



Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

THIS SHEET MUST BE THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ASSIGNMENT YOU ARE SUBMITTING (DO NOT SEND AS A SEPARATE FILE)

For completion by the student:		
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Module code: AHH17001	1811277	Educational support needs: Yes/No
Module title: Research Methodology		
Module tutor: Janet Burton		
Assignment due date: 24 May 2019		
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3 rd		
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The image for this assignment is from the manuscript known as the Westminster Psalter, British Library, MS Royal 2 A XXII folio 220r. It is a tinted drawing in ink with a limited palette of blues, greens and reddish brown on parchment. The outline pen work is in a brown ink.

The manuscript is of medium size, 230 x 155 mm; the date of the main part of the psalter is c1200 but the drawings were added around c1250. The psalter was written and decorated by a number of different hands for the Benedictine community at Westminster Abbey. There is evidence that it was used for services and as a working document recording changes to routines and additions to the calendar and prayers up until 1540. The psalter includes special prayers for Saint Peter to whom the abbey is dedicated and Edward the Confessor who rebuilt the abbey in 1042 and who was canonised in 1161.

The image which does not appear to illustrate any text is the second of five drawings preceding prayers and a collect to Saint Veronica.

Nigel Saul describes the drawing thus;

The young knight shown kneeling with his arms outstretched and his hands open. He is dressed in a mail hauberk, over which is draped a linen surcoat bearing the emblem of the cross patée. From his belt is slung a sword in a scabbard, and through his left arm passes a lance with a pennon attached. Behind him, leaning over the battlements of a tower, a page is caught in the act of handing down a tournament helm, while to one side a warhorse rises up and begins to canter forwards.¹

In the drawing the knight is shown ready for battle with his legs protected by laced up chausses, spurs on his heels and with a set of mail mittens on his hands. The patée cross on his pennon and surcoat is the symbol of the Knights Templar, the order of Benedictine crusader knights.

The story being told visually across the five drawings could be read as that of a knight preparing to do his chivalric duty for his king and be ready to go on crusade. He bows to his king, who in turn acknowledges and gives permission to the knight. The three following drawings illustrate what he needs for the journey he is about to make; Saint Christopher for protection, the Bishop a

¹ Nigel Saul, ed. *Age of Chivalry: Art and Society in Late Medieval England* (London: BCA, 1992) p. 6.

blessing and the image of Christ to secure his soul. The image of Christ is from the Veil of Veronica, the prayers and collect for Saint Veronica are on the following pages. She is known as the woman of Jerusalem and her veil at this time was in Rome.

The drawings are very different from the illuminated pages, historiated letters and roundels that are used throughout the psalter and which relate directly to the text. The inclusion of the drawings may well be considered to be linked to the events that was affecting the king and the community of the abbey during the middle of the thirteenth century. Jerusalem had fallen to the Khwarezmian Muslims in 1244 and the call had come for a seventh crusade in 1248. It was Henry III's ambition to go but he had major problems at home with challenges to his authority and the inability to raise enough funds. Matthew Paris reports in his chronicles that English nobles were taking up the cross,² selling their estates³ and were fully prepared to go even without the king⁴. A small contingent did go but the crusade was unsuccessful and many lives were lost.

The drawings are similar in style to the technique used by Matthew Paris (1200 -1259) who was a Benedictine monk working at Saint Albans. He was a chronicler and historian and it would be easy to attribute them to him as they are typical of his drawing style. They could have been done under his direction but it is not possible to establish that fact, or if indeed he was the creator of the drawings. Drawing can bring an immediacy to the viewer and it is not unusual to convey ideas in this way. The Harley Psalter⁵ from the eleventh century is a very good example and demonstrates how drawings can become the narrative. In the Harley Psalter the line drawings present a visual story line within the text itself and makes the message accessible to those who have little or cannot read latin.

It is possible to compare the drawings with the work of Matthew Paris directly. In frontispiece of the *Historic Anglorum*⁶ written and illustrated by him, he has autographed the work by drawing

²Matthew Paris, *The illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris* ed. and trans. by Richard Vaughan, (Cambridge: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993). p 108.

³ Paris, p 128.

⁴ Paris, p 132.

⁵ British Library, Harley MS 603

⁶ British Library, Royal MS 14 C VII, f 6r.

himself at the bottom of the page giving homage to the Virgin and Child in the frame above. The drawing shows the same type of the fine pen work found in the image of the knight. Another example is the work Henry III commissioned Mathew Paris to write on the *Life of King Edward the Confessor*⁷ in 1230. Images within this manuscript are not dissimilar to knight in his mail hauberk and his cantering horse. It has not been established which king is depicted in the drawings but in 1250 Henry III was on the throne. To honour Edward the Confessor whom Henry revered and considered to be the last of the great Anglo Saxon kings he demolished the romanesque abbey in 1245 and rebuilt it in the gothic style. At its centre was a shrine devoted to the cult of Edward the Confessor who had been canonised in 1161 and his body was translated to the new shrine 1163. More research is needed if links outlined above are to be established.

Bibliography

Printed primary sources

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

Secondary sources

Backhouse, J. *The Illustrated Manuscript* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1994).

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⁷ Cambridge University Library, MS. Ee.3.59