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MCCCXLIX–MCCCL

Edited by Joseph Stevenson

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Narratives of the Expulsion of the English from Normandy, MCCCXLIX–MCCCL

Historian, archivist and clergyman, Joseph Stevenson (1806–95) was employed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission and served as an editor of the Rolls Series, for which he produced this work in 1863. The work comprises three mid-fifteenth-century narratives which deal with the re-establishment of an independent French monarchy in the final years of the Hundred Years' War. The first, in Latin but not translated, was written by Robert Blondel (c. 1390–1460), a reliable source and influential advocate of Charles VII. It recounts events from the capture of Fougères to the English expulsion following the loss of Cherbourg. The second, by Jacques le Bouvier, in French accompanied by a translation, provides a complementary narrative to Blondel's. Both were printed for the first time here. Finally, Stevenson included a translated record of Anglo-French negotiations, first printed in 1454. Together, these documents offer insight into a pivotal period in diplomatic affairs.

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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He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be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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NARRATIVES OF THE EXPULSION OF THE
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M.CCCC.XLIX,—M.CCCCL.

ROBERTUS BLONDELLI DE REDUCTIONE NORMANNIÆ,
LE RECOUVREMENT DE NORMENDIE, PAR BERRY,
HERAULT DU ROY.

CONFERENCES BETWEEN THE AMBASSADORS
OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

EDITED, FROM MANUSCRIPTS IN THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY AT PARIS,

BY

THE REV. JOSEPH STEVENSON, M.A.,
OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY'S
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L O N D O N :
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P R E F A C E.

THERE could be no more appropriate accompaniment to the volumes which treat of “The Wars of the English “ in France,” which have already appeared in the present series of Chronicles, than the works now given to the public. They contain authentic materials for an account of the final issue of the invasion of Henry the Fifth, for they enable us to trace, step by step and day by day, the expulsion of our countrymen from Normandy and their retreat homewards.

The present volume consists of the following pieces :—

“ Robertus Blondelli ¹ de Reductione Normanniæ.”

Robert Blondel, the author of this work, was descended from a family which had settled in Normandy, between Cherbourg and Valognes,² as early as the thirteenth century. Upon the invasion of France by Henry the Fifth, his relatives refused to submit to the conqueror, and they were consequently deprived of their property and driven into exile. They found an asylum in Brittany, where they preserved their independence. The author of the present narrative was born about the year 1390. Nothing is known of his

¹ I gladly accept the earliest opportunity which presents itself of acknowledging my obligations to the Memoir upon the life and writings of Blondel which forms a part of the ninth volume of the second series of the “Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie.” Its author is M.

Vallet, the accomplished professor of the École des Chartes at Paris.

² Upon the expulsion of the English, Charles restored their hereditary possessions to the family of Blondel. They were situated at Ravenoville, in the arrondissement of Valognes, in the department of La Manche.

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early years. When we become acquainted with him in 1420, we find him employed in writing a work entitled "*Complanctus bonorum Gallicorum*," which was speedily translated into French by another Norman clerk called Robinet. This poem is addressed to Charles the Seventh, whom the author urges to take up arms for the purpose of throwing off the yoke imposed upon them by the invading Englishmen. In February 1436 Blondel held an appointment in the household of Queen Yolande of Sicily.¹ He lived to record the triumph of the national independence in 1449. In that year he produced his treatise called the "*Oratio historialis*," which recounts at considerable length the miseries inflicted upon France by England. He next establishes as an historian, a jurist, and a politician, the independence of his own country against the claims of superiority advanced by Henry the Sixth. His work appears to have had an immediate influence upon the nation to which it was addressed, for in the course of the same year began the campaign which terminated in the overthrow of the English power at the decisive battle of Formigny, and which forms the subject matter of the narrative contained in the present volume. From this period the greater portion of Blondel's life was spent at the court of France. He was entrusted, about 1454, by Charles the Seventh with the education of his second son Charles, duke of Burgundy, and he was also chaplain to Queen Mary of Anjou. The exact period of his death is uncertain; but we know that he was alive in the year 1460.

This work, "*De Reductione Normanniæ*," now for the first time printed, is the most important narrative which we possess upon the subject to which it relates. It records, with considerable minuteness and precision, the incidents which occurred in Normandy, Brittany,

¹ *Comptes des recettes de la Reine* | 12 b., in the Imperial Archives at Yolande de Sicile, KK. 244, fol. | Paris.

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and France from the capture of Fougères, when the truce between England and France was broken, to the defeat and final expulsion of the English after the loss of Cherbourg. Due allowances being made for a little pardonable acerbity of expression, we may accept the author's narrative as a fair and honest statement of the incidents which he professes to record. He was familiar with the localities in which these occurrences took place; many of the actors were upon intimate terms with him, and doubtless supplied him with the information which he required.¹ The result is a work of great importance and of considerable interest, supplying as it does the fullest as well as the fairest account of the disastrous issue of the wild and unjust attempt to deprive France of her national independence.

This work is here printed from three manuscripts, all of which belong to the Imperial Library at Paris. They are the following:—

Fonds Lat. 6,198 (formerly numbered 1,814 and 10,392), a MS. consisting of 111 leaves, or 222 pages, in quarto, upon paper, written in a clear hand about the year 1455, and therefore contemporary with the author. The water-mark of the paper is an anchor. It formerly belonged to Henry the Second of France, and on its beautiful binding of black and red panneling occur the double D. and the three intertwined crescents of that sovereign and Diana of Poitiers. The back is covered with fleurs-de-lys. It is by far the best copy extant, and has therefore been adopted as the text of the present edition. In the transcription of this MS., blanks have been left at first which have been filled up upon revision, and the rubrics were added after the completion of the text. This copy is distinguished in the notes as MS. A.

Fonds Lat. 6,197 (formerly numbered 10,318), a MS. consisting of 143 leaves, or 246 pages, in quarto,

¹ See §§ 21 and 170.

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written upon paper, of which the water-mark for the most part is a shield, charged with three fleurs-de-lys, surrounded by a border; but a dolphin occurs on the leaves numbered 93, 96, 101, and 104. It is more neatly executed than MS. A., but is infinitely inferior in value. Although a nearly contemporaneous manuscript and copied from A., or a source nearly identical, it is disfigured by numerous misreadings, some of which exhibit such a degree of ignorance and carelessness as to be worth recording. In very few instances it corrects the text of A. Its readings are here marked B.

Fonds Lat. 5,964, a transcript made for Baluze from A., with a few variations, which, if not conjectural emendations, have been derived from some copy now no longer extant. Its readings are here marked C.

Next follows "Le Recouvrement de Normandie, par Berry, Herault du Roy;" a narrative which in its arrangement and details closely follows that of Blondel. It contains, however, some particulars not recorded by that writer; and the two narratives, when they mention the same general facts, frequently illustrate each other.

This work of Jacques le Bouvier, surnamed Berry, the first king-of-arms of Charles VII., attained considerable popularity shortly after it was written. Besides being incorporated by the author himself in his general history,¹ it was transferred almost entire into the anonymous continuation of Monstrelet,² the Chronicle of Matthew d'Escouchy,³ and that of Jean le

¹ *Histoire de Charles VII. . . .* par Denys Godefroy, p. 432, ed. fol., Paris, 1661. A copy of this chronicle is to be found in the Imperial Library at Paris (Colbert, 6,976, 3, 3), and another in the British Museum (Addit. 10,045), formerly Heber's, in whose sale catalogue it is numbered 834.

² *Chroniques de Monstrelet*, tom. iii. fol. 6 b., edit. Paris, 1603.

³ *Chronique de Mathieu d'Escouchy*, par G. du Fresne de Beaumont, i. 154, ed. 1863, an edition to the accuracy and learning of which I desire to bear willing testimony, and from which I have derived many advantages.

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Clercq.¹ It is now printed for the first time in its original form from the following MSS., all of which have been furnished by the Imperial Library at Paris. MS. Franç. 5,028, formerly Colbert 9,669, 2, 2, and Colbert 1,416. It is in small folio, written in the fifteenth century, upon two kinds of paper, the former having for its water-mark a bull's head, with a star between the horns; the latter beginning on fol. 193, is an unicorn. This present history extends from fol. 152 b. to 177 b., and is written in an even and bold hand. At the end occurs the signature "Marie de Luxembourg," that doubtless of the widow of Francis, count of Vendôme, who died in 1495, and whom she survived until 1546.² The text of this manuscript is upon the whole so far satisfactory that it is here adopted as the basis of the present edition. It is distinguished as A. in the notes.

MS. Franç. 5,035 (formerly Colbert 9,675, 2), fol. 257 in fol., upon paper of the fifteenth century. The variations are marked B.

Colb. 1810 (formerly 9,775, 3, 3). This manuscript formerly belonged to De Thou. It is a contemporaneous copy, written upon strong and thick paper, with rough edges, of which the water-mark is apparently a stag. It extends from fol. 125 to 143. The contents of this copy relate for the most part to the affairs of Bretagne, in which province it appears to have been transcribed. Its readings are marked C.

Franç. 2,682 (formerly 8,346), a transcript, upon vellum, appended to the second volume of a copy of Monstrelet, remarkable for its strong Picard spelling. It is here marked D.

Another copy, upon paper, of the latter part of the fifteenth century, is extant in the Library of S. Gene-

¹ *Chronique de Jehan le Clercq*, | ² *Art. de Vérif. les Dates*, ii, 713,
ed. Buchon, 8vo., Paris. | ed. 1784.

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viève at Paris, No. 1,155, but it does not furnish any variations of importance.

Although these manuscripts mutually agree in their subject-matter, yet they differ in arrangement and expression from each other so widely that it would be most laborious, even if it were expedient, to record their variations. A few of the chief of these, however, have been noticed, while all those that affect the sense have been carefully preserved.

“Negotiations between the Ambassadors of France and England, A.D. M.CCCC.XLIX.”

These negotiations, extending from 20 June to 4 July, are referred to by Blondel and Berry, and form an important source of information respecting the history of the time. They have been already printed by Morice, in his “*Memoires pour servir de preuves à l’Histoire de Bretagne*,” 11, 1454 (fol. Paris, 1744), from the attested notarial copy in the *Chambre des Comptes* at Paris. Failing to discover the original in the *Archives de la France*, I have availed myself of a transcript upon paper in the Imperial Library (Supplém. Franç., 98, 18), which has corrected a few errors which had crept into the text of Dom Morice.

In conclusion, I desire to offer my thanks for the facilities afforded me at the Imperial Library at Paris by the courtesy of its distinguished keepers, M. Claude and M. Léopold Delisle. Further, I am indebted to M. Vallet for the use of his own annotated copy of his masterly essay upon the writings of Blondel, which has supplied me with information to which I could not easily have otherwise obtained access.

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