TRANSACTIONS OF THE
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FIFTH SERIES

VOLUME 10

LONDON

OFFICES OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

96 CHEYNE WALK, S.W.10

1960

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

By Professor the Rev. M. D. Knowles, Litt.D., D.Litt., F.B.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

READ 12 DECEMBER 1959

GREAT HISTORICAL ENTERPRISES

III. THE MONUMENTA GERMANIAE HISTORICA*

LAST December we considered the work of the Maurists, who were at once a product and an ornament of a very brilliant phase of French learning and scholarship. This afternoon we turn to another great nation in what was, perhaps, the golden age of its influence upon the thought and academic disciplines of Europe.

German scholarship of the nineteenth century, and in particular German historical scholarship, was for long unduly neglected in this country. Then, for a short space between the wars of 1870 and 1914, it was widely admired and imitated. Finally, as a result of the two wars and the Nazi régime, it has in large part fallen once more out of the picture for Englishmen, and its achievements and the names of its most eminent practitioners have all but passed into oblivion.[1] It may therefore be of interest to rescue from this undeserved neglect a great enterprise which, initiated by a single man, grew to be a focus of technical scholarship unequalled even in Germany, and ended by becoming a national, not to say a nationalized or Nazialized, institution.[2]

* Professor Walther Holtzmann, Director of the German Historical Institute at Rome, and a member of the Zentraldirektion of the *Monumenta*, was kind enough to read a draft of this lecture and to make a number of corrections and suggestions. While warmly thanking Dr Holtzmann, I must also make it clear that the opinions and judgments (and possible errors) are mine, not his.

[1] The only adequate account in English of German historical studies in the nineteenth century is the old, but still valuable, *History and Historians in the nineteenth century*, by G. P. Gooch (London, 1913; 3rd edn. revised, 1952); there is a section on the *Monumenta*, and a short account of Waitz.

[2] For the story of the *M[onumenta] G[ermaniae] H[istorica]* to 1921 the narrative by Harry Bresslau, the official centenary historian, in *N[eues]*

The 'only begetter' of the *Monumenta* was the eminent Prussian statesman and patriot, the Baron Karl vom Stein. Stein was a statesman of energy, foresight, honesty and determination whose greatness, on a long view, must be reckoned indisputable.[1] He was also a man of wide intelligence and culture, with a particular interest in history, and a conviction that nothing would better serve the cause of German nationhood than a full knowledge of the medieval Empire. Retiring into private life after the Congress of Vienna, he had leisure to use his influence and means in furthering his ideas. He had discussed his hopes with friends such as the brothers Grimm, Goethe, Eichhorn and Savigny, and a number of proposals had been made, among others one of Wessenberg for a network of central and regional associations with government funds and princely patronage. This and other schemes like it broke down upon the hard reef of finance, and the actual beginning was due to Stein alone who enlisted the help of two scholars Büchler and Dümgé, the latter of whom drew up a prospectus of a publishing and editing society (24 June 1818), while Stein began a search for subscribers. Finally, a meeting took place at Frankfurt on 20 January 1819, at which Stein and four leading politicians agreed on a plan establishing Dümgé as general editor and Büchler as secretary of the enterprise, and on June 12 the constitutions of a society, *Die Gesellschaft für Deutschlands ältere Geschichtskunde*, were approved, and remained in force (if that is the word) for more than fifty years.

The association thus called into being had an unusual organiza-

A[*rchiv*], xlii (1921), is authoritative, and has been followed throughout. References are given as *Bresslau*. It may be supplemented by Wattenbach-Levison-Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen in Mittelalter* (edn. 1952), i, 17–28; G. Waitz, 'Über die Zukunft der M.G.H.', in *Historische Zeitschrift*, xxx (1873), 1–13; and E. Dümmler, 'Uber die Entstehung der M.G.H.', in *Im neuen Reich* (Leipsic, 1876). A volume by H. Heimpel, *Organisationsformen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft*, commemorating the centenary of the birth of P. F. Kehr, is scheduled for publication early in 1960 (Göttingen-Zürich).

[1] Stein's biography has been written by G. H. Pertz (6 vols. in 7, 1849–55), Sir J. M. Seeley, *The Life and Times of Stein* (3 vols., 1878), and G. Ritter, *Stein, eine politische Biographie*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1931; repr. 1958). For a short account see the article by J. Holland Rose in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10th edn. (1911). Stein was assisted by others, especially by J. A. v. Aretin, but the latter is not entitled to the share attributed to him in *N*[*eue*] *D*[*eutsche*] *B*[*iographie*], *s.v.* Aretin, J. A.

tion. Whereas a society is normally directed by officers elected from among its members, here from the first the members were contradistinguished from the directorate or governing body (*Direktion* or *Zentraldirektion*) under a President. No machinery was set up for the appointment of Editor and Secretary, who were not *ex officio* members of the Directorate. Stein was, as if by nature, president, and it was assumed that he would appoint the two officers. Members, who became so at first by invitation of Stein or the Directorate, had no right or voice in the affairs of the society; their numbers never increased, and in fact diminished in time almost to vanishing-point. In other words, the society was one of straw; all duties and power lay with the president and the two officers.

Neither Dümgé, a sour and difficult man, nor Büchler, who lacked technical competence, was capable of getting the undertaking out of harbour and over the bar, and by the end of 1821 the former had been dropped by Stein while the latter, who had tried to defend his friend, had resigned. Meanwhile Stein had displayed the greatest energy in finding friends and funds, and among his minor achievements may be counted his enlistment of Goethe, whom he set collating a manuscript of Otto of Freising. Nevertheless, the going was not good; Stein himself had to find most of the money to support the first researches, and a considerable sum was lost on useless or senseless travel in search of manuscripts on the part of inefficient collaborators. The situation was saved by the fortunate appearance of Georg Heinrich Pertz (1795–1876).

Pertz[1] came from Hanover, the son and grandson of prosperous bookbinders; as a schoolboy he had seen and experienced the rigours of the French occupation. Educated in classics and history at Göttingen, he was engaged as tutor in Hanover to a family with official and diplomatic connexions which made him familiar with the tastes and manners of high society and ultimately brought him into personal and friendly contact with Stein. Pertz as a young man was highly intelligent, vivacious, good looking and

[1] There is no adequate life of Pertz. An interesting autobiographical fragment, dictated to his second wife in 1869, together with a selection of his letters (in English), was published by Leonora Pertz in ?1894. His letters to Droysen were published in 1896. Bresslau was able to use many others in the archives of *M.G.H.* For Pertz see also *A*[*llgemeine*] *D*[*eutsche*] *B*[*iographie*].

in every way presentable, and in his early life, at least, lacked neither charm nor understanding nor sympathy. He was sent by Stein to search out manuscripts at Vienna, and his work, and still more his success in personal relations, led Stein to send him in the autumn of 1821 to Rome. Here his tact and charm made still further conquests; he made the acquaintance of Consalvi and Mai and, contrary to all expectation, received the entrée to the Vatican archives. He also won the confidence and affection of the great Niebuhr, then acting as Prussian representative to the Vatican, and was treated by him as a family friend, almost as a son. When, therefore, Stein was faced with the crisis of 1821 and had tried more than one shift, he finally turned to his brilliant young protégé and on 26 August 1823 it was settled that Pertz should become the society's Editor. It was a piece of extraordinary good fortune for the undertaking. Pertz, forty years later, was to suffer an eclipse, and to arouse criticism, opposition, and even hostility, but by then much water had flowed under the bridges, and in 1823 Stein could scarcely have found a better man in Germany to combine the enterprise of youth with solid scholarship and an admirable capacity both for organization and for hard work, together with the determination that could carry him through weather both fair and foul.

Meanwhile Stein had also found his Secretary. Johann Friedrich Böhmer[1] was a young man of exactly the same age as Pertz (1795–1863) but of a very different character and temperament. He was a Frankfurter of the upper bourgeoisie, whose father had held high civic office with conservative traditions from the pre-Napoleonic age; he was earnest, thrifty, retiring and far from expansive in society, but he was loyal, sensitive and romantic of mind. Throughout his life he felt a deep attraction towards the traditions and external manifestations of the Catholic Church, and he had many friends and disciples of that faith, such as Brentano and Janssen, but he never took the step of joining the Church. His influence over a school of historians was considerable, but lies outside our scope. Stein, who had known his family in other years, met him and offered him the post of Secretary. In August 1823 Böhmer met Pertz, and wrote of him as a future Mabillon of

[1] For Böhmer, see the biography, *J. F. Böhmer's Leben, Briefe*, etc., by J. Janssen (1868). Cf. also Ranke, *Abhandlungen und Versuche*, Neue Sammlung, 535–44.

Germany; Pertz for his part took to Böhmer and the long association, which ripened into a friendship, began that was to survive all trials and differences until it was broken by death.

Now that Stein had two such excellent officers it was possible to devise a programme. From the beginning the conception was grandiose; all the sources (Stein would rather have said, all the memorials) of German history from the disappearance of effective Roman rule to the invention of printing—in other words, the millennium from 500 to 1500 A.D. The only topics excluded, large indeed in themselves, but necessarily left on one side, were the purely ecclesiastical history of Germany, and the crusades. The materials were from the first divided into five sections, namely chronicles (*Scriptores*), laws (*Leges*), charters (*Diplomata*), letters (*Epistolae*), and finally writings of antiquarian interest (*Antiquitates*). Hahn of Hanover was selected as publisher.

The first task of the new editor was to produce a volume which would attract attention and prove the viability of Stein's enterprise. Logically, a beginning should have been made with the early Merovingian documents, but this was a peculiarly difficult field in which Pertz had as yet no materials. It was decided therefore to begin with Charlemagne, and the first volume duly appeared on 14 August 1826 with the sub-title *Annales et Chronica aevi Carolini*. After some discussion the format of royal folio had been selected, and from the various formulae proposed by Pertz for the general name of the series Stein selected the familiar three words: MONUMENTA GERMANIAE HISTORICA. On the title-page was the motto originally suggested by Büchler, which has become familiar to so many thousands of readers: 'Sanctus amor patriae dat animum'.

No sooner had the first volume appeared than Pertz set out in search of manuscripts to Paris and England. His reputation, his charm and his ability to combine hard work with social activities were remarkable; in Paris he was received not only by Rémusat, Guérard and the Thierrys, but in diplomatic circles and in fashionable salons. He found manuscripts in plenty; he also found a wife in Julia Garnett, the American-born daughter of a well-known English astronomer. They were married in Paris, with Lafayette and the Hanoverian minister among the guests, and returned to Hanover after Pertz had taken his wife to stay with Niebuhr and Stein, who found her intelligent, unaffected and winning. In the

autumn of this year (1827) Pertz entered upon his duties at Hanover as archivist and librarian of the Royal Library.

In December 1829 the second volume appeared, largely the work of Pertz. Taken together, the first two volumes, with a total of 1500 folio pages, were a good beginning. Several important works, such as the *Annales Xantenses*, discovered by Pertz, were published for the first time, others, such as Einhard's Life of Charlemagne, appeared in a vastly improved text, and though here and there later critics could find faults, the favourable reception was justified. Difficulties, however, were by no means over. Energetic as he was, Pertz could not alone do all the editorial and sub-editorial work, and in 1829 he secured his first standing collaborator, a man of his own age, J. M. Lappenberg, state archivist of Hamburg. Lappenberg did excellent work and remained a pillar of the *Monumenta* till his death forty years later, but he was a contributor, not an assistant. The same may be said of the somewhat unexpected emergence of Böhmer. Böhmer had long been anxious to help with the scholarship as well as with the administration, and had already collected materials for small undertakings. Now, inspired by Pertz, he volunteered to compile a register of imperial charters from 911 to 1313 to serve as the first volume of the *Diplomata* section. The first part was out in 1831 and the series, with offshoots and revisions, continued till his death, but it was financed by Böhmer himself and did not figure among the *Monumenta*, though it usually finds a place on the shelves alongside. With all its inevitable faults and errors it was not only a priceless tool but an inspiration and a pioneer in an important field.

Meanwhile the financial position was still stringent. Neither governments nor nobles helped as Stein had hoped. Some feared, as in France in the days of the Maurists, that research might upset the titles of the reigning houses and powerful families; others, that a study of medieval Germany would make men anti-liberal and pro-Catholic.[1] Metternich in particular feared revolutionary discoveries and would not allow Austria to help. Before any firm position had been reached the undertaking lost its only powerful guide and support with the unexpected death of Stein (29 June 1831). This event revealed the faulty organization of the society. Neither Pertz nor Böhmer was a member of the Directorate; the

[1] For this see Waitz, *N.A.*, ii, 460.

only efficient member to hand was the Prussian politician and minister, Baron K. F. F. von Nagler. Fortunately, the financial cares of the *Monumenta* were shortly to be eased. Böhmer was tireless in circularizing ministers and politicians, and Nagler used his influence in high quarters. Now that Stein was dead Metternich was no longer hostile, and at the Vienna conference of 1834 he recommended the appeal to the Federal Assembly; this body in turn recommended a block grant to be raised by contributions from the member states. The total sum was paltry, and the inevitable shuffling and haggling took place while everyone waited for his neighbour to move, but eventually an income was assured,[1] for a few years only but renewable, and with no strings attached save a very reasonable demand for yearly accounts and report of progress. A more favourable arrangement was made in 1844. Having achieved this, Nagler withdrew into the shadows, leaving Pertz and Böhmer in power. In Stein's project the Directorate was to be composed of statesmen and dignitaries, employing an Editor and Secretary. The constitution remained in force but the president had vanished, leaving Editor and Secretary as sole directors. For thirty years the *Monumenta* was to be conducted by two men living far apart, drawing annual funds from the Federal Assembly, and in fact responsible to no one. Pertz was by far the more powerful of the two partners, but Böhmer was a faithful and active manager, who did not fail to make his views known, though in the final resort Pertz usually had his way.

Shortly after the financial settlement Pertz secured his first regular assistants. The great resurgence of historical activity had by now begun to pay dividends. Above all, Ranke at Berlin had founded a school that was to influence all Europe.[2] Besides his fame as a writer and a personality, which only Macaulay among living historians could rival, Ranke was one of the greatest of academic teachers. He did not indeed initiate, but he certainly canonized the *Seminar*, a group of promising pupils to whom the master taught the skills of his craft in co-operative work with mutual help and rivalry in the field of his own studies. Ranke also gave his pupils two revolutionary methods—recourse to records and archives, rather than to literary sources, and the thorough

[1] *Bresslau*, 209, gives it as nearly 5,000 Taler per annum. The monetary reckonings of early days are always in Gulden and Taler.

[2] For a short English account of Ranke, see Gooch, *op. cit.*, chap. vi.

criticism of the reliability and characteristics of all the contemporary witnesses. His fame attracted students from the whole of central Europe and beyond and for half-a-century the cream of German scholarship flowed through his hands.

Ranke initiated his seminar in 1833, and in the group of the first two years were Giesebrecht, Köpke, Hirsch and Waitz. The last-named,[1] who had come to Ranke by way of Savigny and Lachmann, was hailed by the master as the future Muratori of Germany; in 1835 he won a prize for a brilliant study of King Henry I, and at the advice of Lappenberg, warmly recommended by Ranke, he offered his services to Pertz, who thus in 1836 acquired without effort and for a subsistence wage the greatest medieval scholar of the century, who as a critic was to revolutionize the study of sources and as a constitutional historian did for Germany what Stubbs, his admirer, was later to do for England. In 1837 Waitz was joined by another able young man, Ludwig Bethmann. Both lived with Pertz and his alert, sympathetic and kindly wife as members of the family; the Pertz of those days was still the lovable master and friend; Waitz describes him in his diary as a frank, homely man, with blond hair, blue eyes and an open forehead, a leader, but approachable. It was the April of the *Monumenta*.

The *Scriptores* continued to appear at regular intervals, and as early as 1829 there began a series of individual texts reprinted with shorter editorial matter in cheaper octavo form *in usum scholarum*. At a later date, the 'school editions' became new, scholarly editions replacing many of the original folios. From these arose a controversy between Pertz and Böhmer which lasted for more than thirty years. Pertz throughout loved the folio-format, and viewed with displeasure both the proposal to reduce the *Scriptores* to quarto or to publish a simultaneous octavo version. He feared loss of sales and diversion of editorial energy. Böhmer, with more prophetic vision, wished to popularize scholarly and historical work as much as possible. Unable to move Pertz, he himself

[1] There is no good biography of Waitz; for an intimate sketch by his son Eberhard, see *Georg Waitz* (Berlin, 1913; the centenary of his birth). For appreciations, see W. Wattenbach, *Abhandlungen d. Berliner Akademie*, 1886; A. Kluckhohn, 'Zur Erinnerung an Georg Waitz', in *Sammlung Gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlicher Vorträge* (ed. Virchov u. Holtzendorff), N.F., ii Ser., Heft. 25–48 (Berlin, 1887), 347–82, and the attractive pages of G. Monod in *Portraits et Souvenirs*, 1897.

produced, outside the *Monumenta*, a series of small volumes of texts with introductory matter, each grouped round a leading topic, under the title *Fontes Rerum Germanicarum*. The first appeared in 1843, and the series had a wide sale.

While the financial position was still stringent, a great change had taken place in Pertz's life. In 1841 Ranke, supported by Jacob Grimm and Savigny, obtained for him the offer of the Directorate of the Royal Library in Berlin. Pertz, after some hard bargaining, accepted the post and in April 1842 moved into the commodious house adjoining the great library; he was soon joined by Waitz. A new chapter opened for the *Monumenta*; Pertz, with the entrée to official and academic circles, the friend of Bekker, of Lachmann, of the Grimms, of Schelling and of Meineke, was now a state official, and in two years' time the new grant enabled him to establish for the first time a rudimentary staff. It is true that in 1842 he lost the direct services of Waitz, who went to a chair at Kiel and later (1849) at Göttingen, where he founded a seminar in medieval history that was to become celebrated, but Waitz ever remained faithful to the *Monumenta* and his old chief. Meanwhile, Pertz had found two excellent successors, Rudolf Köpke, Waitz's companion of old under Ranke, and Wilhelm Wattenbach,[1] a pupil of Otfried Müller who, initiated by Ranke, Hirsch and Giesebrecht, came to the *Monumenta* in 1843. These with Waitz and Bethmann were the first professional 'Monumentists', 'Pertz's boys' as Edmund Bishop used to call them, and the chief could now work to a programme with a regular conference on Saturday evenings, though then as always he left great freedom of choice in subject and method to his assistants. It was now, probably through the initiative of Waitz, that a typographical innovation of importance occurred. It had been customary for some years to note in the margin the source, if known, of the medieval writer's text; now the practice was begun of printing all that could be traced to an earlier source in small type, thus making clear at a glance not only the general but even the verbal dependence of a chronicler upon his predecessors.

The years that followed saw the arrival and departure of several talented men. The volumes of *Scriptores* continued to appear, and the name occurred for the first time of Philipp Jaffé,

[1] For Wattenbach see Dümmler's Gedächtnisrede in *Abhandlungen d. Berliner Akademie*, 1892.

in some ways the most brilliant of all 'Pertz's boys'. Jaffé, a young Jew, had abandoned the commercial career planned for him, and spent some months with Ranke. Pertz, despite unfavourable criticism, became his patron, and Jaffé, in five years of phenomenal activity, produced the first (1851) edition of his well-known Register of papal letters. Pertz continued his help, and endeavoured to obtain for him access to the papal archives for a continuation of his work. Pio Nono, however, though courteous, was not forthcoming, and Jaffé in 1854 accepted an invitation to join the staff of the *Monumenta* where, for the next dozen years, he was responsible for much of the best work. Pertz showed less judgment in the encouragement he gave to his eldest son Karl, whom in the same year he made a permanent assistant. Karl was a good worker but without a touch of brilliance; he lacked perception and technical skill, while remaining extremely self-satisfied. Differing in every way as they did, these two recruits were destined to be the principal causes of Pertz's undoing.

Meanwhile Pertz's private life had undergone another change. His first wife had died in 1852. In 1854 he married another Englishwoman, Leonora Horner, a daughter of the well-known geologist and educationist Leonard Horner,[1] for long a chief inspector under the Factories Act. Miss Horner's sisters had married respectively Sir Charles Lyell,[2] the eminent geologist, and Sir Charles Bunbury,[3] a baronet of ancient family with property at Mildenhall and Barton, near Cambridge. These connexions brought Pertz into touch with people of rank and influence in England, and undoubtedly helped him in his researches; he was admitted to the libraries of Earl Spencer and Lord Ashburnham as a gentleman as well as a scholar; we find him staying at Battle and at Barton Hall, and still more unexpectedly joining holiday groups at Tenby and Barmouth, while in Berlin he was seen at government receptions, ambassadorial soirées, and dinners of the English colony. Nevertheless, the influence of his second wife was not wholly benign; she was less adaptable and less motherly; she returned to England for her confinements to give her children English nationality, and insisted on English ways in her house; English was the language of general use there. The young Monumentists were no longer a part of the family, and this cir-

[1] See *Dictionary of National Biography*, *s.v.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, for article on his father.

cumstance, added to others, made Pertz less approachable. For a time, however, all went well. Merkel and Bluhme produced a valuable volume of *Laws* (the third) in 1863, and two more recruits of worth appeared in Winkelmann,[1] the first of Waitz's pupils, and Arndt,[2] pupil of Ranke and Waitz. Against the excellent work of these and others had to be set some less successful editing of Pertz himself. Pertz was hardening in every way, and his aloofness towards his juniors may have hastened, though it certainly did not cause, the tragic dénouement of his relations with Jaffé. It would appear that Pertz in 1860 was responsible for blocking an offer made to Jaffé of an important post in the Florence archives. The matter rankled, and in 1862 Jaffé unexpectedly served on Pertz (who happened to be in Glasgow) the requisite six months' notice of withdrawal from the *Monumenta*. Pertz, stung by what he considered the ingratitude of his ablest lieutenant, accepted the notice but held Jaffé to his six months. Jaffé was still more embittered; he had friends in Berlin such as Ranke, Haupt, Mommsen, Dümmler and Wattenbach, all of whom took his part against Pertz. It was the beginning of a sad ten years in the life of the *Monumenta* and its chief. In the autumn of 1863, Pertz lost his loyal partner Böhmer, with whom he had often disagreed but never quarrelled, and who had often given good counsel. He was now monarch of the *Monumenta* and at sixty-eight showed no sign of choosing a partner or successor. Both the scholars who bought his goods and the politicians who supplied the funds felt that some control or at least a wider spread of responsibility was needed. Relations were embittered by the secretive habits of Pertz, who refused to allow scholars, even such a one as Sickel, to use materials accumulated twenty or thirty years earlier for future use.

The head and front of Pertz's offending, however, was his treatment of the *Monumenta* as private property, to be inherited by his son Karl, while he based his position on the constitution of a virtually extinct society. For months the intrigues continued. Bismarck was approached and endeavoured to withdraw the affair from the Federal Assembly to his own jurisdiction. Pertz fought

[1] 1838–96. For him and the other scholars of the *M.G.H.* the Nachruf or shorter obituary in the *N.A.* may be consulted; here the reference is *N.A.*, xxi, 770 ff.; see also *A.D.B.*

[2] 1838–9 *N.A.*, xx, 664 ff.; *A.D.B.* (supplement).

back with the utmost pertinacity and adroitness. Twice when all seemed lost he was saved first by Bismarck's distraction in the Schleswig-Holstein crisis and later by the dissolution of the Confederacy on the outbreak of war with Austria, as a result of which Prussia assumed liability for the finances of the *Monumenta*. But though he had undoubtedly won the first round, the skies continued to darken. Waitz remained faithful and with his old genius for selection Pertz acquired Weiland,[1] a pupil of Waitz, in 1865 and Scheffer-Boichorst,[2] pupil of Waitz and Köpke, in 1871; these two became firm friends and did yeoman service in after years. On the other hand, the final breach had come with Jaffé. On leaving the *Monumenta* he had planned a series of historical texts, mainly letters, centring round personalities and places, critically edited and annotated; the project had the blessing of Mommsen, and the first volumes had a great success. The series was taken by Pertz, and probably intended by Jaffé, to be a competitor of the cheap editions in the *Monumenta*; he retorted by every kind of petty footnote insult, while Jaffé heaped fuel on the fire by publishing an edition of the letters of St Boniface, long projected and promised by Pertz, and by sharp criticism of Pertz's scholarship. Finally, Jaffé had the misfortune to lose a manuscript from the Berlin library, whereupon Pertz forbade him the use of the place, and when the Minister stepped in on Jaffé's behalf proceeded to accuse his old assistant of espionage. The matter now passed to the lawyers; Pertz refused to withdraw the charge and Jaffé circulated widely in official and academic circles a burning rebuttal. His mind had long had a streak of morbidity, and he now developed a mania of hatred and persecution; in 1870, at the height of his powers as a scholar, he took his own life. For this Pertz cannot be held accountable,[3] but he himself was now showing signs of age and even of an unbalanced mind.[4] Hopeless anarchy reigned in the management of the *Monumenta*; editions languished and proofs were not sent to the editors. Even Waitz determined to contribute no more; Köpke was removed by death,

[1] 1841–95.

[2] 1843–1902; *N.A.*, xxvii, 768 ff.; *A.D.B.*

[3] The article on Jaffé in *A.D.B.*, by Alfred Dove, is unjustifiably harsh in its tone towards Pertz.

[4] *Bresslau*, citing Wattenbach, 469. Cf. Dümmler to Sickel, 28 August 1872: 'Pertz ist geistig stumpf, hält aber gleichwohl mit unbeugsamer Energie den Besitz der Monumenta als Familieneigentum fest' (*Bresslau*, 469, n. 1).

and the first volume of the *Diplomata*, edited by Karl Pertz, was a thoroughly unsatisfactory piece of work. These and similar misfortunes led the government, spurred on by Ranke, to act, and a commission was set up to report. For six months the affair dragged on. Pertz, by a mixture of masterly inaction and historical and legal special pleading, defeated all efforts and resisted all appeals; it was his duty as Stein's legatee to hold on to the *Monumenta*. Finally, in February 1873, when his opponents, *de guerre lasse*, had decided that they must wait for him to die, Pertz suddenly and unconditionally threw in his hand. He was treated with great respect and allowed to share in the rearrangement, but in fact took no further share in the business. He had previously been forced to leave the library, and his last few years were spent in darkening shadows though his wife and family were loyal.

The interested scholars now became active. Waitz, who had refused to move against his old master, was now persuaded to act, and the *Monumenta* was entrusted to a new directorate. This was to include two members nominated by the three academies of Berlin, Munich and Vienna; the rest were to be chosen by co-optation, and were to elect a president, who was himself to have charge of the *Scriptores*.[1] The new directorate was a strong one; Mommsen, Sickel, Giesebrecht, Wattenbach, Dümmler were among its members, with Pertz and Euler carried over from the past. Von Sybel was among the early additions. The directorate was to meet yearly to settle matters of high policy; a committee, consisting of those resident in Berlin, dealt with business in the interim. To each of the five sections leaders were to be appointed with an *ex-officio* seat on the directorate. Ample government funds were granted for the work in general and specifically for a salary for Waitz, together with official quarters and a room for the *Monumenta*. In the autumn of 1875 Waitz left Göttingen to take up his duties. Pertz, greatly decayed in his powers, was present at the annual general meeting in 1876; he died of a stroke in the autumn. A final judgment on his scholarship and on his character had yet to be made, and it may well be more favourable than that of the historian whose account we have been following; here alone perhaps does he seem to lose his fine impartiality. In any case, Pertz had done an inestimable service to European scholarship. To him in another, but in as real a way as to Stein, the

[1] For the new statutes, see *N.A.*, i, 7–9.

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.*, xlvi, 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.

As to the personnel, there were losses and gains, but the latter preponderated. Pertz's last group, Scheffer-Boichorst, Arndt and Weiland all left to take chairs. Into their places came recruits of note: Heller, an attractive character who died young in 1880; Holder-Egger,[1] a pupil of Waitz who was to equal and perhaps surpass his master in critical genius, and who remained a loyal Monumentist from his student days till his death; Bruno Krusch,[2] another faithful worker; Harry Bresslau,[3] eminent alike as palaeographer, editor and historian; Felix Liebermann, familiar to English historians for his work on Old English and Norman law and constitution; Ludwig Traube,[4] the great textual scholar. The output of the years after 1875 was as notable for quantity as for quality. In the *Scriptores* alone six folios, three quartos and eighteen octavo volumes appeared. Meanwhile the *Laws*, divided into five sub-sections, made good progress under Karl Zeumer and Friedrich Thaner; in the *Diplomata* Sickel, having eliminated Karl Pertz, recruited among others the illustrious Paul Kehr; in the *Letters* Wattenbach secured the brilliant young Paul Ewald for the letters of Gregory the Great, and it was Ewald who introduced to the learned world the rich collection of papal letters from the British Museum supplied by Edmund Bishop. In the *Antiquities* Dümmler, with the aid of Max Manitius and above all of Traube, produced an excellent series of editions of Latin medieval poetry. Yet another innovation was the change of the old, dull and reticent periodical or *Archiv* of the Society into the *Neues Archiv*, which under the energetic editorship of Wattenbach became one of the leading learned journals of Europe, with articles and studies bearing on the *Monumenta*, a chronicle and forecast of its activities, and notices of literature bearing upon it.

Waitz died, at the height of his powers, on 25 May 1886. Ranke had preceded him by twenty-four hours, and on his death-bed had

[1] 1851–1911. See *A.D.B.*, Wattenbach in *N.A.*, vi, 456 ff., and the memoir by K. Zeumer in *N.A.*, xxxvi, 821 ff.

[2] 1857–1940.

[3] 1848–1926. Bresslau was Professor-extraordinary at Berlin, 1877–90, Professor at Strassburg 1890–1918 and at Heidelberg for the remainder of his life. Memoir by Kehr in *N.A.*, xlvii, 251 ff. See also his autobiographical contribution (n. 2) to *Die Geschichtswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, ii (1926).

[4] 1861–1907. *N.A.*, xxxiii, 539 ff.; P. Lehmann, introductory memoir to Traube's *Vorlesungen* (Munich, 1909), vol. i.

inquired how his most brilliant and faithful pupil did.[1] Waitz was not only the greatest of German medievalists and a firm leader; he was also a man of singular loyalty and integrity whom all respected as deeply as they admired him. Alike by his energy, his wisdom, his foresight and his personal relations he had rebuilt the *Monumenta*.

The relatively sudden disappearance of Waitz left the succession in the air. Wattenbach was elected acting-president; he had probably been Waitz's choice, and it was assumed by himself and many others that he would succeed without dispute, but in fact a vexatious controversy arose. The directorate was autonomous, with no subordination to the ministry, but the *Monumenta* was financed by the government and Waitz's salary had been paid to the person not to his office. In these circumstances it was natural that the ministry should seize every chance to get control of the appointment, and the executive committee of Berlin academics rent, so it has been suggested, by domestic and foreign rivalries, and dominated by Mommsen, a master-schemer, agreed somewhat hastily that the directorate should do no more than present for nomination by the Kaiser. This might have been a harmless concession, but when they proceeded to elect, opinion was fatally and firmly divided, and Wattenbach and Dümmler received an equal number (7) of votes. This produced an unfortunate deadlock. We need not examine the complicated and painful details of the controversy, which in its progressive stages weakened ever more the position of the directorate *vis-à-vis* the government; in the course of months both Wattenbach and Dümmler refused to stand and then cancelled their refusal. In 1887 it was decided to choose two names for presentation to the government; though the composition of the directorate had changed somewhat the voting resulted as before in a tie; and the government appointed Dümmler. This unfortunate affair had two results; it deprived the directorate of its freedom of election of the president; and it occasioned a change of statute by which the president, no longer necessarily a member of the directorate or in charge of *Scriptores*, was made a full-time director; it was the first step towards an Institute.

[1] See *Abhandlungen d. preussischen Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, 1886, p. 3: 'Was macht denn der treue Waitz?' The words quoted by Wattenbach are also in Eberhard Waitz's memoir, 79.

Once appointed, Dümmler showed himself a tactful, kindly and energetic chief, who gradually healed the wounds of battle. He secured yet another considerable increase in the grant and more commodious rooms for the *Monumenta* and its meetings. Of more questionable wisdom was his achievement in securing the appointment of Holder-Egger with a good salary as assistant director with a seat on the directorate; it was another tap on the wedge of government control. In the realm of editorial policy Dümmler of set purpose maintained the tradition of Waitz, and his term of office, 1887–1902, is therefore the second half of a single epoch, though Dümmler was a less forceful personality than Waitz, and allowed the autonomy of the sections to become almost a constitutional doctrine. Since Wattenbach had resigned and persisted in his withdrawal the *Scriptores* (which he had held since Waitz's death) and the *Neues Archiv* required new leaders; Holder-Egger took over the folio *Scriptores*; Bresslau the *Neues Archiv*. Mommsen, now a septuagenarian, continued his astounding career of productivity and among other work published his great edition of Cassiodorus (1894) and the edition of the *Liber Pontificalis* (1898) which rivalled, but did not supplant, that of Duchesne. Among notable recruits were Tangl,[1] Wilhelm Levison,[2] Alfons Dopsch and Hermann Bloch; among birds of passage the great Wilamowitz-Möllendorf and Heinrich Böhmer, who left his mark on so many diverse subjects. Other memorable achievements of the Dümmler regime were the series of critical lives of the Merovingian saints by Krusch and Levison, which impinged upon Bollandist preserves, the editions by Dümmler and others of the Carolingian letter-writers such as Alcuin, Lupus of Ferrières and Paschasius Radbert, and the masterly edition, not completed for several decades, of Salimbene by Holder-Egger. In a place apart stand the three additional volumes of quarto *Scriptores*, originally planned by Waitz, and entitled *Libelli de Lite*, being treatises and letters connected with the great contest—always the 'lis' *antonomastice* to German historians—between Empire and Papacy. Finally, no account of this time would be complete without mention of Bresslau's classical textbook on

[1] 1861–1920. Memoir by P. Kehr in *N.A.*, xliv, 139 ff.

[2] 1876–1947. An exile from Nazi Germany, he was received as a guest professor at Durham University, and delivered the Ford Lectures at Oxford on the Anglo-Saxon Church in 1943.

medieval diplomatic[1] which, among other things, standardized the method, devised by Sickel, of counterchecking collation by dictation of the script against the original.

Dümmler died in harness in 1902; a few weeks before his death Mommsen, now 85, had retired from his editorial work. Strangely and unfortunately, Dümmler's death gave rise to another contretemps similar to and even more disastrous than that of 1886. This time the government was smartly off the mark and forestalled independent action by appointing Holder-Egger as *locum tenens* pending the election of a president; this *fait accompli* was accepted, and the presentation of names deferred till 1903. Once again opinion was sharply divided. To some Bresslau seemed to have a strong claim, by reason of his great services to the *Monumenta* and his vivacious and likeable personality. He was, however, a Jew, and had never been *persona grata* in Berlin. Holder-Egger, on the other hand, though unrivalled as an editor, was neither a scholar of width nor a leader of men, and old Mommsen, active as ever though on the verge of the grave, was against him. After much complicated manœuvring, in a badly arranged vote for first preference Holder-Egger alone came out with a clear majority. As the Minister had asked for three names at least, it was decided to add three unlikely and even recalcitrant candidates in order to force in Holder-Egger; this deprived Bresslau of any chances he might have had on a straight vote, and he felt the blow deeply. Nor in fact did the trick come off. The government, who would have none of Holder-Egger, held up the appointment and decided to reorganize the *Monumenta* once again as a state-controlled institute, directed, if need be, by an administrator who was not a medievalist. Delays and hitches of all kinds supervened, and for four years the *Monumenta* lay in the doldrums. This delay accentuated the weakness and the fissiparous tendencies of the fabric; editors delayed, prevaricated and defaulted; individual scholars indulged their taste for luxuriant indices and apparatus; a number of bad choices were made, both of texts to edit and of editors to do the work; some faulty editions appeared, especially in the *Laws*, and were mangled by the critical wolves, some of them in the sheep's clothing of Monumentists. Without an effective head there was a real danger that all the channels of movement would silt up; to use another

[1] His *Handbuch d. Urkundenlehre* was first published in 1889.

metaphor, it needed firm central direction to keep all the balls in the air at once.

At last, in July 1906, the government nominated Reinhold Koser, the distinguished historian of Frederick the Great, now for ten years head of the Prussian State Archives. It was another step towards the Institute, another step away from the old conception of the chairmanship of a technical medievalist, *primus inter pares*, and both Holder-Egger and Bresslau were wounded. Koser, however, was a good administrator and an almost too tactful colleague. He did much to improve the status of the young workers, and took the first steps towards integrating them into the academic ladders of seniority, though by securing two state-paid posts he advanced another step towards bureaucracy.

Meanwhile Traube had died in 1907, and his great collection of books was bought by friends and presented to the *Monumenta*. Holder-Egger died in 1911 and was succeeded in the *Scriptores* by Bresslau; among notable publications were Levison's Life of Boniface (1905) and the Anglo-Saxon saints (1919–20), Ehwald's Aldhelm (1913–19), Tangl's Letters of Boniface (1916) and Caspar's Register of Gregory VII. Nevertheless, the *Monumenta* was not in the best of health. It was now operating in three distinct centres—the directorate and several sections at Berlin, the Carolingian *Diplomata* at Vienna, and the *Scriptores* and the Swabian *Diplomata* with Bresslau at Strasbourg; in all the sections the work was largely done by the disciples of the professor in charge of the section, and there was a tendency, already seen on a high level in Holder-Egger, for the Monumentist to be a technician rather than a medieval historian.

Koser died shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, and for some years Bresslau held the fort. But he was once more deprived, partly now by age but chiefly from unwillingness to leave Strasbourg, of the final distinction of the presidency, and in 1919, when Germany's fortunes were at their nadir, Paul Kehr,[1] a pupil of Sickel who had long since done work for the *Monumenta* and who had in 1915 succeeded Koser as Director of the Prussian State

[1] 1860–1944. Memoir by W. Holtzmann in *D.A.*, viii, 26 ff. Kehr's great work as a scholar was to initiate and organize a complete collection, country by country, of papal documents. Among his collaborators Walther Holtzmann, himself a Monumentist since 1946, has published three volumes of *Papsturkunden in England.*

Archives, was nominated and confirmed—the only time, as he himself wryly remarked, that the directorate had voted unanimously. Kehr was by temperament an autocrat and a realist, some might say a pragmatist. He had little sympathy with the liberal views of Bresslau and others,[1] but he did the *Monumenta* an inestimable service in the years after 1919 and in the crisis of inflation. He restored the finances, shifted it to new and convenient quarters in a wing of the building of the State Library, and reorganized the work in three sections with full-time directors; *Scriptores*, *Leges* and *Diplomata*. Of these he took over the last and himself edited three volumes of Carolingian charters. Kehr was still in command when the régime of Hitler gripped Germany. He was not a Nazi, but his realistic, agnostic, authoritarian frame of mind allowed him to go part of the way, at least, with the tide. In 1934 a decree of the Minister of the Interior announced the take-over of the *Monumenta*, and on 1 April 1935 a remarkably laconic communiqué promulgated a new constitution.[2] According to this, the *Monumenta* became a Reichsinstitut directly under the Minister, who had the appointment of the director. The old directorate was changed into a council of twelve honorary members appointed by the Minister with a merely consultative function. At the same time the *Neues Archiv*, after a break, became the *Deutsches Archiv* (1937). Kehr accepted the change, but retired in the following year. He was succeeded as president by E. E. Strengel (1937–42) and Th. Mayer (1942–45).

The *Monumenta* continued to function during the first four years of the War, but when the allied air offensive showed signs of developing the president and his assistants removed to a mansion near Bamberg put at their disposal by the owner, while the more precious of the collections were stored in the galleries of a mine.[3]

[1] Kehr wrote of Bresslau's liberalism (*N.A.*, xlvii, 266): 'Dass dies alles Doktorfragen seien und dass es vielmehr auf die Praxis, auf die Wirklichkeit und auf die Loyalität der leitenden Persönlichkeiten ankomme, wollte er wenigstens theoretisch nicht zugeben'. But would the loyalty of leading persons have saved Bresslau, the Jew, from crossing the Rhine again in the opposite direction had he lived ten years longer?

[2] For an account of this see P. Kehr, 'Die preussische Akademie und die M.G.H.', in *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil-hist. Kl. 1935, 740–77. The 'Bericht über die Herausgabe der M.G.H.' in 1934 is *ibid.*, 731. The statutes of 1935 are *ibid.*, and in *D.A.*, i (1937), 276.

[3] For this see *D.A.*, viii (1950), 1 ff.

At the end of the war the Bavarian government came to the rescue of the finances, but the losses were very serious. The documents in the mine had been burnt by a gang of foreign workers, and the stock of printed volumes at Weidmann's had been destroyed by enemy action. The president, Mayer, was *persona non grata* to the Allies, and he was replaced by W. Goetz, the true saviour of the *Monumenta*. Finally, under F. Baethgen (1947–58) the *Monumenta* was reorganized once more. Headquarters were established at Munich of the 'Deutsches Institut für Erforschung des Mittelalters'. The constitutions were in large part identical with those in force before 1935, but the president was to be freely elected by the directorate for presentation to the Bavarian Minister of Education.[1] The directorate itself was to contain two members from the five German academies of Berlin, Munich, Göttingen, Leipzig and Heidelberg, together with two from Vienna and other scholars of note. Thus once more independent in essentials, but recognized as a state Institute and with a wider field of reference, the *Monumenta* has opened yet another phase of its career. The president, elected in 1959, is H. Grundmann.

The great and unique achievement of the *Monumenta* has been to realize Stein's ambition of presenting Germans, or at least German historians, with an almost complete library of the literary and diplomatic sources of their country's history from the earliest times to the opening of the fourteenth century. The back of the task was broken by Pertz; and it must be his lasting claim to gratitude that by the 'sixties of the last century the materials for medieval German history were in large measure in print; this fact not only moulded the course of German historiography for more than half a century, but gave German medievalists the lead among European historians which even two disastrous wars have not taken from them.

In addition to this, and in a way that Stein could not have foreseen, this has been done in such a way that both text and editorial matter have attained on the whole the very highest of standards, and in so doing, have raised the standard of the whole of Western historical scholarship. While it is true that the *Monumenta* as such has never been a teaching school such as the Ecole des Chartes, it has in fact acted as a nursery of professors and archivists, and as

[1] *Ibid.*, 22 ff.

workshop for the perfecting of certain well-defined technical skills. Take it for all in all, it is the *Monumenta* that has set up for all Western historical scholarship the ideal of the critical text.

Moreover, in the course of their labours Monumentists have made innumerable discoveries of manuscripts in the libraries of Europe, and have thus enriched German and European medieval history to an extent that can only be fully realized by those whose expertise lies in these fields. It is true that in Pertz's day the great majority of the texts printed were of interest solely to the historian of the medieval Empire; it is for this reason that the *Monumenta* remained virtually unknown in this country in the nineteenth century, and exercised so little influence upon the editors of our Rolls Series and early Camdens. But during the last eighty years the horizons both of Monumentists and of English historians have broadened and the work of Mommsen, of Traube, of Tangl, and of Levison—to name but a few—has benefited the whole commonwealth of learning.

The function of the *Monumenta* in the future is not easy to foresee. Thanks largely to its past achievement, scholars now in every country are engaged in editing medieval texts with something, at least, of the skill which the *Monumenta* has taught, and which French and Belgian scholars, in particular, have brought to new perfection. At the same time, the new interests of literary and philosophical history are demanding editions of medieval texts with which, at least hitherto, the *Monumenta* has not been concerned. But such an institution, with such a history, will never be out of place so long as the critical study of medieval history is of any concern to the inhabitants of Europe.