alban's*
 “ from it.
 “ At the head of the first page stands the following
 “ distich, as a general title:—
 “ ‘ Hic praelaturæ Whethamstede pauca secundæ
 “ ‘ More registrantis scribuntur gesta Johannis.’
 “ The History then proceeds as far as fol. 176, and,
 “ although Hearne has published the latter part of the
 “ Manuscript, it is surprising that he should have neg-
 “ lected those interesting memorials which the writer
 “ has inserted about himself. At the end of the seventh

¹ These Notes of Lord William Howard are printed in the foot-notes of the present Volume. They are of singularly little value, but they shew how diligently he had perused the work.

² See p. xvi. of the Introduction to *Amundesham*, Vol. II., for a correction of this mistake. There were two persons of the name of “ John

Whethamstede;” the former, Prior of Tynemouth, was ordained in 1382, and the latter, Abbot of St. Alban's, died in 1465. It would have been little less than a miracle if a man, aged above one hundred years, could have written such a hand as this; and it is somewhat singular that this consideration did not suggest itself to the writer.

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“ year, he had made this lamentation, fol. 136.—¹ ‘ Finit
 “ ‘ unt Acta Anni Septimi. Finit etiam et labor regis-
 “ ‘ trantis, propter senectutis ægritudinisque repugnan-
 “ ‘ tiam in negotio registrandi,’ with five verses ;

“ ‘ Auctori vitæ laus, virtus, gloria sitque,
 “ ‘ Post morbum vitam mihi qui dedit ulteriorem,
 “ ‘ Istud ut inceptum possem finire registrum.
 “ ‘ Discant quo juvenes ea quæ fecere priores,
 “ ‘ Ac aliis referant. Prisca placent que docent’

“ which that antiquary passed over, though he printed
 “ all the rest of that page and the next. But on his
 “ recovery, the Abbot wrote the Acts of three more
 “ years, though with less neatness ; and at length yield-
 “ ing to the infirmities of age, closed his literary life
 “ with words which it is impossible to omit.—² ‘ Finiunt
 “ ‘ Acta in anno decimo : finit etiam et hic labor scrip-
 “ ‘ toris, quia senio fuerat præventus, præoccupatus
 “ ‘ vero morbo. De cujus laboris finitione, de causaque
 “ ‘ finitionis, scribitur hic ulterius, sub brevibus, in hiis
 “ ‘ verbis metrificationis.—

“ ‘ Hac nunc in decade, numerus qui dicitur esse,
 “ ‘ In quo totius residet perfectio legis,
 “ ‘ Scriba suo calamo pausam, finemque libello,
 “ ‘ Imposuit, fessus senio, morboque repressus.
 “ ‘ Cœcutiens steterat, auditus deficiebat,
 “ ‘ Contractique manus, digiti steterant simul omnes.
 “ ‘ Semper et ad valvas stabat mors improba pulsans,
 “ ‘ Dixit et,—“ Ecclesiæ dispone tuæ, moriere.”
 “ ‘ Hac igitur causa scriptor nihil addidit ultra ;
 “ ‘ Addere nec poterat, quia visus deficiebat ;
 “ ‘ Idem scribendi sibi finis eratque videndi.
 “ ‘ Explicit, expliciunt, qualia scripta ferunt.’ ”

Now in answer to these positive assertions that the The bold
and fine
penman- penmanship of the work is to be attributed to Abbot

¹ See p. 322 *post.*| ² See p. 420 *post.*

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ship of the work, such as could not possibly be attributed to a person of Whethamstede's advanced age.

Whethamstede, attention must of necessity be called to the fact, that the volume is written (with the exception of the few pages of religious ¹ exhortation at the end) in a like firm, steady, hand throughout, now known as modern Gothic, or old English, with but little variation or change; the penmanship being characterized to the end by a multiplicity of flourishes, and much ornamental writing, in which are to be detected no indications whatever that may be attributed to a failing sight or a tremulous hand. Elected Abbot in 1420, for the first time, Whethamstede must have passed his eightieth year when the account of the latter part of his second Abbacy was penned; and so utterly improbable is it, as to be all but impossible, that a man of his advanced age, (one too who had complained of being so feeble and ailing, more than twenty years before, as to be ² obliged even then to resign his prelacy,) should have wielded the pen of the ready writer, and that in so masterly a style. On the contrary, there cannot be a doubt that the writing throughout is the work of two or three professional penmen, engaged for the purpose, but who were much better skilled in their own art than in the ³ proprieties of the Latin language. The mistakes made in orthography from time to time, in fact, are assuredly such as Abbot Whethamstede could never have made, however advanced his age.

The mistakes in orthography found therein.

Similar writing in a part of the volume acknowledgedly

At folio 185a, towards the ⁴close of the manuscript, there is an account inserted of the good works done by Abbot Whethamstede, during his second Abbacy, for the benefit of the society of St. Alban's. Now this account is

¹ Not improbably written by Robert Blakeney, already mentioned, at the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII., on a few leaves of the volume which had been left blank.

² See Amundesham, Vol. II. p. 234.

³ See the mistake, for example, in p. 172 of "*Anacoclea*" for "*Aga-*

thocle," of "*Anna*," for "*Cinna*" in p. 349, "*Carundius*" for "*Charondas*" in p. 346, "*defecilem*" for "*difficilem*" in p. 205, and numerous other errors of almost equal magnitude, which may be found upon examination of the footnotes.

⁴ See pp. 423-433 *post*.

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acknowledgedly written after his death; and yet a large proportion of it, on close examination, will be found to be written undoubtedly by the same hand that had penned the earlier portion of the preceding history of the second Abbacy. The position that it was the pen of Abbot Whethamstede himself that wrote this compilation cannot, in fact, for a moment be maintained.

The authorship of the History now remains for consideration.—Taken as a whole, the probabilities seem to be, that it was not a work composed by Abbot Whethamstede, but a compilation from various sources, made shortly after his death by some now unknown hand.

William¹ Walingforde, at the time of the death of Abbot John Stoke, in December 1451, we find holding the joint offices of Archdeacon, Cellarer, Bursar, Forester, and Sub-Cellarer, of the Abbey of St. Alban's; and in office, as Archdeacon at least, combined with the² Chamberlainship, he was continued, throughout the whole of his second Abbacy, by Abbot Whethamstede. In the time of Abbot William Alban, or Albon, Whethamstede's successor, Walingforde was chosen Prior of the Convent; and on Alban's death in 1476, was elected to succeed him as Abbot.³ Such being the fact, the reader will find, and not without some surprise, if he is inclined to believe that Abbot Whethamstede wrote this work, that from p. 102 of this volume to p. 135, the context is occupied by a series of the most revolting charges, under the second year of Whethamstede's second Abbacy, against this same Official General, as he was called. Again and again he is accused of⁴ lying, and of habitual perjury even; and of theft too, of the most iniquitous description, in having appropriated

¹ So called, probably, from being a native of that place.

² See p. 103 *post*; in p. 5, at the time of Abbot Stoke's death, the Chamberlainship is not mentioned.

³ Whether unanimously or not, is

not known, as the folio containing his election is torn out of his Register, MS. Rawlinson (II.) 332.

⁴ See, more particularly, pages 108, 111, 112, 114, 118, 120, 121, 125, and 127, *post*.

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the moneys of the late Abbot, to satisfy the cravings of an innate cupidity, which had characterized him even from childhood. His nefariousness and subtlety are enlarged upon, ¹his pomposity and verbosity are derided, his overheard ²lamentations are sneered at, his self-communings and most secret thoughts, which must have been known to no one but himself, are professedly brought to light. Judas and Gehazi, Simon Magus and Ananias, are set forth as his prototypes, and he is accused, in a spirit of covetousness, which might have animated the veriest usurer, of sacrificing even unto devils. And not content even with this, the writer extends the nefarious charge of stealing the late Abbot's savings, and of committing perjury to conceal the theft, to the Archdeacon's brother, ³Thomas Walingforde, who was Abbot Whethamstede's senior Chaplain, as well. ⁴In one place, the Abbot is represented as finally forgiving the Archdeacon, upon his repentance, and in ⁵another is spoken of as being careful of the Official's honour, and desirous to preserve it "without the stain of disgrace, or the slightest "cloud of scandal." Even had not these assurances of the Abbot's considerateness occurred in the narration, it is impossible to believe that Whethamstede, whatever his peculiarities, and however great his anger against a defaulting official, would either have committed to writing such frightful charges as these against a man whom he continued in office as his own Archdeacon, or have sanctioned their being committed to writing by others. In the cause of truth and honour, good feeling and good faith, we have no option left but to believe that this narrative, whatever the foundation on which it may have been based, so far from being written by the Abbot, never even came before his eyes.

Great improbability that Whethamstede would have penned such charges against a person whom he retained in office as his own Official.

¹ P. 108.² Pp. 104, 107, 133.³ Pp. 117, 118, 121.⁴ P. 135.⁵ P. 121.

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The Abbot again, it may be remarked, is frequently ¹spoken of in terms of extravagant laudation, which it is hardly probable that he himself would have committed to writing; any more than that he would have penned the statement ²that by "solid, sober, and sensible men," his predecessor was pronounced to be "lazy, sluggish, and odious to nearly all."

To conclude with a brief examination of the probable sources from which the compilation is derived.—In page 269 ³"The Register" is mentioned; while in pages 375, 383, and 420, we find "The Shorter Register" spoken of. These, no doubt, were two consecutive Abbey Registers, kept by Whethamstede, or by his direction, during his second Abbacy (neither of which probably now exists); the first bearing reference to the transactions of the first seven years of the Abbacy, the second to those of the following three; some, at least, of the entries in them being probably made by his own hand. The present work, there can be no question, was a compilation from them to a considerable extent; and the compiler probably considered it nothing less than a sacred duty to set forth the words with which the first, or larger Register, began and ended, the passages already noticed as occurring in pages 5 and 322. At the end of the seventh year of his second Abbacy, the Abbot, we have reason to suppose, suffering from an ⁴illness which had threatened to be fatal, found himself compelled to cease his labours upon the Register; and for the moment, no doubt, had the intention of ceasing to keep any such record after that date. The Register would accordingly close appropriately with the words which we find in p. 322. "Finiunt Acta . . . docent;" these words, like the commencing ones, being borrowed in the new compilation in the spirit above alluded to.

¹ See pp. 6, 7, 9, 20.

² P. 20.

³ "*inseri ulterius in Registro.*"

⁴ "*post morbum vitam,*" p. 322.

See also p. 264.

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Circumstances probably attending the compilation of the two Registers.

Having thoroughly recovered, however, from the effects of his illness, the Abbot changes his mind, and commences another, "the Shorter," Register, at the beginning of the year 1459; extracts from which, as we have seen, are acknowledgedly interspersed in the latter part of the History, commencing at p. 323; which honestly¹ acknowledges itself to be a compilation from, and not to be itself, the original work. At the end of the third year after this resumption of the Register, illness again overtakes the industrious prelate; his sight fails him, he hears no longer, his fingers are cramped and powerless. Bending beneath extreme old age, he is sensible that death stands knocking at the door, with the stern summons,—“Put thy church in order, thou shalt die.” With the affecting lines which we read in p. 420, ended the Second, or Shorter, Register, almost beyond a doubt; and those lines the compiler has also borrowed, as forming an appropriate conclusion to his own work.

Other materials employed in this compilation, in addition to the Registers.

In the compilation of the volume, other materials, in addition to the two Registers already mentioned, no doubt, were used. The scandalous attacks upon the character of William Walingforde and his brother would, as already suggested, find no place in the Abbot's Register. Derived from some source which it is now as difficult even to surmise, as it is wholly out of the reach of our knowledge, this structure of calumny and vituperation, based maybe upon some slight fragment of fact, was devised for a purpose which, though not avowed, it is not so very difficult to divine.

Probable date of the compilation.

Abbot Whethamstede survived the close of his second Register from three to four years. On his death in January 1465, William Alban, the Prior, was appointed his successor; immediately after which, William Walingforde was nominated by him as Prior. The compilation was made, there seems every reason to believe, at some

¹ See pp. 375, 383, 420.

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period between this date and the year 1476, when William Alban died; its object being alike to serve as a memorial of the chief historical and domestic events which had occurred during ten years of Whethamstede's second Abbacy, and covertly and insidiously, under the guise of narrative, to convey and perpetuate charges against Walingforde of so heinous a nature as to proclaim him utterly disqualified for ever succeeding to the Abbacy. If so, the poisoned shaft fell short of its aim; for upon the death of William Alban, Walingforde succeeded him as Abbot; though as to the degree of unanimity in reference to his election, which prevailed among the inmates of the Convent, it is impossible to speak. His Register, commencing with the preliminaries of his election, is to be found in the Bodleian Manuscript, Rawlinson (II.) 332; but it is the preliminaries only that are there given; for, somewhat singularly, the account of the election itself is missing, the leaf or leaves containing it having been torn out, purposely, to all appearance.

Whether the copies of verses that are found scattered about the latter part of the compilation formed part originally of Abbot Whethamstede's Registers, it is, of course, impossible to say. The portions of the compilation that bear reference to the historical events of the day had been collected probably during the life of Abbot Whethamstede, and some of them, at least, had formed ¹part of his Registers: others again may have been the contributions of those among the inmates whose ill-fortune it had been to be eye-witnesses of the disasters ensuing to the Abbey and its tenantry, from the fact of its soil having been the scene of two of the great ²events which characterized the sanguinary struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster. These matters, however, will be

¹ See pp. 375 and 383, shewing that there had been entries therein in reference to the Battles of Northampton and Wakefield.

² The first and second Battles of St. Alban's, A.D. 1455 and 1461.

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brought more at length under notice in the Introduction to the succeeding Volume.

On placing this Volume before the reader, the Editor feels it his duty to avail himself of the opportunity of remarking, that an impression seems to exist that the Editors of the works forming this Series are at liberty to treat the text, or, to use somewhat slipshod English, "alter the manuscript," according to the dictates of their own fancy; and so, to incur censure or the converse, according to the taste of those who may consider themselves qualified to express an opinion upon the results of their labours.

Such is certainly not the fact; for the Editor who looks upon it as a duty to observe the injunctions given by the Commission under which he acts, no such option exists. In the year 1861, a printed paper, entitled — "General Directions for the Guidance of the Editors," was issued to the Editors of the Series. These rules, in reference to the formation of the text, are not repealed or obsolete, that the Editor of the present Volume is aware of; and by them he has deemed it his duty, to the best of his ability, to abide. The following are the directions which relate, more especially, to this point. They are quoted solely for the purpose of obviating misapprehension, and not with the object of seeming even to dictate to others:—

"Each Editor is to give the various readings of the MSS. at the foot of the page, without any comment other than is necessary for establishing the correctness of his text, or determining chronological difficulties.

"Classical proper names and all Latin words are to be spelt in the ordinary classical manner, but modern names as they occur in the MS., however various. When any obvious clerical error is amended in the text, the erroneous reading of the MS. must be recorded in a note.