

Monumenta owed its existence. Ranke, who was not always among his supporters, may be allowed the last word. 'In the end', he wrote, 'we are told, he became dull and apathetic. That cannot prevent me from recognizing the great significance of his life. He was not a genius, but he was of sterling worth.'¹

The new directorate got speedily down to work, and the *Monumenta* entered upon the golden age of its existence. Waitz himself took the *Scriptores*, always recognized as the core of the enterprise, but the early, half-Roman period was shorn off as a province for Mommsen. For the *Laws*, always the *Schmerzenskind* of the family,² Boretius of Halle, an old Monumentist who had fallen foul of Pertz, was proposed, but both Waitz and Mommsen vetoed him, and Waitz kept the section in hand. Sickel, the eminent Vienna palaeographer,³ took the *Diplomata*, which henceforth were domesticated in Austria; Wattenbach, unwillingly, took the *Letters*; Dümmler at his own wish the *Antiquities*. The funds available were stepped up in 1876 and again in 1880. Other significant changes were made; the folio format was abandoned for all sections save the *Scriptores* in favour of the quarto. There was a discussion on the use of Latin for editorial matter; in the end it was retained for all save the vernacular texts, but Latin was not Sickel's strong suit, and after he had, with assistance, produced one introduction the learned tongue was abandoned in the *Diplomata*.⁴ The octavo series of *SS. rerum Germanicarum* was developed. Perhaps the greatest surprise was the emergence of Mommsen, already in his mid-sixties, as the energetic and prolific editor who speedily made his section the most brilliant of all. Doubts were expressed then and later as to the relevance of some of the late classical authors, such as Symmachus and Ausonius, to German history, but there can be no doubt of the gain to scholarship in general.

¹ Ranke, *Ges. Werke*, vol. 54, pp. 610 ff. 'Er war nicht genial, aber gediegen'.

² The phrase is used of a later period by Paul Kehr in his memoir of E. Seckel, *N.A.*, xlv, 160: 'Die Leges sind von Anfang an das grosse Schmerzenskind der Monumenta gewesen'.

³ Theodor v. Sickel, 1826-1908. For him see Bresslau, 400 (note), Erben in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, xi, 333 ff., L. Santifaller (editor), *Theodor v. Sickel, Römische Erinnerungen* (Vienna, 1947), and W. Holtzmann in *Archivio della società Romana di storia patria*, lxxix (1956), 89 ff.

⁴ As Sickel himself recounted (*Bresslau*, 531), the members of the directorate, though complimentary, clearly failed to make sense of his Latin.