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.

Historia Anglorum

The History of the English from A.C. 55 to A.D. 1154

Henry of Huntingdon (c.1088–c.1157) wrote his comprehensive Latin chronicle of English history at the behest of the bishop of Lincoln, who asked him to provide a narrative from the earliest English kings right up to their own day. Henry’s fondness for anecdotes – including the story of King Cnut attempting to hold back the tide – adds charm to his account. Although the work was originally completed by 1130, Henry continued to add to his magnum opus for many years, producing a version that concluded with the death of King Stephen and the accession of Henry II in 1154. This is the version edited for the Rolls Series in 1879 by Thomas Arnold (1823–1900), whose scholarly introduction describes the various different versions of the text, lists the extant manuscripts, and surveys Henry’s sources. The text is accompanied by side-notes in English as well as appendices, a glossary and an index.
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Historia Anglorum

The History of the English from A.C. 55 to A.D. 1154

Henry of Huntingdon
Edited by Thomas Arnold
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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDIÆVI SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.
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, prefer-
ence being given, in the first instance, to such materials
as were most scarce and valuable.

He proposed that each chronicle or historical docu-
ment to be edited should be treated in the same way as
if the editor were engaged on an Editio Prineps; 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.
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.
HENRICI ARCHIDIACONI HUNTENDUNENSIS
HISTORIA ANGLORUM.
HENRICI ARCHIDIACONI HUNTENDUNENSIS

HISTORIA ANGLORUM.

THE

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH,

BY

HENRY, ARCHDEACON OF HUNTINGDON,

FROM A.C. 55 TO A.D. 1154,

IN EIGHT BOOKS.

EDITED

BY

THOMAS ARNOLD, M.A.,

OF UNIV. COLL., OXFORD.

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INTRODUCTION.
INTRODUCTION.

The Historia Anglorum of Henry of Huntingdon was first printed by Sir Henry Savile in 1596, in the volume entitled, Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam principui. Since that time no complete edition has appeared in this country. Savile’s collection was reprinted at Frankfort in 1601. In the Monumenta Historica Britannica (1848) Mr. Petrie, who, as a rule, did not print any portion of the chronicles contained in that volume which passed the limit of 1066, reproduced, out of the eight books published by Savile, the following:—Books i., ii.; Book iv. (except the proceedings of the Council of Heathfield with which it opens); Book v.; Book vi., to the end of the battle of Hastings. Mr. Petrie omitted the third book, which is hardly more than an abridged re-arrangement of portions of Beda’s Historia Ecclesiastica, as not possessing sufficient historical value to be printed. Had Mr. Petrie lived to complete his design, the remainder of our author’s history would doubtless have appeared in the second volume of the Monumenta. As it was, the Monumenta Historica Britannica remained a colossal fragment, incorporating a number of other fragments; but the profound and patient investigation, of which the results are embodied in the Preface and Prolegomena, can never cease to command the gratitude and merit the attention of students.

§ 2. Wharton in his Anglia Sacra (1691) printed the epistle to Walter, De Contemptu Mundi, which Henry included in the eighth book of the later editions of his
INTRODUCTION.

History. The same epistle is printed in D’Achery, *Spicilegium*, viii. 178. Portions of the History, as printed by Savile, extending to nearly the entire work, are to be found in Bouquet (Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France, 1786; vols. xi. and xiii.). Finally the Abbé Migne, using Savile’s text, has reprinted in his *Patrologiae Cursus Completus* (vol. 195, 1854) the eight books of the History, and also the epistle *De Contemptu Mundi*.

§ 3. The present edition does not contain more than has been printed by the Abbé Migne. In order to explain and justify the exclusion of two books (all but the epistle *De Contemptu*), numbered in some MSS. viii. and ix., in others ix. and x.—Book ix. being in every case that which treats *De Miraculis*—which undoubtedly formed part of the work according to the author’s final plan, it will be necessary to distinguish between the different editions which he brought out in his lifetime, and also to examine the contents of these two books with some minuteness.

§ 4. In an able paper on Henry of Huntingdon by Dr. F. Liebermann, of Berlin, in the *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* for 1878, a paper characterised by true German thoroughness, much light is thrown on all points connected with the various editions of the *Historia Anglorum*. Henry, who had been made an archdeacon by Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, some years before his death in 1123, was requested, or rather bidden, (“jussu tuo,”) by the new bishop, Alexander of Blois, to write a history of the English nation from the earliest period, founding it on the Ecclesiastical History of Beda and the native chronicles (“chronica in antiquis reservata libraris,”) and bringing it down to modern times. Henry was probably engaged on the work between the years 1125 and 1130, and the project seems to be glanced at by William of Malmesbury in a well-known passage at the end of his *Gesta Regum*, where he says, “Si quis,
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"sic ut jam susurrari audio, post me scribendi de talis
bus munus attentaverit, mihi debeat collectionis
gratiam, sibi habeat electronis materiam."

§ 5. This first edition was brought down to the end
of 1129 (vii. § 40) ; it is represented by two MSS.,
one known as the Hengwrt MS., in the possession of
Mr. Wynne, of Peniarth, Merionethshire, the other, a
much later copy, in the library of All Souls College,
Oxford. In these MSS. the mention of Carlisle among
the English bishoprics (i., § 5), which occurs in all the other
copies, is wanting, and the dioceses are accordingly
reckoned at sixteen instead of seventeen. The see of
Carlisle was founded in 1133; this edition must there-
fore have come out before that date. The Prologue to
Bishop Alexander ("Cum in omni," etc.), which heads
nearly all the later copies, is wanting in these two; yet
it must not be supposed that it was a later addition.
For in the Epilogue ("Hic est annus qui," etc.), which
they both contain, the exact words of a passage in the
Prologue ("ad ipsam morum puritatem . . . . . .
resilinium.") are quoted. The absence of the Prologue
must therefore be due to some other cause, perhaps to
the "abbreviating" spirit which was so powerful in
transcribers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

§ 6. The next edition came down to 1135, that is, to the
end of the reign of Henry I. ; it is named in various
MSS., but not now, so far as I can ascertain, exactly
represented by any. One of the Cottonian MSS. in the
British Museum (Vesp. A. xviii.) does indeed stop at
this point; but the initial rubric names 1145 as the date of
composition; moreover the scribe, after giving the
passage ("Scriptur autem," see below, § 13) designed to
introduce, and which in other MSS. does actually intro-
duce, the three epistles of the book De Summationibus,
breaks off short with the words "Prima igitur [epistole]
exemplar hoc est," and here the MSS. ends. It seems
clear therefore that Vesp. A. xviii is merely an unfinished
INTRODUCTION.

copy of the edition of 1145, and does not represent that which originally stopped at 1135. For one of the three epistles described in the paragraph “Scritp autem,” that to Warinus, was, as internal evidence shows, written in 1139, and could not have been noticed in an edition of the History dated in 1135. Yet that such an edition did appear, the rubric date, 1135, prefixed to at least four MSS. (A₂, C₂, C₃, F), of which one is in the British Museum, two at Cambridge, and one at Paris), seems to render certain; although in point of fact these MSS. carry the history down to various dates between 1139 and 1154. They are probably, as to the earlier portion of them, copies from MSS. of the edition of 1135 which do not now exist. In that edition, the Prologue and Epilogue, as I conceive, continued to appear without variation, the Epilogue being only removed to the end of the additional matter inserted in Book vii. between the years 1130 and 1135, and the words “annus tricessimus” altered to “annus tricessimus quintus.”

§ 7. A third edition appeared in 1139, bringing the narrative of events down to the end of 1138. This is represented by a MS. in the Museum (Addit. 24,061) and another in the Advocates’ Library at Edinburgh. But no change appears as yet to have been made in the plan of the work; Book vii. was merely enlarged by the addition of a few pages, bringing down the narrative to the consecration of Archbishop Theobald in January 1139, which afterwards formed the opening portion of Book viii. The second of the MSS³ above mentioned does not contain the books De Summittatibus and De

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¹ For a description of the Epilogue, see below, § 12.
² Marked 33. 5. 4.
³ MS. Addit. 24,061 does contain them, but as it is of late date, and avowedly a compilation, I am inclined, though with some hesitation, to the belief that it was made up from several copies of the History, representing various editions, and does not faithfully represent the edition of 1139, which in my judgment did not contain these books.
INTRODUCTION.

Mira culis. The Epilogue seems to have been omitted in this edition, probably in consideration of the increased length of the seventh book.

§ 8. Some years now elapsed, and before the next appearance of the History, the archdeacon had resolved to increase its bulk by incorporating with it several letters, on subjects more or less historical, which he had addressed within the last ten or twelve years either to the king or to personal friends, and adding a new book on Miracles, which would in a certain sense be supplementary to his third book, De Conversione Anglorum. This fourth edition may have been prepared in 1145; I know not how otherwise to account for the appearance of this rubric date in a number of MSS. (A², A⁴, A⁶, S, F⁰), not one of which terminates exactly with that year. There is indeed a MS. in the Advocates' Library, which Dr. Liebermann (Forschungen, p. 277, note) names as terminating in this year; but I am inclined to think that he is mistaken.¹ The point to which he really brought this fourth edition on its first appearance, I believe to have been that indicated by the Paris MS. 6042, and several others, namely, a period in the twelfth year of Stephen's reign when the country was enjoying comparative peace, and when in the Lincoln diocese, bishop Alexander, who had happily returned from his journey to Rome in the previous year (1146), had just re-opened his minster after the repairs made necessary by the fire of 1124, arrayed now in such beauty, that “nullius aedificii structure circa fines Anglie cederet.” According to this view the original last words of this edition were “animi peri-

¹ The MS. (Adv. Libr. A., 5. 38) certainly at present terminates with the words “circa fines Anglie cederet” at the end of Henry's annal for 1145. But the writing comes down to the foot of the verso of the last leaf, which itself is but an isolated fragment, being preceded by a hiatus extending to five or six folios; there is therefore no reason to suppose that the MS. is not defective after this leaf as well as before it.
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“cula non reformidantis fuerit,” (Book viii., § 25). The various copies which extend a little beyond this date, ending either with the notice of the English crusading expedition of 1148, (“venerat ex Anglia,” viii., § 27), or with the account of the installation of the new bishop of Lincoln (“jucunditate spirituali,” viii., § 28), may all be considered as belonging to the fourth edition. In framing it the archdeacon proceeded thus. He increased the number of historical books from seven to eight, making the last book commence at the death of Henry I, and eking out its otherwise slender dimensions by putting long speeches, after the manner of Livy, in the mouths of leading generals on either side before the battle of Lincoln. But between this last book and the seventh, he now inserted two new books, viii. and ix. The first was made up of the old Epilogue to the History, which, if our conjecture in a previous paragraph be right, had not appeared since the edition of 1135, followed by three “Epistolæ,” one to Henry I. on the succession of kings and emperors in the various monarchies of the world; the second to “Warinus a Briton,” giving a brief account of the British kings from Brutus to Cadwallader, taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth; the third to one “Walerus,” in which he descants on the emptiness of human greatness, illustrating his theme by not uninteresting biographic notices of a number of eminent persons, in church and state, whom they had both known. The ninth book, “De Miraculis,” is a narrative of miracles of English saints, culled out of Beda’s Ecclesiastical History, followed by a list of sanctuaries where intelligence might be obtained, and books read, respecting the miracles of saints who had lived since the time of Beda, and ending with an account of a miracle said to have been performed by an anchorite then living, St. Wulftric.

§ 9. From this description it must be evident that Henry, when he incorporated this mass of new matter in his Historia Anglorum, was acting rather in the
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interest of his own literary reputation than in that of historical science. He had written the three Epistles at various times, and rightly thought that if they were inwoven into the tissue of his Historia, they would be more likely to go down to posterity than if each were allowed to stand alone on its independent merits. As to the ninth book, it is a piece of what we now call “book-making.” To collect and put together scattered notices from Beda, and to arrange them in regular order, was a piece of light and pleasant labour, better suited to the easy-going temper of the archdeacon than the serious and independent researches which had charms for the robust intellect of a Malmesbury or a Matthew Paris. That the composition of this book formed part of his original plan there is no reason to doubt; for the same prolix references to it which occur in copies of the later editions are found also in All Souls, xxxi, a MS. representing the edition of 1130, and recognizable (although itself a late transcript) as faithfully representing that edition by the non-mention in it of incidents, such as the erection of the see of Carlisle, which happened after that date. There is, however, no evidence, manuscript or other, which should induce us to believe that this book was ever actually annexed to the History before the appearance of the edition of 1145. Nor, though it be granted that it entered into the original plan of the History, should the fact make us question the discretion of Sir Henry Savile the first editor, who, on account of their slight historical importance, excluded the ninth as well as the eighth book from his editio princeps of the author’s chief work. Mr. Petrie, if he had lived to edit the remainder of Henry of Huntingdon, would certainly have taken the same course; he even forebore to print Book iii., which Savile allowed to stand in his edition, on the ground that it was almost wholly borrowed from Beda. No part of the eighth book has been ever printed but the epistle to Walter; this, on
account of its curious descriptions of contemporary persons, has been, as we have seen, printed by Wharton, D'Achery, and recently by the Abbé Migne.

§ 10. Finally, a fifth edition of the Historia brought the narrative down to 1154, so as to make it terminate with the death of Stephen. There is, as may be seen on reference to the passage, some evidence that the author did not intend to stop here, but contemplated the addition of a new book, which would have probably embraced the events of the first five or six years of the reign of Henry II. As this design, if entertained, was never carried out, it seems reasonable to infer that Henry, who must have been at least seventy years old at the time of Henry's accession, died soon after the event which he had so enthusiastically welcomed. This last edition is represented by the excellent MS. at Corpus College, Cambridge (C9), which is in a hand of the twelfth century, by another Cambridge MS. in the Public Library, and by the well-written, though late text in the British Museum, Reg. 13. B. vi. Other MSS., e.g., All Souls, xxxvi., and Arundel, 46, are named by Dr. Liebermann as representing the fifth edition. These, however, as I shall presently show, belong to a class apart: they are copies of a historical work, intermediate in point of time between Huntingdon and Hoveden, which some unknown writer compiled towards the end of the twelfth century out of the Durham book 1 and the Historia Anglorum, and called "a chronicle of Marianus Scotus."

§ 11. In order to show exactly what a reader loses by the omission of Books viii. and ix. (always excepting Epistle iii., which will be found at page 297,) from an edition of the Historia, I proceed to give an analysis of their contents, in the course of which, when I come upon any passage which seems to possess independent value, I shall quote it in Henry's own words. There is, how-

1 See below, § 36.
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ever, one other point connected with editions that must be first considered, namely, whether the arrangement of the books seen in the Lambeth MS. No. 118 may be considered to have been made by Henry himself, or with his authority. In that MS., which is on good parchment and well executed, and in a hand of the early thirteenth or late twelfth century, the eight historical books succeed each other without interruption; they are followed by the two books “De Miraculis” and “De Summationibus,” after which follow two books of “Epigrams,” which are numbered xi. and xii. It might appear at first sight that the archdeacon aimed at securing immortality for his poetical Epigrams, as for his prose epistles, by incorporating them in one work with his History. But on closer examination this notion is found not to be tenable. In the prefatory remarks introducing each book of Epigrams, Henry speaks of the division of the work, “hoc opus,” into eight books, as in the case of his work “De Amore;” he gives a mystical reason for the adoption of the number eight; but adds that the present two books, as consisting of “Epigrammata Seria,” may well be distinguished from the preceding six, “a sex precedentibus,” which contained his “Epigrammata Jocunda.” Now we know from Leland that Henry wrote eight books of Epigrams, eight books “De Amore,” and eight books “De Herbia,” though not one of the three works has reached us in its entirety. It seems, therefore, that the compiler of this MS., a man who had his own views as to the editorial function, in pursuance of which he has inserted the “Laws of Canute,” filling nearly eleven folios, in the sixth book (§ 16) of Henry’s History,—having the volume

1 Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis.
2 Of these three works, so far as I can ascertain, nothing now remains but the two books of Epigrams contained in the Lambeth and other more recent MSS. The first of these two was edited by Mr. Wright from the Lambeth MS. for the Master of the Rolls among the works of the “Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century.”
of Epigrams by him, and taking the hint from Henry's own words ("Nonnullus tamen a sex precedentibus hos " duos disjuncturos scio,"—subjoined the two books of Epigrammata Seria to the ten books of the History, and included them in a common numeration. All other MSS. which have the same arrangement derive it, I believe, at more or fewer removes, from the Lambeth MS.

§ 12. But to return to the books De Summittatisibus and De Miraculis. The former begins with the Epilogue, reduced to the form which it bore in the edition of 1135.

"Hic est annus qui comprehendit scriptorem, annus " tricesimus quintus regni gloriosi et invicti regis " Anglorum Henrici, annus lxix. ab adventu Norman- " norum, gentis temporibus excellentissmae nostris, in " Anglia; annus ab adventu Anglorum in Anglia " ccl.; ab adventu Britannorum ad haec eandem " insulam inhabitandam ii. m. et cc. et lxv.; annus ab " initio mundi v. m. et cc. et xvii.; annus gratiae " mxxxv.1 Hic est igitur annus ille a quo scriptor " historiae suam voluit setatem a sequentibus compu- " tari. Quia vero librum ingredientibus nos ad morum " puritatem quandoque resiliuros promisimus,2 ex hac " etiam computatione quanti simus inspiciatur." With some eloquence of language he proceeds to ask, what has become of the kings, nobles, bishops, &c., who lived in the first millenary after Christ, "circa cxxxv.3 annum," i.e. in the age of the Antonines? What do we who live now know or care about any of them? Addressing the bishop his patron, he says, "Die et tu, laudabilis " presul Alexander, ad quem historiam presentem " dirijimus, de pontificibus qui tunc temporibus fue- " runt, quid tibi videatur." Then turning upon him-

1 MCLXIII., II. G.2  
2 See the Prologue, p. 3 of this edition.
INTRODUCTION.

self,—“Die, Henrice, dic, hujus auctor historie, qui fue-
" rint illius temporis archidiaconi. Quilibet eorum,
“ sive fuerit nobilis vel ignobilis, clarus vel fama
“ obscurus, laudabils vel infamis, clatus vel oppressus,
“ sapiens vel indiscretus, quid referat? Si alquis eorum
“ causa landis et gloriae aliquid laboris præsumperit,
“ cum jam nulla possit super eo esse memoria, major
“ quam super asello suo, cur in vanum miser
“ animum suum affixit?” And you, he proceeds, who
will be living at the same period of the third millenary,
*i.e.* A.D. 2135, what will you think of us? Will you
know or care (for instance) about Henry the Archdeacon,
and this history which he wrote? Some might object
that it was idle to look forward to another millenary,
since the end of the world was near at hand. But this
view he combats, relying on the opinion of Herbert de
Losinga, bishop of Norwich, whom he had heard say,
that according to the best judgment he could form, “the
“ truth would last longer than the type, the light than
“ the shadow, the thing signified than the indication,
“ the time of grace than the time of law.” Those who
firmly believed that the world would last not more than
a thousand years after Christ’s passion, had been proved
to be in error. The author finally comes to the pious
conclusion that the only true glory is “in Deo,” “hanc
“ cum adeptus fueris, habes; mundanam cum adeptus
“ fueris, ut aqua vase terebrata defuit, et nihil habes.”

§ 13. So far the old Epilogue, now become the Intro-
duction to the eighth book. In the paragraph which
follows, beginning “Scripta autem,” the archdeacon
describes his three Epistles, and adds that the insertion
of them here would be neither incongruous nor useless,
while to read them would be neither a waste of time nor
disagreeable. The first Epistle follows, addressed to Epistle I.
Henry I.; it must have been written between 1131 and
1133, for it contains an allusion to the meeting between
the king and pope Innocent II. at Chartres, which took
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place in the first-named year. Beginning with Peleg
the son of Eber he traces the line of patriarchs to Abra-
ham; then passing on through legislators, judges, and
kings, he ends with Zedechias, with whom he says the
"kingdom of the Jews" terminated. The successions of
kings in the four great monarchies mentioned by
the prophet Daniel are then given. The Babylonian monar-
chy ended with Baltasar, the Persian with Darius; the
Grecian monarchy, beginning with Alexander, he traces
through the line of the Ptolemies down to Cleopatra. The
succession of emperors in the Roman monarchy he takes
to have commenced with Julius Cæsar, and ended with
Constantine Copronymus in the middle of the eighth
century, under whom Rome became decipit, and could
no longer help either herself or others; "domina gentium
" facta est ancilla barbarorum." The thread of sovereignty
then passes to the Franks, in the person of Pippin the
deriver of Rome; whence it is traced through Charle-
magne to Henry the Fowler and the Othos, then to the
succeeding emperors ending with Conrad of Hohenstaufen.
No mention is made of the new foundation of the "holy
Roman Empire," through the coronation of Otho I Of
Conrad, it is said, "Vixit annos ii., nondum tamen
" Romam venit." Conrad succeeded Lothair the Saxon
in 1138; this notice of him could not therefore have
been in the original epistle, but was first inserted in
1140. The letter then concludes with some moral
reflexions.

Epistle ii.

§ 14. The second epistle, to Warinus, can be regarded
from two different sides, an advantage not often enjoyed
in the case of mediæval writings, from the side of the
writer, and from that of the literary friend at whose
suggestion and with whose aid it was written. Henry's
own account is given at the opening of the epistle itself;
it is as follows: 1—"Queris a me, Warine Brito, vir

1 MS. Arundel, 48, f. 129.
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"comis et facete, cur patriæ nostræ gesta narrans, a
"temporibus Julii Cesaris inceperim, et florentissima
"regna quæ a Bruto usque ad tempus Julii fuerunt
"omiserim. He pleads in reply that when he wrote
the History this gap was unavoidable, from the lack of
materials, but proceeds: "Hoc tamen anno, qui est ab
"incarnatione Domini mXXXIX., cum Romam profisci-
cerem cum Theobaldo Cantuariensi archiepiscopo, apud
"Beccum, ubi idem archiepiscopus abbas fuerat, scripta
"rerum predictarum stupens inventi. Siquidem Ro-
"bertum de Torinneo, ejusdem loci monachum, virum
"tam divinorum quam sæcularium librorum inquisi-
torem et coacervatorem studiosissimum, ibidem con-
"veni. Qui cum de ordine historie de regibus Anglo-
"rum a me edite me interrogaret, et id quod a me
"querebat libens audisset, obtulit mihi librum ad
"legendum de regibus Britonum, qui ante Anglos nos-
"trum insulam tenerunt; quorum excerpta, ut in
"epistola decet, brevissime scilicet, tibi, dilectissime,
"mitto." ¹

§ 15. Robert de Thorigny, then a monk at Bec, after-
wards abbot of the famous monastery of St. Michel du
Peril de Mer, describes his dealings with Henry in his
own way. In the preface to the Chronicle, coming
down to 1186, which he wrote as an Appendix or
continuation to that of Sigebert of Gemblours,² Robert,

¹ This passage is here printed as
it stands in the MSS. of Robert de
Monte's Chronicle, one of which
(Bod. 212) is in the Bodleian Li-
brary. See Pertz, Germania, vol. vi.
But in several English MSS. (e.g.,
A, A², A³), and possibly in all,
the passage stands as follows:—
"Hoc tamen anno, cum Romam
"proficisceerem, apud Beccensem
"abbatiam scripta rerum predic-

² Pertz, Germania, vol. vi.
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who was at the time a simple monk of Bec, says that, finding the work of Sigebert to be extremely defective, so far as the history of England and Normandy was concerned, he had resolved to do his best to supply the omissions. But a part of the history of England, that which related to the ancient kings of the Britons before the time of Julius Caesar, ran back, according to the testimony of recent historians (he was thinking of the Historia Britonum of Geoffrey of Monmouth), into such a remote antiquity, that if he were to intercalate it according to chronological sequence in the chronicle of Sigebert, it would come in amongst the writing of Eusebius and St. Jerome, which Sigebert had utilised for the early portion of his work. This was not to be thought of; so to treat writers of such high authority would be indecent in the highest degree, yet how otherwise could the desired knowledge about the British kings be given to his readers? A letter which had been written by his friend Henry the Archdeacon some years before furnished a way out of the difficulty:—

"Ut satisfaciam curiosis, huic prologo subjiciam unam epistolam Henrici archidiaconi, in qua breviter enumerat omnes reges Britonum a Bruto usque ad Cadwallonem, qui fuit ultimus potentum regum Britonum, fuitque pater Cadwalladri, quem Beda Cadwalam vocat. Quam epistolam, sicut in ea reperitur, cum Romam idem Henricus pergeret, me ei prebente copiam exemplaris totius historiae Britonum, apud Beccum excerptit." It is needless to remark that this epistle, which is a brief epitome of the famous work by Geoffrey of Monmouth, has not the smallest historical value. In his mania for abbreviation, Henry even cuts down the fourteen rather fine lines in the original, which give the prayer of Brutus and the oracular answer of Diana, to six! He concludes with these words:—

"Hae sunt quae tibi brevibus