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978-1-110-805232-0 - Liber qui Dicitur Flores Historiarum ab Anno Domini MCLIV Annoque

Henrici Anglorum Regis Secundi Primo: Volume 1

Roger of Wendover Edited by Henry G. Hewlett

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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.

Liber qui Dicitur Flores Historiarum ab Anno Domini MCLIV Annoque Henrici Anglorum Regis Secundi Primo

A former prior of Bevoise, Roger of Wendover (d. 1236) established himself as a chronicler at St Albans. This three-volume work, edited by Henry G. Hewlett (1832–97) and published between 1886 and 1889, comprises the latter part of the larger *Flores* opus. Volume 1 begins with Henry II's reign and covers the period 1154–1204. It marks the start of where Wendover can claim direct responsibility for the Latin text, his own observations now finding a place alongside predecessors' compilations from various earlier sources. Hewlett is critical of Wendover's indiscriminate appetite for miracles and readiness to accept rumour as fact, but commends his candour where it is not clouded by ecclesiastical bias. His true importance, however, is as a key influence on his historiographical successor, Matthew Paris, whose political outlook and interests he helped to shape.

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Liber qui Dicitur
Flores Historiarum
ab Anno Domini
MCLIV Annoque
Henrici Anglorum
Regis Secundi Primo

VOLUME 1

ROGER OF WENDOVER

EDITED BY HENRY G. HEWLETT



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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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HISTORIARUM AB ANNO DOMINI MCLIV. ANNOQUE HENRICI
ANGLORUM REGIS SECUNDI PRIMO.

THE FLOWERS OF HISTORY

BY

ROGER DE WENDOVER:

FROM THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1154, AND THE FIRST YEAR
OF HENRY THE SECOND, KING OF THE ENGLISH.

EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

BY

HENRY G. HEWLETT,

KEEPER OF THE RECORDS OF THE LAND REVENUE.

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P R E F A C E.

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IN the preface to volume iii. of his exhaustive Catalogue of the manuscript materials relating to our mediæval history, Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy has dealt consecutively with the succession of chronicles proceeding from the *Scriptorium* of St. Alban's Monastery, and assigned the important place which belongs to the "*Flores Historiarum*" of Roger de Wendover. It may be inferred from the evidence therein adduced<sup>1</sup> that, in or about the year 1231, Wendover succeeded a monk named Walter in the office of monastic historiographer, and resumed the historical narrative which his predecessors had compiled from various early sources, at the point where it had been left incomplete, viz., at the death of king Stephen in 1154. From that period Wendover continued and enlarged it by fresh materials drawn from more recent writers and from personal observation, until within a year before his death in 1236. "From the accession of Henry II. down to 1235, " when the '*Flores Historiarum*' ends, Wendover may " be said to assume the character of an original author."<sup>2</sup> In conformity with my instructions, the present edition is confined to that portion of Wendover's chronicle which comprises the materials thus collected by himself.

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, by Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, &c., &c., vol. iii., preface, p. xxxvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

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Two codices of the "*Flores*" are now known to be extant; one a MS. of the thirteenth century, No. CCVII., among the Douce collection in the Bodleian Library; the other a MS. of the fourteenth century, Otho B.V., among the Cotton collection in the British Museum. The former, which is the more perfect of the two, has been taken as the basis of the present text, and is referred to throughout the foot-notes as D. The latter having been seriously injured in the fire at Ashburnham House in 1731, was carefully repaired some years since under the direction of the late Sir F. Madden, and a considerable portion of its later chapters rendered legible. The present text has been collated with so much of this codex as has thus been recovered, and its various readings are distinguished in the foot-notes by the affix C. Except in a few passages which indicate the revision of a subsequent hand, the Cotton codex is far inferior in value to the Bodleian, owing to the carelessness of its scribe, who has repeatedly omitted words, lines, and even sentences of the original MS. It further differs from the Douce codex by discarding the use of frequent sectional headings and substituting an occasional division into chapters.

The scholarly and laborious edition of the "*Flores Historiarum*" prepared by the late Rev. H. O. Coxe (Librarian of the Bodleian) for the English Historical Society in 1842 was founded almost entirely upon the Douce codex. Its editor, in default of access to the Cotton MS., which had not at that time been restored, was obliged to adopt the various readings, purporting to be the result of a careful collation with it, introduced by Dr. Wats into his edition of Matthew Paris, published in 1684. Although the codex was then in an uninjured state, the collation thus authenticated proves when tested by the existing remains of the MS. to have been singularly inaccurate. In repeated instances the various readings ascribed by Wats to the Cotton codex



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have no existence there ; and it seems probable that the editor may have confounded the MS. in question with another which he consulted at the same time. In other instances where there can be little doubt that he is referring to the Cotton codex, he misquotes it ; owing perhaps (as Mr. Coxe has suggested in the case of one obviously corrupt passage) to want of familiarity with the abbreviations employed by mediæval scribes. However their inaccuracy may be explained, it is certain that the citations of this codex made by Wats and adopted by Mr. Coxe can seldom be relied upon as trustworthy.

A *lacuna* of two leaves in the Douce codex which occurs in the chronicle of the years 1191, 1192, has been supplied in the present volume by a collation of Matthew Paris (who here substantially follows the narrative of Wendover), in Mr. Luard's edition, with the text of C.

The conditions imposed by the English Historical Society upon its editors being probably less stringent than those prescribed to the editors of the present series, Mr. Coxe exercised considerable latitude in dealing with the text of Wendover, amending his frequently defective Latinity with a boldness which I have not felt at liberty to imitate. No mere emendations of style have been suggested in this edition, and such alterations only have been introduced into the text as were imperatively called for by its obvious corruptness. In accordance with the regulations laid down by Lord Romilly, the verbal orthography has been generally conformed to the classical mode, and any mediæval peculiarities of spelling, *e.g.*, the substitution of *y* for *i* in such words as *diabolus*, *idolum*, *imago*, &c. ; the addition of an aspirate to the words *abundare*, *ostium*, &c., its omission from the words *hortum*, *hordeum*, &c., and the duplication of *p* in *reperire*, &c., have been disregarded. I have ventured, however, to preserve as permissible deviations from classical usage a

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few of the author's idiosyncracies, such as his almost habitual choice of the feminine in employing the epicene word *dies*, and of the diphthong *æ* in *cælum*, *cœmeterium*, &c.

The introduction, which will include a compilation of such scanty biographical notices of Wendover as now remain, and an estimate of his value as an historian, is postponed until the completion of the work.

H. G. H.

London, October, 1886.

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## E R R A T A.

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115, note 1, “Aliquotens” *read* “Aliquotiens.”

241, note 1, “Relaxebit” *read* “Relaxabit.”

250, line 26, “De” *read* “De-.”

278, line 27, “Præli” *read* “Prælii.”

285, note 1, *dele* comma after “Regis.”

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