

*Martinus Polonus' Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors: a Medieval Best-seller and its Neglected Influence on Medieval English Chroniclers**

IN 1278 Martinus Polonus (Martinus Oppaviensis or Martin of Troppau as he is better known on the continent), a Dominican friar formerly holding the office of penitentiary at the papal curia, was appointed Archbishop of Gnesen (Gniezno) in Poland by Pope Nicholas III (1277–80); however, he never saw his bishopric as he died at Bologna while on his way to take up his new duties. The enormous fame Martin enjoyed toward the end of his life and, even more notably, after his death throughout the later Middle Ages, does not rest on this remarkable career but, rather, on his having composed the *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*,¹ a catalogue of popes and emperors from the birth of Christ to the accession of Pope Nicholas III, which was 'extremely popular' and was said to have been copied by the hundred.² The chronicle's circulation in England has never been the subject of a detailed examination. In the general books on English historical literature, only six historical works at most on the Middle Ages are mentioned as influenced by Martin, which, as we will see, falls short of the sum total. It therefore seems appropriate to look more closely at various aspects of Martin's success, especially the extent and reasons for the popularity of his work in England.³ In so doing I should like to begin by giving a brief account of Martin's life and of the structure and contents of his chronicle before examining how widely known it was in late medieval England. Then we will turn to the various ways in which it was 'adapted', i.e. translated and extended by continuations. Finally, particular emphasis will be given to Martin's hitherto neglected influence on a number of English medieval chroniclers. The present essay, however, is only intended to outline some of the more striking aspects and general tendencies. A more detailed examination will be part of my forthcoming doctoral thesis on the *Chronicon* in late medieval England.

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1. Edited most recently by L. Weiland, 'Martini Oppaviensis chronicon pontificum et imperatorum', *M[onumenta] G[ermaniae] H[istorica] Scriptores (=SS)* xxii (1872), pp. 377–475. A new critical edition is being prepared by A.-D. von den Brincken.

2. J. Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1987), 22; A. G. Little, 'Chronicles of the Mendicant Friars', *Franciscan Papers, Lists and Documents* (Manchester, 1943), p. 37.

3. A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England* i (London, 1974), pp. 471, 495, 504; ii (1982), 322, 359, 396; Walter of Guisborough, Richard of Durham, Nicholas Trevet, John Rous, Thomas Burton and Thomas Rudborne. For Germany and France, see Weiland (1872), pp. 395–6 and R. Sprandel, 'Möglichkeiten der Weltgeschichtsschreibung im spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland', *Saeculum* xlviii (1997), 275–97.

Little is known about the life of Martin of Troppau.¹ From the preface to his chronicle we learn something about the office he held at the papal curia, where he, '*frater Martinus ordinis Predicatorum*', was '*domini papae poenitentiarius et capellanus*'. Another source, a letter of a Dominican named Hyacinth, tells us that Martin was educated at the Dominican monastery of St Clement in Prague, where he was also consecrated. When he went to Rome and became papal chaplain is unknown. The only fact of which we can be sure is that he worked as papal penitentiary ('*poenitentiarius minor*') from at least 1261 onwards. He died in 1278 in Bologna on his way to assume his see, shortly after he had been appointed Archbishop of Gnesen. He was buried there, in the Dominican monastery.

It is noteworthy that Martin has been referred to by two different names throughout the past centuries. In some fourteenth-century manuscripts the line '*de regno Boemiae oriundus, patria Oppaviensis*' is added to the words which Martin used to introduce himself in his chronicle. According to this, Martin's birthplace was the Silesian town of Troppau, which then belonged to Moravia and hence to the kingdom of Bohemia. A generation after his death, however, Martin was given the epithet 'Polonus' by Bartholomew of Lucca (†1327) and Bernard Gui (†1331), both of whom were Dominicans and saw themselves as continuators of Martin's chronicle. Why Martin was given that name is uncertain, but there are two possible explanations. One links Martin with Poland as his monastery in Prague belonged to the Polish province of the Dominican Order. The other is that Martin was archbishop-elect of Gnesen at the end of his life. Although 'Polonus' is less appropriate, it has been much more frequently used than 'Martin of Troppau' – the name by which I will refer to him in the course of this article.

During his life Martin was quite productive. His *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* was not his only work, if by far his most successful. This may be attributed to its extraordinary layout: although Martin was not the first to present history in tabular form, he surpassed all his predecessors.² Unlike them he dealt only with the two universal powers of his time, the papacy and the empire. Dispensing with other 'minor' powers, i.e. all the other 'national' kingships, such as England

1. For Martin's life and works see, for example, T. Kaeppli, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum medii aevi*, iii, 115–118 and A.-D. von den Brincken, 'Zur Herkunft und Gestalt der Martins-Chroniken', *D[eutsches] A[rchiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters]* xxxvii (1981), 694–735, and *V[erfasser]L[exikon]* vi (second edition 1987), 158–66.

2. Chronicles in tabular form were common in Italy, in Rome in particular, long before Martin came there. A very important and popular predecessor of Martin's *Chronicon* was the *Speculum maius* of the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais (†1264). Also, among others, the universal chronicle of Metz, which consists of up to five parallel columns, and the chronicle of the Venetian Paulinus Minorita with up to twenty-seven parallel columns, both of which were written by Mendicant chroniclers; see von den Brincken, 'Martin von Troppau', *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im späten Mittelalter*, Vorträge und Forschungen xxxi, ed. H. Patze (Sigmaringen, 1987), 171–3.

and France, may have been considered a weakness, but in reality this restriction to two powers proved to be the chronicle's great advantage. As can still be seen in a number of surviving manuscripts, Martin was able to design the biographies of the popes and the emperors, beginning with Christ and Augustus, to run separately on facing pages – with the popes coming first on the verso pages followed by the emperors on the recto pages – which allowed quick comparisons to be made between the two parts of the chronicle. This was made even easier by the fact that both pages were annalistic in design: Martin allocated space to each pope or emperor according to the length of his reign, i.e. one line per year. Thus he wanted to display history in blocks of fifty years on facing pages of fifty lines with the years and lines numbered down the outer margins. This sophisticated graphic arrangement was primarily to serve a didactic purpose. Over time, however, when the chronicle was copied again and again, the annalistic and tabular layout was often – at least partially – destroyed; a fact which may, as Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken rightly presumes, have eventually contributed to the chronicle's decreasing popularity.¹

Such an arrangement inevitably meant that Martin had to omit important events from the shorter reigns and had to pad out some of the longer reigns with ancillary material, often legends. As Dan Embree recently observed, 'this triumph of form over function is a powerful commentary on Martinus's understanding of his role as a chronicler; chronology counted for more than history, and neatness for more than substance'.² It is for this neatness at the expense of logical links and necessary explanations, as well as for a number of 'unhistorical' legends – most notably the fable of Pope Joan – that the *Chronicon* has been harshly criticized by many historians.³ However, this criticism is only partly justified. When compiling his chronicle Martin may not have intended to create an outstanding piece of historical literature; his first and foremost aim was to provide an aid for theologians and canonists, for whom it was necessary – as he put it in the preface to the chronicle – to know the chronology of the popes and emperors. For that reason he suggested that his chronicle (which originally occupied in its entirety – corresponding to twenty-six half-centuries – only twenty-six folios) should be added as an appendix to the *Historia scholastica* of Petrus Comestor (†1179) and to the *Margarita decreti* (also known as *Tabula Martiniana decreti*), an index to the decretals, which is another of

1. von den Brincken, 'Studien zur Überlieferung der Chronik des Martin von Troppau (Erfahrungen mit einem massenhaft überlieferten historischen Text)', *DA* xli (1985), 470–2, 494, and *DA* xlv (1989), 552–3.

2. D. Embree, *The Chronicles of Rome. An Edition of the Middle English 'The Chronicle of Popes and Emperors' and 'The Lollard Chronicle'* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 3.

3. For a collection of mainly negative value judgements see Embree (1999), p. 2.

Martin's works.¹ In short, the *Chronicon* has the merit of brevity, and it may well have been its very quality as a concise and, as regards most facts and figures, reliable handbook, which increased its success.²

It is also worth mentioning that Martin's work has come down to us in three different versions, all of which appear to have been produced by Martin himself. The first recension was completed in 1268, the second in about 1271 or 1272, and the third in 1277, shortly after the accession of Nicholas III.³ The third and final version differs from the prior two by a number of significant additions, most notably a brief geographical and historical introduction, surveying the ancient world – Rome in particular – up to the time of Augustus, and the fable of Pope Joan already mentioned. It was this final recension that was copied the most often.⁴ Yet the extent of its success, particularly in comparison with other historical works, has only been recognized in the past two decades.

In 1980 the French historian Bernard Guenée tried to estimate the success of historical works in the Middle Ages by comparing the numbers of known manuscripts.⁵ On his – admittedly somewhat provisional and incomplete – list of 'best-sellers', the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus came first with 419 known copies, followed by the *Historiae adversum paganos* of Orosius (245), the *Epitome* of Justinus (207) and the *Antiquitates Judaicae* of Flavius Josephus (200), all of which were composed in (late) antiquity. The first truly medieval piece of historical writing is an English one: the *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, in fifth position with some 200 known medieval copies. Other English histories and chronicles⁶ such as those of Bede and Ranulph Higden survived in 164 and 118 manuscripts respectively, thus occupying the seventh and ninth positions on Guenée's list.⁷ One looks in vain, however, for the *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* of Martin of Troppau, because its manuscript

1. However, it seems that most copyists did not comply with this wish, as there is only one known case in England in which the chronicle and the *Margarita decreti* were handed down together: B[ritish] L[ibr.] [ary] London], Roy. 10 C. xi.

2. von den Brincken, *DA* xxxvii (1981), 716–8; T. F. Tout, 'The Study of Medieval Chronicles', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester* vi (1921/2), 428; Little, 38, and the American linguist W. Matthews, 'Martinus Polonus and some Later Chroniclers', *Medieval Literature and Civilisation*, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London, 1969), pp. 275–6.

3. C.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 382–91.

4. See *infra*, p. 331, n. 3.

5. B. Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris, 1980), pp. 250–2.

6. For the different types of medieval historical writing, of which chronicles are only one, see Guenée, 'Histoire, annales, chroniques. Essai sur les genres historiques au moyen âge', *Annales économiques, sociétés, civilisations* xxviii (1973), 997–1016; Taylor (1987), 37–9; A. Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 199–201.

7. The studies of N. Wright and J. C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Cambridge, 1985–91) and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Notes on the *Polychronicon*', *Notes and Queries* cccxiii (1978), 2–3, have shown that the actual figures are higher. Therefore, their respective positions in the hierarchy set up by Guenée could be raised to fourth or even third.

tradition was too extensive for Guenée to be able to deal with it and this is why he refrained from making any assumptions as regards precise numbers.¹

Thanks to the subsequent studies of Thomas Kaeppli, OP and A-D. von den Brincken we know that there are at least 419 medieval copies of Martin's chronicle in existence, the same figure as for Valerius Maximus' work.² In actual fact, however, the number of manuscripts containing the chronicle is considerably greater, as can be illustrated by referring to its 'English' tradition: of the 419 manuscripts in von den Brincken's list, 73, i.e. 17.5 per cent, are preserved in libraries in the British Isles – a figure which may now be enlarged by at least 18 additional manuscripts, bringing the total to some 91 copies of the chronicle.³ Of course not all of these were produced in England; there are also manuscripts of English provenance in European libraries. The total number of a minimum of 437 surviving manuscripts makes the chronicle of Martin of Troppau probably the most widely copied work of historiography on a European scale.⁴ The figure for England is surprisingly high, not least when compared with the number of copies of the works of indigenous English historians, such as William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, or Matthew Paris, which is far smaller.⁵

Guenée's approach is not the only means of evaluating the success of Martin's chronicle. An alternative is to count the frequency with which it was translated into the vernacular. Like the *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden – without doubt the most popular product of historical writing

1. Guenée (1980), 249.

2. Kaeppli, 118–23; von den Brincken, *DA* xli (1985), 460–531; id. *DA* xlv (1989), 551–91; id. *DA* I (1994), 611–13.

3. BL, Add[itional] M[anu]S[cript] 4783 (fos. 8r[ecto]–15v[erso], fragment), Burney 280 (fos. 38v–117v, fragment), Cott. Cleopatra D.ix (fos. 13r–37v), Cott. Galba E.xi (fos. 129r–54v), Harley 3603 (fos. 8r–47v), Sloane 289 (fos. 96r–108r, excerpt); Bodleian Libr. Oxford, Lat. misc. c. 75 (fos. 25r–52v), Lat. hist. d. 4 (fos. 1r–48v); Christ Church Coll.[ege] Oxford, MS 99 (containing the chronicle twice: both as a fragment (fos. 46v–50v) and in its entirety (fos. 141r–96v)); C[oll.] o[f] A[rms London], MS Arundel v (fos. 79v–117r), Vincent 418 (fos. 17r–42r); L[ambeth] P[alace] L[ibr.] London], MS 371 (fos. 72r–80r, excerpt); National Libr. of Scotland Edinburgh, Advocates Libr. MS 18.4.9 (fos. 1r–32r); Trinity Coll. Cambridge, R.4.12 (645) (fos. 74v–121v), R.15.21 (943) (fo. 80, preface); Trinity Coll. Dublin, MS 175 (fos. 1r–2r, fragment), MS 509 (pp. 116–20, excerpt). Of these 91 manuscripts only five belong to the second recension (BL, Add. MS 48178, Burney 280, Cott. Galba E.xi, Roy. 6 B. xi, LPL, MS 371). There are also two manuscripts of the third and final recension which lack the fable of Pope Joan (BL, Roy. 13 A. v (with the tale added in a later hand) and C[orpus] C[hristi] C[oll.] Cambridge], MS 59). These figures demonstrate that the third recension of Martin's chronicle was indeed by far the most popular, constituting more than ninety per cent of the entire tradition; c.f. von den Brincken's studies (see *supra*, n. 2).

4. One cannot be certain about this as another medieval work, the *Historia scholastica* of Petrus Comestor (†1179), was copied extremely often as well. The number of extant manuscripts is likely to be as high as the figure for Martin's chronicle, if not even higher; see von den Brincken, 'Zu Herkunft und Gestalt der Martins-Chroniken', *DA* xxxvii (1981), 696–7; Guenée (1980), p. 249.

5. The respective numbers are according to Guenée (1980), p. 251, at least 55 manuscripts for William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* and *Gesta pontificum* counted together, 25 for the *Historia Anglorum* of Henry of Huntingdon, and 17 for the *Flores historiarum* based on the writings of Matthew Paris.

in late medieval England – the *Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors* was translated at least twice into Middle English¹ and, in contrast with Higden's *Polychronicon*, also into most other national languages of Western and Central Europe, such as German, French, Italian and Castilian, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. What makes the chronicle extraordinary, and perhaps unique in medieval Latin historiography, is the fact that it was not confined to Latin Christendom, but was translated also into Greek, Armenian and, moreover, Persian – an achievement which was not shared by any other Latin chronicle in the Middle Ages.²

The *Chronicon* was not merely copied: in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* thirteen continuations were edited towards the close of the nineteenth century, of which six had been written in medieval England.³ Additionally, there are at least ten as yet unedited English continuations of the chronicle.⁴ Continuations were not the only way in which the chronicle was extended in England: apart from interpolations in the original text, in one specific case details of national history were added alongside the accounts of the popes and emperors. The scribe of MS 449/390 now in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge may have felt that the layout in Martin's chronicle, with popes and emperors as the two universal powers of the West, was incomplete; so he enlarged his copy by adding a third column, dealing with the – mainly mythical – British and English 'kings' up to the death of King Edward III (1377).⁵ In this way Martin's original 'bipolar' arrangement was dropped in favour of a more 'polyfocal' approach.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, another measure of Martin's popularity is the use other late medieval English chroniclers made of him, and this will be the focus of the rest of this article. The first English chronicle in which material from Martin can be traced to any great extent, is the work of Richard of Durham, OFM, composed in or about 1297 and later incorporated into the *Lanercost Chronicle*.⁶ Another historical work of the late thirteenth century, the *Livres de Reis de Brittanie e de Engleterre*, attributed to a Benedictine monk called Peter of

1. Recently edited by D. Embree, 'The Fragmentary Chronicle in British Library, Additional MS 37049', *Manuscripta*, xxxvii (1993), 193–200 and Embree (1999); the latter edition is based upon four surviving manuscripts.

2. von den Brincken, *Geschichtsschreibung* (1987), 156–7.

3. L. Weiland, 'Continuatio pontificum Romana', *MGH SS* xxii (1872), pp. 475–482; Weiland, 'Continuationes chronici Martini Oppaviensis', *MGH SS* xxiv (1879), pp. 251–265; O. Holder-Egger, 'Continuationes breves chronici Martini Oppaviensis', *MGH SS* xxx.1 (1896), pp. 708–720.

4. I am preparing a scholarly edition of most of these unprinted continuations, mixtures of continental history and English affairs.

5. For the mythical history of Britain the third column seems to be mainly based on the *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

6. *Chronicon de Lanercost 1201–1346* (Edinburgh, 1839), ed. J. Stevenson; partly translated into English by H. Maxwell, *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272–1346* (Glasgow, 1913).

Ickham (†1295),¹ may serve as further evidence that Martin's chronicle was brought to England quite soon after his death. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the *Chronicon de gestis regum Angliae* of Walter of Guisborough, OSA († after 1313),² followed by the *Annales sex regum Angliae* by Nicholas Trevet, OP († circa 1334), both used the work of Martin.³ That Nicholas Trevet had considerable recourse to the Dominican chronicle in his *Annales* is well-known, but his use of the *Chronicon* extends also to his Anglo-Norman – i.e. French – chronicle (*Cronicles*).⁴ The *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden, OSB (†1363),⁵ is also greatly indebted to Martin, as are the *Eulogium historiarum*,⁶ the Middle English *Lollard Chronicle*,⁷ and the *Chronica monasterii de Melsa* of Thomas Burton, OCist. (†1437).⁸ In at least two manuscripts of the *Flores historiarum* we can trace a number of interpolations which are derived from Martin's chronicle.⁹ It is noteworthy that the fourteenth century saw his chronicle being drawn on for the theological writings of Wyclif and his disciples,¹⁰ as well as for the anonymous *Stanzaic Life of Christ* written in Middle English.¹¹

In the fifteenth century the *Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors* continued to be of interest to a number of British historians, such as

1. *Le livre de reis de Britannie e le livre de reis de Engleterre. Genealogy of the Kings of Britain*, [R]olls [S]eries) xlii (London, 1865), ed. J. Glover. A Latin compilation traditionally and probably unjustly ascribed to Peter of Ickham is extant in at least fifteen manuscripts (see R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997), 427, to whose list MS Arundel v of the CoA (fos. 121r–72v), and MS 803 (755) of the Bibliothèque municipale, Douai (France) (fos. 120r–71v) should be added). It is, as Glover, pp. ix–xiv, rightly assumes, more likely that only the French text is by Peter of Ickham. The preface of the unedited Latin compilation has also been transcribed by T. D. Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the End of the Reign of Henry VII*, RS xxvi.3 (London, 1871), p. 272). Contrary to the preface of the compilation where Martin is explicitly referred to as a major source (e.g. on fo. 135r of CCC MS 194), his chronicle cannot be traced with certainty in the text. Only the French text contains some material taken from it; see *infra*, p. 336, n. 3.

2. *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, Camden Series lxxxix (London, 1957), ed. H. Rothwell.

3. *The Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet: Text, with Historical, Philological and Literary Study* (Ph.D. thesis London, 1932), ed. A. Rutherford. There is a partial edition by R. J. Dean, *The Life and Works of Nicholas Trevet with Special Reference to his Anglo-Norman Chronicle* (Ph.D. thesis Oxford, 1938).

4. *F. Nicolai Triveti Annales Sex Regum Angliae qui a comitibus Andegavensibus originem traxerunt (AD MCXXXVI–MCCVII)* (London, 1845), ed. T. Hog. A more recent edition of the last section of Trevet's *Annals* is to be found in *A Critical Edition of the Gesta Temporum Edwardi Regis Anglorum (Chapter VI of the Annales Sex Regum Angliae) of Nicholas Trevet, O.P.* (Ph.D. thesis Toronto, 1977), ed. F. A. C. Mantello.

5. *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, RS xli (London, 1865–86), ed. C. Babington and J. R. Lumby.

6. *Eulogium (historiarum sive temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini 1366, a monacho quodam Malmesburiensis exaratum*, RS ix (London, 1858), ed. F. S. Haydon.

7. Edited by Embree, see *supra*, p. 329, n. 2.

8. *Chronica monasterii de Melsa*, RS xliii (London, 1866–8), ed. E. A. Bond.

9. *Flores historiarum*, RS xcv (London, 1890), ed. H. R. Luard.

10. A. Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London, 1985), pp. 23–4, 48–9.

11. *A Stanzaic Life of Christ*, E[arly]E[n]glish]T[ext]S[ociety], clxvi (London, 1926), ed. F. A. Foster.

Andrew of Wyntoun, OSA († circa 1424), who wrote the *Original Chronicle* of Scotland,¹ Thomas of Elmham, OSB († circa 1426/7), with his *Speculum Augustinianum*,² Thomas Rudborne, OSB († after 1450), the author of the *Historia maior* of Winchester,³ and John Rous (†1492) and his *Historia regum Angliae*.⁴ The most important writer to use the work of Martin was John Capgrave, OESA (†1464), who was very productive; his *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, *Ye Solace of Pilgrims*, and the *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* all took material from Martin.⁵ From this list we can see that Martin of Troppau was not only drawn upon by historians writing in Latin, but also by those using the vernacular.

It is interesting to wonder whether Martin's *Chronicon* appealed to particular religious orders. It is clear that it was mainly the Benedictines who used it, which is hardly surprising as the libraries of the great Benedictine houses were most likely to have been able to afford a copy.⁶ That Martin's chronicle was regarded as an important standard work is illustrated by the medieval library catalogue of St Augustine's Canterbury, to take the most striking example, which lists no fewer than five copies.⁷ The mendicant orders used it, particularly the Franciscan Richard of Durham, the Austin friar John Capgrave and the London Dominican Nicholas Trevet; also the Augustinian canons Walter of Guisborough and Andrew of Wyntoun.⁸ Andrew is particularly remarkable as his borrowings show that Martin's chronicle crossed the border and was known and copied in (southern) Scotland; there is no evidence as to whether it was known in Wales or Ireland. Therefore the *Chronicon*'s popularity was not confined to Martin's fellow brethren, the Dominican historians, nor was it short-lived, for it was being read well into the fifteenth century. As a result of the extensive use made of Martin's work, both in England and on the continent, the term *Chronica*

1. *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1903–14), ed. F. J. Amours.

2. *Historia monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis*, RS viii (London, 1858), ed. C. Hardwick.

3. *Anglia sacra sive collectio historiarum de archiepiscopis et episcopis Angliae ad annum 1540*, i (London, 1691), ed. H. Wharton, pp. 179–286.

4. *Joannis Rossi antiquarii Warwicensis historia regum Angliae* (Oxford, 1716), ed. T. Hearne.

5. *Johannis Capgrave liber de illustribus Henricis*, RS vii (London, 1869), ed. F. C. Hingeston, who also translated the text into English; *Ye Solace of Pilgrims. A Description of Rome, circa A.D. 1450*, by John Capgrave, an Austin friar of King's Lynn (London, 1911), ed. C. A. Mills; *John Capgrave's Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, EETS cclxxxv (Oxford, 1983), ed. P. J. Lucas.

6. Among the great Benedictine houses are those of Canterbury, Durham, Glastonbury, Norwich, St Albans and York as well as Bardney, Reading and Thorney; see N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, i (London, 1964), pp. 6, 42–3, 47, 75, 91, 136, 138, 156, 166–7, 189, 217 and Ker, ii (London, 1987), 32, 38.

7. In addition, the late fourteenth-century library catalogue of Dover Priory lists two copies. See M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903), pp. 295, 485.

8. The houses of the religious orders which possessed a copy (or copies) of Martin's chronicle are, for example, the following: (1) Franciscans: Canterbury, Doncaster, Hereford; (2) Dominicans: Boston; (3) Austin friars: London; (4) Augustinian canons: Southwark. See Ker, pp. i, 11, 48, 58, 100, 125, 181; Ker, ii, 39. In addition, a number of other religious orders (e.g. the Carmelites and Cistercians) as well as colleges (Eton and Oxford colleges) and collegiate churches (e.g. Southwell) owned the *Chronicon*. See Ker, pp. i, 80, 148, 181; id., ii, 55.

Martiniana became synonymous with the entire genre of chronicles on popes and emperors as early as the turn of the fourteenth century, and the name 'Martin' came to be attributed to the works of otherwise unknown chroniclers as a means of conferring authority on them.¹

In order to examine which elements of the chronicle were of particular interest and why it enjoyed such popularity in late medieval England, further analysis is needed. Martin's English followers fall into three groups: first, those historians who used Martin as a major source albeit selectively; then those who included most of the *Chronicon* (or at least a considerable portion of it), but apparently unselectively; thirdly, those who explicitly referred to Martin as an alleged source, although their citations cannot be traced in Martin's text. Of these categories the first constitutes my main interest. But before turning to it, I would like to make a few brief remarks about groups two and three.

The *Eulogium historiarum* is an example of a work in which the chronicle of Martin of Troppau was copied indiscriminately. The second and third books dealing with the apostles and popes up to John XXI (1276–7) and the rulers of the (Holy) Roman Empire up to Frederick II (1212/20–50), are more or less direct copies of Martin with just a few additions.² The same is true of Capgrave's *Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, which may be divided into three parts: the first, beginning with the Creation and then dealing with the empires of the ancient world, is followed by the history of the Christian era until the Norman Conquest; the last part is mainly concerned with English affairs. As Peter J. Lucas, its modern editor, has shown in great detail, the second part, and also portions of the third, are mainly extracted from the work of Martin.³ The situation is similar in the case of Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*, which follows Martin quite closely up to the end of the eleventh century.⁴ It is remarkable that only in this work is explicit and repeated reference made to Martin.⁵ By contrast, in the *Historia* of Thomas Rudborne and that of John Rous, Martin is occasionally or allegedly referred to by name in order to substantiate assertions. Rudborne mentions Martin five times. However, on three or perhaps four occasions, the references are completely unwarranted.⁶ Rous

1. von den Brincken, *DA* xxxvii (1981), 694–8; id. *VL*, viii, 165–6. One significant example is the *Flores temporum*, which was written as a derivative of Martin's work by an anonymous Swabian friar Minor in c. 1292. As the author's name was not known he was referred to as Martinus Minorita.

2. Haydon i, xliii–iv; see also *infra*, p. 339, n. 3.

3. Lucas, bxxi–vii. The first scholar to identify Martin as one of the main sources was William Matthews, pp. 277–82.

4. Amours pp. i, lxxii–iv. However, Amours is wrong in saying that the last parallel to Martin is text on the year 1012. On the contrary the last passage is probably the entry on Pope Gregory VI (1045–6); see Amours iv, pp. 246–7. Also see Matthews, pp. 276–7.

5. There are at least 23 explicit references to Martin and his work: Amours pp. ii, 10–11, 120–1, 140–1; iii, 16–17, 92–3, 94–5, 98–9, 118–19, 162–3, 180–1, 184–5 (reference unfounded), 226–7, 298–9, 390–1; iv, 2–3, 16–17, 22–3 (reference unfounded), 44–5, 102–3, 165, 188–9, 222–3, 246–7.

6. Wharton, pp. 179–80 (references mainly unwarranted), 272; c.f. Weiland (1872), p. 435.

mentions Martin only once, as does Thomas of Elmham.¹ If we substract these three Latin works from our corpus of fifteenth-century histories because they only occasionally, or only ostensibly, draw on Martin, we are left with only one work in Latin in which a considerable portion of Martin's chronicle appears, namely Capgrave's *Liber de illustribus Henricis*.² This, of course, may simply reflect the increasing use of the vernacular in the fourteenth, and in particular fifteenth, centuries in English historical writing.

As already mentioned, the chronicle of Richard of Durham and the *Liveres* of Peter of Ickham were the first historical works produced in England in which the *Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors* can be traced. For these two authors, Martin provided access to the latest news: Richard made use only of the last three decades covered in the *Chronicon*,³ Peter of Ickham selected a few entries for the years 1250, 1251 and 1270.⁴ Walter of Guisborough, writing at the beginning of the fourteenth century, also exploited Martin's chronicle for its information about quite recent events: he borrowed a couple of facts mentioned by Martin, mainly relating to the time of Emperor Frederick II, and he also used a continuation to the *Chronicle of the Popes* extending to the election of Pope Clement V (1305–14).⁵ Trevet, in contrast, did not confine his interest to the 'more recent' information given by Martin. His *Annales sex regum Angliae* dealt with the period of the English kings from Stephen to Edward I (1136–1307). Contrary to what might be expected from the title, it was not dedicated exclusively to English affairs but covered European history on a grand scale, particularly the Church, the Holy Roman Empire and France. For his account of continental events, Trevet had no choice but to fall back on his fellow Dominican, and he did so extensively: in total more than seventy passages derived from Martin can be traced in his work.⁶ The first borrowings related to the middle of the twelfth century, and from then on he followed Martin's chronicle until it ended in 1277.⁷ Trevet used Martin's facts and figures, which shows that the chronicle was appreciated as a reliable source of factual information. In addition, Trevet copied some longer passages,

1. Hearne, p. 73; c.f. Weiland (1872), p. 426. Hardwick, pp. 173–4; c.f. Weiland, pp. 457–8.

2. Hingeston, pp. 9–11, 13, 15, 18, 26, 30–2, 37, 40, 47; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 461, 464, 466–8, 470–1.

3. Stevenson, e.g. pp. 56, 69, 73, 75, 86–7, 89, 92, 98; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 441–3, 472–4.

4. Glover, pp. 286, 292, 296; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 472, 474.

5. Rothwell, pp. 178–82; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 471–2. The continuation, extant in a number of manuscripts (e.g. CCC MS 194 or LPL MS 22 and 340), has not yet been printed; see Rothwell, pp. 223–4, 228–30, 239, 355–6, 363–4.

6. The most complete list published is by Mantello, pp. 82–3, citing some 33 passages, which include the most notable borrowings.

7. Hog, pp. 19–20, 296; cf. Weiland (1872), pp. 436, 443. Towards the end of the *Annals* Trevet's borrowings from Martin increase significantly. After 1277 Trevet seems also to have used parts of a continuation to Martin's chronicle, the *Continuatio pontificum Romana* (Hog, pp. 296, 301; c.f. Weiland, 476–7). Trevet's *Anglo-Norman chronicle* also focuses on the more recent information; see for example Mantello, p. 530; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 442–3.

almost word for word, such as the account of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 or the crusade and death of St Louis, king of France, noted under 1270.¹ Sometimes legends took Trevet's interest, such as the story of a Spanish Jew who converted to Christianity after having found a sacred text sealed up in a rock, or the appearance of a comet in 1264.²

Trevet not only took advantage of the contents of the *Chronicon* but was also inspired by its layout in tabular and annalistic form. As already mentioned, this graphic arrangement served a didactic purpose, which may also explain why Trevet used tables at the beginning of each year.³ A table for the year 1243, for example, looked like this in Trevet's *Annales*:

| D.N.I.C. | P. Romanorum R. | Francorum | Anglorum |
|----------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| MCCXLIII | Innocentii IV 1. | Federici II 32. | Lodovici IX 17. |
| | | | Henrici III 27. |

It is striking that Trevet counted the years not only according to the incarnation of Christ but also by the lengths of the reigns of the popes and emperors, as well as of the French and English kings. That the popes and the 'kings' ('*r[eges]*') of the Holy Roman Empire are both placed in the second column, the popes preceding the emperors, reflects the sequence employed by Martin. It is tempting to assume that Trevet was inspired by Martin's layout, which he then decided to extend to the national kingships of France and England. On account of Trevet's twofold debt to Martin, both for the content and for the layout of his chronicle, one may perhaps be justified in calling him the English continuator of Martin of Troppau.⁴

Ranulph Higden composed his famous *Polychronicon* some two decades after Trevet. He used the *Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors* – as Trevet had done – first and foremost as a handbook, i.e. as a source of facts and figures for continental affairs.⁵ He also used it as a source of legends, particularly spectacular ones, with which he obviously hoped to attract the reader's interest. Among the legends he copied word-for-word are the one about the Spanish Jew already mentioned, and two other stories: the legendary account of Pope Joan, for which Higden explicitly refers to Martin as his authority, and Martin's statement that the council

1. Hog, pp. 193–4, 275–6; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 438, 474.

2. Hog, pp. 239–40, 262; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 472, 473. The latter example is the only instance where Trevet explicitly mentions Martin as a source.

3. These tables are extant in a number of manuscripts and have been printed in Hog's edition.

4. Without doubt he is considered the most important Dominican historiographer in England; see, for example, Little, p. 38. Trevet is the only English historian mentioned in the preface to Weiland's edition (1872), p. 396.

5. Unlike Trevet, Higden quite often makes reference to Martin both in the preface and the chronicle.

of electors had already been in existence in the days of Emperor Otto III (983/96–1002).¹ As Joan Morris has emphasized, Higden was the first English historian to incorporate the tale of Pope Joan into his chronicle² – all later writers had to rely either on Higden or on Martin for this. It proved to be very popular in late medieval England; it appeared in the *Eulogium*, Capgrave's *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* and *Ye Solace of Pilgrims*, the *Lollard Chronicle* – itself a mixture of Martin and Higden – and Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*.³ The story was also interpolated into two manuscripts of the *Flores historiarum*.⁴ Although the legend was popular all over Europe, English historians appear to have taken a particular liking to it, which may be explained by Martin's assertion that Pope Joan was of English origin ('*natione Anglicus*'). This may also explain why some late medieval British chroniclers, such as Andrew of Wyntoun, felt the urge to supplement the information provided by Martin.⁵

John Taylor attributes the great success of the *Polychronicon* to a number of factors, including its interesting and spectacular contents and Higden's skill as a writer.⁶ If we assume that Higden used Martin's chronicle particularly because he wanted to increase the appeal of his own writing by adding stories otherwise unknown in England, this factor may also in part explain Martin's own success. Taylor also suggests that another reason for the popularity of the *Polychronicon* lay in its being a universal history, dealing with the remote past, classical antiquity in particular, which enjoyed a revival of interest in the fourteenth century.⁷ Here Martin was also one of Higden's major sources: in the first four books dealing with the pre-Christian period he was referred to by name on at least ten occasions.⁸ Higden also frequently copied from Martin without admitting it. Therefore, at least some of the popularity of the *Polychronicon* was due to the influence of Martin's chronicle. However, Higden was not unique in using Martin's information about

1. Babington/Lumby vi, pp. 330–4; vii, 44–6; viii, 236; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 428, 466, 472.

2. J. Morris, *Pope John VIII – an English Woman alias Pope Joan* (London, 1985), p. 101. Higden's fable of the female pope proved to be very influential, as the Bohemian reformer John Hus (†1415) took it from Higden and not from Martin; see E. Gössmann, *Mulier papa, der Skandal eines weiblichen Papstes* (München, 1994), pp. 49, 62–3.

3. Haydon i, p. 243; Lucas, p. 87; Mills, p. 74; Embree (1999), p. 124; Amours iv, pp. 166–9. All these accounts of Pope Joan are quite similar in their content, with the exception of the *Eulogium* where there is an alternative version extant in only one manuscript of Martin's chronicle; see Morris, pp. 87–8, 154–5. This shows once again that the compiler of the *Eulogium* must have taken it from another source than Higden.

4. Luard i, p. 425 (note 4).

5. See Amours iv, p. 167.

6. J. Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulph Higden* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 46–7; Taylor, *Historical Writing*, p. 98.

7. Taylor (1966), pp. 2, 41; see also C. D. Eckhardt, 'The Presence of Rome in the Middle English Chronicles of the Fourteenth Century', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* xc (1991), 187–207.

8. Babington/Lumby i, pp. 208, 210–12; ii, 432, 434; iii, 44, 54, 56; iv, 258; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 398–9, 402.

classical antiquity: Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*, Capgrave's *Ye Solace of Pilgrims* and the *Stanzaic Life of Christ* all drew on it to describe the remote past.¹

All historians who wanted to produce universal chronicles after Higden could simply have modelled their works on the *Polychronicon*. Of course, the *Polychronicon* did have a considerable impact on subsequent chroniclers; but its influence may have been exaggerated. The *Eulogium* has been described as a work 'mainly extracted from the *Polychronicon*';² but this assessment is not tenable, in view of the fact that most of the second and the third books of the *Eulogium* 'follow the *Chronicon Pontificum* so closely that an exhibition of the minute differences between them would be tedious and unnecessary'.³ Another world chronicle which could have taken the *Polychronicon* as its main source was Capgrave's *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, but the author in fact chose to draw on Martin's chronicle and the historical work of Thomas Walsingham.⁴ These examples, in particular that of the *Eulogium*, reveal that a chronicler using the *Polychronicon* as a source could not automatically dispense with Martin's chronicle. The reason for this is quite simple: Higden usually shortened the entries given by Martin or turned them into abstracts – if a later historian wanted the full story, he had to fall back on the *Chronicon*. In this way material from Martin found its way into new compilations both directly and indirectly, as in the chronicle of Thomas Burton and the *Lollard Chronicle*.⁵

We are left with the question as to whether the *Chronicon* inspired a renewed preoccupation with, or interest in, papal and imperial history. Judging from our corpus of late medieval historical literature in England, a distinct preference for the history of the Church is discernible. This explains why the treatment of papal history did not break off after 1277 – the year in which Martin's chronicle came to an end. Here there is a contrast with the secular history of the Holy Roman Empire. Thomas Burton, writing in the early fifteenth century, was the sole writer to show an interest in imperial affairs independent of Martin. He seems to be the only one who realized that the vacancy of the Empire had ceased with the coronation of Henry VII in 1312. This emperor, the

1. For the *Original Chronicle* see the first ten passages mentioned on p. 335, n. 5; Mills, p. 45; Foster, pp. 172–3, 180; c.f. Weiland (1872), pp. 398, 401, 403–4, 406, 408, 444.

2. Gransden ii (1982), p. 104. c.f. the statement of Sharpe, p. 666: 'The work is largely derived from Ranulf Higden'.

3. Haydon i, p. lxiv. For the few remarkable instances where the compiler of the *Eulogium* deviates from Martin see Haydon i, pp. lxiv–lxiv.

4. The influence of Walsingham is well-known: Gransden ii (1982), p. 390, is wrong in saying that Capgrave's *Abbreuiacion* was 'a compilation almost entirely from Walsingham'.

5. For the dual influence in Burton's case see for example Bond i, 113, where a portion taken from Higden's *Polychronicon* – itself containing some material from Martin – is followed by a passage of Martin's chronicle. The copy of the *Chronicon* Burton had access to contained – in contrast to Higden – an edited continuation up to 1295; edition by Holder-Egger (1896), pp. 717–19 (*Continuatio pontificum Anglica*). For the *Lollard Chronicle* see Embree (1999), pp. 15–16.

first since Frederick II, and his successors Lewis IV of Bavaria (1314/28–47) and Charles IV (1346/55–78) received substantial treatment in Burton's chronicle.¹ It is remarkable that Burton, writing about the local history of the monastery of Meaux, takes such a broad view by including imperial history in his chronicle, whereas the *Polychronicon* – in its intent and approach a universal history – confines itself mainly to English affairs with the last King of the Romans mentioned by Higden being Richard of Cornwall (1257–72), brother of King Henry III.² Higden's formerly quite detailed notes concerning the Empire break off in the 1270s, as did most of the other chronicles mentioned. This break demonstrates that Martin was the most important 'mediator' of imperial history in late medieval England; his work largely determined what Englishmen knew, or thought they knew, about Germany in that period. This applies, although to a lesser extent, to ecclesiastical history. The fact that Martin was explicitly and repeatedly referred to as an authority by fifteenth-century chroniclers, even though they had only made marginal – if any – use of his work, may be taken as evidence of the high esteem in which the *Chronicon* was held.³

What were the reasons for the great popularity Martin enjoyed in Europe in general, and in England in particular? First, the chronicle was a concise and, in most cases, reliable handbook, in which facts and figures were presented in a sophisticated layout that proved to be didactically useful. This aspect of Martin's work has already been stressed. But the *Chronicon* remained influential even after its original layout had been destroyed as a result of repeated copying. Legends – in particular fantastic ones – seem to have been very popular in medieval England. Taking the *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Higden's *Polychronicon* – apart from Bede the most widely copied historiographical works in England – as outstanding examples, it becomes clear that spectacular legends and anecdotes could considerably increase the readership of a chronicle.⁴ In order to satisfy this predilection of the English audience, and its antiquarian interest – or, as William Matthews put it, a 'romantic inclination'⁵ – from the fourteenth century onwards, it was more or less necessary to fall back on Martin.⁶

1. The Roman kings from Rudolf I (1273–91) to Albrecht I (1298–1308) are treated briefly; Bond ii, p. 241. For the longer passages on the emperors from Henry VII to Charles IV see Bond ii, pp. 250, 320, 321–2, 325, 387; iii, 156.

2. Babington/Lumby viii, p. 238.

3. Gransden (1992), pp. 299–327. The antiquarian interest of the fifteenth-century historians Thomas of Elmham, Thomas Rudborne and John Rous may be considered as their main motive for falling back on Martin.

4. One medieval scribe tried to increase the attractiveness of his copy of the *Historia regum Britanniae* (Bodleian Libr. Oxford, MS Jesus Coll. 2) by interpolating it with material from Martin's chronicle; see N. Wright and J. C. Crick, iii, pp. 141–2.

5. Matthews, pp. 276, 277.

6. As the legend of Pope Joan and the text dealing with the pre-Christian period only appear in Martin's third and last recension, it is tempting to assume that Martin was already well aware of the effects of spectacular legends and the emerging interest in classical antiquity, and therefore he added these elements in order to enhance the success of his work.

As there were no indigenous English authors to compete – such as Bernard Gui in France, who regarded his chronicle of popes, the *Flores chronicorum*, as a continuation of the work of Martin – the *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* remained the most important source for information about continental affairs in England throughout the later Middle Ages.¹

In conclusion, the importance of Martin's work in the later medieval period in England seems to have been underestimated. Both the impressively large number of manuscripts of the *Chronicon* copied in England and the influence it exerted on a number of well-known English (let alone Scottish) chroniclers, put it beyond comparison with either Vincent of Beauvais, OP (†1264), whose *Speculum maius* was the most important predecessor of Martin's chronicle, or with Bernard Gui, his most notable continuator.² The *Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors* of Martin of Troppau therefore should be considered not only the most popular historical work on a European scale by a Dominican, but also the most widely circulated and probably the most influential continental history in late medieval England.

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1. In France the competition with Bernard Gui seems to have had an effect on the number of manuscripts in which Martin's chronicle is extant: Using von den Brincken's numbers (see *supra*, p. 331, n. 2) there are only 57 manuscripts in France compared to the 73 listed for England.

2. Guenée, 250–1, gives the figure of 100 manuscripts for Vincent's *Speculum historiale* and 48 manuscripts for Bernard Gui's *Flores chronicorum* (120 manuscripts for all his works). Of the three historical works of Nicolas Trevet, traditionally considered the greatest English Dominican, far fewer copies have come down to us; c.f. Guenée, p. 251, and Mantello, pp. 90–182.