

Order of Saint Lazarus: Primary sources

Chronica Majora. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Mss 26 and 16, 362 x 244/248 mm. ff 141 + 281, composed 1240-1253

- Translated in: J.A. Giles [translator]. *Matthew Paris's English History from the year 1235 to 1273*. H.G. Bohn, London, 1853, Vol.II:p.406,409; J.A. Giles [translator]. *Matthew Paris's English History from the year 1235 to 1273*. H.G. Bohn, London, 1854, Vol. III: p.327-328

1240-1253	Matthew Paris	<i>Chronica Majora</i>
-----------	---------------	------------------------

Chronica Majora. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Mss 26 and 16, 362 x 244/248 mm. ff 141 + 281, composed 1240-53. His major historical work, but less heavily illustrated per page than others. These two volumes contain annals from the creation of the world up to the year 1253. The content up to 1234 or 1235 is based in the main on Roger of Wendover's *Flores Historiarum*, with additions; after that date the material is Paris's own, and written in his own hand from the annal for 1213 onward. There are 100 marginal drawings (25 + 75), some fragmentary maps and an itinerary, and full-page drawings of William I and the Elephant with Keeper. MS 16 has very recently had all prefatory matter re-bound separately. A continuation of the *Chronica*, from 1254 until Paris's death in 1259, is bound with the *Historia Anglorum* in the British Library volume. An unillustrated copy of the material from 1189 to 1250, with much of his sharper commentary about Henry III toned down or removed, was supervised by Paris himself and now exists as British Library Cotton MS Nero D V, fol. 162-393

Historia Anglorum. British Library, Royal MS 14 C VII, fols. 8v–156v.[6] 358 x 250 mm, ff 232 in all. A history of England, begun in 1250 and perhaps completed around 1255, covering the years 1070-1253. The text is an abridgement of the *Chronica*, also drawing on Wendover's *Flores Historiarum* and Paris's earlier edited version of the *Chronica*. Bound with it is the final part of Paris's *Chronica Majora*, covering the years 1254-1259 (folios 157-218), and prefatory material including an itinerary from London to Jerusalem and tinted drawings of the kings of England. All is in Paris's own hand, apart from folios 210-218 and 154v-156v, which are in a hand of the scribe who has added a note of Matthew Paris's death (f. 218v). The *Chronica* concludes with a portrait of Paris on his death-bed, presumably not by him. By the 15th century this volume belonged to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, son of Henry IV, who inscribed it "Ceste livre est a moy Homffrey Duc de Gloucestre". Later it was held by the bishop of Lincoln, who wrote a note that if the monks of St Albans could prove the book was a loan, they should have it back. Otherwise it was bequeathed to New College, Oxford. The fact that the book was acquired by a 16th-century Earl of Arundel suggests that Duke Humphrey's inscription was not entirely accurate, as New College would probably not have disposed of it.

1. .A. Giles [translator]. Matthew Paris's English History from the year 1235 to 1273. H.G. Bohn, London, 1853, Vol.II:p.406,409

A.D. 1250.] CONCERNING THE LAST HALF-CENTURY. 405

Of the wonderful events of this last half-century.

For in this half-century the Tartars left their places of retreat, and ravaged, with the cruelty of wild beasts, the countries of the East, those inhabited by Christians as well as infidels. The emir Murelin, the most powerful king of Spain and Africa, was defeated and took to flight, and his whole army dispersed. When Master Oliver was preaching in the German provinces, the figure of Christ appeared in the sky, and was plainly visible to every one. The Greek church withdrew from all subjection to that of Rome, owing to the various enormities of the latter, especially its usury, simony, sale of justice, and other intolerable wrongs. Damietta, the most celebrated city of Egypt, was twice taken and retaken with great loss of blood, both Saracen and Christian. England lay under interdict for about seven years; and the same kingdom also suffered from intestine wars for nearly the same length of time; it also became tributary. King John, in fulfilment of the prophecies of certain persons, did not hold quiet possession of any territory when he died, whence he was called Homeless. The ordeal for proving innocence by fire and water was prohibited. Permission was granted to one person to receive the profits of several bishoprics, and to retain the revenues he previously held besides. The martyrs, St. Thomas in England, and Edmund the Confessor in France, were translated. St. Elizabeth, daughter of the king of Hungary, flourished in

Germany during this period. Persons were forbidden, and afterwards by the agency of money were allowed, to hold more churches than one, and illegitimates were legitimized. Louis, the eldest son and legitimate heir of the French king, was elected lord, and as it were king of England; but soon afterwards, owing to a violation of his faith, ingloriously left the country. The Roman emperor Otto, owing to the persecution of Pope Innocent the Third, met with a pitiable downfall, being defeated in battle, excommunicated, and deposed. The brethren of the Temple, and the Hospitallers of the Teutonic order of St. Mary and of St. Lazarus, were twice taken prisoners, dispersed, and put to death. The holy city of Jerusalem, with its sacred churches and the places hallowed by the presence of Christ, was twice destroyed, and on the last occasion was cruelly levelled to the ground by the Chorosmins and the sultan of Babylon. An eclipse of the sun occurred twice in three years; and another remarkable portent appeared in the sky, an account of which is fully given in this book, in the year of grace one thousand two hundred and thirty-three. Earthquakes occurred in England, and even in Chiltern, several times. In the provinces of Savoy, five villages, with their churches, houses, and inhabitants, were overwhelmed by masses of mountains which fell upon them. An unusual and destructive rise of the sea took place, such as had never been seen before. During one night immense numbers of stars were seen to fall from the heavens, so that at one and the same time ten or twelve seemed to be flitting about in the midst of the sky, some in the east, some in the west, in the south and the north, which if they had been real stars, not one would have remained in the sky: and no evident reason could be found for this event in the book on Meteors, except that Christ's threat was impending over men,—“There shall be signs in the sun,” &c. &c. A general council was twice held, at Rome and at Lyons: at the second of these, the Roman emperor Frederick was deposed. Cardinal Otto, formerly legate in England, was made prisoner at sea near Genoa, together with a great number of archbishops, bishops, abbats, and prelates, and some Genoese, of whom many were drowned. Wales, after losing its prince, Llewellyn, and his two sons in succession, who met with a premature death, submitted to the laws of England and the

A.D. 1250.] CONCERNING THE LAST HALF-CENTURY. 407

domination of its king. Gascony, which had kicked against the king of England's authority, was subdued by Simon, earl of Leicester. King Henry the Third twice crossed the sea with his army to regain possession, by force of arms, of his continental possessions, especially Normandy, of which his father had been deprived by the decision of twelve peers of France, as being stained with the murder of his nephew Arthur, and twice returned ingloriously, a disgraced and a poor man. A great part of Spain, with several of its noble cities, amongst which were Cordova, Seville, Peniscola, and several others, as well as the islands of Majorca and Minorca and many places on the coast, were taken by the victorious king of Castile, and were brought over to Christianity. In the northern parts, a great portion of Friesland and Russia, to the extent of a twelve days' journey, was taken by Waldemar, king of Dacia, and seven bishoprics in that part were by this event gained to Christ. The pope, having fled or been driven from the city by the persecution of the emperor Frederick, exiled himself and took up his abode in concealment at Anagni and Perugia—being accused by the said emperor of having endeavoured to seize on the empire whilst he was fighting for God in the Holy Land. The Templars too, out of hatred excited in them by the pope, took an opportunity, and endeavoured to deliver the emperor into the hands of the sultan of Babylon. On the death of Pope Gregory, the papal see was vacant for a year and nine months. Three men sat in the apostolic seat within two years. One of the cardinals, more distinguished than the rest, Master Robert Summercote, an Englishman by birth, who the others feared would be elected pope, was killed by suffocation in the palace, called the Palace of the Sun, as was reported, out of envy. At length, Sinibald, a cardinal, was elected under the name of Innocent the Third, who, following in the steps of his predecessor, excommunicated the emperor Frederick, and fleeing from place to place to avoid his persecution, at last went to Lyons, where, at a general council, he deposed the said emperor, and having shamelessly extorted a sum of money from the prelates of the Church, he endeavoured by its means to promote the landgrave of Thuringia, and afterwards William, count of Holland, to the imperial thron. One of these, however, dying, and the other

being defeated, he failed in his purpose. The usurers called *Causins*, who were reckoned as Christians, found a place of refuge and tranquillity in England, at first under the tolerance only of the pope, but afterwards under his open protection; and unblushingly called themselves the pope's merchants and exchangers. Prelates were suspended from the collation of benefices till the pope's avaricious demands were satisfied for his unworthy followers, who never made their appearance in England, and never troubled themselves about the charge of souls. Brethren of several orders sprung up in abundance,—at one time the Preachers, at another the Minorites; now the Cross-bearers, now the Carmelites. In Germany there sprung up a sect of continent women, who assumed the title of *Beguins*, and who became so numerous, that a thousand of them or more dwelt in Cologne alone. These Preachers and Minorites at first led a life of poverty and the greatest sanctity, and devoted themselves to preachings, confessions, divine duties in the church, reading, and study, and abandoned many revenues, embracing voluntary poverty in the service of God, and reserving nothing in the way of food for themselves for the morrow; but within a few years they got themselves into excellent condition, and constructed costly houses. The pope moreover made them, although against their consent, his receivers of taxes and agents of his manifold extortions. The time indeed seemed to be returned of which Benedict, full of the spirit of all saints, makes mention at the commencement of his rule, where he treats of the various orders of monks. Nor did the order, either of St. Benedict or of St. Augustine, retrograde for such a length of time since their first establishment, as they did at this time. St. Edmund, formerly archbishop of Canterbury, whose body was found uncorrupted at Pontignac; St. Robert, a hermit at Knaresborough; St. Roger, bishop of London, and several other saints in England, shone forth in remarkable miracles, which were worked at their tombs; as also St. Elizabeth, daughter of the king of Hungary, and St. Hildegarde, a prophetess in Germany. The church of Westminster was rebuilt, and a golden shrine of most costly workmanship was constructed by King Henry the Third for the use of St. Edward. Some of Christ's blood, and a stone bearing his footmarks, were brought to England and placed

at Westminster as a gift from the king. The heresies of the Albigenses, Jovinians, and many Italian people, which had shot forth their branches, were destroyed during this period. Haco was anointed and crowned king of Norway. The Cistercian monks, following in the steps of those of the Black order, having obtained a dispensation from the pope, erected suitable buildings at Paris and elsewhere, where communities of scholars flourished, and held schools there, that they might not be held in contempt by the Preachers and Minorites. The noble see and church of Canterbury, which had been distinguished and sanctified by so many holy archbishops in former times, was taken possession of by an incompetent person thrust in by the king; which said intruder, stimulated by the example of the bishop of Lincoln, who, notwithstanding the opposition of his canons, obtained the power of visiting them, extorted the first year's profits of vacant churches for seven years, and oppressed many of those subject to him. In this last year of the last half-century the Saracens triumphed at will, and the whole Christian army, consisting of the nobility of all France, the Templars, Hospitallers, the knights of the Teutonic order of St. Mary, and those of St. Lazarus, was cut to pieces in Egypt; and at the same time also, Louis, the pious king of the French, was taken prisoner, together with his two brothers, the counts of Poitou and Provence; William Longuespee too was there slain, with many of the nobles of England; and Robert, count of Artois, the French king's brother, fled from the battle and was drowned. The pope and the whole Roman court daily lost favour with the clergy as well as the people, because the crusaders were sold, absolved from their vows on payment of money, and delayed in manifold ways. All Christendom was disturbed, and the universal Church exposed to danger, owing to the wars which arose out of the hatred and discord existing between the pope and Frederick. King Henry the Third and many of the nobles of England assumed the cross; as also did many kings, princes, nobles, and prelates of Christendom. The only abbat who did so was the abbat of St. Edmund's, who, forgetting that with the cowl he had undertaken perpetually to bear the cross of Christ, amidst the derision of many, received the ostensible sign of the cross in presence of and together with the king, which

manifestly savoured of flattery. In this deadly year there departed to Christ an immense number of nobles, who had left their native country, their wives and children, their relations and friends, to fight faithfully for Christ. All of these were manifest martyrs, and their names, which cannot be given in this work on account of the great number of them, are inscribed in indelible characters in the book of life, and they themselves receive the crown of martyrdom according to their deserts. Moreover, on St. Lucia's day, Frederick, the wonder of the world, died in Apulia. All these remarkable and strange events, the like of which have never been seen or heard of, nor are found in any of the writings of our fathers in times past, occurred during this last half-century.

—

Here end the chronicles of brother Matthew Paris, monk of St. Alban's, which he committed to writing for the benefit of posterity, out of love for God and for the honour of St. Alban, the English protomartyr, that the memory of modern events might not be destroyed by age or oblivion.

2. J.A. Giles [translator]. Matthew Paris's English History from the year 1235 to 1273. H.G. Bohn, London, 1854, Vol. III: p.327-328

A.D. 1259.]

BATTLE AT ACRE

327

Of the battle between the Templars and Hospitallers.

About the same time, too, at Acre, the Templars, the brethren of St. Lazarus and St. Thomas, the Hospitallers and their partisans in that neighbourhood, besides some others, consisting of Genoese and Pisans, quarrelled among themselves in the Holy Land, and those who were usually considered the legitimate defenders of the Church, now proved

themselves to be the most bloodthirsty destroyers of peace, of each other, and of the said Church. The Hospitallers, to a man, rose against the Templars, in consequence of some deadly feud between them, and, after losing a very large number of their own body, entirely destroyed them ; indeed, on the side of the Templars scarcely one man escaped, whilst a great many of the Hospitallers still survived. Never, indeed, was such a pitiable slaughter mentioned to have occurred amongst Christians, especially religious men. In consequence of this calamity, all the Templars who remained in the Holy Land held counsel together in these urgent circumstances, and, according to report, sent word in all haste to the whole of the brethren of their order, who were dwelling in the houses of the order in all countries, that they were to place those who were necessary for the purpose to take care of each house, and, laying aside all pretext for delay, to come with speed to the Holy Land, to repair, in some measure, the void in their houses at Acre, occasioned by the destruction of so many of their brethren there, and also to take a fearful vengeance on the Hospitallers, by force of arms. Great fears were in consequence entertained throughout the world, that unless the Almighty should appease their anger, the peace and stability of Christendom would, in a great measure, be destroyed through their extreme fury.

How the pope secretly obtained the imperial dignity for Earl Richard, whilst the latter was in England.

In the mean time, whilst the king of Germany was peaceably dwelling in England, an easy road was being prepared for him to obtain the imperial dignity ; and this was done by the pope himself, clandestinely and with deep cunning, that he might not openly show himself an opponent of the king of Spain. The king of Germany, however, remained quietly in England, in order to amass more money, and thus to guard against future times of necessity. The nobles of England in the mean time prudently devoted themselves to carrying into effect the resolutions they had come to, and troubled themselves little or nothing whether the aforesaid king stayed or went away, and unanimously gave their whole attention to destroy evil customs, and acts of injustice and corruption.