

**CHRONICA JOCELINI DE
BRAKELONDA DE REBUS
GESTIS; SAMSONIS ABBATIS
MONASTERII SANCTI EDMUNDI**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649152438

Chronica Jocelini De Brakelonda de rebus gestis; samsonis abbatis monasterii sancti edmundi
by Jocelin De Brakelond

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JOCELIN DE BRAKELOND

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CHRONICA
JOCELINI DE BRAKELONDA,
DE REBUS GESTIS
SAMSONIS

ABBATIS MONASTERII SANCTI EDMUNDI.

NUNC PRIMUM TYPIS MANDATA

OTRANT

JOHANNĒ GAGE ROKEWODE.



LONDINI: *Camden*
SUMPTIBUS SOCIETATIS CAMDENENSIS.

M.DCCC.XL.



12

LONDON :

PRINTED BY JOHN BOWYER NICKOLS AND SON, 93, PARLIAMENT STREET.

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CORRIGENDUM.

P. 129. l. 30, for "basepent," read "ba serpent."

P R E F A C E.

THE present Chronicle comprehends the annals of the Monastery of St. Edmund from the year 1173 to 1202. The early pages give a rapid sketch of the state of the Monastery under Abbot Hugh, intended as an Introduction to the History of the Government of Samson de Totington, his successor, whose acts are the chief object of the Chronicle. Abbot Hugh died in 1180, and was succeeded by Samson in 1182, after a vacancy of a year and three months.

Jocelin de Brakelond, the writer, a native of St. Edmundsbury,¹ dates his Chronicle from the year when the Flemings were taken prisoners without the town (alluding to the battle of Fornham in 1173), in which year, he tells us,² that he took the habit at St. Edmund's, having made his noviciate under Samson, then Master of the Novices, afterward Abbot, to whose charge he had been

¹ The Long Brakelond, leading from the North Gate to the Market Place, and the Little Brakelond, are ancient streets of St. Edmundsbury mentioned in deeds 33 Edw. I. Regist. Croftis, MS. Harl. XXVII. fol. 5. 10 v. 14. 15.

² Vide Chron. p. 1.

specially committed.¹ According to Bale,² he studied at Cambridge; but for this we have not seen any authority. At the time of the election of Abbot Samson, Jocelin was the Prior's chaplain; and within four months was promoted to be chaplain to the Abbot,³ with whom he lived, to use his own language, day and night for six years.⁴ In 1198 and 1200, he did the honours of the abbey as guest-master,⁵ perhaps still continuing one of the Abbot's chaplains; and was afterward almoner, an office which he filled at the death of Samson in 1211.⁶

A contemporary monk of St. Edmund's has recorded⁷ the character of our Chronicler in these simple words: "Dominus Jocelinus elemosinarius noster, vir religionis eximie, potens in sermone et opere."

Jocelin de Brakelond wrote⁸ on the miracles of St. Robert, the boy martyred by the Jews at St. Edmundsbury in 1181. Bale, and later bibliographers, also ascribe

¹ Ibid. p. 3.

² Script. Illust. Bas. 1559, p. 259.

³ Chron. p. 19.

⁴ Ibid. p. 27. Bishop Tanner, in error, represents that our author was cellarist of the monastery in the 9th Richard I. confounding him with Joellus or Jocellinus, twice cellarist, and afterward appointed to the Altar. Vide Chron. pp. 84, 86, 91; Chronica de Electione Hugonis Abbatis MS. Harl. 1005. fol. 164.

⁵ Chron. pp. 71, 95.

⁶ Ibid. p. 50. Chron. de Electione Hugonis Abbatis, fol. 165.

⁷ Chron. p. 50.

⁸ Ibid. 12.

to him the *Chronica de Electione Hugonis Abbatis, postea episcopi Eliensis*; but the part which our author took, on the occasion of that election, is spoken of in the same Chronicle in such a manner as to leave no doubt that it was the work of another.

The public events recorded in this volume are chiefly those in which the Abbot of St. Edmund's had a share during the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I. They are not without historical interest; but the merit of the Chronicle lies more in the variety of ordinary incidents detailed, from which often something is to be learnt touching our language, manners, and customs, or our system, civil and religious, particularly the monastic polity.

The style of the work is easy, mixed, but not offensively, with the language of writers sacred and profane, according to the custom of the monastic historians of the age. The story is told throughout with a pleasing naïveté, and sometimes humour; the characters are drawn with spirit, and the whole seems written with truth.

That part of this Chronicle is subsequent to the Chronicle of Diceto, is apparent from the fact, that our author, commenting on an occurrence in the Monastery of St. Edmund during the year 1200,¹ cites words which he finds apt to his purpose, used by the Dean of London in his Chronicle.

¹ Chron. p. 97.