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Study and Research Methodology

The Computer and Study

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Since the library at the University of Wales is not readily available to me, I have had to rely on my own wits in order to research and write the papers I have submitted to date. As much as possible I have tried to obtain the books I needed through the library of the University of Arizona (which has not been very successful) or through purchase (usually over the Internet and from booksellers around the world), but there have been times when I have had to resort to searching the World Wide Web for information. What follows are five websites that I have used.

One of the best sites I have found is the 'Internet History Sourcebooks Project' at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/>, edited by Paul Halsall and hosted on the website of Fordham University. While this site has translations of documents from all eras and from all over the world, I found the 'Medieval Sourcebook' particularly useful. Under the section entitled, 'The Celtic World' are translations of Gildas' *The Ruin of Britain* (6th century); the text ascribed to Nennius of *The History of the Britons* (9th century), and the *Annales Cambriae* (the Annals of Wales - 9th century). The website also gives the bibliographic information at the end of each entry that a scholar would need for a research paper.

The main problem with this site, as with many sites, is that the translations are particularly old. Of the three documents I've mentioned above, the first two were translated in 1848, and the third one in 1912. More modern translations would take advantage of any advances in our understanding of early Medieval Latin that have taken place since then, so in the end I bought books containing more modern translations of these documents for my paper. But having these on-line versions enabled me to get started on understanding the text and were a useful accompaniment to the reading brick that I could use while I waited for the books to arrive in the post.

Another website that I found useful was the 'Celtic Literature Collective' created by Mary Jones, which can be found at <http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/index.html>. This site is an exhaustive collection of texts including Greco-Roman texts, pre-Christian Celtic texts, and even

some of the historical Latin texts I had found on the Fordham University website (above). For some of these, Ms. Jones has managed to include translations of different recensions of the same text, which is a wonderful way of comparing how similar (or different) they can be. Medieval Welsh and Irish literature can be found here, and even that of the Scots, Cornish, Bretons and Manx.

Once again, though, with the exception of a couple of texts, most of these translations are seventy-five or more years old. Some of these older versions are far more flowery and obtuse than newer translations, which is obvious when looking at the two translations on this website of the *Gododdin* – one by Skene (1868) and the other by Clancy (1970). At best these older versions can give a wonderful flavor of a work in question, but I tried to find newer translations from books I was able to buy on-line.

This next website is one that I intend to hang on to, even though its translations are as old as the others. This is the ‘CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts’ website run by University College Cork in Ireland, and found at <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/index.html>. Texts in translation include *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, two translations of the *Second Battle of Moytura*, two recensions of the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, the *Wooing of Etain*, and many others. In some cases these translations are the only ones I’ve been able to find.

I discovered this website when I was looking for information on Finn Mac Cumail for my paper on Arthur, and even though it was of little help there, the website still includes much that could be useful later.

Back when I was writing my paper on the Celtic Arthur, I wanted to find an overview concerning the collapse of Roman Britain and the subsequent two centuries that I could use as a framework for understanding many of the articles in the reading brick for that course. I found a site entitled, ‘The End of Roman Britain: Assessing the Angle-Saxon invasions of the Fifth Century’, found at <http://members.aol.com/bakken1/angsax/asinv.htm>. This sounded impressive, but the Internet address was for a member at AOL.com! I was very hesitant at first, but upon using Google.com to search for the name of the author, William Bakken, I discovered that he was a professor at the University of Rochester in New York State. However, I had no idea if he was part of the majority opinion of scholarship in this subject, so I decided to take what I read there with a grain of salt.

The article on this website does have many references and notes, and these could be useful in themselves. Also, the overall thrust of the article didn't contradict anything that I read in the reading brick, so I came to trust it. The settlement patterns of the various Saxon groups as discovered by archeology were particularly fascinating. This article helped fill in the overall picture of the period for me, and though I didn't need to quote anything from it for my paper, it was helpful in a general way.

The last website that I am going to mention is the Cambridge Journals Online (<https://journals.cambridge.org/action/login> but which I have to access through the MyAthens login portal). When I first discovered that I would have access to this journal site through the University of Wales by being a student there, I was quite excited. However, when I went to the site, I discovered that very little that I had access to would be of much use. The Cambridge Archeological Journal was fascinating, but very little of what I found there was helpful in my studies for this degree. The only other journals available that might be helpful were those on general history and religious studies. But the thrust of the courses I was taking rarely took me in those directions.

The free websites I found, even with outdated material on them, were actually more useful than the Cambridge Journals Online. It frustrates me that I cannot see (and often cannot even buy) copies of articles from the various journals that interest me, such as the *Studia Celtica*, the *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* or the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*. While an individual may occasionally buy a specific article, the various journals seem to be reserved for large institutions only and subscriptions for individuals seem to be out of the question.