

Deconstructing Research Projects Exercise

Paper chosen:

'The Annals of Dunstable Priory: From Living Memory to Written Record in a Thirteenth-Century Textual Community' by Harriett Webster

Introduction

The main primary source used in the paper by Harriett Webster is today referred to as *The Annals of Dunstable Priory*. However, the original medieval manuscript was badly damaged in a fire of 1731 and in spite of restoration is now too fragile for scholars to examine (London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A. X). This has led to much discussion from the nineteenth century onwards as to its authorship and construction. Webster's paper outlines these issues arguing that the original manuscript represents a 'working version of the text that was read, updated, and regularly used by the community that produced it'.

Different types of primary sources used

- *Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia* : This is a Victorian edition in book form of the original Latin manuscript together with English summaries of the Latin text in the margins. It was edited by Henry Richards Luard. (It is difficult to be more precise about this source without examining it. Google Books does show some pages of the source but this isn't sufficient to determine on what it was based. Did Luard have access to the original manuscript when creating this text or was he working from a later edition?)
- *The Annals of Dunstable Priory* : This is a 2018 edition of the 'Annals', edited by Harriett R. Webster and translated from Latin into English by David Preest. (It would be necessary to examine this book to determine if Preest's translation was based on the Latin version by Luard.)
- *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani* : This is a 2019 edition of 'The Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans', edited by James G. Clark and translated from Latin into English by David Preest.
- *Radulfi de Diceto decani Lundoniensis opera historica* : This is a Victorian edition in book form of the original Latin manuscript together with English summaries of the Latin text in the margins. It was edited by William Stubbs.

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- *Chronica monasterii de Melsa, a fundatione usque ad annum 1396* : This is a Victorian edition in book form of the original Latin manuscript together with English summaries of the Latin text in the margins. It was edited by Edward A. Bond.

Archives identified

- The British Library where the original manuscript of *The Annals of Dunstable Priory* is kept (Cotton MS Tiberius A. X).

Online sources used

- None identified.