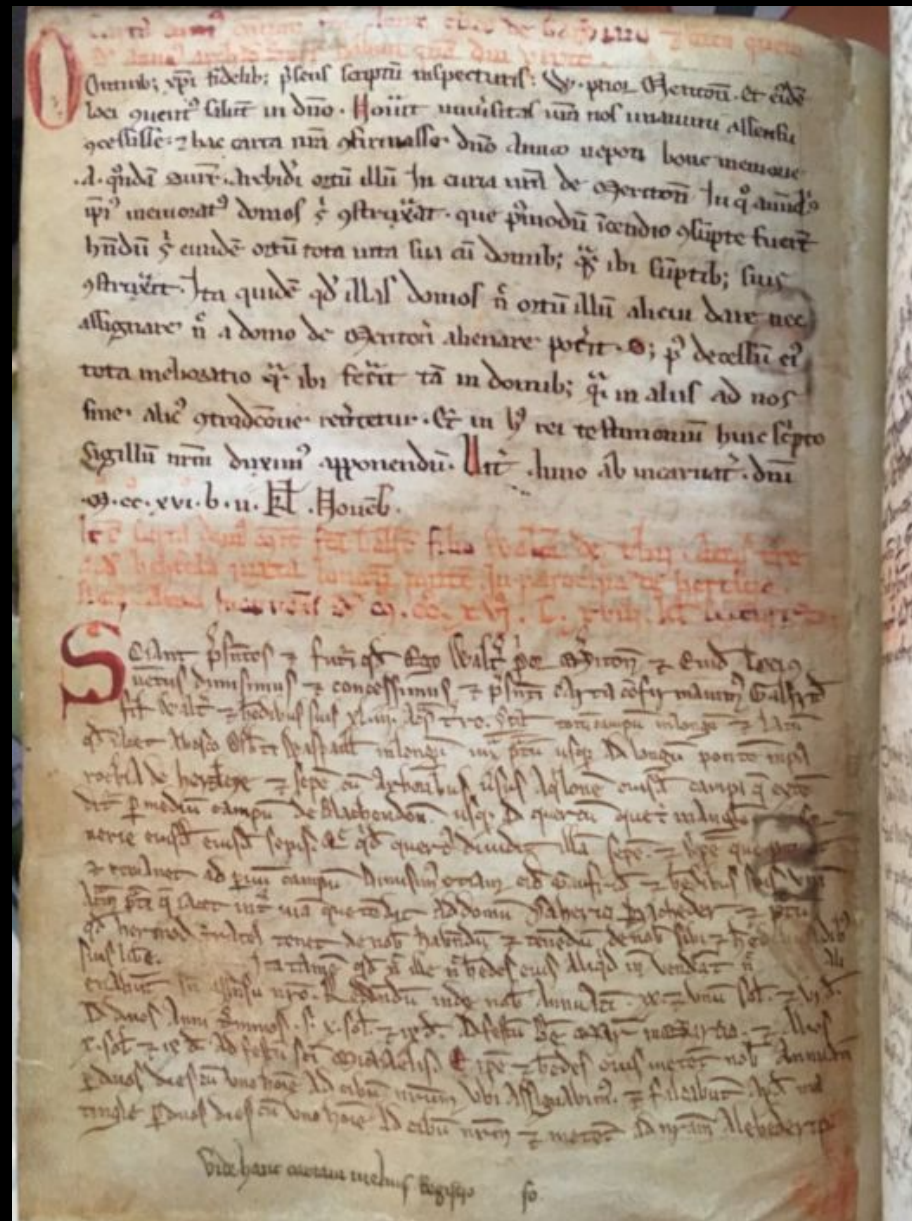


Dating pre-modern records



Records

Who, What, Why, Where, When?

Records

Who?

- Relates to 'when' and 'what'
- Church & literacy
- Machinery of government
- Lay literacy

Records

What?

- Manuscripts (see elsewhere!)
- Laws/ legal codes – civil, canon, common
- Charters/ diplomas (transfer of land; obligations of landholding)
- Taxation records
- Royal government records – rolls, writs, letters (patent and close)
- Manorial records
- Feet of fines



FACSIMILE OF THE FINE IN TRIPPLICATE REFERRED TO ON PAGE 187.

Records

Why?

- Oral to written
- Record – or forgery?

Records

Where?

- Local, national
- Survival of documents
- Categorisation/ cataloguing

Records

When?

- Contemporaneous or retrospective
- Dating:
 - Dating undated records
 - Converting medieval dates to modern dates
 - Internal and external evidence

Records

Survival

- Material – durability
- Environment
- Permanence/ transience
- History/ ‘lifetime’ events – mediæval and modern: don't cry

As soon as the train had fairly started, Thorndyke proceeded to inspect the little volume; and his manner of doing so was highly characteristic. An ordinary person would have opened the book and looked through the contents, probably seeking out at once the sinister history of Gilbert Lumley.

Not so Thorndyke. His inspection began at the very beginning and proceeded systematically to deal with every fact that the book had to disclose. First he made an exhaustive examination of the cover; scrutinised the corners; inspected the bottom edges and compared them with the top edges; and compared the top and bottom head-caps. Then he brought out his lens and examined the tooling, which was simple in character and worked in “blind”—i.e. not gilt. He also inspected the head-bands through the glass, and then he turned his attention to the interior. He looked carefully at both end-papers, he opened the sections and examined the sewing-thread, he held the leaves up to the light and tested the paper by eye and by touch and he viewed the writing in several places through his lens. Finally he handed the book and the lens to me without remark.

R. Austin Freeman, *The Apparition of Burling Court*

Dating original records

- **Intrinsic evidence:** date in some form; datable events or people
- **Extrinsic evidence:** handwriting, illustration, media – inks and paints, parchment/ paper (watermarks?), bindings
- *Terminus post/ ante quem non*

Materials

- Parchment: current throughout the Middle Ages and beyond...
- Paper: first paper mills in Germany, 14th century, England 15th century; laid paper till late 18th century; watermarks
- Ink(s): click me: [Hamburg University](#)

*Epistola de vita venerabilis Gundonis aherito
nensis ecclesie canonici. Discto suo Radulfo.*

Disti cha
tissime frater et obuipe pensa: qua
timus de vita gloriosi parentis tui
uel breuiter aliqua tibi tuiscribere
Detinui tue quous pie tamen assensu
prebere. Dum distuli. tu multis occupationibus pre
tus: tu potius materie magnitudinem viribus
mee possibilitatis nimis ponderare pendens. Sed
qui quas impitua denegat interdum vires cari
tas suum inuicere solet: vita ipius saltem sum
matum perstringere temptabo tuoque desiderio put
petere satisfacere curabo.

igitur in primordio quo fratres apud aherito nam
ad regularit' vniuersum: sedm institutione car
gi Doctoris Augustini congregabantur: quidam
italicus genere qui in scholis regendis preclaram
famam consecutus fuerat nomine Guido. ad co
uersione int' ceteros venit. Dicit non potest q
humiliter ut susceperetur expetit. cu' quanta
denotione religionis habitum suscepit. Totum
em negotium illud quo ad militiam xpi nomi
ti promouentur: magnis gemitibus multisq
lacrimis & suspiriis prosequabatur. Nam dum
ad confessionem ut mos est prelato faciendam