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Edited by Richard Howlett

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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.

Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I

The first volume of this four-volume set of Latin chronicles, edited by Richard Howlett (1841–1917) and published between 1884 and 1889, contains the first four books of the *Historia rerum Anglicarum* by William of Newburgh (c.1136–c.1198). Newburgh's extensive history, in five books, chronicles events from 1066 up to 1198 and is a valuable source of information on twelfth-century England, especially the so-called period of 'The Anarchy' during King Stephen's reign. The first book begins with William the Conqueror's victory at Hastings, and the fourth book concludes with the return from captivity of Richard I in 1194. Along the way, Newburgh enlivens his history with tales of supernatural prodigies. In his lengthy editorial introduction, Howlett remarks that Newburgh's chronicle forms a commentary on the various works presented in the other three volumes of this set, as they all fall within the chronological scope of Newburgh's work. English side-notes to the Latin text are provided throughout.

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Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I

VOLUME 1

EDITED BY RICHARD HOWLETT



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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108052269

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1884
This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-05226-9 Paperback

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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI
SCRIPTORES,
OR
CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND
DURING
THE MIDDLE AGES.

R 8918.

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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.

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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HISTORIA RERUM ANGLICARUM.

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CHRONICLES OF THE REIGNS
OF
STEPHEN, HENRY II., AND RICHARD I.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING THE FIRST FOUR BOOKS

OF THE

HISTORIA RERUM ANGLICARUM

OF

WILLIAM OF NEWBURGH.

EDITED FROM MANUSCRIPTS

BY

RICHARD HOWLETT,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY'S
TREASURY, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS:

LONDON :

LONGMAN & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW ; TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL :

ALSO BY

PARKER & CO., OXFORD ; AND MACMILLAN & CO., CAMBRIDGE ;

A. & C. BLACK, AND MESSRS. DOUGLAS AND FOULIS, EDINBURGH ;

AND A. THOM, DUBLIN.

1884.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05226-9 - Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I: Volume 1

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Printed by
EYRE and SPOTTISWOODE, Her Majesty's Printers,
For Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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P R E F A C E.



THE history of English affairs from the Conquest to A.D. 1198, written by William, canon of the Augustine Priory of St. Mary at Newburgh in Yorkshire, is the work of a man of unusual moral elevation, mental power, and eloquence, and though the treatise has taken a high place among mediæval histories rather on account of the valuable contemporary judgments on men and events which it contains than by reason of the absolute amount of original information it imparts, there is still much in it which is not to be found elsewhere, and all facts, so far as known to the author, are recorded with unswerving faithfulness. These points have commended and will still continue to commend it to those who desire to understand fully the life and ideas of the twelfth century.

Summary
of Preface:
Author-
ship of the
Historia
Rerum An-
glicarum.

The peculiar quality of the book, which is to a great degree a commentary, fits it to play the part of a collateral narrative running parallel with and completing the minor chronicles of the twelfth century. The work will thus, it is believed, be found at the same time to illustrate and form a complement to the shorter treatises which it is proposed to append in the succeeding volumes of this edition. These are the "Draco Normannicus" of Etienne de Rouen, which has never before been printed in England, the "Gesta Stephani," the short chronicle of Richard of Hexham, the account of the Battle of the Standard by St. Ailred of Rievaulx, the metrical chronicle of the wars of 1173-4 by Jordan Fantosme, and the chronicle of Richard of Devizes. All these fall reason-

ably well within the chronological limits of the *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, but it is further designed to add the interesting continuation of Newburgh's work which is contained in the Cottonian MS., Cleopatra A. 1. This has never yet been printed.

Such remarks as the present editor desires to offer as to the composition and merits of the "*Historia Rerum Anglicarum*" will be found in the preface which follows, but as the matter must in many places be treated in a technical and uninviting manner, it may be well to summarise for general purposes the points to which especial attention is directed, adding references to the particular pages of the preface in which they are treated at length.

Facts known as to the author's life.

The author's name is stated by Leland¹ to have been William Petit or Parvus, but there is some, though slight reason for thinking that it may have been William of Rufforth² and that "Parvus" was merely a soubriquet. He was born at Bridlington in 1136, was brought up from boyhood in Newburgh Priory, and died probably in 1198, not in 1208 as is usually asserted.³

The priory to which he belonged was an offshoot of the Augustinian house at Bridlington. It was first located at Hode and was afterwards moved to Newburgh, Hode remaining as a cell to the later foundation.⁴

The history was probably begun about the year 1196, the author being at the time in feeble health, and it was dedicated to Ernald abbot of Rievaulx. It is a composite work, the author having derived matter from other chroniclers to an extent which, it is believed, has not hitherto been recognised; his style of writing and his habit of recasting borrowed passages rendering it exceedingly difficult to detect his mode of building up his

¹ *Collectanea*, iv. 37.

² p. xix.

³ p. xxiii.

⁴ p. xv.

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history.¹ In the first three chapters of his book Newburgh leans upon Symeon of Durham; ^{Portions of his history copied from the works of Symeon of Durham, Henry of Huntingdon, Jordan Fantosme, Richard of London, and probably from the lost work of Anselm the chaplain.} ² for the whole of Stephen's reign he closely follows and occasionally falls into the actual words of Henry of Huntingdon.³ The account of the rebellion of the younger Henry comes principally from Jordan Fantosme; ⁴ the history of the events leading up to the third crusade, and the facts of the crusade itself are largely taken from the *Itinerarium* of Richard the Canon.⁵ Lastly there is reason to believe, from verbal and other coincidences between this chronicle and those of Ralph of Coggeshall and Roger Hoveden, that the account of Richard's captivity, and of French and German affairs intimately connected with it, is derived from the work of Anselm the king's chaplain, who is known not only to have narrated the facts of this episode to Coggeshall, but also to have penned an account of it which is now lost.⁶

Added to these unacknowledged sources of information are others of a minor character, such as the letters of Terric the Templar, and those of the Genoese to Pope Urban, which are not openly quoted, but are worked into the general fabric of the book.⁷ ^{Minor sources of information.}

It has been necessary to point out some errors of date and fact, but it has been of course no part of the editor's design to supply omissions.⁸

The history is to be found in four previous editions.

The present is founded on the Stowe manuscript[S.] ^{Manuscripts.} which belonged to Newburgh Priory, and was written, to judge from the handwriting, not later than the year 1200. The Lambeth [L.], Cottonian [C.],⁹ and [B.] Bodleian (Rawlinson) MSS. have also been fully collated

¹ p. xxv.² p. xxv.³ p. xxvi.⁴ p. xxvi.⁵ p. xxvii.⁶ p. xxviii.⁷ p. xxxvi.⁸ p. xxxvi.⁹ Probably the actual copy used by Thomas Wykes.

as far as the end of book iv.,¹ and a fragment in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, containing the fourth and fifth books has been similarly used. This fragment has a special interest from the circumstance that it is linked by a spurious chapter to a hitherto unnoticed MS. of the early part of the *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi*.²

Four other MSS. of less account have also been consulted in places.

Various readings.

The result of this extended collation has been an inundation of various readings, often of a trivial character.³ Many of these are from the Lambeth MS., the bulk of which had been collated before the Stowe MS. became available.⁴ The heavy task of shifting the basis of the edition from one MS. to the other had to be faced, and when the work had been done it was thought better on the whole not to expunge the readings of the Lambeth copy, especially as there are lacunæ of many pages in extent in the Stowe copy which it has been necessary to supply from the Lambeth volume.

The state of Yorkshire after A.D. 1069.

When in Domesday Book the population was noted down in a dry business-like way, it was never intended to tell or to conceal the fact that fifteen years after the harrying of the shires in 1069 there were over four hundred Yorkshire manors so wasted that but forty-three human beings remained on the whole wide surface of them.⁵ Some of the wretched survivors, we are told, were driven to

¹ The Bodleian (Rawlinson) MS., a 13th cent. copy, quoted as "B," has been altered by a 15th cent. hand. All the various readings refer to the *original state of the text* unless the contrary is noted.

² See p. xlvi.

³ An endeavour has been made

to reduce the number by excluding specified words. See p. lvi.

⁴ It became the property of the British Museum trustees in the summer of 1883.

⁵ The entire population of the county as given in the survey was 8,055. That of Lincolnshire was 25,305.

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cannibalism, and William of Malmesbury, writing about the year 1130, says that the land lay waste round York for a breadth of sixty miles "*usque ad hoc etiam tempus.*"

Though martyrs in no ecclesiastical sense, the blood of these miserable peasant victims proved in very truth to be the seed of the church. Their desolate lands must in such a stretch of years have become for the most part absolutely lost to the service of man. The paved roads by which ancient Rome had opened Britain to light and civilization, then doubtless once more played a part, allowing the stream of life to return to the deserted shire. Foremost in this peaceful warfare against desolation were communities of monks. Their modest buildings and clearings, succeeded by stately edifices and broader culture, formed outposts round which the peasantry could gather once more, and whence they could obtain that benevolent direction which is so true a boon to simple, half civilised men.

Monastic foundations lead the return of population to the wasted lands.

Newburgh tells us (p. 53) that under Stephen's short reign more monasteries were founded than during the hundred preceding years, and indeed, if we analyse a list of English monasteries we shall find that out of a total of about 698¹ dated foundations, 247 were built before Stephen, 115 during Stephen's nineteen years of turbulence, 113 during the 35 years of Henry, and 223 in later times. Descending in our analysis to counties² it is seen that one shire, which, if its semi-mountainous

Conventual foundations numerous under Stephen, especially in Yorkshire.

¹ This is only a rough total of dated foundations. I have preferred to found my calculations on an old list. The one used was published by James Moore, in 1798. It was based on the works of Tanner and Keith, and was revised by John Caley, and its sufficiency as a source of a rough comparative statement can therefore scarcely be in question.

I have added a few dates to Moore's list, and have struck out all establishments remaining undated.

² The ten at the head of the list are, Yorkshire, 68; Lincolnshire, 50; Norfolk, 37; Essex, 31; Suffolk, 29; Middlesex, 24; Kent, 23; Warwickshire, 23; Staffordshire, 21; Sussex, 21.

districts are subtracted, ceases perhaps to be the largest, heads the list with the surprising total of 68 houses. The next is the large fen county of Lincoln with 50, and passing only to the fourth of the series we at once reach totals that are less than half of the Yorkshire figures.

The monks sought deserted places.

Looking closer still we must attribute 20 Yorkshire monasteries to early times, 20 to Stephen, 11 to the reign of Henry the Second, and 18 to the succeeding centuries. For Lincolnshire the same distribution would give the numbers 8, 19, 14 and 9. Thus it is a noteworthy fact, that monks joined if they did not lead the army which was to conquer waste, moorland, and fen, and that it was to desolate regions rather than to luxury and cultivation that these pioneers directed their steps.¹ Even in the case of Norfolk, then perhaps the richest of our counties,² we find St. Benedict's, the greatest monastery of the county, in the heart of the dreary district of the Broads.

The position of Rievaulx, Byland, and Newburgh.

It seems probable then that following the direction in which the struggle for existence was least severe these communities tended to go where nature had left the land waste, or where Norman ravagers had left it bare, and it is with no intent to cast a slur upon the beneficence of founders that we also remark a tendency to make grants of waste and forest on a liberal scale. Our present interest centres on one particular group of these convents. A line scarcely six miles long, drawn in a south-easterly direction, passes through the great abbeys of Rievaulx and Byland, and its southern point touches the priory of Newburgh. The two northern belonged to the great Cistercian order, the third, and perhaps humbler establishment was an Augustinian priory, but there is much to

¹ See Newburgh's expression "*locus horroris*," applied to the site of Rievaulx.

² See Jordan Fantosme, l. 908, 9, the poem of John of St. Omer

(Cott. Titus A. xx.), and the fact that the Domesday population was 27,087 as against 17,434 for Devonshire.

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show that notwithstanding the difference of order these houses were drawn together by common bonds of esteem and brotherhood. We have but to turn to the pages of the chronicle which follows in this volume to find that the work was undertaken at the request of Ernald Abbot of Rievaulx,¹ and that when Roger Abbot of Byland is mentioned as the authority for a statement, he is referred to in terms of the deepest respect and affection.² A circumstance too, which will be mentioned below, shows that Newburgh Priory received incidental benefit from the association.

The account of this house in the *Monasticon*³ is bare and unsatisfactory, and though in the body of the charters presented by that vast work there is incidental information to be gleaned which throws light on the origin of the priory, the facts are not indexed or brought together under the head of Newburgh, but are to be found among the documents appended to the history of Byland.⁴

The monasteries of that date frequently sent forth swarms to find and furnish new hives. Parties, usually of thirteen, went forth from some great house, and it was thus, or in some similar way, that Furness Abbey became the mother house of Byland, and also, as it now appears, that Bridlington Priory became the parent of Newburgh.

The proof of this is to be found in the account of the foundation of Byland written by Philip, third abbot of that house.⁵ The passage is as follows:—

“ Postea autem manentibus apud Bellamlandam abbate Rogero et monachis, idem abbas ad petitionem et instantiam domini Rogeri de Molbray et Sampsonis de Albaneio dedit locum de Hode, ubi prius habitare inceperant, quibusdam

p. 3.

² p. 52.

³ Vol. vi. p. 317.

⁴ See below.

⁵ *Monasticon*, Vol. v., p. 353.

“ canonicis qui venerant de Bridlington, qui nunc sunt de
 “ Novoburgo, pro omnimodis decimis grangiæ de Wildon et
 “ Cambe. Tali etiam compositione interveniente quod illi
 “ canonici manerent apud Hode cum plenario conventu in-
 “ perpetuum et ibidem viverent secundum regulam sancti
 “ Augustini.”

Hode, a
 cell to
 Newburgh
 Priory.

From a passage a little further on it appears that Sampson de Albany, a relation of Roger Mowbray, became himself a canon of Hode. The canons then apparently migrated to Newburgh, leaving behind a small community in what thus became their cell at Hode.¹

It was after the conscientious refusal of the abbot of Byland to accept the *jus patronatus* over the churches of Thirsk, Honingham, and Kirby Moorhead, together with other possessions, that Mowbray transferred his generosity to the canons of Hode or Newburgh.

Position of
 Newburgh
 Priory.

The change from Hode to the final site near the village of Coxwold took place in 1145, the convent thus obtaining a pleasant abode under the shelter of the Hambleton Hills, among woods and close to a running stream. More than all this the house was on one of the ancient routes from York to the mouth of the Tees, the trackway which, running past Crayke Castle and thence close to Newburgh Priory and Coxwold, climbs the Hambleton Hills and proceeds at a considerable elevation and with a directness which perhaps tells of Roman origin² right onward to the mouth of Tees.

This position must have caused Newburgh Priory to be a frequent halting-place for travellers of all grades. It has frequently been said that the monasteries were

¹ In the parish of Sutton, five miles east of Thirsk. On the Ordnance Survey map it appears as Hood Grange. It was a partially wasted site, the manor having fallen in value from 3*l.* in the Confessor's time to 30*s.* at the date of Domes-

day. Newburgh cannot be identified with any certainty, but Easingwold, which is but four and a half miles distant, was reduced from a value of 32*l.* to 20*s.*

² Gill's "Vallis Eboracensis," p. 149.

the hostelries of early times, and Newburgh must by its position have played a considerable part in this way on the northern road. Much later than the times of which we write Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., travelling northwards to her marriage with James IV. of Scotland, rode from York to Newburgh, where she passed one night and thence set forth again for Edinburgh.

The house, though respectably endowed, was never perhaps a wealthy one. Henry VIII.'s commissioners set down its revenue at about 367*l.*, which of course would compare favourably with 238*l.* for Byland and 278*l.* for Rievaulx if we could place the least reliance on the truth and honesty of the assessors, but the facts may very well have been, and probably were, wholly the other way, for the abbot of Rievaulx was head of the Priors of
Newburgh. Cistercian Order in England.

Scarcely anything seems to be known about the early occupants of the priory. Even the list of priors in the *Monasticon* begins so late as 1269, while Gill ("*Vallis Eboracensis*," p. 170), quoting from Torr's MSS., gives a list which is on the face of it incorrect. The earliest reliable information is given by Benedict of Peterborough, who says (i. 352) that in 1186 Bernard prior of Newburgh was one of those nominated for the King's selection with a view to filling the northern archiepiscopal see. Henry, who intended the position for Geoffrey, of course rejected all of the nominees, but the personal standing of the prior of Newburgh is for us sufficiently indicated by his being one of the number.

Little beyond the spacious kitchen of the present mansion remains of the ancient priory. Much is built up in the modern structure, but all architectural glory has disappeared, and all interest about the spot centres in the old Austin canon, whose celebrated history of his own times follows in the present volume.

Leland, on the authority of some words added to a MS: of Newburgh's Commentary on the Song of Personal
history of

William of Newburgh. Solomon,¹ formerly in the library of Queens' College Cambridge, tells us that William of Newburgh was born at Bridlington, and our author himself, when describing the phenomenal appearance of intermittent springs for which the neighbourhood of Wold Newton is noted even at the present day, speaks of them as being "in provincia . . . Deirorum, haud procul a loco natiuitatis meae,"² and proceeds to say that they were called in English "Gipse."³ We have but to turn to a map of Yorkshire to see that a stream now called the "Gipsey Race" runs from Wold Newton into the sea close to Bridlington; and placing this circumstance by the side of the facts above noted as to the connexion between the Austin priories of Bridlington, Hode, and Newburgh, a reasonably good confirmation of Leland's information results. The date of our author's birth we know with some exactness, for he says that he was born in the first year of Stephen's reign,⁴ and since, as we shall show, he everywhere follows Huntingdon's chronology for that reign, we may fix the date as 1136.

The author's name. As to our author's name there has been some difference of opinion. Sometimes he appears to have been confused with the William of Rievaulx who, as John of Hexham asserts, died in 1146;⁵ but if we turn to the history itself there seems reason for thinking that the name usually assigned to him is the right one. The occurrence of such expressions as "*mea parvitati*," "*ego servorum Christi minimus*,"⁶ in the work of an

¹ The words are, "Gulielmus natus fuit in Bridlingtona, qui canonicus factus in Novoburgo ad petitionem Rogeri abbatis de Belland explanationem in Cantica Cautic: intra unum annum scripsit et edidit." Collectanea, iv. 19.

² p. 85.

³ The *g* in this word is hard.

⁴ p. 19.

⁵ Hardy, Materials for Hist. of Engl., ii. 227-8.

⁶ Of course these expressions of humility are common, e.g., the "*minores minimis sumus*" of the Franciscans, but when Newburgh speaks on p. 313 of the Jew *Benedictus* becoming *Maledictus*, and on p. 362 cannot resist a recurrence to S. Gregory's pun, we may suspect a deeper meaning.

author who shows some inclination to play on words seems, though the evidence is but slender, to point to the correctness of tradition in calling him *Parvus* or *Petit*; this was probably, however, only a nickname.

Vossius¹ says that William, a Cistercian monk of *Rusheford*, wrote a history and dedicated it to St. Ailred of Rievaulx. This, as Oudin (ii. 1123) shows, is the present history, but there is a point which makes the statement important.

The Bodleian MS. Rawl. B. 192 begins with the rubric "*Liber Sanctæ Mariæ Fratris Willelmi*² *monachi de Rufforth*," and this ascription in a manuscript certainly written before the year 1300, coinciding with what Vossius tells us from some unknown source, cannot be passed over lightly.

The rubricator of this manuscript [B.] was singularly careless, and never scrupled to alter or mutilate the heading of a chapter, and we may therefore at least amend his title thus:—

Liber Sanctæ Mariæ de [?], *Chronicon Fratris* [Willelmi] *monachi de Rufforth*.

Now *Rufford* was a well known abbey in Nottinghamshire, while our author tells us that he lived at Newburgh from boyhood. Also he was not *monachus* but *canonicus*.

In the worst blundering there is often a grain of truth. Does not our grain possibly lie here in the word *Rufforth*? There is a village called Rufforth some five miles west of York. If our author's grandparents flying in 1069 before the Norman ravagers had migrated to Bridlington, their descendant, William of Rufforth, entering Newburgh Priory, might become known either as William of Newburgh or by his soubriquet of *Petit*, and our blundering rubricator, not knowing Rufforth, but like Vossius being well acquainted with Rufford Abbey,

¹ Hardy, *Materials for Hist. of Engl.*, ii. p. 227.

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² The word *Willelmi* has almost disappeared from the parchment.

b 4 +

would readily be misled by the similarity of the names, and would imagine that William of Rufforth meant William, *monk* of Rufforth.

He tells us that he was brought up from boyhood in Newburgh Priory. Probably starting as one of the children of the choir, and attracting notice by an early exhibition of the solid abilities and sober good sense which he certainly showed in later life, he won his way upwards and was admitted to full brotherhood through the recognition of his personal merits.

Assertion that he was once a candidate for the bishopric of S. Asaph.

The only further personal fact as to our author which comes or professes to come from an external source is contained in a passage in Dr. David Powel's preface to his edition of Ponticus Virunnus:—

“ Quoniam in annalibus nostris ante annos trecentos conscriptis, literis proditum invenio, istum Gulielmum (qui ibi “ Gwilym bach, *i.e.* Gulielmus Parvus, dicitur) post mortem “ prædicti Galfridi Arthuri episcopi Elguensis, eum episcopatum ambivisse circa annum Domini 1165 atque repulsam “ passum, et a Davide principis Oeni filio male tractatum, “ inde causam maledicendi arripuisse, et postea malitiæ suæ “ virus universum in gentem Britannicam evomuisse, quod prudenti etiam lectori ex ejus scripti acrimonia et acerbitate “ facile patebit.”¹

This was written in 1585, but Dr. Powel gives no clue to his 13th century authority, and he has so worded his scurrilous remarks as to leave some doubt as to whether the error apparent on the surface of the passage does not go deeper. Indeed Bishop Nicolson² has utterly misunderstood him. Taking, however, the meaning most favourable to Powel's reputation for accuracy, it appears from other sources that Geoffrey of Monmouth died in 1154 (when Newburgh was eighteen), that his successor, Bishop Richard, died in 1155, and that Bishop

¹ Humphrey Lluyd of Denbigh (*Frag. Brit. Descript.*) speaks of Leland's defence of Geoffrey of Monmouth, “ contra caninos rictus “ et vatiniæ (sic) ordinem delirantis Urbinatis, et bene saginati “ Rhicvallensis (sic) monachi magis

“ in coquina quam in antiquorum “ historiis versati.” I do not remember any similar rancour against Giraldus de Barri, who joins Newburgh in speaking contemptuously of Geoffrey of Monmouth's legends.

² *Bibl. Historica*, ed. 2, p. 59.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05226-9 - Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I: Volume 1

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Godfrey held the see from that date to 1175. Newburgh cannot therefore have been a candidate for the bishopric in 1165. Dr. Powel may have meant 1175, but why then does he merely say, "after the death of the aforesaid Geoffrey," when he means on the second succeeding vacancy in the see? In the next place, if Newburgh had been ill-treated by David, son of *Owen Prince of Wales*, the ill-usage must have occurred in or before 1169. After that date he would have dealt with *David Prince of Wales, son of Owen*. On such blundering testimony as this we cannot believe the story against a man whose modesty, sober judgment, and deep religious feeling are apparent on every page of his book.

What little remains to be known of Newburgh's personal history must be derived from his writings, and but scant details can there be found. One circumstance, which will be useful in considering a point to be brought forward later, may here be stated. He has not written a single sentence or given a single local fact or description which would lend support to the idea that he had ever travelled beyond the limits of Yorkshire and Durham.¹ All information clearly floated to him on the tide; he went to seek nothing. A negative statement of this kind of course cannot be proved by pointing out passages; the reference must be to the whole work, and to the conviction resulting in at least one mind which has considered that work attentively and with a view to the point in question.

The persons from whom he derived information are sometimes named, sometimes only vaguely referred to, as witnesses worthy of credit. Some aged person related to Newburgh, then no doubt a youth, the incident at the Conqueror's burial, thus confirming, if confirmation were needed, the accounts of Eadmer and Ordericus Vitalis. The blinded monk of Byland, once Bishop Wimund of

¹ Nothing in his account of the Welsh wars exhibits a trace of special knowledge of the country.

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the Isles, detailed a story of rebellion and deeds of blood by sea and land on the coasts of Western Scotland which reads like a romance, but which, as it was confirmed by one of the strange adventurer's own followers, and is supported by the chroniclers of the day, may be regarded as reliable information as to a very dark passage in the annals of the North. A similar service is done by the chapter as to Raymond Trencavel, though the narrative, also derived from accounts brought to the author, is marred by such errors as a wrong name and a wrong location of the chief event.¹ Roger Abbot of Byland brings information as to Henry's penance at Canterbury; an Irish bishop contributes facts as to his own island; a canon of York, a personal friend of Archbishop William, refutes by word of mouth the horrible story of poisoning by the sacred chalice; and Symphorianus, the prelate's chaplain, adds his own verbal testimony in the same direction.² Crusaders and pilgrims brought their tales to the northern abbeys, and were, it is evident, eagerly questioned by at least one man who loved to ponder philosophically over the great events of the world outside his convent walls.

Two results may be expected from this mode of gathering: the first, vagueness; the second, error of date and detail. If the listener, moreover, be not inordinately sceptical, we must ultimately get from his pen a record of the half-conscious exaggerations of men who have told and retold their tales until they are exposed to the temptation of giving fresh point to them. Such apparently is the case as regards the narrative of the fall of Edessa, such and much more must assuredly be the case with the ghastly stories of corpses emerging from their graves by night and hunting down living men, which we find in the fifth book of this otherwise sober history.

¹ It did not occur in the cathedral of Béziers but in the church of St. Mary Magdalen. See p. 128, note 5.

² Hoveden, i. 213, alludes to this in a few words, quoting from the Chron. de Mailros.