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THE MAGAZINE

OF THE HONOURABLE

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**Giraldus Cambrensis: De Invectionibus.**

By W. S. DAVIES,

*Senior Classical Master, Swansea Grammar School.*

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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With the consent of the Council the Editor has devoted the thirtieth volume of *Y Cymmrodor* to a reproduction of the full text of the *Liber de Insecutionibus* of Giraldus Cambrensis, taken from photographs of the original manuscript now preserved in the Vatican. The work of transcription and collation has been carefully carried out by Mr. William S. Davies, B.A., of the Swansea Grammar School (a son of one of the earliest members of the existing Council), who has also contributed the Introductory Essay dealing with the contents of the *Liber*. Mr. Davies wishes to acknowledge his obligations to Mr. E. Ernest Hughes, M.A., University College, Swansea, for advice and encouragement extending over a long period, and to Mr. L. Stanley Knight, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., for assistance rendered in revising the proofs of the text. Pains have been taken to make the reproduction an accurate copy of the manuscript. The more important of the transcriber's errors have been noticed as they occur, but it was not considered necessary to call attention to minor errors of spelling, to inaccuracies in the enumeration of chapter headings, or to discrepancies between the list of chapter headings and the actual contents of the text. For the Index free use has been made of that which is included in the eighth volume of the Rolls series of the works of Giraldus Cambrensis.

# Y Cymmrodor.

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VOL. XXX. "CARED DOETH YE ENCLIGON." 1920.

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## The Book of Invectives of Giraldus Cambrensis.

BY W. S. DAVIES, *Senior Classical Master,*  
*Swansea Grammar School.*

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE *Liber de Invectionibus*, or Book of Invectives, is one of the two complete extant works of Giraldus Cambrensis that deal with the claims of the see of St. David's to be independent of Canterbury. It is preserved in a single manuscript at Rome, where the composition of the work was begun by Giraldus, when engaged in the conduct of his case before Innocent III. The treatise is frequently referred to, in other works of Giraldus, but it does not appear to have attracted the attention of later writers, and no manuscript of it was supposed to exist. In the middle of the last century, Mr. Brewer, when examining a volume of transcripts made for "the late Record Commission", discovered a copy of the last two books of the treatise, which he published (1861) in the first volume of the Rolls edition of the works of Giraldus. This transcript was made in the year 1836 by a German copyist, "from a manuscript at Rome in the collection of Christina, Queen of Sweden, No. 470". It was apparently intended to be a complete and accurate copy of the



manuscript. The passages omitted are neither numerous nor long, but verbal and literal inaccuracies occur on every page. The Rolls editor fully recognised the carelessness with which the transcript had been made, but in spite of its deficiencies, he was able to write of it that its discovery was one of the most remarkable recoveries of a mediæval manuscript, and unquestionably the most important of the services effected in that way by the Record Commission.<sup>1</sup> It was supposed that the remainder of the work had been irretrievably lost, but shortly afterwards a transcript of the missing books was discovered at the new Record Office. In dealing with these earlier books, the transcriber unfortunately adopted a different method from that employed in copying the fifth and sixth. Long passages were either wholly omitted or ruthlessly summarised in accordance with the transcriber's ideas of their importance. The extent to which the manuscript had been subjected to this process of curtailment and mutilation was evident from the appearance of the copy. The Rolls editor, indeed, felt some hesitation in submitting to the press so imperfect a copy of this "unique and hitherto unknown manuscript," but finally decided that it was "more desirable to give it to the world in its present state, than risk the omission of it, perhaps its total disappearance". That this hesitation was well-founded will become evident from a comparison of the text printed in this volume with that contained in the third volume of the Rolls edition. Not only do we find such verbal and literal inaccuracies as abound in the transcript of the later books, but the passages summarised or omitted are frequently of considerable length, and include some of the most important portions of the work, *e.g.* the letters connected with the case of Giraldus, and the Bernard

<sup>1</sup> *Giraldus Cambrensis*, Rolls ed., vol. i, p. xciii.

documents discovered at St. David's. The complete text printed in this volume is derived from photographs of the Vatican manuscript, which were procured some years ago by the late T. Matthews, of Llandebie, and generously placed at the writer's disposal.

The manuscript belongs to the thirteenth century, and is written in two hands, the second scribe having taken up the task at chapter xi in Book II. A heading prefixed to the first book runs as follows:— "Incipit liber Invectionum quem alii a Giraldo, alii a notario suo scriptum esse commemorant." The transcriber for the Record Commission took this statement to refer to the actual handwriting, and suggested that the first portion of the work was in the writing of Giraldus, and the second in that of his scribe. Mr. Idris Bell, of the British Museum, has examined several of the photographed sheets, and given me the benefit of his wide experience. He writes that there can be no question of an autograph of Giraldus. "Probably both hands are much about the same period, and there seems no reason to place either very early or very late in the century. About the middle of the thirteenth century is perhaps not far from the truth." Our manuscript is, therefore, a copy of an earlier one. There are certain imperfections in the text which point to the same conclusion. The repeated use of Gerardus for Giraldus in the sixth book seems to indicate that this part of the work was copied by a scribe without personal knowledge of Giraldus. The marked discrepancies between the list of chapter headings of the second book and its actual contents suggest the possibility that the two scribes of our text were copying from different manuscripts.

The work is divided into six books. The first contains the replies made by Giraldus to the attacks of his

opponents upon his personal character; the second opens with an account of the progress of the Christian faith in the island of Britain, and includes copies of the documents used in the course of Bernard's efforts to maintain the dignity of St. David's; the third and fourth books deal similarly with the later efforts of Giraldus, and consist mainly of the letters and documents employed during the hearing of his appeal to Innocent III; the fifth book was apparently intended by Giraldus as a justification of his efforts in spite of their failure, and as an answer to critics who estimated his merits by the degree of worldly success which he attained; the sixth enumerates the various grounds for the confidence felt by Giraldus, and includes thirty visions, which were supposed at the time to forecast the defeat of the archbishop and the ultimate victory of St. David's.

In different parts of the writings of Giraldus, the Book of Invectives is variously referred to as the "Libellus Invectionum," the "Libellus de Invectionibus," the "Liber Invectionum," and the "Liber de Invectionibus". Giraldus, it has been said, has a way of referring to the same work under different titles. In the case of the Book of Invectives, the change of title seems to have been due to something more than a mere love of variety. This will become clear from an examination of the passages in which the work is mentioned. In the "De Jure et Statu Menevensis Ecclesiae," Giraldus describes the work as follows:—

"Libellum Invectionum Romae in Giraldum acriter inchoatum, et ibidem ab ipso respondente et papa monente completum."<sup>1</sup>

In the shorter catalogue of his books, the work is described as,

<sup>1</sup> *Giraldus Cambrensis*, Rolls ed., iii, 333.