



Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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For completion by the student:		
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Module title: Research Methodology		
Module tutor: Janet Burton		
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Saint Albans Abbey and Matthew Paris are the subjects for the fourth exercise.

King Offa of Mercia founded the Benedictine monastery of St Albans by charter in 793. The monastery and abbey including a more permanent shrine to the saint were built in the Norman style replacing a small church and the tomb which contained the relics of the saint. The hill on which the abbey was built is believed to be where the martyrdom of Alban, a third century christian convert, took place.

St Albans was an important Benedictine abbey and became a place of pilgrimage just a days travelling from London. The abbey established a series of daughter houses across the north and east of England.

The monastery dedicated to the first English saint was a centre of learning and the scriptorium produced manuscripts for the church and nobility. Well known scribes and chroniclers including Roger of Wendover (died 1237), Matthew Paris (1200-1259) and Thomas Walsingham (died 1422) held the office of historiographer and were responsible for chronicling historical events as well as the lives and times of their community. They also researched and recorded important events from the past.

I have identified a number of historical accounts which have made the transition to printed editions and show the importance of the Abbey and community that surrounded it in the thirteen, fourteen and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries as well as a number of works by Matthew Paris, one of the abbey's well known chroniclers.

Amundesham, Johannes, *Annales Monasterii S. Albani*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1870-1871)

The authorship of both volumes has been questioned but Johannes Amundesham appears to be the main contributor to the work which has been edited by Riley for the Roll Series. The Annals mainly chronicle the abbacy of John Whethamstede between 1422 and 1431. A full introduction and overview to the latin text, describes the continuing influence of the abbey. The text adds to the knowledge of the history of the abbey.

Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, trans. and eds. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)

Bede writing in the seventh century recorded the events and legends surrounding the martyrdom of Alban, this edition is written to provide the best translation of the text comparing a large number of texts available to the editors and producing an accessible edition for study.

Matthew Paris, *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858)

The original manuscript was prepared for Henry III and attributed to the hand of Matthew Paris at the time of the rebuilding and rededication of Westminster Abbey. This edition is number 3 in the Roll Series and provides a rather dated edition of the Latin text only. Matthew Paris moved in the court circles and on his own admission was aquatinted with Henry III who made numerous visits and pilgrimages to St Albans.

Matthew Paris, *Vie de Seint Auban: A poem in Norman-French* ed. Robert Atkinson (London: John Murray, 1876)

This work is an illustration of Matthew Paris's poetical work. Professor Atkinson has produced a comprehensive analysis of the manuscript held in the library of Trinity College in Dublin. The edition includes a concordance-glossary and notes. The edition also includes an in-depth study of the poem and the language used.

Matthew Paris, *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi sancti Albani, Chronica majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, 1882), VI

The full text of Matthew Paris's major work was prepared for the Rolls Series number 57 in 6 volumes. The preface in English describes the content and source of the main text which is in the original Latin. Footnotes and marginal comments in English guide the reader through the text. The appendices include a list of shields of arms, the cross referencing of the Papal Letters mentioned by Paris with copies in the Vatican Archives. Also included is a cross reference table of the text to original manuscripts and earlier printed editions. The text is a valuable reference source.

Matthew Paris, *The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris* trans. and ed. by Richard Vaughan (Cambridge: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993)

Richard Vaughan translated and edited four years of Matthew Paris's chronicles and with the help of Nigel Wilkins who has chosen illustrations from the chronicles themselves has produced a very accessible and readable translation. The introduction puts the work into perspective and gives a very good insight to the life on the monastic community. The drawings show Matthew Paris's skill and desire to communicate the events he is portraying.

Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History, Comprising the History of England from the Descent of the Saxons to A. D. 1235 Formerly Ascribed to Matthew Paris*, trans. by J. A. Giles, 2 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849)

Roger preceded Matthew Paris and his chronicles were formally ascribed to him this edition is a full translation of the Latin text with short introduction in the preface of the source of the historical facts and the little known facts about Roger of Wendover. A useful edition for the non Latin scholar.

Walsingham, Thomas, *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed., Henry Thomas Riley 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869)

The chronicles of St Albans monastery are in twelve volumes, number 28, of the Rolls Series edited by Henry Thomas Riley between 1863 and 1876. Three of the volumes are devoted to Thomas Walsingham and give a full description in English of the Latin text. Two known manuscripts which together contain the full chronicle written by Thomas Walsingham have been used for the transcription. The Latin text has marginal notes and some further translations within the text. A useful and scholarly edition making the chronicles available to a wider audience. Matthew Paris's chronicles were used by Walsingham as the source of the earlier sections of his chronicles.

The titles I have chosen illustrate the history of St Albans and one of its great chroniclers. The role of both the abbey and Matthew Paris play in the history of England and the influence on the crown and community it served cannot be underestimated. Matthew Paris was a talented chronicler and was used as an ambassador by the Pope who sent him to resolve concerns in a monastery in Norway. His work was admired by the king who commissioned texts to be prepared by him. Paris's drawing style although not unique was used by him to illustrate the events in the chronicles he was employed to produce and also turned his hand to cartography and finer illustrative works. Matthew Paris presents the researcher with insights into his own life through the language he uses and the personal encounters he records. Further study of his work would increase the knowledge and understanding of the religious community in which he lived and the influence and standing it had in the thirteenth century.