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Scandinavian Britain

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It will be well before speaking of this movement, its causes, progress, and effects, to give some account of the chief sources upon which our knowledge of it must be based. The sources are of twofold origin, springing from *books* or from *things*. The latter comprise all the facts and ideas that can be drawn from physical geography, from archæologic discoveries, and from numismatics. The former, our written authorities, may be grouped under the heads of *British*, *Scandinavian*, and *Continental*.

Under the first heading come—the Old English Chronicle by various anonymous authors, in its various MSS., vernacular and Latin, ranging over nearly three centuries, of the highest importance, as the work of truthful contemporaries; the different references by Old English authors, from King Alfred to Bishop Wulfstan, to historical events of their days, and several poems. To these we must add several lives of saints, in Latin or English, and that vast collection of deeds and records that makes up our Old English Diplomatarium, a mine of information on places and persons during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Next come the careful and accurate Irish chronicles, especially Tighernach's *Annales*, the compiled *Annals of Inisfallen*, *Chronicon Scotorum*, and the compilation known as the *Annals of the Four Masters*, which gives us an orderly mass of facts not found elsewhere, and are of main use in fixing the difficult chronology of the periods they cover.

The list of British authorities is concluded by the Welsh chronicles, especially the *Brut y Tywysogion*