NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. A CHANCERY Scribe: Stephen of Fougères

By T. A. M. BISHOP

The authentication and dating of twelfth-century royal charters will be assisted if it can be shown that they were normally drafted, or partly drafted, by the scribes who wrote them.

In any presumptively accurate copy of any chancery-written charter of Henry II, more or less generally addressed, the formula ...et Omnibus hominibus... in the address indicates, with considerable probability, that the original was written and partly or wholly drafted by the chaplain and scriptor regis, Mr. Stephen of Fougères.

Professor Galbraith has suggested that ten original charters of Henry II were drafted as, they were undoubtedly written, by the same man. The suggestion is supported by the fact that the address clause of each of these charters contains the unusual formula ...et Omnibus hominibus.... And it is confirmed when this formula, appearing in the printed texts of other extant originals, proves to be a clue to the discovery of the same hand in them. Mr. Galbraith's suggested identification of the draftsman-scribe with Stephen of Fougères, whose subscription— it seems to have been an irregular experiment—appears in two of the originals, is confirmed by the presence of the same unusual formula in copies of other charters subscribed by Stephen. As a means of detecting Stephen's work among other copies of Henry II's charters it falls short of entirely certainty, since it appears in copies of a few charters which appear to have been genuine and which, if genuine, were issued after Stephen's elevation to the see of Rennes in 1168. But it was certainly characteristic of his work, and encourages the hope of associating other apparently insignificant formulae with the work of other scriptores regis, and of applying what is known of their careers—this is in some cases quite considerable—to the criticism of chartulary and enrolled texts.

In addition to the ten original charters reproduced by Mr. Galbraith, the appearance of the formula in printed texts has led to the discovery of Stephen's hand in four more, numbered in series below.

1 V. H. Galbraith, 'Seven charters of Henry II', Antiquaries' Journal, xii. 269-78, where facsimiles of all ten charters are reproduced; facsimiles of seven of them appear in C. W. Foster, ed., Registrum Antiquissimum (Lincoln Record Society), i and ii. nos. 1135-8, 140-9, 179, 186; of two in Deliau, Recueil des Actes de Henri II: Atlas, plates VIII (166), XI; and of one in Chevreux & Vernier, Archives de Normandie, plate XVIII.
2 No. 11. Angers, Archives du Maine-et-Loire. 242H no. 12, printed Recueil, no. cclxxxii. I am obliged to Professor Jacques Levron for a photograph of this charter, and for permission to reproduce it. No. 12. Fécamp, Musée de la Béthenicte, no. 15, printed ibid., no. cxxxi. I am obliged to the Conservateur, M. Engel, for giving me a photograph of this charter. No. 13. Caen, Archives du Calvados, printed ibid., no. cclxxxviii. I am obliged to Mlle Le Cacalou for a photograph of this charter. No. 14. Oxford, New College, Hornchurch deeds no. 158, facsimiles in Recueil: Atlas, plate VII (63A) and H. E. Saltair, Oxford Charters, no. 34, printed ibid., loc. cit. and Recueil, no. xci. I am obliged to the Warden and Fellows of New College for allowing this charter to be photographed and reproduced.

The formula appears in a charter to Haughmond Abbey (1156-61) printed in Hist. MSS. Commission, MSS. of Sir Walter Corbet, p. 67. The original of this charter, missing for many years, has very recently come to light, and is now at Shrewsbury, County Record Office, S.R.O. 322/3; I have not seen it; Miss Mary C. Hill has kindly supplied indications which suggest that it is in the hand of Stephen of Fougères.
11 (Plate). A confirmation to Fontevrault Abbey. It is dated 1169 by Delisle, and 'vers 1169' by Berger; if this is right, the charter can hardly have been written by Stephen of Fougères, who was not employed in the chancery after 1168. But it is evidently in the same hand as nos. 1-10. The script is upright and—the standards of Henry II's chancery—more or less calligraphic. It employs the same marks of abbreviation. The tironian et appears in two forms; the more careful of these is characteristic of Stephen's work, and the other is sometimes present in it. The minuscule letters—notably g—are identical with those of other examples of his work. Among characteristic mannerisms may be noted the unusual N of Normannorum, the partly superscript Q of Quare, the arbitrary use of a cedilla in Abbate (line 4) but not in hec (line 9), and the spacing of the place-date. In several respects—for example the isolated appearance of a slack form of g in Reginaldo (line 11)—this charter closely resembles no. 10 in Mr Galbraith's list, of 1166; and there seems to be no reason why it should not be of the same date.

12. A grant to Fécamp Abbey and abbot Henry the king's cousin (1162). In this charter—too large for reproduction here in its original dimensions—some of the occasional mannerisms of the script are slightly subduced; its permanent characteristics are unmistakably. In Normannorum and Normannie respectively it employs the mannered and the conventional form of N.

13. A grant to the nuns of Notre-Dame-du-Pré, Lisieux (1156–61). Too large for reproduction here, this charter is an excellent example of Stephen's earlier and apparently more careful work.

14 (Plate). A grant to the hospital of SS. Nicholas and Bernard of Montjeux (August, 1158). The hand of this charter does not at first sight resemble that of the originals already discussed. It is less upright and regular, and lacks such occasional or invariable features as the cedillas, the Q of Quare and the spacing of the place-date. The unusual N of Normannorum in each of the others is here replaced by the usual form. But this form can be matched by the N of Normannia in no. 12; the careless forms of the tironian et and g which are frequent in this charter occur, if less frequently, in no. 11 and some of the others; it reproduces such minor peculiarities of their script as the fanciful v of axv (line 6); the essential forms of its abbreviation marks and small letters are identical with theirs. The differences in writing between this charter and the other originals are consistent with the view that it is the work of the same scribe, writing in haste. And of haste there are independent marks; of haste in drafting as well as in writing. The P of Progero seems to have been achieved by altering another letter. The address is irregular, totius Anglo having been written too soon and the rest added as an afterthought. The subscription is irregular: archdeacon Proger should have taken precedence of some, at least, of the laymen. And the postscript after the witnesses' names, which might have passed in some peremptory Anglo-Norman writ, is nearly unparalleled among the products of Henry II's chancery. For the remarkable carelessness in the execution of this charter an explanation is forthcoming in its issue at Southampton and in the difficulties—whether or not notified, as they sometimes were, by some such formula as in transitu or in transfations regis—which might well affect the work of a chancery staff under embarkation orders.