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Matthew Paris Edited by Henry Richards Luard

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Chronica Majora

Henry Richards Luard (1825–91), a Church of England clergyman and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, edited a number of works in the Rolls Series, for which he was noted for the quality of his indexing and the depth of his commentary. This seven-volume work, first published between 1872 and 1883, has been hailed as one of the best editions in the series. It is a rich source for English history from the Creation to 1259, written by England's greatest medieval historian. Matthew Paris (c.1200–59) became a monk at St Albans in 1217 and had access to a wide variety of documents as an acquaintance of such men as Bishop Robert Grosseteste and King Henry III, whom he knew well. The Latin text of Volume 1, covering the Creation to 1066, derives mainly from the work of Paris's predecessor, Roger of Wendover.

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Chronica Majora

VOLUME 1:
THE CREATION TO A.D. 1066

MATTHEW PARIS
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HENRY RICHARDS LUARD



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He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be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

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MATTHÆI PARISIENSIS,

MONACHI SANCTI ALBANI, CHRONICA MAJORA.

EDITED

BY

HENRY RICHARDS LUARD, M.A.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE; REGISTRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND VICAR OF
GREAT ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. I.

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

THE most valuable portion of the Greater Chronicle of MATTHEW PARIS, perhaps the best known of all the mediæval historians, was first published by Archbishop Parker in 1571, an edition reprinted at Zurich in 1589 and 1606, and again by William Wats in 1640, whose edition was reprinted in Paris in 1644, and in London in 1684. It has been translated into French by A. H. Breholles, in 1840-41, and into English by Dr. Giles, 1849-1854. In spite of this, however, it cannot be said that the historian has ever yet had justice done to him, for his work has never been printed in its entirety, and his original editor, Parker, had such strange ideas of his duty as an editor, as to alter his text almost at random, and to introduce matter from other sources in a very arbitrary manner.¹

All that is known of the life of Matthew Paris has been put together with such care and skill by Sir Frederic Madden in his preface to the third volume of the *Minor History* (the *Historia Anglorum*), as to preclude the necessity of saying anything more on this subject; and for a sketch of the Scriptorium of St. Alban's, I need only refer to the preface of Sir Thomas Hardy to the third volume of his *Materials for British*

¹ Proofs of this will be given in the preface to the second volume. See the remarks and specimens given by Sir F. Madden in his preface to the *Historia Anglorum*, i. pp. xxxii-xxxvii. The edition edited by Wats was printed off as far as the beginning of the reign of Henry II. before he had anything to do with it.

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PREFACE.

History in the present series. I propose at this time to confine myself to an account of the chronicle as far as 1066, the whole of which is contained in the present volume, reserving the consideration of the later portion, and an estimate of Paris as a historian, to subsequent volumes.

Question of the authorship of the earlier portion of the chronicle.

The question of the authorship of the chronicle contained in the present volume is a very difficult one; unfortunately the original MS., though it has been used by many, has never before been thoroughly collated; nor have the authorities which were used in its compilation been investigated. Much light has of necessity been thrown on the question by doing this; and if I have come to a different conclusion as to the authorship from what has been the popularly received theory, it must be remembered that I am in possession of evidence of which hitherto no use has been made. While, however, several of the modern theories respecting this question can be proved to be incorrect, and while I believe the conclusion to which I have come is at least a very probable one, I cannot feel that it is in any way certain. It is very evident that we have not the original MS. from which the chronicle was transcribed; and this not being in existence, much that would be proved from it can only now be conjectural. All that I can do is to put the facts that can be ascertained as clearly as I can before my readers, and to leave them to judge how far my conclusions are correct. The question must involve a great deal of careful investigation and minute criticism. It is not, however, without its own interest, and will shed considerable light on the value of our authorities for the early history of England.

In the first place, I will set before the reader, as briefly as I can, the evidence given by the existing MSS., in order to show what the difficulty attaching to the question of the authorship is.

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Under the name of MATTHEW PARIS we have the two MS. volumes, Nos. 26 and 16 (which I denote by the letters A. and B.),¹ in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, having the earlier portion, down to 1195, written in one or two scribes' hands of the beginning of the 13th century, and the later portion in the hand which has commonly been supposed to be that of Paris, and which certainly is a St. Alban's hand. Throughout the earlier portion, that is before the hand called Paris's begins, are numerous additions and corrections, some on inserted leaves, others in the margins or between the lines, in certainly more hands than one, but all bearing distinctly the St. Alban's character.² In some cases the writing of the original scribe has been carefully erased, and fresh matter written over the erasure; in these cases the corrector has always had additional matter to insert. The corrections embrace frequently very minute points, such as alterations of spelling, and show that the MS. was read through with the idea of being corrected throughout; the work of correction has however been very unequally done, as many gross and obvious blunders are left unaltered. Though I believe that there is evidence that these corrections were done at different times, and that they, as well as the additions, are written in at least two hands, I cannot think that there is any reasonable doubt that they were written either in the handwriting or under the direction of Matthew Paris himself, the author of the later portion of MS. B. Indeed, under the year 622 (p. 271), where he has introduced a considerable amount of fresh matter, written over an erasure, respecting Mahomet, he refers for further details to what he has

¹ See the full description of these volumes in Sir F. Madden's preface to the *Historia Anglorum*, pp. liv-lxi.

² The question of the handwriting of the additions to this MS. has been so fully and carefully investi-

gated by Sir Thomas Hardy in the preface to his third volume of the *Materials for British History*, and in the account of the fac-similes prefixed to that work, that I need say no more on the point.

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given under the year 1236, while under this latter year he inserts a reference to what is given on the subject under the year 622.¹

Copies of
this in the
British
Museum.
Cotton.
Nero D. 5,
Harl. 1620.

Of this MS. there exist two copies, MS. Nero, D. 5 in the Cotton Collection in the British Museum (which I call C.), and MS. 1620 in the Harleian Collection, in the same library (which I call D.).² These are each written in one hand throughout, and are demonstrably copied from the Corpus Christi MS. (A.). C. contains some additional notes in its margins, which are believed by Sir F. Madden to have been written by Paris; so that this MS. would have some authority of its own, as having passed under the author's own eye. It is however, as well as D., a most slavish copy of the Corpus MS., the grossest errors being left uncorrected, and the corrector's marginal additions being usually foisted into the text, even when they are only variations or explanations of a word, and spoil the sense by being thus thrust in. Thus frequently, when the corrector of A. has given a various reading in the margin, the scribe of C. inserts it with the other in the text; e. g., p. 15, where A. has *Tricerbero*, the corrector has *vel Cerbero* in the margin; C. has *Tricerbero vel Cerbero* in the text; p. 19, A. has *vastitata* (of the island of Leogecia), the corrector has over the word between the lines *vel vastata*; C. reads *vastitata vel vastata*; p. 67, A. has *delate*, the corrector puts *percepte* above it, and C. D. read *delate percepte*.³ A curious instance may be seen in the note¹ to p. 17. The corrector has here written a marginal note as to the grammatical use of the word *exulo*. In D. this is in the text written on like the rest, as if

¹ These references are both in rubrick, and in (I think) the same St. Alban's hand.

² See Sir F. Madden's description of these two MSS. Preface to the *Historia Anglorum*, pp. lxi-lxv.

³ This is the case continually.

See the notes¹, p. 22; ¹, p. 25; ², p. 36; ², p. 68, &c. I have quoted the readings of C. D. at first, in order to show their identity with A.; afterwards I only give their variations.

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it were part of the sentence, of which it of course makes nonsense.¹

Under the name of ROGER OF WENDOVER, and with his name at the end, there exist two MSS., one the MS. Douce cvvii., in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (which I call W.), of about the middle of the 13th century; the other Otho B. 5 (called O.), in the Cotton Collection in the British Museum, written about the middle of the 14th century. The first of these begins as A. does, after a prologue chiefly copied from Robert de Monte (to which, however, it adds an additional paragraph), with the Creation, and goes through all the early Scripture and Roman history much in the same way, except that it is usually fuller. This compilation has much both verbally and in matter that is identical with A., and yet they differ so greatly that no one could call them copies of the same book, and so as to make collation of the two in the earlier portion impossible.² This is the case down to the year A.D. 231. Here the MS. which bears Wendover's name becomes identical with the Corpus MS.; and with only such variations as will always exist between two copies of the same work, continues so till the year 1012, the only exception being the insertion of a chapter, "De origine militiæ Templi," introduced before the year 621 from William of Tyre.³ From the year 1012, still having much in common with A., it is for the most part less full, omits much that is found in A., and has some entries that A. has not. This continues to the year 1065, when the MSS. are again identical. This MS. is written by a very careless and ignorant scribe, there being many omissions

¹ See the notes ², p. 37; ², p. 97; ³, p. 100; ¹, p. 470.

² See the comparison between Parker's printed text of "Matthew of Westminster" and the earlier portion (still unprinted) of Roger

of Wendover in the Appendix II. to Sir Thomas Hardy's Materials for British History. vol. iii. pp. 415-419.

³ See p. 269.

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of words, and even sentences; it has been corrected throughout, but not very carefully, in another hand.

MS. Cotton. Otho B. 5.

The other MS. bearing Wendover's name, which I call O., has been unfortunately grievously injured by the fire at Ashburnham House in 1721; so much so that though it has been most carefully and skilfully put together, a large portion of most of the leaves is gone, and much that is left is illegible. It is very carefully written, with comparatively few errors of transcription or omission. It supplies many of the omissions in W., explains many of its blunders, and is probably copied from the earlier one of which W is a transcript. Sometimes, however, its omissions are the same as those of W¹. The earlier portion, before the Incarnation, *if it ever existed*,² is gone altogether. Its arrangement differs from that of W., as there are no headings like those in that MS. to each paragraph or year, but the whole is divided into 93 chapters, with a heading to each, *e.g.* "capitulum secundum de his quæ contigerunt tempore quo Gaius Caligula;" "capitulum 47 de his quæ facta sunt tempore quo regnavit Anastasius imperator;" "capitulum 90 [de rebus gestis tempore quo regnavit in Anglia Henricus secundus a conquestu sub quo sanctus Thomas Cantuariensis fuit martirio coronatus." Roger of Wendover was printed from the Douce MS. in 1841–1842 by the English Historical Society, under the editorship of the Rev. H. O. Coxe, now Librarian of the Bodleian Library. Mr. Coxe omitted all before the year A.D. 449, excepting a portion which he inserted

¹ See, for instance, p. 297, where the passage "nisi legitimum habere connubium, nullus faciat," which is in A., is omitted in both the Wendover MSS.

² In the old catalogue (Oxon. 1696) of the Cotton MSS., it is described as "Chron. Rogeri de Wendovere a Christo nato ad A.C.

"1234." As, however, it begins, "Incipit liber secundus de floribus Historiarum a nativitate Domini nostri J. C.," &c., the earlier portion was probably in the MS. originally, though removed before it came into Sir R. Cotton's possession.

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PREFACE.

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in his preface, so that the earlier portion of this chronicle is still extant only in MS.

But besides these there is a large number of MSS., ^{“Matthew of Westminster.”} in their earlier portion mainly identical with A., which go under the name of a third writer, MATTHEW OF WESTMINSTER. These in many cases in the earlier years have some entries which A. has not; they occasionally vary from each other, as if peculiar additions had been made in the different MSS. according to the monasteries where each was written; but for the most part, down to A.D. 231, and from 1012 to 1065, where the Wendover MSS. differ from A., they agree with A. and not with Wendover. Of these the earliest is the MS. preserved in the Chetham Library at Manchester (No. 6712), which is written in various hands, a portion, namely that from 1241 to 1249, being written in what is distinctly a St. Alban’s hand, and which is supposed by Sir F. Madden to be Matthew Paris’s own. It is from one of these MSS. of the so called “Matthew of Westminster” that the early portion of this chronicle has been printed,¹ and thus what is contained in the present volume has got the name of “Matthew of Westminster.”² Even since Mr. Coxe’s edition of Roger of Wendover was issued, and it was clear that so much of these two was identical, they yet have been quoted as if independent authorities, when, whether original or not, they are absolutely identical, and this even by writers like Lappenberg and Earle.

As “Matthew of Westminster” goes down to 1307, the authorship of the later portion does not concern the present inquiry; but as the earlier portion is nearly identical with the MSS. of Matthew Paris, and as the

¹ First by Parker, London, 1570.

² Turner, for instance, in his History of the Anglo-Saxons, invariably quotes this chronicle as “Matthew of Westminster,” quite indifferently when it gives matter

not to be found elsewhere, and when it is obviously a transcript of some earlier writer. He seems to consider its authority quite as good as that of Florence or Huntingdon.

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Chetham MS. must have been written about the same time as A. (in the first half of the 13th century), the existence of these MSS. has added difficulties to the question of the authorship, and it will be necessary to clear up the question as far as relates to them.

My belief is that the earlier portion of "Matthew of Westminster" is a transcript with additions and omissions of the MS. at Corpus Christi College, made by some independent person after some few of the corrector's alterations were written, but before the greater portion of them, certainly before the longer inserted passages, and with additions introduced by the individual, whoever it was, under whose direction the MS. was first transcribed. I see no reason for doubting that this was done in St. Alban's, and then the copy lent for transcription to Westminster or other monasteries, St. Paul's, St. Mary's Southwark, Merton, Norwich, Rochester, &c.,¹ in each of which some additions peculiar to each monastery or scribe were introduced. These additions in one case take the shape of an additional chapter, "Distinctio regionum,"² but are for the most part inserted sentences from the same sources that the author of the original compilation has used.³ I have examined all the MSS. under the title of Matthew of Westminster in the British Museum,⁴ the Bodleian Library,⁵ Westminster Abbey, Trinity College, Cambridge,⁶ Manchester,⁷ Eton, and (by a friend) the one at Paris,⁸ and the following evidence will, I think, prove my point.

¹ See Madden's Preface to the *Historia Anglorum*, i. p. xxviii.

² See note ⁴, p. 5. The substance of this is in Wendover, though at a different place.

³ See, for instance, pp. 7, 13, 34.

⁴ These are Arundel 96, Claudius E. 8, Reg. 14 C. 6, Lansdowne 96, Nero D. 2. Generally the Arundel and Nero MSS. agree, and

the Claudius and Royal form another pair.

⁵ These are Laud 572, Fairfax 20, Rawlinson B. 177, Id. B. 186, Mus. 149, Hatton 53.

⁶ R. 4. 2. A well written MS. of average correctness.

⁷ Chetham 6712.

⁸ Paris, Bibl. du Roi 6045.

- p. 11. A. has *Atheniorum* for *Atheniensium*. So MS. Chetham and the other MSS. of Westminster. Errors of the scribe of the Corpus Christi MS. which are followed in the Chetham MS. of Matthew of Westminster.
- p. 14. A. has "ab ara destructa ductus Jeroboal," for *dictus*. So Chetham. The other MSS. of Westminster generally follow Chetham, excepting the Eton MS., which frequently differs altogether, and in most cases is more correct. It is written in one hand throughout, a hand of the early part of the 14th century. of Matthew of Westminster.
- p. 15. A. omits *milia*. So Chetham. The Eton MS. inserts *M̄*. above the line.
- p. 19. A. omits the verb belonging to *templum Dianæ*. So Chetham. Paris supplies *invenerunt*.
- p. 26. A. has *Litico* for *Levitico*. So Chetham.
- p. 26. A. has *oram* for *horam*. So Chetham.
- p. 30. A. has *nedom* for *Edom*. So Chetham.
- p. 39. A. has "seditionem *populis* Romæ fecit," for *populus*. So Chetham, reading also *fuit* for *fecit*.
- p. 53. A. has *destitui* for *destrui*, in speaking of the walls of Babylon, which makes nonsense of the passage. So Chetham and other MSS. of West.
- p. 58. A. has *profecte* for *profecti*. So Chetham.
- p. 65. A. has *exivit* for *exuit*. So Chetham.
- p. 67. A. has *formidinis* for *fortitudinis*. So Chetham and most of the MSS. of West.
- p. 68. A. omits *vires*. So Chetham.
- p. 70. A. has *in urme* for *in urbe*. The MSS. of West. vary between *in urme* and *in urine*. The Eton alone has *in urbe*.
- p. 78. A. wrongly inserts *se*. So Chetham.
- p. 85. A. has *Siciliam* for *Ciliciam*. So Chetham and other MSS. of West.
- p. 86. A. has *cam* (a blunder for *causa*). Chetham has *cā*, probably seeing the source of A.'s blunder, and restoring the old abbreviation for *causa*.
- p. 96. A. has *ingressi* for *ingessi*. So Chetham.
- p. 96. A. has *ducebat* for *ducebat*. So Chetham, and most of the Westminster MSS.