



Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society

<https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org>

Research Group Newsletter

No. 11: November 2022

Welcome to the Research Group e-newsletter

Members of the Society will be aware of the passing of Her Majesty and Duke of Lancaster, Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022. This is profoundly sad for the Royal Family, and for the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, whose lives Her Majesty touched with her kindness and devotion to duty as our longest reigning monarch who will be dearly remembered by all.

We wish her peace, and to her family, comfort at this difficult time. The Society offers its condolences to His Majesty King Charles III.

Her Majesty approved the Grant of a Charter which constituted and founded the University of Lancaster in 1964 and retained a ceremonial role as the University's Visitor. The Queen visited the Duchy of Lancaster and the City of Lancaster on several occasions during her 70-year reign, the last occasion being in May 2015 when Her Majesty visited the Duchy of Lancaster at Lancaster Castle and prior to that in 1999 when Her Majesty visited Lancaster Castle, Lancaster Priory, and Morecambe to unveil the Eric Morecambe statue.

NEWS UPDATE

The Research Group has its own webpage on the Society's website at

<https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org> which has been updated to include e-newsletters, Issues 1-10.

We welcome suggestions for future Research Advisory Guides and articles from guest authors. Comments and corrections on all the News Updates and articles we publish are equally welcome.

MEMBERS' RESEARCH PROJECTS

Michael Haslam has written the second Research Advisory Guide

RESEARCH ADVISORY GUIDE 2

Critically reviewing a book or a journal article

This advisory guide is an aid for conducting a review of a book or article, substantially set in a historiographical non-fictional context. Most publishers and editors of journals will have their own guidelines to achieve a consistency of style and presentation for their publications.¹ What they will not do is tell you how to write a review for which there are no set rules, as this will depend on the length, theme and writing style of the book or article (hereafter, collectively referred to as “the Work”) and the opinions of the reviewer. There are however principles and procedures that reviewers will be expected to follow, just as there are when writing a dissertation or thesis, and these are addressed in this guide.

A review is an analysis and critical evaluation to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the Work compared to the state of current knowledge and the views of the subject being discussed by the author. Most importantly, a review is a commentary and not a summary or a restatement of the subject matter. The reviewer constructs an argument which may agree or disagree with the content or purpose of the Work. Where the Work is noteworthy or deficient in its knowledge, judgement, or organisation, this should be mentioned. A review should serve as a recommendation for other readers through the ability of the reviewer to question and challenge the Work with an enquiring mind.

The length of a review will vary depending on the publication in which it is to appear but will rarely exceed 1,000 words and will typically range between 500-750 words. Potential reviewers writing for *Contrebis* for example should seek the advice of the editor on the length of review required if this has not been stipulated in the invitation to contribute a review.

A review has three constituent parts: a Review Analysis, an Evaluation, and a Conclusion.

Review Analysis

It is very important to have a clear strategy or a plan of action for writing a review. This is achieved by adopting a methodical and consistent approach in critically analysing the text before starting to write a succinct and well-supported argument. If this is done uncritically, the assumptions, the rationale, the points the author has made and the intent of the author in writing the Work in the first-place risk being overlooked. Ascertain what the structure of the Work is at the outset to make the reader aware what the review is about. For a book, view the table of contents to understand how the book is organized, and for an article, read the Abstract. Identify what the author’s main ideas are and how they have been developed. The research background of the author may help one to understand the author’s experience and reputation on the subject matter and any other relevant books the author may have written. Analyse the Work in terms of its theme(s), that is, the subject or topics, the author’s ideas and principal points focusing on evidence to support these ideas and points. Consider the validity of the author’s points of view and the purpose for writing the Work. The findings from the Review Analysis will form the first section of the review.

Consider the following issues:

- Prepare a concise summary of the content of the Work.
- Describe the author, the author’s expertise and any books or articles relevant to the Works the author has written.
- Check if the author has provided any information about the text or structure of the book in the preface or introduction.
- What is the main argument of the Work?
- What primary and secondary sources have been used?
- How much of the Work is original and will extend the boundaries of existing knowledge?

- Answer the following questions:
 - Did you like the Work? Why? Why not?
 - What is the author trying to achieve in the Work? Why did the author write it in this way? Consider the quality of writing style such as clarity, originality, and conciseness.
 - What points is the author most concerned to make?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Work? What does the author fail to do given the framework or objectives set by the author?
 - What has the author accomplished?
 - Did the author's arguments make sense? Were you persuaded by them? Why? Why not?
 - Are the author's ideas, main points and conclusions valid? Does the author cover the subject adequately in a balanced way supported by evidence?
 - Who is the intended readership? Is the author's writing style intelligible to the intended audience?

Evaluation

A book and a journal article are written with a specific purpose in mind within a defined framework or number of stated objectives in a historiographical context. As a reviewer it is important to question and challenge the assumptions, the rationale, the points the author has made and the purpose or intent of the author in writing the Work. Discuss what has previously been written about the subject and what issues have been identified by other commentators. Keep this discussion brief so that the Work under review remains the focus. The key is to evaluate the current context of, and approach to, the subject or topic that you are commenting on to allow a balanced but rigorous assessment to be made based on supporting evidence while avoiding any bias. The content and structure of the Evaluation will comprise the largest part of the review on the Work.

Consider the following issues:

- What are the existing theories about the subject or topic? What are the influential and important publications on the subject or topic?
- How will you provide a learned context to your critical review? Consider dividing your commentary into themes in paragraphs to support your understanding addressed in an orderly and logical manner that readers can follow.
- Evaluate the Work for its interest, accuracy, objectivity, importance, and usefulness.
- Are there inconsistencies, gaps or other shortcomings in the author's knowledge and understanding? What aspects need to be further tested? This will allow you to demonstrate a gap or a contradiction which your critique can identify and explain.
- What contribution will your critique make?
- Only concentrate on the most important issues in the Work. You will not be able to cover all the points made by the author.
- A competent and analytical critical review will demonstrate that the reviewer has an informed understanding of the issues being discussed.
- Avoid providing lists or descriptions of individual issues without linking them and discussing them in a wider context.
- Avoid repeating what is already in the Work without linking your comments to a specific point or issue.

- Critically comment using your understanding of the subject or topic to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the Work to consolidate your evaluation. How well has it met its objectives? Are there opportunities to present an alternative viewpoint or response?

Conclusion

Conclude with a concise summary of what the Work is about and your opinions as a reviewer. Do not introduce new evidence for your argument in the conclusion.

Michael Haslam

Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society

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Acknowledgements

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References

1. See ‘*Guidelines for Contributors*’ on the LAHS website at <https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org> under ‘Contents’ and ‘Contrebis’

LIBER REGALIS

The coronation of a new King or Queen

No-one will ever forget the meticulous planning and precision that went into arranging the funeral of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II last month. It has since been announced that the coronation of King Charles III, alongside the Queen Consort, will take place on Saturday, 6 May 2023 and we can be sure the same degree of preparation and attention to detail will be present. A Coronation Committee composed of privy counsellors will be appointed to make the arrangements for the King’s coronation.

What is less well known is that the *Liber Regalis* (Royal Book), a fourteenth century English medieval illustrated codex, contains the order for the coronation of a King, a King and Queen, and a Queen alone, as well as details regarding the funeral of a monarch at what was then called the Church of Westminster – now Westminster Abbey. It was designed to help people organize and manage a coronation.¹

The *Liber Regalis* is now believed to have been written in c.1308 for the coronation of Edward II rather than in 1382 as originally thought for the coronation of King Richard II and Queen Anne of Bohemia (Figure 1).² It is written in Latin on vellum and comprises 34 folios although it is not known who wrote it or its source of patronage. The manuscript was originally kept in the Treasury at the Church of Westminster and is now in the library of the Abbey. The manuscript was translated into English in 1603 for the coronation of James 1 which included a major variation from the original codex with the substitution of the Communion Service from the Book of Common Prayer in place of the Latin Mass. Given the length of time since the late Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation on 2 June 1953, it is likely there will be further amendments to the service to bring it up to date.



Figure 1: An illustrated manuscript from the *Liber Regalis* depicting the coronation in 1382 of King Richard II and his Consort, Queen Anne of Bohemia

Source: Alamy (Image ID: EX6J7H)

A coronation service is divided into four parts. The monarch is presented to the people (the Recognition). The monarch makes promises to his/her subjects and to God which is required by statute (the Oath). The monarch is blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury with Holy oil from an Ampulla laid on the Altar beforehand (the Anointment). The Anointment is the most important part of the ceremony. During the Anointment the Archbishop makes a cross with Holy oil on the royal forehead and elsewhere on the body to show that the monarch has been chosen by God by divine right. The monarch then receives the royal regalia, the insignia of royalty, including the crown, a sword, the sceptre and the orb (the Investiture), before finally being

crowned with Edward II's crown. The Queen Consort will be crowned with the platinum and diamond crown made for the Queen Mother's coronation in 1937.³

Two Thrones of Estate are set up between the Choir and the Altar: one for the King and the other for the Queen (Consort). Traditionally the King's Throne is placed higher than the Queen's. It will be interesting to see if that will be the case in the modern era. Further details will no doubt be released nearer the time.

Michael Haslam

References:

- 1 Westminster Abbey (2018) (Anon) *Guide to the Coronation Service* online at <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/learning/christianity-in-10-objects/the-liber-regalis> (accessed on 20 October 2022)
- 2 Cross F L and Livingstone E A (eds) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2009) third edition F L Cross and E A Oxford: Oxford University Press
- 3 Seth R (2022) *Royals: Everything We Know So Far About King Charles III's Coronation* online in Vogue Magazine online at <http://www.vogue.com/article/king-charles-iii-coronation-everything-we-know-so-far> 11 October 2022 issue (accessed on 21 October 2022)

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REGIONAL ARCHIVE SERVICES AND LIBRARY UPDATES

The next detailed updates will be published in the February 2023 Newsletter. Readers are referred to the August 2022 Newsletter for contact details of Regional Archive Offices and Regional Library updates which remain correct as of 31 October 2022.

The New Archives Card

The new ARA Archives Card was recently launched and replaced the previous CARN scheme. Users visiting most archives in the UK (including Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Offices) will need this card to access archival material. Begin registration at the following link and visit a participating archive within three months to complete the registration, bringing two forms of ID with you: https://www.archivescard.com/ARAHUB/About/Card_Guidelines.aspx

The Archives Card is free of charge and valid for five years.

Darren N. Webster, Archivist

LANCASTER MUSEUMS UPDATE

The next updates will be published in the February 2023 Newsletter. Readers are referred to the August 2022 Newsletter for contact details of Lancaster City Museum and Lancaster Maritime Museum updates which remain correct as of 31 October 2022.

Lancaster Cottage Museum:

The Cottage Museum is now closed for the winter season and will re-open in Spring 2023.

Further details are at this link:

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/museums/cottage-museum>

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