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REPRODUCED FROM THE MAP BY AUGUSTUS RYTHIER  
PUBLISHED AT AMSTERDAM BY CORNELIUS DANKERTS IN 1604  
SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL 18 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

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# Chronicles of London

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

CHARLES LETHBRIDGE KINGSFORD, M.A.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

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## INTRODUCTION

SIR HENRY ELLIS, in the Preface to his edition of Robert Fabyan's Chronicle, praised the author as 'the rare instance of a citizen and merchant in the fifteenth century devoting himself to the pleasures of learning.' Herein he did the worthy alderman more than justice; for Robert Fabyan was but one of the last in a long line, and built only a little that was new on the foundations which others had laid.

From the beginning at least of the fifteenth century aldermen and citizens of London had shown their interest in civic and general history by compiling, or encouraging others to compile, English Chronicles arranged under the years of the municipality. The Chronicles of London, which, as we now know them, thus came into being, can, however, trace their ancestry much further back. Early in the growth of municipal life there must have arisen the desire for a readily accessible record, giving at least the succession of city officers. To the record thus established it was natural to add year by year notices, whether of landmarks in the history of the City, or of some great event which had made the year in question memorable<sup>1</sup>.

An early official record, in which the bare list of officers is thus supplemented by historical notices, is contained in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, still preserved in the Record Room of the Corporation, and edited for the Camden Society by Mr. T. Stapleton in 1846. The original portion of this record was written in Latin in the year 1274, and covers the history of the City from 1188 to that date. Down to 1238 this Chronicle is very meagre, and fills barely seven pages in the printed edition. From this point it lengthens gradually; the next fourteen years take thirteen pages, and from 1254 onwards the narrative is enriched by numerous documents relating to the history of the City. Afterwards the original record was supplemented by additions, with lists of the sheriffs and brief historical notices,

<sup>1</sup> I must not omit to notice the instance of a Bristol Chronicle of this type preserved in the *Kalendar* of Robert Ricart, who was Town Clerk in the time of Edward IV, and compiled his 'Mayor's Register' at the bidding of the Corporation. Ricart's *Kalendar* was published by the Camden Society in 1872.

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the most important of which are in French and come down to the end of the reign of Edward II.

A second record, which was perhaps of at least a semi-official character, is contained in the *Annales Londonienses*, edited by Dr. Stubbs for the Rolls Series<sup>1</sup>. Of these Annals Dr. Stubbs remarked that it 'would seem clear on the face of the work that it was drawn up by a citizen, and by a citizen who had ready access to the records of the Corporation.' He went on to conjecture that this citizen was Andrew Horn, fishmonger, of Bridge Street, and Chamberlain of the City of London, who died on 20 October, 1328, and left by his will to the Chamber of the Guildhall six precious volumes, two of which are identified with the *Liber Custumarum* and *Liber Horn*. If so, some successor may have added the notices in the *Annales* for the years 1328 and 1329<sup>2</sup>.

The *Annales Londonienses*, from 1184 to 1289, consist in the main of an abridgement of the *Flores Historiarum*, long ascribed to a supposed Matthew of Westminster, with additions relating chiefly to the history of London and the succession of mayors and sheriffs. From 1289 to 1293 the matter seems to be original. A break then occurs till 1301, and at 1316 the narrative breaks off once more, to be resumed only for a few memoranda belonging to the civic history of London at the opening of the reign of Edward III.

The *Annales Londonienses* contain notices, which are not extracted from the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, but agree in matter if not in form with passages in the later Chronicles of London<sup>3</sup>. Some at least of the notices, in which the later

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicles of the reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, i. 4-251, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> *id.* i. pp. xxii-xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> A good instance is found under 1226, where the *Annales* read:—  
 Eodem anno placitata fuerunt placita coronae apud Turrim; et Johannes Herlison defecit de magna lege sua facienda pro morte Lamberti de Legis.

Under the same place Harley MS. 565 has:—

'In this yere the pleas of the crown were pletyd in the tour of London; and John Herlison failed of his lawe for the death of Lambert his lege.'

Whilst *Gregory's Chronicle* reads:—

'And that yere the plees of the crowne were holdynne at the Towre of London, and John Herlyon faylyd of his lawe for the dethe of Lamberte of le Legys.'

These are clearly translations from the *Annales*, and not from the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, which reads:—

Hoc anno fuerunt placita corone apud Turrim, et Johannes Herlison defecit in lege sua, quam vadiavit pro morte Lamberti de Legis, cui dominus rex concessit vitam et membra ad instantiam precum Mulierum Civitatis.

For the history of the incident to which this refers see Stow, *Survey*, 163.

Another instance occurs in 1245, where the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* is still more clearly not the original. See also the notices for 1222, 1230, 1232, 1253, 1254, 1257, 1258 and 1279.

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Chronicles follow the *Annales*, are direct translations; and it is noticeable that the agreement is always with the additions, and not with the abridgement of the *Flores*. The indebtedness of the later Chronicles to the *Annales* is confined to the earlier portion, which ends in 1289. It seems fair to conclude that there was in existence a brief London Chronicle, compiled in the latter part of the thirteenth century, which was made use of by Andrew Horn, and formed the basis of the later English Chronicles.

This early Chronicle was no doubt written in Latin, and the variants in the texts of the English Chronicles seem to be due chiefly to the fact that the translations were made independently<sup>1</sup>. Other Chronicles, however, like the notes added to the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, were compiled in French. An example is preserved in the French Chronicle of London edited by Mr. G. J. Aungier for the Camden Society in 1844. This Chronicle gives the history of the City from 1260 to 1345, and was no doubt compiled soon after the latter date. The author certainly made use of the earlier Latin Chronicle<sup>2</sup>, but perhaps also of other sources. In one place at all events—under 1284—the later English Chronicles of London resemble Aungier's Chronicle more closely than the *Annales Londonienses*; but even here all three are probably derived from some common original. Aungier's Chronicle does not, however, appear to have been used by later writers; and, unless perhaps in 1306, there is no matter common to that Chronicle and to the English Chronicles of London of later date than 1285. The most valuable and peculiar part of the Chronicle, from 1307 to 1344, stands by itself.

In addition to the Chronicles, which are preserved in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Annales Londonienses*, and Aungier's Chronicle, it cannot be doubted that many other brief City Chronicles, both in Latin and French, once existed. Of such we may perhaps find traces in the formal Latin headings, with which some versions of the English Chronicle begin each new reign, in the common entry of the names of the mayors and sheriffs in Latin, and in the survival in the earlier portions of occasional Latin notices and marginal notes. Most of these notices appear to be derived from some other source than the *Annales Londonienses*, and they may perhaps be taken as evidence of the existence of other independent Latin Chronicles<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See the passages quoted in the previous footnote, and note on p. 289. A simple instance is 'undir duke Domynek' in H. (Nicolas, p. 6).

<sup>2</sup> Compare the notices in Aungier and the *Annales* for 1279.

<sup>3</sup> See H. under 1233, 1239, 1245, 1246, 1272, 1273, 1280, 1328 and the headings for 1367 and 1377; and J. B I under 1246. Except perhaps for the last none are derived from the *Annales*. There is a French notice in H. under 1238.

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Further examples of such Chronicles may yet be discovered ; but there is nothing strange in the fact that so few have survived, for interest in them ceased when they were superseded by the later English Chronicles.

From the early days of the fourteenth century, when Robert Mannyng turned the French of Langtoft into 'simple speech for love of simple men,' the native tongue of England was beginning to regain her own. By the close of the century the process was wellnigh complete, and the contemporaries of Chaucer and of William Langland desired to read the history of their country in their own familiar speech. John de Trevisa had already translated the *Polychronicon* of Higden into English, and the great Chronicle of the *Brut*, which, thanks to Caxton, was to become the first of English printed Histories, was about to take shape. To this time also the English Chronicles of London, as we know them, owe their first origin. The half-dozen copies, or more, which now survive can represent but a few of the many which were written ; and, as I shall endeavour to show, there were in process of time many editions. But down to the end of the fourteenth century at all events the English Chronicles of London are derived from some common source, and their first compilation may be attributed safely to the early part of the fifteenth century.

It is during the reign of Henry IV that the Chronicles first show signs of having been written, in their present shape, contemporaneously with the events which they record. It may indeed be that the tragedy which placed the House of Lancaster on the throne had something to do with the kindling of interest of which these Chronicles were the outcome. At all events the record of the Parliament of 1399, which is contained in the Cotton. MS. Julius B II, is the most notable passage which any of the Chronicles down to this point contain. But probably the first edition, if I may so call it, was not compiled till the early years of the reign of Henry V. During the preceding reign the seven Chronicles, which I propose to compare, appear, notwithstanding frequent variations, to have been derived from one main original. The first marked diversion comes with the year of Agincourt, and after that date the Chronicles fall more clearly into separate classes. But before I proceed further it will be convenient to describe the manuscripts of the Chronicles themselves.

Placing them as nearly as may be in their chronological order, they are as follows :—

Cotton. Julius B II = J. B II. Date 1435. ✕

Cotton. Cleopatra C IV = C. Date 1443. ♣

Harley, 565 = H. Date 1443.

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Short English Chronicle=S. Date 1465.

Gregory's Chronicle=G. Date 1470.

Cotton. Julius BI=J. B I. Date 1483.

Cotton. Vitellius A XVI=V. Dates 1440, 1496, 1503, 1509.

These dates are those at which the several copies end; the dates of writing and composition can be settled only by examination.

*Cotton. Julius B II*, a volume of 102 leaves of paper measuring 11½ by 8½ inches, is carefully written, with ornamental initial letters, and plentifully rubricated. The main Chronicle extends from 1189 to 1432. There then follow on ff. 89<sup>ro</sup> to 100<sup>ro</sup> Lydgate's verses on the reception of Henry VI at London in that year. On f. 101<sup>ro</sup> the names of the mayors and sheriffs for three subsequent years are given. The natural assumption is that the manuscript was written in 1435, and with this the character of the handwriting and the style of the language are not inconsistent. The early part—previous to 1399—is very meagre; and here, as also in the later portions, the narrative resembles H. more nearly than G. or J. BI. The most notable contents are the record of the parliament of 1399, the bill against the clergy in 1407, and the articles and arbitrament between Henry Beaufort and Humphrey of Gloucester in 1426. These three documents occupy more than half the main Chronicle. No part of the manuscript has been previously printed, though Sir N. H. Nicolas collated it for his edition of Lydgate's verses in his *Chronicle of London*.

*Cotton. Cleopatra C IV*, on forty leaves of paper measuring 8 by 5½ inches, is now bound up with a number of other pieces with which it had originally no connexion. The Chronicle begins on f. 22<sup>ro</sup> of the present volume in the middle of a sentence, and ends in the middle of f. 61<sup>ro</sup>, the last leaf being much rubbed and worn *in verso*; nothing appears to have been lost at the end, but how much has been lost at the beginning it is impossible to say. The writing is in three different hands, which are all of about the same date, towards the middle of the fifteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The first hand extends to nearly the end of f. 30<sup>ro</sup>, and covers only part of the second and the whole of the third mayoral years of Henry V (1414-6); the handwriting is untidy and somewhat crabbed, and suggests that this part was written by the original owner rather than by a professional scribe. The second hand extends to the foot of f. 31<sup>ro</sup>, and covers four years (1416-20); it is perhaps the latest of the three, if, as seems probable, the narrative for these four years was written in

<sup>1</sup> For a piece of evidence that the third hand is later than 1446 see note on p. 313 below.

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## CHRONICLES OF LONDON

at the foot of f. 30<sup>vo</sup> and on one leaf that had been left blank in the first instance. The third hand is superior in character to the two former, and is clearly the work of a professional copyist.

The most notable parts of the Chronicle are the account of the years 1415 and 1416, and the notices of the French war during the years 1433 to 1439. Considerable extracts from the narrative for 1415 were given by Nicolas in his *Battle of Agincourt*, and the 'Ballad of Agincourt' is printed in Wright's *Political Poems and Songs*, ii. 123-7 (Rolls Series). The text of Lydgate's verses on ff. 38-48 was printed, somewhat carelessly, by Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps among Lydgate's *Minor Poems* for the Percy Society in 1841.

For the years 1415, 1416 and 1432-8 C. stands by itself. The narrative for 1416 to 1420 is identical with that in the *Short English Chronicle*, an abbreviated version of the original chronicle which was probably compiled in 1446. For the years 1420-32 C. is related very closely to J. B II, but with some marked variations approximating to H. under the years 1427-30. For 1438 to 1440 C. is very similar to, and for 1440 to 1443 very nearly identical with H.; since, however, C. lacks the broken sentence with which H. concludes, we may conjecture that it was the later completed.

*Harley 565* is a well-written manuscript on parchment measuring 8 by 5½ inches. In addition to the Chronicle, which extends from 1189 to 1443, the volume contains, in the same hand, copies of the Latin historical inscriptions on three tablets in St. Paul's Cathedral, together with Lydgate's verses on the expedition of Henry V in 1415, and on the entry of Henry VI into London in 1432. The Chronicle and other documents were printed in full in the *Chronicle of London* edited by Sir N. H. Nicolas and Edward Tyrrel in 1827. The editors, however, omitted a list of the kings of England which is given on f. 1. This list is of importance, as enabling us to fix the date of writing precisely to 1443-4; for Henry VI is therein stated to have reigned twenty-one years. The narrative for 1442-3 ends with a broken sentence.

The *Harley Chronicle* is, down to the end of the reign of Henry IV, certainly the fullest which has survived. It is throughout of a distinctly civic character. The notices of London events are fuller, and the mayors and sheriffs are generally described by the Guilds to which they belonged (a practice that is less usual in other copies). On the other hand H. contains none of the public documents, which contribute so much to the value of some of the other Chronicles.

For the reign of Henry IV H. appears to be more nearly



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related to J. B II than to any of the other Chronicles. Down to 1427 the relationship continues, but H. is usually, though not always, the fuller. For the years 1427-30 H. agrees more nearly with C., whilst from 1430 to 1439 it agrees—save for a few additions—with a copy of the Chronicle in Cotton. MS. Vitellius F IX<sup>1</sup>. From this point, as already noted, H. is very closely connected with C.

*A Short English Chronicle* is contained in Lambeth MS. 306, and was edited for the Camden Society by Dr. James Gairdner under this title in 1880 (ap. *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles*). The MS. was written in the reign of Edward IV, not long after 1465, when the Chronicle ends. A later hand, of Henry VIII's time, made many insertions from some other London Chronicle (probably of a similar type to G.), and Stow, who used this MS., made copious memoranda on the blank leaves. The title given to the Chronicle by Dr. Gairdner is peculiarly happy, since down to 1445 it is so brief that we may regard it justly as an abbreviation made about that time from one of the longer versions. During this earlier portion S. contains hardly a note that is not to be found elsewhere. The circulation of an abbreviated version of the Chronicles of London is confirmed by the identity of the notices for 1416 to 1420 in C., and by the resemblance of S. and J. B I. For 1428-9 and from 1431 to 1445 the two latter Chronicles are nearly identical, though J. B I contains some additional matter. The composition of the original abbreviation may perhaps be fixed for 1446, since C. cannot be much later than this, and after 1446-7 S. loses its jejunity. For 1445-6 S. and J. B I have no notice whatever, but afterwards renew their resemblance down to 1459; the notice of Cade's rebellion in J. B I is clearly abbreviated from S.; on the other hand the notices for 1451-2 and 1458-9 in J. B I seem to be the more original. The most valuable parts of S. are the notice for 1451-2 (Jack Cade), and the narrative of the last six years from 1459 to 1465.

*Gregory's Chronicle* is contained in Egerton MS. 1995 in the British Museum, and was edited by Dr. James Gairdner, in *Collections of a London Citizen*, for the Camden Society in 1876. It extends from 1189 to 1470. The earlier portion, down to 1440, is very closely related to J. B I and V. Under the year 1451-2 the following entry occurs:—

'An that yere come a legat from the Pope of Rome with grete pardon, for that pardon was the grettyste pardon that evyr came to Inglonde from the Conqueste unto thys tyme of my yere, beyng mayre of London.'

William Gregory, skinner, was mayor of London this year,

<sup>1</sup> As to this MS. see p. xiii below.

and the natural conclusion (as expressed in a modern note at the end of the volume) is that he was the author, or part author, of the Chronicle. Hence Dr. Gairdner described it as *Gregory's Chronicle*. But the Chronicle extends to 1470, whereas William Gregory's will was proved on 23 January, 1467. The MS. is, moreover, written throughout in one hand, and consequently Gregory cannot have been the author of the whole Chronicle, or the writer of the manuscript. Dr. Gairdner has nevertheless argued with fair reason that Gregory may have been the author of that part of the Chronicle which covers the nineteenth to the thirtieth years of Henry VI, i.e. 1440 to 1452. The notice for 1452-3, that 'was competent, welle, and pessabylle as for any rysynge a-mong owre selfe, for every man was in Cheryte,' must have been written by some one who was weary of the subsequent years of civil strife. For 1453-4—the 32nd year—the names of the mayor and sheriffs are given, but the events recorded belong to the 33rd year. This looks as though the original writer had stopped short with his lament for peace, and, after adding the names of the next mayor and sheriffs, written no more. The continuator then began with the 33rd year without noticing the gap. This, however, is a mere conjecture which in the absence of the original text cannot be verified.

The Chronicle ends abruptly in the middle of the ninth year of Edward IV; but one or two leaves are certainly lost, and it is impossible to fix a date for the termination of the Chronicle in the extant manuscript. The date at which the original continuation of *Gregory's Chronicle* (from 1452 or 1453 onwards) was compiled can, however, be closely determined. Under 1461 the writer states that Dr. Morton 'schapyd a way longe tyme after, and ys by yonde the see with the Quene.' This points conclusively to the entry having been written after August, 1463, when Margaret began her seven years' exile, and before the restoration of Henry VI in the autumn of 1470. Morton himself probably left England with Margaret, and returned with Warwick in September, 1470. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the reference, under 1465-6, in the present tense to Henry Parker, who died in 1470; and from the statement, under the same year, that John Milverton had been released from San Angelo, but was still detained at Rome<sup>1</sup>. Milverton was released in 1468. Consequently the Chronicle, as it now stands, must have been composed not earlier than that year, nor later than the summer of 1470.

The first part of G. down to 1440 is substantially identical

<sup>1</sup> *Collections of a London Citizen*, pp. 215, 228, 232.

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with V., and down to 1423 is very closely related to J. B I. As far as 1414 it is very similar to H., but with variations, which seem to point to its independent derivation from the common original. For the year of Agincourt the narrative shows some resemblance to that in C. From 1416 to 1426 G. is generally somewhat fuller than the three older versions, and is distinguished by the insertion of the full text of a number of documents, viz. the agreements for the surrender of Falaise and Rouen, the treaty of Troyes, the ceremony and banquet at the coronation of Queen Catherine, the terms for the surrender of Meaux, the agreement for the surrender of Pont Meulan, and the treaty between Bedford, Burgundy, and Brittany in 1423. From 1426 to 1431 it resembles H. (but with some marked variations) more nearly than J. B II. Under 1429-30 there is a long account of the coronation of Henry VI, and under 1431-2 there is a prose paraphrase of Lydgate's verses on the king's reception at London. For the years 1432 to 1440 it is in the main an abbreviation of C., but with some additions, especially in the later years; for the last of these eight years it is much briefer than V. From the nineteenth year of Henry VI (1440-1) the Chronicle assumes an independent character. If Gregory was indeed the author of any part of the Chronicle, there is another break at 1452 or 1453; but the whole of the concluding portion of the Chronicle from 1440 onwards is marked by a curiously personal note, of which the entry under the 31st year is a striking but by no means solitary example.

*Cotton. Julius B I* contains 102 leaves of paper measuring  $11\frac{1}{2}$  by 8 inches, and is written throughout in the same hand, probably soon after the end of the reign of Edward IV, the notice of whose death is the last entry in the Chronicle. The Chronicle ends on f. 90; several of the subsequent leaves are blank, the others contain copies of various documents, including a list of mayors and sheriffs for the first twenty-two years of Henry VIII. The Chronicle in J. B I is manifestly for the greater part a copy of older versions. By a fortunate accident I found an early copy of the original of its most ancient portion in Cotton. Vitellius F IX, a manuscript which was damaged by the fire in the Cottonian Library in 1731, and has in consequence passed unnoticed. I will first, therefore, give some account of the more ancient manuscript.

The Chronicle in Cotton. Vitellius F IX is written in the same hand on seventy leaves of paper, all of which have been much damaged (chiefly at the top), though the greater part can be read without difficulty. The Chronicle begins with 1189 and ends in the middle of 1439. Down to 1431 it is identical with J. B I. From that point to the end it is in close agreement with

H., and since the text of the latter contains a few additions Vitellius F IX may be presumed to represent for this period the original of H. The account for 1438-9 is incomplete, and ends with the words 'and that made Bakers lordes, but I pray God lette vs neuer see that Day no more, if hit be his wille<sup>1</sup>.' The Chronicle stops in the middle of f. 70<sup>ro</sup>; and, since nothing seems to have been lost, it was probably written in 1439.

The Chronicle, which is thus represented by Vitellius F IX and J. B I, down to 1423 closely resembles G. It has a similar notice for Agincourt, and inserts the same documents. It contains, however, some additional matter; under 1417-8 there is given the agreement for the surrender of the *Castle* of Falaise as well as that for the *Town*; in the next year the agreement for the surrender of Rouen includes some articles which are omitted in G. Furthermore, the text of the inserted documents is more accurate, and the narrative is in places fuller (a good instance is the notice for 1409-10, which in some points resembles H. and in others G.). From 1423 to 1431 Vitellius F IX and J. B I must be considered to represent a separate version, though in parts they resemble J. B II or H. The notices for the parliaments of 1423-4 and 1424-5 are fuller than in H. and G.; under the first of these years there is a detailed account of the trial of Sir John Mortimer, and a list of French towns and castles taken by the English in Guienne, and under the latter the agreement made by the Earl of Salisbury for the surrender of Le Mans. Under 1425-6 the arbitrament, but not the articles, between Henry Beaufort and Humphrey of Gloucester are given, and also the full text of Beaufort's letter to John of Bedford. The account of the fighting at St. James de Beuvron is also fuller than in G. The notice of the parliament in 1427-8 is peculiar to this Chronicle, and the text of the service at the coronation feast under 1429-30 varies from that in G.; under this latter year there is also a letter from Philip of Burgundy describing the capture of the Maid, and a list of the 'Journeis that were done after the kyng was landid at Caleis<sup>2</sup>.' For 1426-7 and 1430-1 it resembles H., and for 1428-9 agrees with S.

From 1431 to 1459 J. B I, as already noted, agrees generally with S. Under 1432-3 and 1433-4 occur two short notices not found in S.<sup>3</sup>; the notice for 1436-7 is a little fuller<sup>4</sup>; and under 1437-8, where S. has nothing, J. B I has the entry: 'In this year Oweyne, that wedded quene Kateryne, brake out of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nicolas, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> See Nicolas, pp. 165-71. Nicolas, however, omits most of the additional matter for 1423-5, and also the arbitrament and the proceedings of the parliament of 1428.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas, p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> *id.*, pp. 172-3.

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Newgate.' The notices for 1440-2 resemble H. The chief subsequent variations of the two MSS. have already been noted. The independent portion of J. B I, from 1459 to 1483, is, with the exception of the notice for the first year (1459-60), extremely meagre, and nearly all the notices relate to events in London.

The more material variations of J. B I from H. were printed by Nicolas and Tyrrel in their edition of the *Chronicle of London*<sup>1</sup>; where also the full text of J. B I from 1443 to 1483 is given<sup>2</sup>. The text of the agreement for the surrender of the Castle of Falaise was printed by Dr. Gairdner in *Collections of a London Citizen*<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Gairdner also collated the text of J. B I for the documents contained in G. The narrative for 1423-5 and for 1427-8 is given in Appendix III to this volume.

*Cotton. Vitellius A XVI* contains 213 leaves of paper measuring 8½ by 6 inches. It is made up of three separate Chronicles, with some subsequent additions, arranged as continuations of one another, but written by different hands at wide intervals. The paper shows three different watermarks: (1) for ff. 1-53, ff. 66-102 and ff. 210, 211; (2) for ff. 54-65; and (3) ff. 102-209, and ff. 212, 213; three leaves of the original volume appear to have been missing in Cotton's time; the whole of the leaves in the first part of the MS. are numbered in a hand of the fifteenth century, f. 1 of the present volume being numbered 4. The missing leaves may have comprised the reigns of Richard I and John; the present f. 1 was restored in Cotton's time, and in the process some writing was covered up. The volume has been recently rebound, and the leaves mounted separately on guards.

The first Chronicle extends from 1216 to 1440, and ends in the middle of f. 102<sup>vo</sup>, with the names of the mayor and sheriffs for the nineteenth year of Henry VI (1440-1). This portion is written in a hand (or hands) of the latter part of the reign of Henry VI. There is a possible change at f. 53, the concluding sentences on which leaf are repeated on f. 54<sup>vo</sup>; it will be observed that this repetition coincides with a change in the paper; an explanation may perhaps be found in the combination of the work of two scribes.

The text of V. (1) is nearly identical with that of G., but is on the whole superior<sup>4</sup>. In the earlier part it sometimes resembles H. more nearly than G., and in the concluding years (1432-40) it approximates occasionally to C. There are a few passages which are peculiar to V. (1), such as the notices of the birth of Henry V, and of the affray in Eastcheap<sup>5</sup>. The notice for the concluding year (1439-40) is much fuller than that in G.; and

<sup>1</sup> The documents are omitted.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 133-47.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 258-62.

<sup>4</sup> See the collation in Appendix I, pp. 265-75 below.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 267 and 268 below.

since it is also fuller in some respects than the notice of the year in C., I have thought well to begin this edition with that year; the reference to the ordinance as to Lombard merchants not having been performed, seems to show that the date of writing was some years later, but presumably earlier than the re-enactment in 1453<sup>1</sup>.

The second Chronicle of V. begins in the middle of f. 102<sup>vo</sup>, where, after the names of the mayor and sheriffs, the second writer has entered in a cramped fashion the first part of the notice for the nineteenth year. This second Chronicle is written in a hand of the late fifteenth century, and, extending from f. 102<sup>vo</sup> to f. 160<sup>vo</sup>, covers the period from 1440 to 1496. The earlier portion is of course in no sense contemporary; and, though the writer no doubt followed in the main some older version, there are many indications that the narrative as it now stands was written long after the time to which it relates. The affray between 'men of the Court' and 'the men of the town' is given under both the nineteenth and the twentieth years of Henry VI. The double notices of this incident, and of the fate of Eleanor's accomplices under the same years<sup>2</sup>, point to a derivation of material from more than one source. Under the twenty-first year the coming of Margaret to England and the destruction of St. Paul's steeple are dated incorrectly; the former incident is afterwards described in its proper place under the twenty-third year. The custom by which the mayor, in and after 1453, went to take his charge at Westminster by water, was clearly long established when the account of that year was written<sup>3</sup>. The reference to the invention of printing under 1457<sup>4</sup> can hardly have been written till printed books had become familiar, say at the earliest not before 1480 and probably later. Even so late as the eleventh and thirteenth years of Edward IV errors of chronology occur: the Earl of Oxford was taken prisoner in 1474 and not in 1472; the Duke of Exeter died in 1475 and not in 1474<sup>5</sup>; it is, moreover, stated expressly that Oxford remained in captivity many years—in point of fact he did not escape from his prison at Hammes near Calais till August, 1484. For these reasons alone we may safely place the compilation of this part of the Chronicle at least as late as the end of the reign of Edward IV.

Nevertheless, the earlier portion of the second Vitellius Chronicle has much interest of its own. It has no very close relationship to any other of the existing London Chronicles. It is clearly not derived from them, since it contains much peculiar

<sup>1</sup> Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, i. 280.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 154, 155 below.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 186 and 319 below.

<sup>3</sup> p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> p. 167.

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matter; and when all are on common ground, as in the account of Jack Cade, V. preserves an independent narrative. On the other hand, the Vitellius Chronicle is of special value as representing the type of Chronicle which was used by Fabyan from 1440 to 1485. Fabyan's account of the fall of Richard III is so much the more interesting that it is not likely that the writer of V. could have had it before him. Fabyan's own Chronicle stopped at 1485, and probably this date marks the end of the common original of Fabyan and V. (2).

I conclude therefore that the original compiler of the second Chronicle in V. was probably the author of the portion from 1485 to 1496<sup>1</sup>; and that for the earlier part from 1440 he had made use of a Chronicle which for this period was the common original of his own work and of Fabyan. But this latter Chronicle was itself also in part a compilation from earlier Chronicles. I have noted above mistakes and statements which point to its having been compiled long after the dates to which they refer. The character of the Chronicle itself also seems in its latter portion (1474-85) to undergo a change; it becomes more purely civic, and interesting comments of a personal kind are introduced<sup>2</sup>. The last of the errors occurs in 1473-4, and the civic narrative begins with the next year. We may perhaps therefore be justified in a threefold division of the second Vitellius Chronicle: (1) 1440-74, for the present shape of which the original writer of the second part was responsible; (2) 1474-85, the completed Chronicle of which Fabyan made use, and which was compiled soon after the end of Richard's reign; (3) the completed Chronicle of V. (2) coming down to 1496, and written not long after.

The second Chronicle and the second hand of the Vitellius MS. end in the middle of f. 160<sup>vo</sup>. The third Chronicle begins on f. 161<sup>ro</sup> with the year 1496-7, and extends to 1502-3 on f. 206<sup>ro</sup>. With its exact and orderly chronology and minute detail this Chronicle has somewhat of the air of a Journal written down from time to time, whenever the keeper of it found anything worthy to record<sup>3</sup>.

Although it is written throughout as a continuous narrative, variations in the handwriting and the ink show that it was not all written at the same time. This and the occasional mistakes and corrections serve to show that in V. (3) we have, not the original, but only a copy, made presumably in 1503, since there are no

<sup>1</sup> The Vitellius MS. is probably only a copy and not the original. Mistakes of a trivial kind, such as would be made by a copyist, are not infrequent; see especially the repeated error of 'other detemyner' on pp. 199, 203, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Notably the accounts for the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Edward IV. The comments are in substance common to V. and to Fabyan.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 224 for an instance of a strictly contemporaneous entry.

entries of later date than April of that year. This conclusion is confirmed by the variations in the continuation of Fabyan, and by the evidence of Stow and other writers, who have preserved some information not contained in our manuscript<sup>1</sup>.

Soon after the end of the reign of Henry VII another hand entered in the Vitellius MS. a copy of a continuation from 1503 to 1509. This Chronicle, which is almost identical with Rastell's continuation of Fabyan, is very brief, the whole of the six years filling little more than four pages—ff. 206<sup>vo</sup> to 208<sup>ro</sup>. The yearly headings are marked with red ink, and each sentence begins with one or two words in larger letters<sup>2</sup>.

At the foot of f. 208<sup>ro</sup> a contemporary hand, not dissimilar to the last, has entered a brief notice of the first year of Henry VIII. On f. 209<sup>ro</sup> in a quite different hand there is an entry for the mayoral year 1515–6. On f. 209<sup>vo</sup> Stow has written a copy of the will of Robert Thorn<sup>3</sup>, Merchant Taylor, who died on Whitsunday, 1532. On f. 210<sup>ro</sup> begins a list of the lords, knights, and others slain since the murder of Humphrey of Gloucester in 1447, which extends to f. 213<sup>vo</sup> and is written in a hand of the late fifteenth century, contemporary, but not identical, with that of the second Chronicle<sup>4</sup>.

I will now turn back to summarize the general conclusions to which this examination of the individual manuscripts points.

The earliest of the extant copies—J. B II—was written about 1435 and ends with 1432. This will therefore furnish us with a convenient limit for the first part of our inquiry. Before that date the history of the Chronicles of London is of necessity somewhat conjectural. But as regards the existing manuscripts we can distinguish clearly three classes:—

- (1) J. B II and H., with C. from 1420.
- (2) Vitellius F IX and J. B I.
- (3) G. and V. (similar to the second class down to 1423, or perhaps 1424).

<sup>1</sup> See further pp. xxix, xxxiv below.

<sup>2</sup> I have shown these in the text by capitals.

<sup>3</sup> He left £4,440 to charitable uses in London and Bristol, including a bequest to the grammar school of the latter city. Probably he was a relative of the Robert Thorne, merchant of Bristol and London, who wrote some letters on the Indies printed by Hakluyt, and died at Seville in 1527 (*Dict. National Biography*, lvi. 294). The two Robert Thorns must apparently be distinct, for the will is dated 17 May, 1532. The bequests to relatives and friends amount to over £5,000. Mention is made of Katheryn Woseley and Alice Goodman, his sisters, William Thorne his uncle, Robert Thorn a godson, T. Moffet, master of Bristol Grammar School, and Paul Withypole his master. See Stow, *Survey*, 43, 70.

<sup>4</sup> Henry VII was still alive (p. 278). The list ends with an account of Giles Daubeney's expedition to Dixmude in 1489, and was probably written soon after. See Appendix II, pp. 276–9.



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Till towards the close of the fourteenth century there can be no question that all the versions are derived from the same source. And down to 1414 the variations are nowhere so marked as to be incompatible with the theory that they have all one common original. Nor previous to that year is the division of the manuscripts into classes so clear as it becomes at a later stage. Thus H. contains matter in common with J. B I and G., which is not found in J. B II, and J. B I and V. at times resemble H. more closely than G. I incline therefore to 1414 as the approximate date at which the English Chronicles of London were first put into a permanent form. But it must be understood that different copies, of what for convenience I will call the first edition, may have presented considerable variations, and there is sufficient evidence that independent translations were made from the Latin original of the earliest part of the Chronicles.

With the year of Agincourt there comes a marked divergence. For that year J. B II and H., with something in common, differ too much for us to argue with certainty that they were derived from one and the same source; C. stands by itself, but may in part be derived from the same source as G. and J. B I<sup>1</sup>; the two latter manuscripts present only textual differences, and have clearly a common original. It is, however, possible that this divergence may be due only to the exceptional interest of the year, and to the unusual wealth of material which induced different scribes to depart from the common text.

For the years after Agincourt the existing Chronicles show more variation than before, and the division into classes is more definite. Probably several versions were compiled during this period, and there is fair evidence for fixing 1423 and 1427 as the dates for two such recensions. The former year is indicated by the divergence of J. B I and G. With 1427 the close resemblance of J. B II, C., and H. is interrupted, and for the year 1427-8 J. B II has no notice, a hiatus which may mark a breach in its original. But the question is not free from difficulty. Thus in 1423-4 and 1425-6 G. has matter which appears to come from the original of J. B I. Under 1425-6 J. B II alone preserves the full text of the articles and arbitrament between Henry Beaufort and Humphrey of Gloucester; this document cannot be, as the record of the parliament of 1399 and the Lollards' Bill may be, an insertion of the scribe, for it is clear that it formed part of the original both of G. and of J. B I; J. B I gives the text of the arbitrament and the full text of the letter of Beaufort to John of Bedford (where J. B II has only an extract); whilst in G., though no part of the text is given, there are details as to

<sup>1</sup> For the variations of V. see pp. 268-70 below.

the disturbances in London, which appear to be derived from the articles<sup>1</sup>. Again, whilst J. B II, H., and C. (from 1420) are in general agreement, H. has points in which it more closely resembles G. or J. B I, such as the notice of the parliament of 1424. The fact that each of the existing Chronicles has some matter that is peculiar to itself perhaps favours the theory of one common original for them all. The evidence of Fabyan's Chronicle, so far as it goes, points to a similar conclusion, since he appears to have had access to a fuller version than any of those now extant. Nevertheless, it seems clear that there must have been a recension of earlier date than the abbreviated version of 1432 which is preserved in J. B II, and I therefore accept the evidence for 1423 and 1427. Indeed, it is probable enough that more versions were already in existence. The independent narrative for the years 1414-6 in C. may be a later compilation. But for 1415-6 H. must have been derived from more than one source, since it gives two notices of Bedford's victory at Harfleur; the first (with most of the narrative for the year) is peculiar, whilst the second agrees with that in J. B II, which the Chronicles of the other two classes also at this point resemble.

The five years from 1427 to 1432 remain to be considered. The main grouping of the manuscripts continues as before, but with a good deal of cross division. In the first class C. and H. agree on the whole from 1427 to 1430; as do J. B II and C. from 1429 to 1432. J. B I and Vitellius F IX agree down to 1431, for the last year being very similar to H.; for 1431-2 J. B I agrees with the much later version of S., and Vitellius F IX with H. G. and V. are at least in form independent, and probably represent a later recension; their distinguishing characteristics are the account of the ceremony at the coronation of Henry VI, and the prose paraphrase of Lydgate's verses. A probable hypothesis seems to be that J. B II, H., and C. had a common original ending in 1430. Although J. B II in its present form was written about 1435, as regards the original of its earlier portion the date of composition cannot have been later than 1430; for under 1417-8, after mentioning the election of the new pope, the text reads, 'and he is called Martinus Quintus<sup>2</sup>.' All the later MSS. read 'which pope *was* callyd,' and Martin died in Feb. 1431. This note might, of course, be due to an edition of 1427, but the divergence of J. B II and C. from H. after 1430 points to the compilation of a further edition in that year. Similarly, since 1430-1 is the last year for which Vitellius F IX and J. B I agree, we may assign the composition of their original to that year. Thus by 1431 we have two main

<sup>1</sup> V. is here identical with G.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 72 below.

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versions of the Chronicles; the first and shorter represented by J. B II, and the longer, which is marked by the insertion of the text of treaties, &c., by J. B I; but neither of these versions is in its earlier portions fully representative of the original archetype<sup>1</sup>. J. B II will represent also a still later edition made about 1432.

The next most convenient halt is marked by the conclusion of C. and H. in 1443. Between 1432 and 1443 several copies of the Chronicles of London must have been compiled or brought up to date. First comes Vitellius F IX, which ends in the middle of the seventeenth year of Henry VI in 1439. With the eighteenth year the independent part of C. and the common part of G. and V. both conclude. For the seventeenth and eighteenth years C. has much in common with H., G., and V.; it is possible therefore that all are indebted to a version compiled in 1440. The evidence of G. and V. is in any case conclusive for the termination of one version at that date; this version will have followed the original of J. B I as far as 1423, and after that date may have been derived from several sources, for 1423 to 1430 chiefly from the original of J. B II, and from 1430 to 1440 perhaps from the original of C. In 1443 H. ends, and the existing manuscript was written in the following year. The compiler appears to have followed the original archetype down to 1414, the original of J. B II from that date to 1430, and Vitellius F IX to 1439. The narrative of the next eighteen months comes from the version of 1440, and for the last three years we may perhaps be justified in regarding H. as the actual original. It should of course be remembered that the compiler of each version may have used more than one older copy, and may further have supplemented his copy or copies from quite independent sources. This is no doubt the case with H., where the compiler followed Vitellius F IX for 1431-2, but added at the end Lydgate's verses from some other copy. The note on William Goodgrom under 1437-8 is another instance of an addition to Vitellius

<sup>1</sup> There is in existence a Chronicle ending with 1431, which has so many points of resemblance to one or the other of the existing Chronicles of London that we may fairly conjecture that it was in part at least derived from the same source. This is the brief St. Alban's Chronicle for 1422-31, which is printed in Amundesham's *Annales*, i. 1-64 (Rolls Series). A few of the more noticeable points are: the execution of Mortimer in 1424; W. Wawe the thief, and the destruction of bad wine in 1427; the Duke of Norfolk's escape from drowning in 1428; executions of Cole and Hunden, and fight by two men of Feversham at Smithfield in 1430. The notices of the impostor 'Baron de Blakamore' in 1424, and of the complaint of the woman of the stocks against Humphrey of Gloucester under 1428, do not occur in the Chronicles of London; but they clearly come from the same source as the corresponding matter in Stow's *Survey*, p. 22 and *Annales*, 369. See also pp. 133, 273, 282-3, 308 below; *Gregory's Chronicle*, 161, 163, 171; Nicolas, 117, 118.

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F IX. So also the last part of C. is derived from several sources ; for 1420 to 1432 from the originals of J. B II ; for 1432 to 1440 perhaps from the version of 1440 ; and for 1440 to 1443 certainly from H.

After 1443 S. and J. B I alone have any obvious connexion. S. is derived from an abbreviation of the version of 1440, probably made and brought up to date in 1446, with a continuation to 1459, and a conclusion of its own ending in 1465. The compiler of J. B I used first the original of Vitellius F IX to 1430, and from 1430 to 1459 the original of S. supplemented by H. or some similar copy, and finally added a continuation of his own to 1483.

No doubt there were many copies of the Chronicles of London written at various times during the latter half of the fifteenth century. G. perhaps represents two, which ended in 1452 and 1470 respectively ; and in V. we can trace, conjecturally or positively, copies which were written in 1474, 1485, 1496, 1503, and 1509<sup>1</sup>. But before the time of these last the day of the written Chronicle was passing away. Robert Fabyan was already at work on his enlarged Chronicles, and with their appearance in print in 1516 the written manuscript lost its interest for any but the antiquary. Nevertheless, the tradition lingered for a time. The so-called 'Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London' was compiled in civic form by an ex-Franciscan in the reign of Queen Mary<sup>2</sup> ; and Charles Wriothesley, the Windsor herald, who died in 1562, chose to give his memoirs the shape of a continuation of the city chronicle of Richard Arnold<sup>3</sup>. The history of Arnold and the other printed Chronicles is another story, which I will for the present postpone.

Instead let us consider what evidence can be obtained as to the method by which the Chronicles of London reached their present form, and from what sources they were derived. They

<sup>1</sup> Another example is Arundel MS. XIX in the College of Arms, which ends in 1451, but was prepared in blank down to 1475, and has some additions coming down to 1522. In Harley MS. 541, ff. 215-9, there is a list of mayors from 1189 to 1482. The names of the mayors for the next sixteen years have been added in various hands, together with some brief notes ; see p. 321 below.

<sup>2</sup> Edited for the Camden Society in 1852 by J. G. Nicholls, and more excellently in *Monumenta Franciscana*, vol. ii, in the Rolls Series. The original is contained in Cotton. MS. Vitellius F XII, and is written throughout in the same hand ending in 1556. The earlier part, perhaps as far as 1509, is abbreviated from a city chronicle of a similar type to V. with a few insertions relating to the Franciscans.

<sup>3</sup> *Wriothesley's Chronicle*, Camden Society, 1875-7. Another London Chronicle is printed in the *Camden Miscellany*, vol. iv ; it extends from 1500 to 1545, but down to 1532 is extremely meagre.

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began no doubt with official records, such as the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, which were supplemented from general chronicles, like the *Flores Historiarum*, as in the case of the semi-official *Annales Londonienses* and their continuations. Aungier's French Chronicle of London affords sufficient evidence that in the middle of the fourteenth century unofficial records of a similar form were in circulation. From such sources, official or unofficial, some of the matter of the existing English Chronicles was derived. The close agreement of all versions of the Chronicles of London down to the close of the fourteenth century is, moreover, in itself evidence that there had by that time been put into shape a popular but short chronicle—whether Latin or English—arranged according to the mayoral years. The record is, till near the close of this period, for the most part so brief that we cannot with any advantage seek to trace more exactly the sources whence it was derived. In the earlier Chronicles, as in the later English Chronicles of the fifteenth century, the notices of events in and near London may well have been set down as they occurred, or written up from personal knowledge by the compiler of each new version. The copies which have survived can represent only a small portion of those which once existed. When the wealthy citizen, rising to municipal importance, desired to obtain a record of the City's history, he doubtless procured a copy from some friend, and employed a professional scribe to bring it up to date; or he may himself, as perhaps did William Gregory, have written at the end of his copy his own record of events within his own knowledge. But the Chronicles include much information which could not have come within the personal ken of any London scribe or citizen. For the incidents of the French war and for the battles of the Roses other material must have been obtained. In *Gregory's Chronicle* we are once told that certain information 'was as letters made mencyon that were sente into Englonde.' True, in the same place V. reads 'as *they* made mencion<sup>1</sup>.' But we need not reject either version. Together they justify the assumption that the scribe based his narrative in part on hearsay from men who had been at the wars, and in part on letters which had come into his own or his patron's hands. Amongst the minor authorities for the French war in the fifteenth century not the least important are the letters which were sent home to England, whether of an official character from great persons like the king or chief commanders, or the private correspondence of humble individuals with their friends<sup>2</sup>. With the one exception above noted there is no direct reference to any such letters; but

<sup>1</sup> *Collections of a London Citizen*, p. 179. Cf. p. 275 below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Foedera*, ix. 779, 911; Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd Ser. i. 77.

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on no other hypothesis can we explain the numerous passages where the narrative seems to record obviously the impressions of an eye-witness. Of such are the account of the surrender of Harfleur and of the reception of the French envoys by Henry V in C.<sup>1</sup>; of a similar character also are the detailed notices in the latter half of the same Chronicle, as for instance the account of the fighting before Crotoy in 1438<sup>2</sup>. The same Chronicle furnishes some instances of passages which appear to be founded on a verbal report: under 1436-7, Montereau-faut-Yonne appears as 'Motrewe-in-fort-Jon,' a mistake which might readily be made by a scribe who knew the name only by hearsay, but is not likely to have been committed by any one who, knowing the place, appreciated the significance of the name. On the other hand 'Seynt Jelyan Dew Maunte' seems to be a palpable misreading of Seynt Jelyan deuouuauntes (for De Vouvauntes)<sup>3</sup>.

It is perhaps peculiar that nowhere in the Chronicles is there evidence that the writers had made use of the letters which we know that Henry V and other high personages addressed to the mayor and City. The compiler of the third part of V., however, had access to the City records, and frequently gives as his authority 'certeyn tydynges, which came to the Mair,' or 'certeyn tydynges from the Kyng unto the Mair<sup>4</sup>.' Even here once only do we get the full text of such a letter, viz. under 1499, where is preserved a letter from Henry VII describing his negotiations with the Archduke Philip<sup>5</sup>. There is other evidence also in both Chronicles in V. of the use of official documents; under 1496 we have the full text of Sir Henry Colet's bond as mayor to the Duke of Burgundy<sup>6</sup>, and on various occasions the Chronicle reproduces much of the text of ordinances made in Common Council, as on the election of Chamberlain and Bridge-masters, on the guardianship of Orphans, and on Brocours Alyauntes<sup>7</sup>. From the City records also must have come the details as to prests, benevolences, and loans in the second and third Chronicles in V.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps even the notices of fires, which are a curious characteristic of the fourth Chronicle, may be due to some official concern of the writer<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to private or official letters and City records the compilers of the fifteenth century made use of documents which had been put forth by authority in the public interest. Of a semi-official character at least must be the record of the parliament of 1399, which is manifestly derived from official

<sup>1</sup> pp. 118, 119 below.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 213, 218, 233.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 196, 225.

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 260, 261.

<sup>2</sup> p. 144 below.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 186, 193-5, 212.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 143, 145.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 209.