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978-1-108-04875-0 - *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169-1192: Volume 1*

Edited by William Stubbs

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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.

### **The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169-1192**

This chronicle begins in 1169: it covers the accession of Richard I in 1189 and ends in the spring of 1192. It is a crucial source of information on the reign of Henry II and consists of annals and a wide variety of documents, presented here in the original Latin. The chronicle was originally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough (c.1135-93), who kept the manuscript in his library. This was disputed by the scholar William Stubbs (1825-1901), who edited this two-volume work for the Rolls Series in 1867. It is now widely accepted that the author was Roger of Hoveden (d. 1201/2), clerk to Henry II and present during Richard I's journey to take part in the Third Crusade. Volume 1 includes extensive historiographical commentary and appendices.

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Gesta Regis Henrici  
Secundi Benedicti Abbatis  
The Chronicle of the  
Reigns of Henry II  
and Richard I  
A.D. 1169-1192

VOLUME 1

EDITED BY WILLIAM STUBBS



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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI  
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

18181.

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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.

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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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GESTA REGIS HENRICI SECUNDI  
BENEDICTI ABBATIS.

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GESTA REGIS HENRICI SECUNDI BENEDICTI  
ABBATIS.

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THE CHRONICLE

OF THE

REIGNS OF HENRY II. AND RICHARD I.

A.D. 1169—1192;

KNOWN COMMONLY UNDER THE NAME OF

BENEDICT OF PETERBOROUGH.

EDITED, FROM THE COTTON. MSS.,

BY

WILLIAM STUBBS, M.A.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,  
AND LIBRARIAN TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

VOL. I.

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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**P R E F A C E.**  
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## P R E F A C E.

THE present work contains an account of the reign of Henry II. from the year 1170 to his death, and of the reign of Richard I. from his accession to the spring of the year 1192.

The present work a proper chronicle.

It is one of the best existing specimens of a class of historical compositions which is of the first importance to the genuine student, for it may rank with the contemporary portions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Florence of Worcester, Simeon of Durham, and their continuators. It is to this class of writings that the name of Chronicle in its mediæval signification properly belongs, as distinguished from the more pretentious work of the historian on the one hand, and the humbler record of the annalist on the other.

By the term Chronicle is to be understood something very different from that which Lord Bacon<sup>1</sup> describes as the representation of a time. The subject of the record

Meaning of the word chronicle.

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's classification of civil history is as follows :—“ For civil history, it is of three kinds ; not unfitted to be compared with the three kinds of pictures or images, for of pictures and images we see some are unfinished, some are perfect, and some are defaced : so of histories we may find three kinds, memorials, perfect histories, and antiquities.”

“ I. Memorials or preparatory histories are of two sorts, whereof the one may be termed commentaries, and the other registers. Commentaries are they which set down a continuance of the naked events and actions without the motives or designs, the counsels, the speeches, the pretexts, the occasions, and other passages of action. Registers are collections

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PREFACE.

Objection to  
Bacon's  
definition.

was not the time or age looked at in its horizontal extension, but the fortunes of the world or nation viewed in their vertical or longitudinal development. Time was the principle of the arrangement. This arrangement of course pervades the "Narration" and the "Biography" with which the philosopher contrasts the "Chronicle," but in the latter the string on which the recorded events are strung is simply the sequence of time, not the interest of a particular person or action.

Distinction  
between  
chronicles  
and his-  
tories.

In the twelfth century the names, History, and Chronicle possessed much more of the significance of their derivation than they seem to have done earlier or later. Aulus Gellius shows that the distinction between them was a question discussed in his day. According to Verrius Flaccus some were of opinion that a history was the description of events by an eye-witness; annals were a simple record.<sup>1</sup> Sempronius Asellio, however, maintained that annals were mere chronological tables, whilst his-

"of public acts."—"III. Antiquities, or remnants of history, when industrious persons . . . out of monuments, names, words, proverbs, traditions, private records and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of books that concern not story, and the like, do save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time."—"II. History which may be called just and perfect history is of three kinds; . . . for it either representeth a time or a person or an action: the first we call chronicles, the second lives, the third narrations or relations." If Lord Bacon were not above criticism, it might be said that the whole analogy is false, or forced so far as to be untrue, and that the division is illogical and incorrect. The chronicle proper does not fall under any

of the heads. The class of "commentaries" would include the mediæval notion of *annals*, but it does not contain the Commentaries of Cæsar or the Annals of Tacitus. Bacon's idea of history, as exemplified in what he calls chronicles, is, however, neither a vertical nor a horizontal view exclusively, and the examination is not that of a line, but of a plane superficies. The division into ancient and modern history is not a division of method, but of subject matter.

<sup>1</sup> "Historiam ab annalibus quidam differre putant, quod cum utrumque sit rerum gestarum narratio, earum tamen proprie rerum sit historia, quibus rebus gerendis interfuerit is qui narret. "Ἱστορία Græce significat rerum cognitionem præsentium."—Noces Atticæ, v. 17. 1. 2.

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tories demonstrated the designs of the actors and the process of causes and consequences.<sup>1</sup> The vulgar view was, as Gellius states it, that annals stood to histories in the relation of species to genus. None of these accounts expresses with any fulness the original force of the words.

Early  
discussion  
on the  
point.

The mediæval chronicle was neither a mere table of dates nor the representation of a time; it was a detailed arrangement of events in the order of time. The mediæval history was neither a generic term including all classes of materials, nor the simple narration of a spectator. Whether, according to its earliest use, it may have been an exposition of the results of research, or of the process of the research itself, it was now understood to mean an exhibition of events in their deeper relations of cause and effect, in their moral and political bearings, and in an approach to a dramatic or pictorial form. The history was a work of art, the chronicle a faithful narration of acts and an orderly arrangement of dates. Chronicles were, as Ralph de Diceto had read in Cassiodorus, "*Imagines Historiarum*," the outlines of histories.<sup>2</sup>

Definition  
of mediæval  
chronicle  
and history.

<sup>1</sup> "*Annales libri tantummodo quod factum quoque anno gestum sit ea demonstrabant,*" &c.—*Ib.* 8. "*Nobis non modo satis esse video quod factum esset id pronuntiare, sed etiam, quo consilio quaque ratione gesta essent demonstrare.*"—*Ib.* 9.

There is a good passage on the difference between histories and chronicles in the prologue to the *Chronicle of Gervase*, c. 1336. Both historian and chronicler aim at truth, but the former proceeds diffusely and elegantly, the latter steps simply and shortly. The historian "*projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba*;" the chronicler "*silvestrem musam tenui meditatur*

"*avena.*" The former has to delight his readers with his style, to inform of the acts, manners, and life of those whom he describes, and to include nothing but what reasonably belongs to history. The chronicler has to compute years, and to express briefly the acts of kings and princes, great events, portents, and miracles. Gervase hardly deems himself worthy of the name of chronicler, because he does not write for a public library.

<sup>2</sup> R. de Diceto, MS. Lambeth. "*Chronica vero quæ sunt imagines historiarum, brevissimæque temporum commemorationes, scripsit Græce Eusebius.*" Cassiodorus, *De Divinis Lectionibus*, i. 17.

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Difference  
between  
chronicles  
and annals.

The difference between chronicles and annals was not, as it has been sometimes stated, that the former belong to universal, the latter to national or particular history, but that the former have a continuity of subject and style, whilst the latter contain the mere jottings down of unconnected events. The annals are the ore, the chronicles are the purified metal out of which the historian elaborates his perfect jewel.

Difference  
of value of  
history and  
chronicle.

The chronicle thus retains its value for ever as a record of facts; the history loses its importance as soon as the principles which it is written to illustrate, or which have guided its composition, become obsolete; nor does it recover its interest until it has itself become monumental, and the inquirer asks not what was true, but what was thought true by the writer.

Description  
of contem-  
porary  
chronicle:

A contemporary chronicle is a record of acts and events which the actors and eye-witnesses thought worthy to be remembered.<sup>1</sup> It contains, therefore, no relations of the manners and customs of common life, things which to those who live amongst them are scarcely matters of consciousness, and which are only curious when they have ceased to be spontaneous; such details belong properly to the department of the foreign traveller, or to the historian of the next age. But the manners and customs of kings and great men do find a place there, because they are amongst the things which impress themselves on the memory, and of the number of the causes which disturb the tenour of everyday life.

it does not  
describe the  
events of  
common  
life;

nor inves-  
tigate the  
springs of  
policy.

For a different reason minute investigations into the bearings of events are not to be found in the chronicle. Its author sees the drama of his times neither behind the scenes, where the parts are allotted and the machinery contrived, nor from the standing point of the mere spec-

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<sup>1</sup> "Non tamen omnia memorabilia | " moria esse videntur." Gerv.  
" notare cupio sed memoranda tan- | 1337.  
" tum, ea scilicet quæ digna me-

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tator, in whose eyes actors and events show themselves in their proper grouping and proportion.

Thus in a work like the present we miss much that we might have desired. There is none of the life or of the colouring of history; there is no "word-painting," or grouping of characters, or pictorial effects; there is none of the philosophy of history, no speculations on principles. But if we consider what the historical colouring, and what the philosophy of the age were, we see that our loss is trifling in contrast with the positive advantage we have in the careful arrangement of events, and the details of their actual connexion. The chronicler is more serviceable, though he may be less entertaining, who takes pains to check his dates by the perpetual calendar, than the historian who labours to put fictitious speeches in the mouths of his heroes, or to depict imaginary fields of battle.

But although the ancient chronicles are more variable than the histories, as containing more of the invariable truth of facts, and less of the variable element of speculation, the mediæval writers are not to be blamed for giving, as they do without exception, the higher place to the historian. He framed his work on a higher ideal, and was in many cases a man of more learning and political knowledge than the chronicler. The direct and common place narration of events requires of itself, of course, far less ability and much more ordinary endowments; what advantage the chronicler lacked in these respects was compensated amply by the importance of his position and his opportunities of learning the truth.

The position needed for a mediæval chronicler must have been such as did not fall to the lot of every one who had a taste for chronology. The monastic annalist might be content to copy out a standard chronicle, adding in the dates of events that he remembered, or that were interesting to his monastery or its patron; or he might, if his zeal or that of his abbot urged him, borrow the

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PREFACE.

Monks excluded.

annals of a neighbouring or kindred house, and incorporate and codify them ; or, if he felt the desire of original composition so strongly as did Jocelin of Brakelond, he might by journalizing the ordinary life of his companions provide a treasury of curious lore for a future archæologist, and be looked upon by his contemporaries as a detailer of trifles to which only strong corporate feeling could give even a passing value.

But, supposing that the monk historian had the instincts and powers of a chronicler, he could not, as a monk, have either the experience or the opportunities of a free agent. He could not follow the court or camp, he could get only second-hand news, he could not give the exact dates of public events, nor adjudge to the details the relative importance and proportion which they possessed in the eyes of witnesses. His work had a value of another sort.

I. The chronicler must live in or near court.

The man who undertook to register the actions and movements of those whose lives make up history must be in a position to witness or to have a speedy report of all. He must either follow the court or live in the capital. In the twelfth century the communication of news was slow, whilst the action of princes was rapid. To ensure perfect accuracy the chronicler must be attached to the king's person ; to ensure approximate accuracy he must be where the reports of the king's proceedings would be first received. The wonderful coincidences in chronological details which may be traced in contemporary writers who had no apparent communication with one another, as, for instance, Hoveden, Gervase, and Ralph de Diceto, and the way in which they illustrate and supplement one another, are proofs both of great pains taken to ensure exact intelligence, and of a publicity in the conduct of affairs, which we are accustomed to connect almost exclusively with the existence of newspapers.

Besides personal attendance on the king, the bishop, or the court, we must include among the advantages of the

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chronicler access to documents of historical importance. This would follow naturally from the former; where the court was the chronicler would fill an office somewhat like that of an extra secretary. To him, as to a more intelligent person than the professed notary, the letters of foreign princes and the reports of ambassadors would be shown for review; he would be almost necessarily employed in the drawing up of the answers. Many documents are inserted in the mediæval chronicles which owe their preservation probably quite as much to parental affection as to their own value, or the desire of collecting authentic information. The collections that are found in the *Burton Annals* must of course have been the fruits of real historical research, but such cases are rare. Sometimes important records were circulated among the religious houses to be copied and preserved in the archives,<sup>1</sup> but even such memorials were seldom enrolled in the registers, and appear only occasionally in the annals of sister monasteries.

II. He must have access to records.

The English chronicler must not only have had a fair acquaintance with the earlier history of his country, but have been somewhat of a diplomatist. During the latter half of the twelfth century the position of the king of England was a commanding one; his dominions bordered on, or closely approached, the territories of every great prince, his wealth made him a very desirable ally, his family connexions alone bound up the whole continent in a common cousinship, and his personal character or his acquaintance with the world, with law and policy, the wisdom of his counsellors, or his supposed impartiality, made him not unfrequently a referee in cases which it would have been dangerous to submit to pope or emperor. In all these relations the chronicler, the clerk, or courtier who was known to be writing the king's history, would be likely to be called

III. He must be a diplomatist.

<sup>1</sup> See *Cont. Flor. Wig.* ii. 247; | 37; *John of Oxenedes*, 256; *Trivet*, *Rishanger*, 128; *Hemingburgh*, ii. | 322, &c.



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His diplomatic accomplishments.

into council. That he did acquaint himself with the manners of foreign nations, and the alliances of the different ruling families, with the ecclesiastical and civil divisions of states, and with the previous history of persons with whom he was brought into contact, is not a matter of conjecture, but may be satisfactorily proved by an examination of the result. The collection of chronicles made by Roger Hoveden is an authority not only for the history of England, but for that of France, Flanders, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Papacy, Norway, Palestine, and even Constantinople. And this not merely in default of national historians, as in the cases of Norway and Palestine, but as harmonizing with and completing their narratives, where they exist, with an independent authority. Much of the information thus preserved must have been obtained by letters from abroad, but much also must have been gained from intercourse with travellers and foreigners who made their way to court. This must have been the case especially with geographical details, which are very abundant in the present work, and of great value for their illustration of mediæval nomenclature. It is very fortunate when the chronicler preserves to us the exact particulars of his borrowed chart.

He was not acquainted with foreign languages.

It would be pleasant if we could on good evidence add to the qualifications of the chronicler an acquaintance with foreign languages, but this cannot be done. A praiseworthy anxiety sometimes appears to give the Latin equivalent of a foreign word, but this must have been obtained either from a glossary or from an interpreter, a profession apparently confined almost exclusively to the Jews. Latin and French were probably the only languages known to the higher classes, to which the chronicler of the twelfth century generally belonged. It is a curious fact that in all of them there is hardly a sentence of English to be found in which the various readings of different MSS., or the corruptions of the original,



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are not so manifold as to show that it presented very little that was intelligible either to the chronicler or to his transcribers. This could hardly have been the case if the writers had been of the lower clergy, whose duties brought them in close connexion with the people. The monk educated in the monastery might forget his mother tongue, but the secular or lay writer who shows ignorance of English can only have been one whom Norman descent or dignified position placed beyond the necessity of intercourse with the English. It is inexplicable that Roger Hoveden, who was not only an Englishman, but a judge before whom causes must have been tried in the native tongue, should have been unable to copy four lines of English without a mistake. We can only shift the blame from the author to his amanuensis.

Carelessness of mediæval writers as to their native tongue.

It can hardly be questioned that the composition of most of these chronicles was carried on openly and as a recognized occupation. There appears, indeed, to be no evidence that the historiographer's place was one of definite dignity and profit, but his character was certainly recognized, and as such favoured by many of the early princes. Hence, perhaps, is derived the apparently colourless complexion of some of the best chronicles. It would be impossible to criticize the acts of a patron whom it would have been dangerous to flatter. But the dignity of truth may be fairly said to have been appreciated by most of the historical writers who have come down to us. Doubtless there were professed encomiasts, probably there were secret satirists, but the encomiums have generally perished as they deserved, and the criticisms had lost their interest before it was safe to publish them. Happily there were few such unscrupulous liars as Giraldus. The chronicler was, however, highly privileged, or it may be that kings were less sensitive to rough words than they are supposed to have been. Matthew Paris wrote plainly enough about Henry III., with whom he was in frequent association

IV. The chronicler's was a recognized character.

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PREFACE.

Examples of  
chroniclers  
at court.

The necessary qualifications of a contemporary chronicler could, as has been said, find their employment only in the courts of kings and prelates. We do not indeed see in the twelfth century that the writers were so closely connected with the princes as Eginhard was with Charles the Great, or Asser with Alfred; the English royal family afforded no scholar to do for Henry II. what Otto of Freising did for Frederick I. Still the historians were in close and constant intercourse with the leading men of the time. William of Malmesbury, whose later history has some of the characteristics of a chronicle, was on terms of intimate friendship with earl Robert of Gloucester, the son of the king.<sup>1</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, whose later books are of the same sort, was acquainted personally with Henry I., and was a member successively of the household of Robert Bloett, the king's most trusted adviser, and of that of Alexander of Lincoln, whose family furnished the chief royal ministers for nearly a century. Eadmer was the secretary of S. Anselm; all the biographers of Becket could boast of a close friendship with their hero. Peter of Blois and Giraldus Cambrensis were courtiers of Henry II. Roger Hoveden was one of his clerks and justices. Two, at least, of Richard's personal attendants, his almoner and chaplain, witnessed and recorded his adventures. Matthew Paris was a favoured and privileged acquaintance of Henry III.,<sup>2</sup> who occasionally directed him what to record,<sup>3</sup> and, if we may believe his own account, bore his rebukes with patience, if not with attention.<sup>4</sup> Henry the Lion, the famous son-in-law of Henry II., took great pains

<sup>1</sup> See his dedications to Robert of Gloucester of both his histories.

<sup>2</sup> See the passages collected by Wats in his preface to M. Paris.

<sup>3</sup> M. Paris, 736, 739. "Cum esset cum ipso continue in mensa, in palatio, et in thalamo qui hæc scripsit, direxit scribentis cala-

"mum satis diligenter et amicabili liter," p. 945. This refers only to the king's visit to S. Alban's in 1257. Matthew Paris was not a constant resident at court, or his dates would have been more exact than they are.

<sup>4</sup> M. Paris, 783.

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in superintending the composition of the chronicles of his own country; <sup>Historical tastes of princes.</sup> <sup>1</sup> it is possible that Henry himself, whose strongest literary taste was for history, did the same. <sup>2</sup> Certainly a great part of the literary activity which characterizes this period in England was devoted to historical writing; <sup>3</sup> and the fact is not without significance, that so many independent writers were employed in chronicling the events of the reign of Henry II.

Foreign examples, such as William of Tyre, also the minister of an Angevin prince, Suger of S. Denys, Hugo Falcaudi, Romuald of Salerno, Villehardouin, and Joinville, will occur to all. <sup>Foreign ex-amples.</sup>

An influential ecclesiastic like Ralph de Diceto may be said to have combined almost all the advantages that could conduce to the making of a chronicler. As dean of S. Paul's he was the head of a body of canons, amongst whom were the chief administrators of the government; he was the friend and correspondent of kings and prelates, he was resident in London, he had ready access to the Libraries, the records of the kingdom, and the letters of the chief men of the day. His narrative is clear, detailed, accurate, and colourless, and, although the composition only occasionally rises above the level of the <sup>Case of the dean of St. Paul's.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Antiqua scripta chronicorum colligi præcepit et conscribi et coram recitari, et in hac occupatione sæpe noctem duxit insomnem." Chron. Stederburg. ap. Leibnitz, Ser. Rer. Bruns. i. 867.

<sup>2</sup> "Unde et historiarum omnium fere promptam notitiam et cunctarum rerum experientiam prope modum ad manum habebat." Gir. de Instr. Princ. (ed. Brewer, 1846), p. 73. William of Tyre gives the same account of Amalric of Jerusalem, Henry's uncle, "Historiarum præ cæteris lectionibus erat avidus auditor, memor per-

"petuo, et fidelissimus recitator," p. 956; and of Baldwin III., his brother, "Historiarum præcipue auditor, antiquorum regum et optimorum principum gesta moresque diligenter investigabat," p. 890. Their common ancestor, Fulk Rechin, was himself a historian.

<sup>3</sup> We have contemporary histories of the reign of Henry II. by William of Newburgh, Ralph de Diceto, Robert de Monte, Gervase of Canterbury, and the author of the present work, all quite independent of each other.

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PREFACE.

annalist, he may be taken as a fair specimen of the class to which he claims to belong.

Value of  
the monas-  
tic his-  
tories.

Very different was the lot, and of another sort the merits of the monastic annalist or historian. The principal value of his work consisted in its faithful reproduction of standard books of history, or in the local and professional details added in the monastery, or else in the accident that the huge volume, of which the convent was so proud, embodied, besides, the knowledge and experience of some one of the body whom circumstances or social qualifications marked out as the chronicler of the time. It is only in this latter and accidental point that the class of works represented by the *Annals of Winchester* and *Worcester* touches the same ground with the chronicle of our author or of *Ralph de Diceto*. *Matthew Paris*, at once a monk and a courtier, occupies almost singularly this common position. The monastic annals are invaluable as embodying and adding to the chronicles, but they are in few cases independent or first hand authorities for public affairs.

*Matthew Paris.*

No law of  
copyright  
in chro-  
nicles.

A narrative composed under the circumstances I have described, so trustworthy, circumstantial, and safe, could not long remain the private property of its author, even had literary property possessed any acknowledged rights. It was possibly published in periodical divisions, and from the moment it was given to the world the writer had no power to see to the integrity of his text or to prevent interpolations. In this class of writings, far more generally than in any other, the name of the author has been forgotten; if he was a monk it has been sunk in the name of his monastery; if the authorship was thought worth usurping it was freely appropriated. The work of the chronicler or annalist was incorporated in new compilations, with no mark of distinction; copied verbatim et litteratim without a word of acknowledgment. In this respect he fared worse than the professed historian, whose artistic composition was kept generally as

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distinctly his own as if he had written a poem or a Practice of compilation. treatise of divinity. The compiler appropriated the chronicles as common property, and himself claimed little more credit for his compilation than is commonly earned by the formation of a newspaper scrap-book. The literary character of the book of chronicles (like that of a peerage or a cookery book in the present day) was throughout its existence of very secondary importance to its usefulness.

Under such circumstances it will on consideration appear that the work before us was composed, published, and forgotten.

Of the present chronicle the original manuscript is MSS. of the present work. not known to exist. Both the existing copies are transcripts. The elder of the two was probably made whilst the work was in process of composition, and the other within a very few years of the period at which it stops.

The first of these is the Cotton Manuscript Julius Cotton Julius A. xi. not original, but an early copy. A. xi.<sup>1</sup> This manuscript is in perfect preservation; it is written in long lines on a small quarto page, and contains 109 perfect folios and half a page over. It has been transcribed by two or three copyists working together: the hands change at the end of the several quires. Where the matter to be copied has not been sufficient to fill the space allotted to it, the last page of the the quire has in some cases been left blank, or the latter paragraph written in wider spaces, so as to cover the page and prevent the suspicion of erasure. These breaks occur sometimes in the middle of a sentence, and may be considered sufficient evidence that the manuscript proceeded from some monastic scriptorium, or from the workshop of a professional transcriber. There are, moreover, one or two trifling errors,<sup>2</sup> and inconsistencies in the

<sup>1</sup> This is the MS. A. of the present edition.

<sup>2</sup> As, for instance, the substitution of *Portesmutam* for *Barbefluctum*,

at i. 6, note <sup>2</sup>; the casual omission of *hæc*, p. 68; the transposition of two clauses at p. 113.

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PREFACE.

MS. Julius  
A. xi.:

spelling of names, which could only have crept in during the process of transcription.

copied  
before the  
original was  
perfected:

That it was transcribed from an original before the author had had time to make his final corrections, and put the finishing touches to his work, appears most probable from the fact that there occur frequent blanks<sup>1</sup> for the names of persons of which the writer was not quite certain, gaps which would certainly have been either filled up or avoided if the work had been prepared for publication, and which are filled up often incorrectly by the later copyists. The manuscript, moreover, breaks off in the middle of a page, and with a full stop, the sense of the sentence being complete as far it goes, although we find from the other copy that the author afterwards added a clause. This seems to show that at the time the copy was made the author had not proceeded any further with his work.

begins in  
1169 and  
ends in  
1177.

This manuscript begins at Christmas, 1169, and ends in 1177, in the middle of the account of the shipwreck of Geoffrey the chancellor. It contains no reference to any event that took place later than the year of the break, so that it is quite possible that it was copied in that very year. The character of the penmanship would agree very well with this date. It is from this manuscript, as being of primary authority, that the text of the present edition has been taken down to the period at which it ends.

The same  
volume con-  
tains a copy  
of Ailred's  
Genealogia:

The volume in which it occurs contains also, prefixed to the present chronicle, an ancient copy of the *Genealogy of Henry II.*, written by Ailred of Rievaulx, and bearing on its heading the title, probably intended to include both it and the following work, "*Gesta Henrici IIi Benedicti Abbatis.*" The copy of our chronicle

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, at i. 79, 83, 84, 122, 162, &c., and especially pp. 124 and 125, where the blanks of the original writer have been wrongly filled up by the writer of the Vitellius MS. and Hoveden.