

Deconstructing Research Projects Exercise:

A. Questions to consider

The author states that the article 'explores these incidents (of attacks on the Abbey of Strata Florida) in detail for the first time'.¹ She considers the significance of the three attacks, which spanned a century and a half from the Edwardian conquest of Wales (1277-1283). There are various reasons why a particular piece of research is done.

1. There may be gaps in the area that need to be filled - the author here states that her topic has not been explored in detail before. Other reasons might include
2. Re-evaluation of existing interpretations might be required
3. Existing scholarship might be considered too simplistic and require further work and interpretation
4. New material has come to light
5. Whatever reasons lie behind a research topic, it should be the result of the researcher's interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject

The starting point for research is a literature review, so identifying secondary sources will be the initial task. This would provide information as to what work, if any, has already been done, what questions remain to be answered, what issues need to be explored more, what needs to be looked at if the researcher does not agree with the conclusions reached in the work already done. It can also help to refine the research idea. And it will

¹ Janet E Burton, '[Authority and Conflict at the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida](#),' *Welsh History Review/Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru*, 29/3 (2019), pp. 377- 407

suggest what primary sources will be likely to be needed, so the next stage will be to identify the primary sources required and then to locate them.

Primary sources can be held in a variety of places. As this is not an oral history project, there will not be any living people to locate, so the primary sources will be written in some form and stored in libraries, archives, private collections etc. (If artefacts are involved, museums or private collections will likely be the primary places to locate them, but that is not applicable in this case).

The primary sources used in the research article were compiled during the time of the events being investigated, so can be considered first hand. It does not mean, of course, that they were accurate, true or unbiased, so primary sources must be carefully evaluated.

This means certain questions need to be asked of the primary source

1. Who wrote it
2. Why was it written
3. Who was the intended audience
4. What was the significance of the document at the time it was written
5. Is there any bias in the document
6. What are its limitations
7. Is it reliable

A topic like this requires a good knowledge of what medieval primary sources exist, and what they are about. If a researcher does not know what a close roll or pipe roll is, they cannot consider if it might be useful or essential in providing information. Not a problem that a distinguished

historian like the author of this article would face, but for a new researcher knowing where to look for information can be very tricky. Sadly - or perhaps excitingly - there is no handy package labelled 'All documents ever written relating to Strata Florida Cistercian Abbey.' It requires a considerable degree of informed detective work to track down relevant information from primary sources.

B. Summary Tasks

1. Types of Primary Sources Used in 'Authority and Conflict at the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida'

Close rolls

Pipe rolls

Inquisitions post mortem

Inquisitions miscellaneous

Charter rolls

Annals

Papal registers

Patent rolls

Chronicles

General Chapter of the Cistercian Order

Register of Edward the Black Prince

Littere Wallie - a collection of legal documents from the reigns of Henry III and Edward I

Some of these primary sources exist as edited published versions, listed below.

Patricia M. Barnes (ed.) *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1212* (London, 1955)

Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office (London, 1902–), 1279–88,

Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office (London, 1891–)

Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 6 vols (London, 1903–27), 1327–41

Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 6 vols (London, 1903–27), 1327–41

J.-M. Canivez (ed.), *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab Anno 1116 ad Annum 1786*, 8 vols (Louvain, 1933–41), III

J. Goronwy Edwards (ed.), *Littere Wallie Preserved in Liber A in the Public Record Office* (Cardiff, 1940), nos 71, 187

Fowler and C. Jenkins (eds), *Registrum Simonis de Sudbiria, Diocesis Lundoniensis, AD 1362–1375*, 2 vols, Canterbury and York Society, 34, 38 (1927, 1938)

Thomas Jones (ed. and trans.), *Brut y Tywysogyon, or, the Chronicle of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955),
David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London (eds), *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, I, 940–1216*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2001)

David M. Smith and Vera C. M. London (eds), *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, II, 1216–1377* (Cambridge, 2001)

David M. Smith (ed.), *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, III, 1377–1540* (Cambridge, 2008)

J. H. Parry (ed.), *Registrum Johannis de Trillek, Episcopi Herefordensis, AD MCCCXLIV–MCCCLXI*, Cantilupe Society (1910) and Canterbury and York Society, 8 (1912)

William Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975)

The Register of Edward the Black Prince Preserved in the Public Record Office, 4 vols (London, 1930–3), I

Doris M. Stenton (ed.), *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1211* (London, 1953)

John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkins (eds and trans.),
The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Majora of Thomas Walsingham, vol. 2, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2011)

J. A. Twemlow (ed.), *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters, IX* (London, 1912)

2. Archival Sources

The National Archive at Kew, London

Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru - The National Library of Wales

Vatican Archives

Public Record Office Cardiff

Public Record Office London

UK National Register of Archives, held at TNA, Kew

3. Online sources

(I am not suggesting that all these were used in the writing of the article, but simply identifying them as possible sources for research generally.)

British Library Website - www.bl.uk

Brut y Tywysogion, Llyfr Coch Hergest/Red Book of Hergest Version
at <http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/editions.php.en>

Cardiff PRO - Glamorgan Archives (Charters from 1370) -
www.glamarchives.gov

www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=008

The Hathi Trust Digital Library - www.hathitrust.org

Internet medieval Sourcebook -

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/sbook.asp>

Jstor - www.jstor.org - a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources

Medieval Genealogy at www.medievalgenealogy.gov.uk has a large quantity of information about sources of material relevant to medieval history and is not simply related to genealogy.

Monastic Wales - www.monasticwales.org

National Archives Website - www.nationalarchives.gov.co.

Project Muse - <https://muse.jhu.edu> - provides digital humanities information for more than 700 journals and nearly 70,000 books

Register of John de Trillek, Bishop of Hereford (A.D. 1344-13610) online at

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435002344794&view=1up&seq=12>

Welsh Chronicles research Group -

<http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/editions.php.en>

The World catalogue - www.worldcat.org - gives access to the catalogues of 10,000 libraries world wide