

2011

The Monastic Wales project

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Recommended Citation

. "The Monastic Wales project." *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 3, 1 (2010): 1-2.
<https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol3/iss1/6>

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SHORT NOTICES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Monastic Wales project

The religious houses of medieval Wales have long been overshadowed by their more numerous, generally more prosperous, and normally better-documented neighbours east of Offa's Dyke. Yet their history is inseparable from the religious, cultural, economic, political, literary, and urban history of Wales during the period between the arrival of the Normans in the late eleventh century and the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth.

In an attempt to identify more firmly Wales's place on the monastic map of Europe, this new large-scale project seeks to establish a comprehensive monastic history of medieval Wales, the findings of which will be made available to scholars and students, as well as the wider public, both electronically and in print. Initially this will comprise monasteries and houses of canons which were active in Wales for some or all of the period from the late eleventh century until the Suppression of the religious houses in the sixteenth century. It is hoped that with additional funding the database can be extended to include the friaries.

The first phase of the project was the creation of a database and website which can be used as both a research and a teaching tool. This will be regularly updated and expanded; the interactive element in the design enables external participation. The website was officially launched in October 2009. It will eventually comprise a full bibliography of primary sources and secondary literature, links to relevant web-published material and research tools, and reports on related work in progress.

The project seeks also to encourage new research into aspects of Welsh monastic history and to provide a platform for unpublished material and new work. Essays and articles will be available to users on the website. A comprehensive history of monastic Wales, with contributions from leading scholars in the field, will be published in book form.

<http://www.monasticwales.org/>



Priory Church of St Mary, Chepstow. Photo: Paul Watkins