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Historical writing in medieval Wales

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HISTORICAL WRITING IN MEDIEVAL WALES

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SUMMARY

This study focusses on the writing of history in medieval Wales. Its starting-point is a series of historical texts in Middle Welsh which, from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, begin to appear together in manuscripts to form a continuous history, termed the Welsh Historical Continuum. The central component of this sequence is a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's influential history of the Britons. The main questions of the first part of the thesis are when and why these historical texts were first combined, and to what degree this Welsh historiographical phenomenon reflects broader European trends. Codicology, textual typology, a geographically centred case-study and comparison with similar texts in Latin, Anglo-Norman French, Middle English and Icelandic are the main areas of research.

The second part of the thesis moves on to consider the chronicle writing which formed the basis for the third part of the Historical Continuum, and then brings the study together with a discussion of the role of the Cistercians in the writing of history in medieval Wales. The fourth chapter's re-assessment of *Brut y Tywysogion* offers a comprehensive re-evaluation of one of the most important narrative sources for medieval Wales. The fifth chapter discusses a neglected but significant Welsh chronicle, *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, a new edition of which is appended to the thesis. The discussion of the Cistercian order in the sixth chapter serves in some ways as a synopsis and a conclusion, since it fits the diverse matters discussed in previous chapters into a general discussion of the important role these monastic institutions played in the formation and dissemination of what became the standard narrative of Welsh history for several centuries. Overall, the thesis is a wide-ranging and comprehensive investigation of the most influential and enduring historical narrative to emerge from medieval Wales.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BL British Library
- BT P20* *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS. 20*, ed. by T. Jones, History and Law Series 6 (Cardiff, 1941)
- BT P20 Tr.* *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes, Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones, History and Law Series 11 (Cardiff, 1952)
- BT RB* *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes, Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones, History and Law Series 16 (Cardiff, 1955)
- BS* *Brenhinedd y Saesson or the Kings of the Saxons: BM Cotton MS. Cleopatra B v and the Black Book of Basingwerk, NLW MS. 7006*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones, History and Law Series 25 (Cardiff, 1971)
- CW "'Cronica de Wallia" and other documents from Exeter Cathedral Library MS. 3514', ed. by T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 12 (1946), 27–44
- NLW National Library of Wales
- PRO* Online transcription of the PRO Chronicle (the B-text of *Annales Cambriae*), prepared by H. Gough-Cooper, [http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=E164/1_pp.2-26._Annales_Cambriae_B-text._From_A.D._1206_to_the_end_of_the_chronicle_\(A.D._1286\)](http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=E164/1_pp.2-26._Annales_Cambriae_B-text._From_A.D._1206_to_the_end_of_the_chronicle_(A.D._1286)). The entries are given as 1234=1212, the first date being the chronicle's and the second being the year to which the entry actually corresponds.

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I must also thank David Stephenson, for stimulating feedback on *Oes Gwrtheyrn*; Daniel Huws for permission to consult his forthcoming *Repertory*; Georgia Henley for stimulating discussion, feedback and access to unpublished work; Vicky Cribb for translating a considerable amount of *Breta sögur*; Edward Carlsson-Browne for similar help concerning *Boglunga sögur*; Janet Burton for advice on the Charltons and Powys; Erich Poppe for discussion concerning Dares Phrygius; Brynley Roberts for advice concerning Cotton Cleopatra B.v and Jesus 141; Barry Lewis for advice on Guto'r Glyn; Jo Shortt Butler for advice on matters Norse; Daisy Le Helloco for help with medieval French; Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan for an invite to an excellent symposium in Abersytwyth; and to John Grant Jones for feedback on the written work. For unceasing support and belief I also owe a huge debt to my parents and family.

INTRODUCTION

This study focusses on the writing of history in medieval Wales, this specific categorical, temporal and geographical focus being tempered by a number of different approaches. Separate sections of the thesis approach the topic from the perspective of codicology, textual typology, a geographically centred case-study, the creation of a critical edition, detailed historical reassessment of a key source, and finally through discussing the results of these approaches in the context of political developments in Wales between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. This diversity of critical approaches results in a nuanced and comprehensive investigation of the form, significance and development of historical writing in medieval Wales, focussing on texts which show the influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* and the chronicle tradition which were eventually combined in the vernacular to form an influential history of the Welsh from classical antiquity to the late thirteenth century and beyond.

The combination of three historical texts in Middle Welsh to form what is termed the Welsh Historical Continuum is the starting point for the thesis. The central questions of the first part of the thesis are when and why these historical texts were first combined, and to what degree these Welsh historical texts reflect broader European trends. With these questions answered, the second section of the thesis moves first to a re-assessment of the chronicle *Brut y Tywysogion*, then to discussion of a shorter chronicle, *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, and then asks to what extent the role of Cistercian monasteries in the production of these and other historical texts was linked to their political support for native Welsh princes. It investigates whether the combination of native chronicles with Galfridian material can be seen as a product of

the cultural milieu of the thirteenth century, and of Cistercian engagement with Welsh culture and politics. The aim is to provide a wide-ranging investigation of the origins and context of the Welsh Historical Continuum, which was in existence by the mid-fourteenth century and continued as a standard historical account of Welsh history far into the early modern period.

By 1350 translations of *De gestis Britonum* were circulating in combination with two other texts, a translation of a Latin history of the Trojan war attributed to Dares the Phrygian, *Ystoria Dared*, prefacing Geoffrey's history, and a chronicle of the Welsh princes up to 1282, *Brut y Tywysogion*. Together they form a continuous history of the Welsh from the Trojan War to the loss of independence, a remarkable feat of vernacular historical writing. The manuscript context of these works is explored in the first chapter, which investigates the textual typology of the three texts to ascertain when and where the Continuum was developed. It builds on the work of B. G. Owens, who edited *Ystoria Dared*; Thomas Jones, editor of *Brut y Tywysogion*; and Brynley Roberts, who has produced several editions of different versions of the Welsh translations of Geoffrey's history, usually termed *Brut y Brenhinedd*.¹ Its discussion of the manuscripts themselves is often indebted to the work of Daniel Huws as well as being based on first hand inspection of the manuscripts.²

Though building on work already done in editing and interpreting these texts and manuscripts, the chapter goes further than these studies in offering a comprehensive and original survey of the development of two distinct versions of this

¹ *BT P20*; *BT P20 Tr.*; *BT RB*; *BS*; B. G. Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius* (*Ystoria Dared*), eu Tarddiad, eu Nodweddion, a'u Cydberthynas' (MA thesis, University of Wales, 1951); B. F. Roberts, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Chyfieithiad Cymraeg Cynharaf o *Historia regum Britanniae* Sieffre o Fynwy, Ynghyd ag "Argraffiad" Beirniadol o Destun Peniarth 44' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1969); *idem*, *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS 1 Version*, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 5 (Dublin, 1971).

² D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000); *idem*, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming).

Welsh Historical Continuum. This is also compared with the manuscript context and textual typology of Geoffrey of Monmouth's original Latin history, as analysed by Julia Crick.³ The chapter's conclusions concerning these texts set a firm foundation for the further discussion of this phenomenon in the following two chapters, one of which focusses on a case-study of a particular monastery and its surrounding area whereas the other expands the discussion to compare developments in Welsh with those in other European vernaculars.

The importance of the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis in the development of the Welsh Historical Continuum is touched upon in the first chapter, but the second chapter focusses on this institution and its surroundings as a case-study illustrating the social and institutional context of these texts. Several categories of evidence are discussed in order to provide a coherent picture of links between the monastic institution, the secular society of the surrounding area and Welsh poets. The physical remains of the abbey, and particularly the unrivalled collection of stone sculpture, provide some evidence for the connections of the local nobility with the abbey in the period immediately after the Edwardian conquest, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the poetry composed in praise of members of these same families indicates a close and developing attachment to the historiographical themes evident in the historical texts produced at the abbey. It is argued that the importance of these histories in post-conquest society is itself indicative of the effects of that conquest. The Welsh Historical Continuum offered a secure foundation for understanding the history of a conquered nation, and also provided the opportunity for a redefinition of political concerns and historical grievances in response to contemporary developments. A three-way interchange between the secular nobility, the monastic

³ J. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth III: A Summary Catalogue of the Manuscripts* (Woodbridge, 1989); *eadem*, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1991).

institution and the bardic order shows an engagement with the historical texts discussed in the first chapter on the part of all these groups, while the discussion also indicates the interconnectedness of patrons, monasteries and poets in northern Powys.

The third chapter places the development of the Welsh Historical Continuum discussed in the first chapter and the second chapter's case-study in an international context, and asks how the situation in Wales compares with the treatment of Geoffrey's history in other European vernaculars. The wide range of the comparisons means that much of the discussion is based on previous critical analysis of the works in question as well as close readings of the texts, but the conclusions which can be drawn from such comparisons offer a means to understand the uniqueness or otherwise of developments in Wales, as well as shedding new light on the significance of these histories in England and Iceland. The English evidence encompasses texts written in both Anglo-Norman French and Middle English and includes under-discussed chronicles such as that of Robert of Gloucester. It is shown that historical material derived from Geoffrey became part of a standard national history in England which, in function and audience, offers a valuable comparison with the Welsh Historical Continuum. But changes to Geoffrey's account in this history reveal fundamental differences between the way this material was received in Wales and England as well as a difference in the nature of the Welsh and English national histories. The Welsh Historical Continuum can be seen as having a more ethnic focus than its English equivalent, the latter eliding the ethnic disruption with which Geoffrey's history concluded to produce a history which is more institutional in focus. The chapter also highlights interesting similarities in Welsh and Norse treatments of Galfridian historical material in terms of the close manuscript association between translated versions of Geoffrey's history and of Dares Phrygius, and argues that

together these works were seen as forming a parallel to accounts of the settlement and Christianisation of Iceland.

The second part of the thesis deals with chronicle writing in Wales and then asks when this chronicle material was combined with Galfridian historical material. This development is placed in the context of the involvement of the Cistercian order in native Welsh politics and culture. It opens in chapter four with a re-assessment of the chronicle *Brut y Tywysogion*. Unlike *De gestis Britonum* and Dares Phrygius, texts translated into many European vernaculars, this chronicle is unique to Wales, although like the other works it was translated into Welsh from Latin. The fourth chapter focusses on several distinct aspects of the chronicle to offer a radical reassessment of its composition and nature as a source. Despite some recent work by David Stephenson and J. Beverley Smith, the Welsh chronicles have been little discussed as sources since the appearance of Thomas Jones' editions, and this chapter represents a comprehensive and innovative reassessment of key aspects of this material.⁴ It offers a review of past scholarship concerning the Welsh chronicles, and afterwards moves on to consider the relationship between the vernacular and Latin chronicles through a close comparison of *Brut y Tywysogion* and *Cronica de Wallia*. This comparison provides some answers to questions concerning the role of a late thirteenth-century compiler in the creation of *Brut y Tywysogion*, and this as well as an assessment of the overall nature of the chronicle concludes that the effect of such compilation on the source material of the original chronicle was probably minimal. The three Welsh versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* can therefore be taken to represent earlier sources with reasonable faithfulness, and it is this principle which enables

⁴ D. Stephenson, 'The "Resurgence" of Powys in the Late Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 30 (2007), 182–95; J. B. Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales: The Composition of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*', *Studia Celtica* 42 (2008), 55–86. Fuller references and discussion are given in the chapter itself.

detailed discussion of the fullest section of *Brut y Tywysogion*, that which covers the early twelfth century. It is argued that this portion of the work can be seen as an example of twelfth-century Cambro-Latin historical writing, and that some striking similarities between the author's ideas about the Welsh past and those of Geoffrey serve to contextualise the work of both men as belonging to a common tradition of Welsh historical writing.

Only after these issues concerning the complexities of *Brut y Tywysogion*'s compilation and sources have been discussed is attention given to the three distinct vernacular versions of the chronicle. This is where historiographical discussion of the chronicles joins with the discussion of the Welsh Historical Continuum in previous chapters, and the development and reception of *Brut y Tywysogion* after the conquest can be fitted in to previous conclusions concerning the development and significance of the Welsh Historical Continuum of which two of the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* became a part. Approaching *Brut y Tywysogion* only after describing and contextualising the creation of the vernacular Historical Continuum in previous chapters enables the interpretation to take into account the extent to which the text can be read as a distinct work or as part of the larger whole. This joining of Galfridian and annalistic historical texts in Wales is also a central concern of the sixth and last chapter, but before this attention is given to a neglected chronicle. The discussion of the chronicle *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, 'From the Time of Vortigern', which forms the fifth chapter of the thesis is in some ways distinct and separate from the preceding and following chapters, as is the critical edition which forms an appendix to the thesis. Its primary concerns are to determine the chronicle's date and purpose and to establish a critical text through the comparison of surviving manuscripts. The chapter is therefore based on extensive research including transcription, codicological and

palaeographical study as well as textual criticism. But it also places the work firmly in the context of Cistercian annalistic activity discussed in the fourth chapter, and the text itself shows evidence of the combination of this material with information derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. The edition establishes *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* as a surprisingly wide-ranging and important text despite its brevity compared with other chronicles, and shows that it is now essential to consider this work alongside *Brut y Tywysogion* and the Welsh Latin annals in any discussion of the development of Welsh chronicles.⁵

The discussion of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* also indicates that the chronicle can shed new light on the history of medieval Wales, offering an unique perspective on events of the early thirteenth century and also recording the last known viking raid on Wales, an event not previously discussed in scholarly terms. These events are discussed and contextualised in the notes to the edition. The Aberconwy origin of the chronicle argued for here also makes it the only Welsh chronicle to have survived from the most important polity in thirteenth-century Wales.

The link between political and institutional developments in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Wales on the one hand, and the production of historical texts at Welsh Cistercian monasteries on the other, is the focus of the sixth and final chapter. Its chronological outline of developments in Welsh political and cultural life builds on many issues discussed in previous chapters, and in this sense it can be seen as a synoptic chapter in which the conclusions reached in the other chapters are related to each other, and different aspects of this historical writing are discussed in chronological order. The chapter begins by discussing the prominent role of the

⁵ For example, in order to complete David Dumville's recent parallel editions of the vernacular and Latin chronicles it would be necessary to add *O Oes Gwrtheyrn. Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, Basic Texts for Brittonic History 1 (Cambridge, 2002); *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The Kings of the English', A.D. 682–954: Texts P, R, S in Parallel*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, Basic Texts for Medieval British History 1 (Aberdeen, 2005).

Cistercians in native Welsh political life, showing that their cultural role, specifically the production and promulgation of historical texts, is intimately linked with this political activity.

The preceding chapters can broadly be divided into those focussing primarily on historical writing under the influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth (1–3) and those focussing on Welsh chronicle writing which can be said to derive from a distinct historical tradition (4–5). The sixth chapter, then, seeks to define and describe the combination of these two traditions which resulted in the Welsh Historical Continuum, discussion of which forms the starting-point of the thesis. It discusses the spread of knowledge of Geoffrey's work in Wales and the role of the Cistercians in this process, before discussing the order's role in the chronicle writing investigated in detail in the previous two chapters. Attention is then given to the combination of these two historical traditions in the thirteenth century.

In order to contextualise the situation in Wales, the discussion then turns towards Cistercian historiographical activity elsewhere in Britain, particularly northern England and the Scottish Borders. This comparison, like the third chapter, sets Welsh developments in a broader frame of reference. After this, attention returns to Wales to focus on developments after the conquest, which returns to many of the issues discussed in the first and second chapters. This leads naturally to the conclusion of the thesis, which discusses the significance of this historical writing to medieval Welsh political and cultural history and reasons are given for the development of a continuous history which combined a Welsh annalistic tradition with the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Before the investigation of the Welsh Historical Continuum which forms the first chapter of the thesis, attention will be given to two matters of basic importance to

the following study, the first an author and his work and the second a group of monasteries. The above outline of the different chapters of the thesis will have made clear how important the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth is to the following discussion, in particular his *De gestis Britonum*. This title is now to be preferred to the more familiar *Historia regum Britanniae* since Michael Reeve has proven that it was what Geoffrey himself called the work.⁶ Similarly, the Cistercian monasteries of Wales are discussed in every chapter of the thesis, and so the introduction concludes with an account of the introduction of these monasteries into Wales. This focusses on the spread of the order in the later twelfth century and the definition of a group of 'native Welsh' houses founded from Whitland, a group whose role in the production and translation of Welsh historical texts was central, although not to the exclusion of other monasteries. The history of these houses in the thirteenth century and after the conquest is discussed in subsequent chapters, particularly the second and the sixth.

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

Our knowledge of Geoffrey of Monmouth's background is based almost entirely on what he tells us himself, which is precious little. On three occasions in *De gestis Britonum* he calls himself *Galfridus Monemutensis*, of Monmouth, which suggests he came from that settlement in Erging.⁷ Apart from this information and geographical details in his work, particularly relating to Caerleon, which seem to confirm his origin in south-east Wales, our main historical record of Geoffrey is his appearance in seven charters around Oxford between 1129 and 1151. Geoffrey is called *magister* in two of

⁶ *Geoffrey of Monmouth, the History of the Kings of Britain: an Edition and Translation of De gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, ed. by Michael D. Reeve and Neil Wright, *Arthurian Studies* 69 (Woodbridge, 2007), p. lix.

⁷ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 5, 145, 249. For Monmouth's position in Erging rather than Gwent, see J. E. Lloyd, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth', *English Historical Review* 57 (1942), 460–68 (461–62).

these charters, which might be taken to imply some teaching responsibilities, probably as a secular canon of the college of St George in Oxford.⁸ These charters are also witnessed by Archdeacon Walter, the man who Geoffrey says provided him with the main source material for his history, and it would therefore seem that Geoffrey wrote the work at Oxford. Geoffrey also calls himself *pudibundus Brito*, 'an abashed Briton', which taken with the epithet *Monemutensis* suggests that he was of Welsh ethnicity. The ambiguity of the term means that it is possible to argue for a Breton or Cornish background, an issue discussed in more detail below.⁹

Geoffrey appears in the witness lists to the Oxford charters as *Galfridus Arturus* or *Artur*, a nickname which indicates that his interest in the Arthurian legend was well-known and which was used by his contemporaries.¹⁰ Indeed his first foray into such material, *Prophetiae Merlini*, predated the appearance of the complete history and carries a separate dedication to Alexander, bishop of Lincoln (1123–1148).¹¹ It was to Alexander's successor as bishop of Lincoln, Robert de Chesney (1148–1166), that Geoffrey dedicated a work he wrote after the completion of *Gestis Britonum, Vita Merlini*, a life of Merlin in hexameter verse which was completed some time after 1148.¹² It was during this time that Geoffrey found ecclesiastical preferment, being elected bishop of St Asaph in 1151. There is no

⁸ H. E. Salter, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Oxford', *English Historical Review* 34 (1919), 382–85; *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568*, ed. by Neil Wright (Cambridge, 1984), p. x.

⁹ J. C. Crick, 'Monmouth, Geoffrey of (d. 1154/5)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10530>, accessed 7 Nov 2013]; *Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern*, ed. Wright, p. ix.

¹⁰ Both Robert of Torigni and Henry of Huntingdon refer to Geoffrey in this way. That it was a nickname rather than a patronymic is suggested by the fact that *Artur* appears in the nominative case, rather than the genitive which would be expected of a patronymic. *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. by R. Howlett (4 vols., London, 1884–1889), IV., 75, 168; *Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern*, ed. Wright, p. x.

¹¹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 143.

¹² *The Vita Merlini*, ed. by J. J. Parry (Urbana, IL, 1925).

evidence that he ever visited the bishopric, which was at this time under the control of the hostile Owain Gwynedd, and he died in 1155.¹³

Geoffrey completed *De gestis Britonum* at some point in the late 1130s, certainly by 1139 when Henry of Huntingdon was introduced to a copy at the library of Bec.¹⁴ It became one of the most influential works of the middle ages. It narrates the history of the Britons and their kings from the Trojan war to their loss of the crown of Britain and the beginning of Saxon rule over England. Geoffrey claims to have derived his account from an ancient book in the 'British' language acquired from Walter, archdeacon of Oxford.¹⁵ It begins with the story of Aeneas' escape from Troy, his settlement of the Trojans in Italy and the eventual birth of his great grandson Brutus. After being sent into exile, Brutus liberates a group of Trojans enslaved in Greece and with these eventually settles Britain, until then inhabited only by giants. Geoffrey's history goes on to relate the establishment of the kingdom of Britain under Brutus' descendants, until the reign of Belinus and Brennius explores the uneasy relationship between Britain and Rome. This is perhaps the most important theme in the work, given that the history itself is an attempt to put the Britons on a par with the Romans in terms of origin and nobility. The Roman occupation which follows is seen not so much as a conquest as a series of confrontations and compromises between the rulers of Britain and Rome. The settlement of Brittany by the finest British warriors is seen as a result of these conflicts, and it is this draining of British talent which necessitates the tyrant Vortigern's dependence on Saxon mercenaries to defend the island against barbarian attacks.

¹³ Lloyd, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth', 465–66.

¹⁴ For a survey of the debate about the exact date of composition, see *Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern*, ed. Wright, pp. xii–xvi.

¹⁵ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. by Reeve and Wright, pp. 5, 281.

The rebellion of these Saxon troops against the Britons and their seizure of power sees the return of a Breton dynasty which culminates in King Arthur, whose subsequent defeat of the Saxons is followed by victories and conquests further afield and an eventual confrontation with the Romans. Arthur's reign is presented as the return of a golden age, but it ends in civil war and his mortal wounding at Camlann. There follows a slow decline in the fortunes of the Britons, but they are eventually overcome not by the superior power of the Saxons but by plagues and foreign invasions attributed to the judgement of God, which eventually enable the Saxons to occupy Loegria (roughly synonymous with England) and confine the Britons to Wales. It is predicted that the Britons' fall from power, determined by the judgement of God, will eventually be reversed by divine will, with Britain coming under British rule once more. Geoffrey closes his account by entrusting the relation of the subsequent history of the Saxons to William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, and the subsequent history of the rulers of the Welsh to Caradog of Llancarfan.¹⁶

In strict historical terms, much of Geoffrey's history is pure fantasy. The question of why an educated twelfth-century canon would devote so much time and effort to such elaborate falsification of the British past is one of the most contentious issues surrounding the work. His work has been interpreted both as a form of resistance to Anglo-Norman power and a vindication of the same, while some critics have read the work primarily as parody. J. S. P. Tatlock's close study of Geoffrey's work saw its narrative as containing numerous coded references to twelfth-century English politics, and interpreted the work primarily as an allegory for the recent history and contemporary situation of the Anglo-Norman realm.¹⁷ Emphasis on the book's reflection of Anglo-Norman political affairs has the advantage of

¹⁶ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. by Reeve and Wright, p. 281.

¹⁷ J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1950).

contextualising the work with reference to the affairs of its dedicatees and readers, but sometimes the sheer multiplicity of suggested parallels detracts from their collective significance.¹⁸ Some have seen such political explanations as oversimplifications of a rich and multi-layered work, emphasising instead its literary quality, and in doing this some critics have emphasised the work's parodic function, fixing on the epilogue's references to more reputable twelfth-century historians and on the untraceable nature of Geoffrey's supposed main source.¹⁹

Another means of explaining the purpose of the history with reference to contemporary political events is to focus on the Welsh context of the work's composition, prioritising the fact that it relates the history of the Britons above any perceived allegorical link with the contemporary Anglo-Norman state. This was John Gillingham's approach in his study of the work's purpose, where he set it in the context of Welsh political recovery in the wake of the death of Henry I. Gillingham emphasises the essentially Welsh character of the themes and locations of Geoffrey's history, which affirm his connections with Monmouth. He also argues for a particular context for Geoffrey's positive portrayal of the ancestors of the Welsh, and particularly for his emphasis on the importance of Caerleon, in the alliance between

¹⁸ Examples of such readings are: F. Ingledew, 'The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: the Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 665–704; M. B. Shichtman and L. A. Finke, 'Profiting from the Past: History as Symbolic Capital in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*', *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993), 1–35; F. Tolhurst, 'The Britons as Hebrews, Romans, and Normans: Geoffrey of Monmouth's British Epic and Reflections of Empress Matilda', *Arthuriana* 8 (1998), 69–87. The approach is perhaps best summarised by Antonia Gransden's comment that 'the value Geoffrey's work has as an historical source is as a mirror of his own times, not as a record of the past'. *Historical Writing in England i: c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p. 206.

¹⁹ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 3rd edition (2 vols., London, 1939), II., 527–28; C. N. L. Brooke, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian', in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday*, ed. by C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin and D. Owen (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 77–91; V. Flint, 'The *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth: Parody and its Purpose. A Suggestion', *Speculum* 54 (1979), 447–68; for a wide-ranging survey of various critical interpretations of Geoffrey which nevertheless prioritises the work's parodic function, see R. R. Davies, *The Matter of Britain and the Matter of England: an Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the University of Oxford on 29 February 1996* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1–11.

Morgan of Caerleon and Robert of Gloucester, the primary dedicatee of *De gestis Britonum*.²⁰

Arguments about the purpose of the work are therefore partially dependent on assessments of Geoffrey's national sympathies, and these in turn depend on assumptions about his ethnic origins. Tatlock, stressing Geoffrey's sympathies with the Anglo-Norman elite, argues that Geoffrey's sympathies lay primarily with the Bretons rather than the Welsh, and also subscribes to the idea that Geoffrey was himself of Breton descent.²¹ This depends primarily on the fact that Monmouth's lords in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were Bretons, and it is assumed that Geoffrey was part of a Breton contingent which settled in the area.²² Geoffrey's perceived preference for the Bretons has, however, been questioned, Oliver Padel arguing that Cornish descent is at least as likely on the basis of a close reading of *De gestis Britonum*.²³ Karen Jankulak's recent study leaves the question open, but emphasises the authority of Geoffrey's own testimony regarding his connection to Monmouth as the only secure indication of his origins.²⁴

Such debates are fed by the ambiguity of the terms *Brito*, *Britones*, in this period and therefore colour our understanding of Geoffrey's source material.

Geoffrey's *Britannici sermonis liber* could be taken to refer to a book in any of the Brittonic languages. Although arguments that the surviving Welsh *Bruts* were derived

²⁰ J. Gillingham, 'The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991), 99–118, reprinted in his *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 19–39, to which further citations refer. For the dedications, see *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. ix–x.

²¹ Tatlock, *Legendary History of Britain*, pp. 414, 443.

²² Tatlock, *Legendary History of Britain*, pp. 440–41; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II. 375–76, 444. A feature of William fitz Osbern's conquest of Gwent, mentioned by Lloyd, was considerable institutional continuity on the part of the Welsh administrative class of the kingdom, a fact which could explain Geoffrey's social background and British/Norman sympathies rather better than descent from Breton settlers.

²³ O. J. Padel, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Cornwall', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 8 (1984), 1–28.

²⁴ K. Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Cardiff, 2010), pp. 10–12.

not from Geoffrey's history, but from this original source, were conclusively disproved by the twentieth century, questions concerning the veracity of his claim to have taken much of his material from an older source have never been conclusively answered.²⁵ In terms of known source material, Geoffrey used Bede, Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum*, and his work was also influenced by Virgil's *Aeneid*.²⁶ He certainly used some sources other than these, although whether there was ever such a thing as a single volume with the influence on Geoffrey's work that he suggests in the prologue and epilogue to *De gestis Britonum* is unlikely, given the dependence of large parts of this work on the known sources listed above. However, as noted below in the third chapter, Gaimar's reference to two distinct works which related the history of the Britons around 1137 may indicate the independent existence and circulation of an earlier work on which Geoffrey's history was based.²⁷ Molly Miller's study of the earlier section of Geoffrey's history dealing with British kings immediately after Brutus, the section with the least dependence on known sources, highlighted traces of earlier stages in the construction of the king-list and regnal years which indicate that these details were not entirely of Geoffrey's own invention.²⁸ She acknowledges, however, that the source for this material need not have been a lengthy one. There is often an assumption that since any Welsh sources apart from Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* no longer exist, such other sources as there were can be lumped together as belonging to 'oral tradition'.²⁹ Given the appalling rate of survival for manuscripts

²⁵ B. F. Roberts, 'Ymagweddau at *Brut y Brenhinedd* hyd 1890', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 122–38; *idem*, *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS 1 Version*, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 5 (Dublin, 1971), pp. 55–74.

²⁶ N. Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas', *Arthurian Literature* 2 (1982), 1–40; *idem*, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Bede', *Arthurian Literature* 6 (1986), 27–59; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. by Reeve and Wright, pp. lvii–lix.

²⁷ I. Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 323–43; see below, pp. 129–30.

²⁸ M. Miller, 'Geoffrey's Early Royal Synchronisms', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 28 (1979), 373–89.

²⁹ For example, Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307*, p. 203.

from Wales before the thirteenth century, and the probability that any such written sources would have been replaced by Geoffrey's account in the same way that Wace's *Roman de Brut* supplanted Gaimar's British history, it seems cavalier to assume that the non-survival of any such sources indicates that they only ever existed orally.³⁰

It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the nature, purpose and sources of *De gestis Brittonum* in detail. These topics themselves could fill more than one thesis. But a preferred approach, rather than a concrete assertion of conviction, concerning these matters is essential as a basis for the following chapters, all of which feature some discussion of the influence of Geoffrey's work in Wales. Gillingham's analysis of the work's purpose and context is here endorsed as the most convincing attempt to attribute a particular propagandistic bias to aspects of the work, or at least to explain the impulse behind its creation in relation to contemporary politics. The main feature which commends his interpretation is its simplicity. Arguments concerning the primarily Breton or Cornish sympathies of Geoffrey must always contend with the fact that his primary association on his own authority is with Monmouth and with Wales, and his regard for south-east Wales is clear from his emphasis on the importance of Caerleon. The idea that his invention of an exalted past for the kings of the Britons was intended to glorify the rulers of the Anglo-Norman realm must always contend with the fact that this connection is never made in the text itself and that any ancestral or institutional link between the kings of the Britons and those of England is never mentioned.³¹ Geoffrey's description of later English kings as

³⁰ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 3–13. Some scholars have, indeed, been open if noncommittal concerning the possible existence of the book which Geoffrey claims to have received from Walter, archdeacon of Oxford. B. F. Roberts, 'Sylwadau ar Sieffre o Fynwy a'r *Historia Regum Britanniae*', *Llên Cymru* 12 (1973), 127–45 (134–35); A. O. H. Jarman, 'Y Ddadl Ynghylch Sieffre o Fynwy', *Llên Cymru* 2 (1952), 1–18 (3); R. W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 20 (1970), 173–96 (194).

³¹ Ingledeu, 'Book of Troy', 681–88, is a typically thorough example of the scholarly sleight of hand

ruling *Loegria* rather than the unified kingdom of Britain further undermines such an interpretation.³² Julia Crick's interpretation of the purpose of Geoffrey's work, strengthened as it is by her investigation of the text's subsequent reception, has much to commend it, particularly her argument that interpreting Geoffrey's 'historical mythologising' in the tradition of Welsh and Irish synchronising histories is an argument against seeing *De gestis Britonum* as primarily imaginative fiction or a literary hoax.³³

Gillingham's arguments for seeing *De gestis Britonum* as Geoffrey's response to events in Wales during 1136 and 1137 need not be accepted wholesale in order to see the value of his overall interpretation of the work, and particularly his emphasis on Geoffrey as a Welsh Latin author. It is this side of Geoffrey which Jankulak emphasises in her book. Her arguments for seeing Geoffrey as writing in the tradition of insular pseudo-history are persuasive, and affirm the roots of his work in earlier Welsh tradition despite the surprise with which some of his Anglo-Norman contemporaries and colleagues received the work.³⁴ Further, the important point that Geoffrey's judgement of the Welsh cannot be taken as evidence for a lack of Welsh roots is emphasised when he is considered as part of a tradition stretching back to

which substitutes the Normans for Geoffrey's Britons with very little basis in the actual text of *De gestis Britonum*. This is particularly egregious in light of the article's emphasis on genealogy, and it consistently fails to address the problem inherent in treating the English kingdom as a successor to Geoffrey's Britons when these successors are explicitly the Welsh in genealogical terms and implicitly the Welsh in prophetic terms.

³² R. William Leckie, Jr., *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 69–72, 107–8. In the twelfth century, it seems that Geoffrey's history was more of a threat than a weapon for the kings of England. Gillingham, 'Context and Purposes', p. 23.

³³ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, pp. 218–26. In this she builds on Patrick Sims-Williams' comments in 'Some Functions of Origin Stories in Early Medieval Wales', in *History and Heroic Tale: a Symposium*, ed. by T. Nyberg (Odense, 1985), pp. 97–131 (pp. 97–98, 105–6).

³⁴ Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, pp. 22–28, 94; for Henry of Huntingdon's surprise, see N. Wright, 'The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the Text-History of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*: a Preliminary Investigation', in *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. by G. Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 71–113 (p. 93).

Gildas, a harsh judge of his own fellow countrymen. The other interpretations of Geoffrey's origins, sympathies and focus tend to add another level to our basic information about him and his work, whereas an assessment which prioritises his Welsh origins and those of his source materials offers a more straightforward understanding of his work and motivation, notwithstanding the undeniable subtlety and complexity of *De gestis Britonum*. The consistency of Geoffrey's work with regard to Welsh historiographical themes is emphasised in the work of Brynley Roberts, the chief authority on the Middle Welsh translations of Geoffrey's work, and this essential point is endorsed fully in the following study.³⁵ Not only are many features of the narrative, such as the Trojan foundation of Britain, traceable to earlier Welsh sources such as *Historia Brittonum*, but the overall thematic preoccupations of the work, ideas such as the unity of Britain, the relationship between the Britons and the Romans and the prophesied restitution of British control, have deep roots in the historical traditions of the Britons.³⁶ Writing in this Welsh tradition, Geoffrey nevertheless presented his work in an Anglo-Norman milieu, and his work articulated, advanced, transformed and sometimes supplanted the Welsh historical traditions which came before it.

THE CISTERCIAN ORDER IN WALES

The Cistercian order grew from the foundation of a monastery at Cîteaux in Burgundy in 1098. Its foundation was spurred by the dissatisfaction of its first abbot, Robert,

³⁵ Roberts' work is central to much of the following discussion, particularly the first, second and sixth chapters, but an accessible summary of his position with regards to Geoffrey's influence is B. F. Roberts, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Welsh Historical Tradition', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 20 (1976), 29–40.

³⁶ The relevance of some of these themes in Brittonic-speaking areas beyond Wales is indicated by the Cornish glosses on John of Cornwall's version of Merlin's prophecies. Roberts, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Welsh Historical Tradition', 39–40; 'La "Prophetia Merlini" de Jean de Cornwall', ed. by P. Flobert, *Études Celtiques* 14 (1974–1975), 31–41; L. Fleuriot, 'Les fragments du texte Brittonique de la "Prophetia Merlini"', *Études Celtiques* 14 (1974–1975), 43–56.

with the religious and disciplinary standards of his abbey of Molesme. From these events grew an order which was characterised by strictness of observance and simplicity in decoration, and which sought a return to true observance of the Rule of St Benedict.³⁷ The order quickly expanded, with monasteries often being founded in relatively remote locations, often in borderlands.³⁸ Early Cistercian legislation codified this preference for non-urban sites.³⁹

With this expansion came one of the main hallmarks of the order, the pattern of the supervision of daughter houses by the mother houses from which they were founded on the basis of an annual visit. The centralisation of the order was further reinforced by the required attendance of all abbots at the General Chapter, held at Cîteaux every September. These mechanisms were codified in the *Carta Caritatis*, the order's written 'constitution', and although there is some disagreement as to when they were first codified and enforced they were firmly in place by the time of the first Cistercian settlements in Wales.⁴⁰

The Cistercian order's international character and its centralisation were to be important factors in its spread in Wales. Ties of mother and daughter houses crossed the boundaries of lordships and kingdoms, making the order less susceptible to the influence of secular rulers. Although the foundation of a daughter house required the permission of the local bishop, and the order should not be considered as lying entirely outside these structures of authority, the centralised structure of the order and

³⁷ J. Burton and J. Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 9–20.

³⁸ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 22–25.

³⁹ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 56–57. For the choice of sites in Wales, see J. Bond, 'The Location and Siting of Cistercian Houses in Wales and the West', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 154 (2005), 51–79.

⁴⁰ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 29–35, 82–83, 88–95; *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by C. Waddell, *Studia et Documenta* 9 (Cîteaux, 1999), pp. 274–82, 440–50; F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349*, *Studies in Welsh History*, 1 (Cardiff, 1977), p. 112.

the approval of this structure by the Papacy provided a counterweight to local episcopal influence.⁴¹

The changes wrought in Wales by the Norman invasions of the eleventh century included the introduction of Benedictine monasticism to the country. However, the houses founded tended to be in Norman centres of power and remained associated with that conquering Anglo-Norman elite. Many of them were also former Welsh monastic centres granted to English or continental abbeyes, not for the foundation of new monasteries but as dependent priory cells for the collection of revenue. Benedictine monasticism in Wales retained an alien, sometimes an extractive character, although recent work has emphasised the fact that native Welsh rulers still showed generosity towards such orders.⁴²

This initially seemed true of the first Cistercian foundations in the country. The foundation of Tintern in 1131 by Walter fitz Richard de Clare, lord of Chepstow, conformed to the pattern of a Norman lord founding an alien monastery in the conquered March.⁴³ This was also true of Margam, founded in 1147 by Robert of Gloucester, but this abbey conformed to another feature of Norman monastic foundations in Wales as it is likely that it was founded at the site of a pre-existing native monastery.⁴⁴ The foundation of Whitland in 1140 seems to have been due to the initiative of Bernard, bishop of St David's, though after his death it moved to a site

⁴¹ The earlier *Carta Caritatis* was approved by Pope Calixtus II in 1119 and a later version by Pope Eugenius III in 1152. The administrative framework of the order received further confirmation when Innocent III endorsed it as a model for the Benedictines and regular canons at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 30, 82–83; *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, ed. Waddell, pp. 371–94, 498–505; *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: I*, ed. N. P. Tanner (Georgetown, 1990), pp. 240–41.

⁴² Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 9–17; B. Golding, 'Trans-Border Transactions: Patterns of Patronage in Anglo-Norman Wales', *Haskins Society Journal* 16 (2005), 27–46.

⁴³ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, p. 21; P. L. Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium* (Vienna, 1877), p. 19.

⁴⁴ Based on the existence of a great deal of early medieval inscribed stones at the abbey and in its vicinity. M. Redknap and J. M. Lewis, with G. Charles-Edwards, J. Horák, J. Knight, and P. Sims-Williams, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume I: Breconshire, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Radnorshire, and geographically contiguous areas of Herefordshire and Shropshire* (Cardiff, 2007), pp. 408–459, especially p. 420; Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, p. 107.

donated by John of Torrington.⁴⁵ Both Neath and Whitland were founded from Clairvaux, at this time presided over by the bishop of St David's namesake, St Bernard, who oversaw a great expansion of the order. St Bernard of Clairvaux is known to have taken an active interest in the expansion of the Cistercian order in Ireland, but nothing survives concerning his role in their spread to Wales.⁴⁶ Bernard of St David's was, however, closely connected during the anarchy of Stephen's reign to the Angevin party which included David I of Scotland.⁴⁷ David himself had close connections with Malachy of Armagh who was instrumental in the introduction of the Cistercian order to Ireland and who was a friend and associate of Bernard of Clairvaux.⁴⁸

Although Bernard of St David's was a staunch defender of the rights of his see, he was initially resented as an alien Norman intruder into the Welsh church.⁴⁹ His career as bishop saw him reform the organisation of St David's along Norman lines, but also recognise and use the earlier traditions of the see in an attempt to gain recognition of the church as the seat of an archbishop. It was only in the chaotic years after the death of Henry I that he began to vigorously campaign for this recognition, but in doing so he may have gained the support of Owain ap Gruffudd, ruler of Gwynedd.⁵⁰ Although it has been noted that his support for this cause had 'little connexion with Welsh nationalism; its real driving force was Norman ambition',⁵¹ and Owain Gwynedd's support was linked to the ongoing controversy over the bishopric

⁴⁵ H. Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', in *Yr Arglwydd Rhys*, ed. by N. A. Jones and H. Pryce (Cardiff, 1996), pp. 145–77 (pp. 155–56 and n. 54); Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 61–62.

⁴⁶ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 21–23.

⁴⁷ *St Davids Episcopal Acta 1085–1280*, ed. by J. Barrow, Publications of the South Wales Record Society 13 (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 3–4.

⁴⁸ M. T. Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 70–71.

⁴⁹ *BT P20*, p. 62.

⁵⁰ Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 453–54, 480–82; *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, ed. by H. Pryce (Cardiff, 2005), no. 192. The authenticity of the letter is open to question.

⁵¹ F. Barlow, *The English Church 1066–1154* (London, 1979), p. 312.

of Bangor, it is arguable that Bernard's episcopate saw some degree of reconciliation between the Welsh and Anglo-Norman influences in the Welsh church.⁵² He certainly oversaw co-operation between the Welsh and Anglo-Norman members of his bishopric, particularly the family of Sulien.⁵³ It may be that his support for the Cistercians was therefore a factor in the acceptance of that order by the Welsh.

Nevertheless the next stage in the expansion of the Cistercian order in Wales continued the pattern of Anglo-Norman patronage. The abbey of Strata Florida was originally founded in 1164 as a colony of Whitland by Robert fitz Stephen, the Norman constable of Cardigan castle.⁵⁴ It was only with the conquest of Ceredigion by the Lord Rhys in the following year that the abbey acquired the patronage of a native Welsh ruler.⁵⁵ Before this point, there were six Cistercian monasteries in Wales, each one an Anglo-Norman foundation.⁵⁶ The extent to which the spread of the Cistercians throughout native Wales in the following four decades was due to Rhys' patronage is uncertain. If the aborted initial foundation of Cwm Hir in 1143 is accepted, and its founder understood as Maredudd ap Madog, Welsh rulers took an interest in the order before this time.⁵⁷ The fact that every benefactor who founded daughter-houses of Whitland and Strata Florida was related to Rhys by marriage and

⁵² M. Richter, *Giraldus Cambrensis: the Growth of the Welsh Nation* (second edition, Aberystwyth, 1976), pp. 34–54.

⁵³ Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', pp. 148–49; *Episcopal Acts and Cognate Documents Relating to Welsh Dioceses, 1066–1272*, ed. by J. C. Davies (2 vols., Cardiff, 1946–1948), I., 136–7, II., 503–6.

⁵⁴ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, p. 151.

⁵⁵ Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', p. 156.

⁵⁶ The absorption of the order of Savigny in 1147 added the abbeys of Neath and Basingwerk to the Cistercian family. These were founded, respectively, by Richard de Granville, constable of the lord of Glamorgan, and Earl Ranulf II of Chester. The other houses were Tintern, Margam, Whitland and Strata Florida.

⁵⁷ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 74–75. J. E. Lloyd was skeptical of the notice, which requires Maredudd ap Maelgwn to be emended to Maredudd ap Madog, ruler of Maelienydd 1140–46. *History of Wales*, II., 594.

co-operated with him politically suggests, however, that he played an important role in their acceptance.⁵⁸

Regardless of whether Rhys' support was more cause or symptom, the rapid expansion of the order in the years up to 1201 demonstrates the embracing of the Cistercian order not only by the native rulers who founded the monasteries but also the general population who joined them as choir monks and lay brothers in such numbers as to allow this expansion.⁵⁹ The foundation of three daughter houses by Whitland in the space of twelve years testifies to this remarkable degree of recruitment. After Strata Florida, a colony was established in 1170 at Ystrad Marchell (Strata Marcella) in southern Powys under the patronage of Owain Cyfeiliog, who had established his authority over southern Powys in the wake of the death of Madog ap Maredudd.⁶⁰ The third colony was at Cwm Hir in Maelienydd under the patronage of Cadwallon ap Madog, ruler of Maelienydd and Ceri, founded in 1176.⁶¹

All three of Whitland's Welsh daughters sent out colonies of their own. The first to do so was Strata Florida, which in 1179 sent out a colony of monks to Nant Teyrnnon in the lordship of Caerleon, under the patronage of Hywel ab Iorwerth, ruler of Caerleon.⁶² There had already been an earlier, abortive attempt to found a monastery in Blaenau Morgannwg at Pendâr, which would have attracted the

⁵⁸ Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', pp. 158–59, where the point is made that it is unknown when Rhys began to support Whitland. It was only in 1189–95 that Rhys gained control of St Clear's, the lordship in which Whitland stood, but the fact that the abbot of the house was a Welshman, Cynan, by 1166 may indicate that Rhys' sponsorship was symptomatic of a general integration for the Cistercian order into Welsh society rather than necessarily being dependent on political control.

⁵⁹ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 46–47.

⁶⁰ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 159–60; T. M. Charles-Edwards and N. A. Jones, 'Breintiau Gwŷr Powys: the Liberties of the Men of Powys', in *The Welsh King and His Court*, ed. by T. M. Charles-Edwards, M. E. Owen, and P. Russell (Cardiff, 2000), pp. 191–223 (pp. 196–97).

⁶¹ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 74–75; P. M. Remfry, *A Political History of Abbey Cwmhir and its Patrons, 1176 to 1282* (Worcester, 1994), p. 1.

⁶² Hywel's father, Iorwerth, had only managed to regain possession of Caerleon as recently as 1175, having lost it at the hands of Henry II in 1171. Hywel seems to have exercised effective authority in the lordship of Caerleon by 1179. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 545–46, 600; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, p. 35.

patronage of the Welsh of Morgannwg.⁶³ The lands granted for this purpose were to pass to Llantarnam, as the abbey at Nant Teyrnnon became known, which attracted the loyalty of the Welsh of the lordship, although Margam also continued to be patronised by the lords of upland Morgannwg.⁶⁴

The second of Strata Florida's daughter-houses was founded in 1186, initially at Rhedynog Felen in Arfon but moving, by 1192, to the mouth of the river Conwy.⁶⁵ The probability that Dafydd and Rhodri, sons of Owain Gwynedd, acted as joint founders of this abbey is raised in a subsequent chapter, and the position of the abbey between Dafydd and Rhodri's lands suggests that these dynasts saw the foundation as one which was to serve the kingdom of Gwynedd as a whole, despite its division between rival dynasts at the time.⁶⁶

A foundation which is somewhat more difficult to interpret is that of Cymer in Meirionnydd. A daughter-house of Cwm Hir, it has been suggested that its foundation arose partially from a temporary relocation of Cwm Hir monks to Meirionnydd during the Mortimer conquest of Maelienydd in the late 1190s.⁶⁷ The abbey was founded in 1198, in an area which would come under the growing power of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in the next few years.⁶⁸ At the time Meirionnydd was under the power of

⁶³ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 23–24; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 616.

⁶⁴ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, nos. 122, 127–28, 130–139, 141–46, 148–55, 157–90 Morgannwg; 616–18 Senghenydd. For the patronage of Margam by these dynasties see Huw Pryce, 'Patrons and Patronage among the Cistercians in Wales', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 154 (2005), 81–95 (85–87). The survival for Margam of the fullest collections of charters for any Welsh monastery presents a somewhat skewed picture. For Llantarnam's continuing Welsh identity despite its acquisition of an Anglo-Norman patron in the thirteenth century, see Cowley, *Monastic Order*, p. 47.

⁶⁵ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 186–87; C. A. Gresham, 'The Aberconwy Charter; Further Consideration', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30 (1982–1983), 311–47 (314–16); C. Insley, 'Fact and Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Gwynedd: The Aberconwy Charters', *Studia Celtica* 33 (1999), 235–50 (236–38); R. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway, 1186–1537* (Cardiff, 1963), pp. 5–6.

⁶⁶ Gresham, 'The Aberconwy Charter', 316.

⁶⁷ J. B. Smith, 'Cymer Abbey and the Welsh Princes', *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes a Chofnodion Sir Feirionnydd* 13 (1999), 101–118 (101–5); *idem* with L. A. S. Butler, 'The Cistercian Order: Cymer Abbey', in *History of Merioneth Volume II: the Middle Ages*, ed. by J. B. Smith and Ll. B. Smith (Cardiff, 2001), pp. 297–325 (pp. 297–303).

⁶⁸ *BT P20*, p. 143.

Maredudd and Gruffudd, sons of Cynan, one or both of whom may have acted as the abbey's founder, and the division of Gwynedd at the time may explain the fact that two Cistercian houses were founded within the kingdom.⁶⁹ It is nevertheless slightly puzzling to find Gruffudd as both a donor to Aberconwy and the founder of Cymer.⁷⁰ The overlapping interests of the two abbeys is underlined by their involvement in a dispute with each other as early as 1199.⁷¹

The last of the Welsh Cistercian houses to be founded was a daughter of Ystrad Marchell, appropriately enough given that it also lay within Powys. The division of Powys at the death of Madog ap Maredudd in 1160 proved to be a permanent one, with Owain Cyfeiliog's consolidation of a southern bloc south of the river Rhaeadr in Mochnant facing a corresponding polity in Northern Powys under Gruffudd Maelor ap Madog.⁷² This polity was inherited by his son, Madog, who founded the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis around 1201.⁷³

By 1201, then, every significant native Welsh polity had an associated Cistercian monastery, the links between the royal dynasty and their favoured monasteries evident from donations of land, and the dynasts' choice of them as places of burial and retirement. While it is debatable whether the foundation of the abbey of Valle Crucis, for example, was linked to a realisation that the division of Powys into two polities was becoming permanent, the fact that two royal dynasties now existed there necessitated the foundation of a Cistercian house to serve as a focus for the patronage of the northern dynasty as well as the southern. It seems very much as

⁶⁹ H. Pryce, 'The Medieval Church', in *History of Merioneth*, pp. 254–96 (pp. 275–77).

⁷⁰ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 206.

⁷¹ *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, ed. by J. Canivez (8 vols., Louvain, 1933–1941), I., 237.

⁷² Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 565–66.

⁷³ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, p. 205; for uncertainty regarding the date of foundation, see *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 499.

though an associated Cistercian abbey had become a requirement for a native Welsh polity.

Was there by 1201, then, a clear division in Wales between native and Marcher Cistercian houses? The pattern from the mid-twelfth century reveals considerable ambiguity, particularly if the earlier, 1143 date for the initial, aborted foundation of Cwm Hir is accepted. Although 1143 would seem early for Whitland, not founded before 1140, to send out a colony, it may be that this was a factor in the colony's lack of success in addition to the instability of Maelienydd in this decade.⁷⁴ There is more information regarding the aborted foundation of Pendâr from Margam, which probably occurred at some point between 1158×c.1174.⁷⁵ Under the patronage of Gruffudd ab Ifor, lord of Senghenydd, it is interesting to note that a hermit, Meilyr, was required to act as intermediary in the foundation of this colony, though he may have been the head of a pre-existing cell which he brought into the Cistercian fold.⁷⁶ Both these abortive foundations were from abbeys which were, at that point, very much Anglo-Norman foundations, though the use of Meilyr in the case of Pendâr, and perhaps the eventual failure of the house, may indicate that this created some difficulties.

The eventual foundation of Llantarnam as a daughter of Strata Florida clarified the distinction between native and Marcher houses in this area. Margam abbey, founded by the lord of Glamorgan, could expect the patronage of the magnates of that lordship. The dynasty of Iestyn ap Gwrgant's patronage of Margam must be understood as a result of Morgan ap Caradog's territorial expansion of the dynasty's power in the area in the 1180s.⁷⁷ So even after the foundation of Llantarnam, Margam

⁷⁴ D. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 6.

⁷⁵ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 616; *idem*, 'Patrons and Patronage', 85.

⁷⁶ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 4, 196.

⁷⁷ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, pp. 20, 55–56.

continued to receive gifts from the Welsh lords of upland Morgannwg, but Llantarnam seems to have had the advantage in acquiring the patronage of the Welsh of the eastern part of Blaenau Morgannwg and of Gwynllŵg/Caerleon.⁷⁸ Such was the perceived overlap between the two houses that spheres of influence were marked out between the two institutions at an early date, and in the area between the rivers Taf and Dowlais, donations from the Welsh were to go to Llantarnam and those from Anglo-Normans to Margam. The definition of Llantarnam as a monastery for the Welsh of Morgannwg is further underlined by its acquisition, by 1200, of the land of Margam's aborted Welsh daughter-house at Pendâr.⁷⁹ In this case, then, there is a clear, perceptible division between native and marcher Cistercian monasteries.

The abbey of Basingwerk also occupied a somewhat ambiguous position, sited as it was in an area where political control fluctuated depending on the relative strength of the kingdom of Gwynedd and the English crown. Although originally founded as a Savignac house by the earls of Chester in 1131, it eventually came to count among its donors Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his son Dafydd as well as two English kings, Henry II and Edward I.⁸⁰ Although it was not part of the family of Whitland and cannot be classed as a native Welsh house, its abbot was used as an emissary by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd.⁸¹ The second chapter discusses the influence of the Pennant family, prominent patrons of Welsh culture, over the abbey in the fifteenth century.⁸²

⁷⁸ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, p. 27. An accurate comparison of the level of benefaction received by both houses is impossible because of the survival of a large collection of charters relating to Margam and the comparative lack of documentation relating to Llantarnam.

⁷⁹ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, p. 27; *Cartae et alia munimenta quae ad dominium de Glamorgancia pertinent*, ed. G. T. Clark (2nd ed., 6 vols., Cardiff, 1910), II., 289–90, 589–90, 606–8.

⁸⁰ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, nos. 213–16, 292.

⁸¹ J. B. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), p. 96.

⁸² See below, p. 111.

By 1200 there was a clear difference between the Cistercian abbeys of native Wales and those of the March. This cultural difference is apparent from the names of monks at these abbeys.⁸³ The failure of the Anglo-Norman houses to found Welsh daughters underlines the integrity of the family of monasteries descended from Whitland, which was strengthened by the system of visitations and the workings of the General Chapter.⁸⁴ As discussed in chapter 6, these differences would only become sharper in the polarising political atmosphere of the thirteenth century, although the importance of Whitland as the mother house of the Welsh abbeys would become somewhat eclipsed by the greater role played by Strata Florida and Aberconwy, closer to Venedotian centres of power.⁸⁵

As well as recruitment, differences were underlined by ties of patronage, but in the conflicts that characterised thirteenth-century Wales these could change.⁸⁶ The conquest of Maelienydd by Roger Mortimer gave the abbey of Cwm Hir an Anglo-Norman patron. After Mortimer's conquest of Maelienydd between 1195 and 1198, control remained with the Mortimers until 1215 when Maelienydd came under native rule once more, but the political allegiance of the territory fluctuated throughout the thirteenth century.⁸⁷ This must have introduced an element of ambiguity into the identity of the house.⁸⁸ This process could go both ways, as with Strata Florida and Whitland in the twelfth century, and it has been suggested that there was a danger of

⁸³ Compare, for example, the names of the abbots, listed in D. H. Williams, 'Fasti Cistercienses Cambrenses', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 181–229 (at 188–91).

⁸⁴ For an investigation of the reasons for the failure of the Anglo-Norman houses to found daughters in Wales, see Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 24–25.

⁸⁵ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ Pryce, 'Patrons and Patronage among the Cistercians in Wales', 82–85.

⁸⁷ Smith and Butler, 'The Cistercian Order: Cymer Abbey', pp. 297–303; C. A. R. Radford, 'The Cistercian Abbey of Cwmhir, Radnorshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 131 (1982), 58–76; D. Stephenson, 'Llywelyn Fawr, the Mortimers, and Cwmhir Abbey: the Politics of Monastic Rebuilding', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 80 (2010), 29–41 (31–33). Stephenson argues that the Mortimers were responsible for the rebuilding of Cwm Hir around 1200.

⁸⁸ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 194, 210. This point is perhaps best illustrated by Roger Mortimer's donation to Cwm Hir to remember his men who died in the conquest of Maelienydd. B. G. Charles, 'An Early Charter of the Abbey of Cwmhir', *Transaction of the Radnorshire Society* 40 (1970), 68–73 (68).

the Welsh lords of Afan becoming patrons of Margam by right of conquest up to around 1250.⁸⁹ This close relationship with the lords of Afan paints Margam as one of the more ambiguous of the Marcher houses in terms of identity, and is a reminder that despite the institutional ties which differentiated the Cistercian monasteries in Wales, the division between Marcher and native houses was by no means an impermeable one.

The work of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the introduction of Cistercian monasticism into Wales have both been discussed. The first chapter will now focus on vernacular historical texts showing considerable Galfridian influence, manuscripts of which can be associated with Cistercian monasteries in Wales. The impact of Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum* and its translations on Welsh historiography, as well as the role of the Cistercian order in this process, will be discussed more fully in the last chapter. The focus of the first chapter is on the manuscripts themselves, but this discussion will then be contextualised in two different ways in the second and third chapters. The fourth and fifth chapters investigate chronicles which came to form the most significant non-Galfridian element in the Welsh Historical Continuum. The diversity of approaches in these earlier sections of the thesis inform the more chronologically ordered survey of Welsh Cistercian historiography and the spread of Galfridian influence in the last chapter to such an extent that the latter serves in some ways as a synopsis and a conclusion. Only after several key aspects of medieval Welsh historical writing have been examined in detail can these conclusions be set in a chronological framework.

⁸⁹ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, p. 197; Clark, *Cartae et alia munimenta*, III., 927.

PART I: GALFRIDIAN HISTORICAL TEXTS IN WALES AND BEYOND

CHAPTER 1

THE MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT OF MEDIEVAL WELSH HISTORICAL TEXTS

A number of medieval Welsh manuscripts contain three texts which together form a continuous history of the Welsh from classical antiquity to the end of the thirteenth century. This represents a considerable historiographical achievement and one which shows the deep interest of the Welsh of the middle ages in their own origins. This chapter will focus on the manuscript context of this branch of Welsh historical writing, with particular attention given to manuscripts where the medieval Welsh translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* collectively known as *Brut y Brenhinedd* are extended with the addition of texts such as *Brut y Tywysogion* or *Ystoria Dared*. The central questions of the chapter are when and how this compilation was created and how it spread, and the answer will be ascertained mainly through discussion of the manuscripts themselves. Initially the medieval manuscripts containing any of the three texts, *Brut y Brenhinedd*, *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Tywysogion/Brenhinedd y Saesson*, will be discussed briefly, before focussing on the five medieval manuscripts where the three texts occur together in order and on their relationship to each other as well as to the other medieval manuscripts. The development of the continuum of texts apparent in these five manuscripts will be sketched with reference to the Welsh evidence. The Latin manuscript context of *De gestis Britonum* will then be investigated with attention given to the degree to which texts associated with the Latin history extend its narrative in a similar way to the Welsh histories. This will all shed light on the impulses which led to the development of a continuous history of the Welsh with Geoffrey's history used as a keystone,

sketching the details of this phenomenon's development in the vernacular as well as showing Latin influence on it.

THE TEXTS

The following discussion will focus on three Middle Welsh historical texts, or more accurately three groups of texts, since some are independent translations of different Latin recensions of the same texts. All three are translations of Latin historical texts into Welsh, translations which, when following on from each other in manuscripts, provided the Welsh with a continuous history of their nation from Classical antiquity to the late thirteenth century. The first, most numerous and in many ways the most important group is composed of translations into Middle Welsh of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* or *De gestis Britonum*, 'The Deeds of the Britons', discussed in the introduction.¹ Geoffrey's history represented an attempt to provide the Britons with a glorious past on a par with the ancient Romans, similarly presenting them as descendants of the Trojans.

As would be expected, Geoffrey's work swiftly achieved popularity in Wales, an area with which manuscripts of the 'First Variant' recension of the work seem to be particularly associated.² References to characters in his work become apparent in the poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd*, but the clearest indications of his work's popularity are the various translations of it into Welsh, generally known by the names of significant manuscripts in which they occur. Three of these translations were undertaken in the

¹ See above, pp. 9–18.

² J. C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 214. This association between the First Variant and Wales is curious, given the First Variant's tendency to reconcile Geoffrey's account to the Anglo-Norman historical tradition and its generally more English character. See R. William Leckie, Jr, *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1981), and the discussion of this in chapter 3, pp. 161–62.

thirteenth century. The 'Peniarth 44' and 'Llansteffan 1' versions are independent translations of two different versions of Geoffrey, probably undertaken soon after 1200.³ The earliest manuscripts of these two versions may originate at the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis, a house with a significant role in the development of the historical texts under consideration.⁴ The third thirteenth-century version, the 'Dingestow' *Brut*, was undertaken slightly later than the first two but still in the first half of the century and probably also in North Wales.⁵

The fourteenth century saw two new translations of *De gestis Britonum* as well as the production of another version. One of the new translations is present in Peniarth MS 23 as well as other manuscripts, whereas the other, the 'Cotton Cleopatra' version, will receive more attention below. This 'Cotton Cleopatra' version was also the basis of a shorter fifteenth-century version which was for a long time given the unwarranted authority of being taken to represent Geoffrey's original source, *Brut Tysilio*.⁶ The other fourteenth-century version is the Red Book of Hergest or *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version, a combination of two of the thirteenth-century translations which will also be discussed in detail below.⁷

A historical text which, as will be seen, is linked in manuscripts with the Welsh translations of Geoffrey is *Brut y Tywysogion*, a chronicle which can be thought to extend the narrative of Geoffrey's history from its close with the death of Cadwaladr to the end of the thirteenth century. The seminal study of this work was

³ B. F. Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', in *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol*, ed. by G. Bowen (Llandysul, 1974), pp. 274–302 (pp. 292–93); *Brut y Brenhinedd, Llanstephan MS. 1 Version*, ed. by B. F. Roberts, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 5 (Dublin, 1971), pp. xxiv–xxxvi.

⁴ D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 53; see below, pp. 72–73.

⁵ Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', pp. 287–93; *idem*, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Chyfieithiad Cymraeg Cynharaf o *Historia Regum Britanniae* Sieffre o Fynwy, Ynglyd ag "Argraffiad" Beirniadol o Destun Peniarth 44' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1969). For further discussion of all three versions, see below, pp. 346–49.

⁶ B. F. Roberts, *Brut Tysilio* (Llandysul, 1980).

⁷ *Brut y Brenhinedd, Llanstephan MS. 1*, ed. Roberts, pp. xxiv–xxx; 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', p. 293.

carried out by Thomas Jones in four volumes between 1941 and 1971. *Brut y Tywysogion* is more properly a name given to a family of medieval Welsh chronicles compiled from a number of annalistic sources towards the end of the thirteenth century.⁸ The text has a complex relationship to the surviving Welsh Latin annals collectively known as *Annales Cambriae*, sharing material with all of them to a varying degree but based on none of them directly.⁹ The Welsh chronicles are much fuller than the Latin annals, and whereas in the past this was ascribed mainly to literary elaboration on the part of the compiler of the Latin basis for the Welsh chronicles, recent studies have shown that much of this greater detail must be due to the compiler's dependence on fuller, now lost sources.¹⁰

Dependent on a number of annalistic sources, the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* nevertheless represent a unified and coherent attempt to compose a narrative of Welsh history from the death of Cadwaladr to the late thirteenth century and beyond. Originally composed in Latin, the original chronicle is now lost and is represented by three different versions in Middle Welsh. Two of these, named the Peniarth 20 and Red Book of Hergest or *Llyfr Coch Hergest* versions after individual manuscripts which contain them, have been seen as independent translations of two different recensions of the original Latin chronicle.¹¹ The original chronicle seems to have been compiled some time after the Edwardian Conquest of 1283, though the

⁸ David Dumville's suggestion that the term 'Brenhinedd y Saesson' should be used instead of 'Brut y Tywysogion' must be rejected, as discussed below in chapter 5, p. 186. *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The Kings of the English' A. D. 682–954: Texts P, R, S in Parallel*, ed. D. N. Dumville, University of Aberdeen Basic Texts for Medieval British History 1 (Aberdeen, 2009), p. v.

⁹ There are four sets of relevant annals: London, British Library Harleian MS 3859 (the A-text); London, PRO, MS E.164/1 (B); London, B. L. MS Cotton Domitian A.i (C); and *Cronica de Wallia*, occurring in Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514. For more detail on these chronicles, see below, pp. 190–96, and *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlv–xlix; *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec, sef Cyfiethiad Cymraeg Canol o'r 'Promptuarium Bibliae'*, ed. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1940), p. xl; K. Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages, Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, *Studies in Celtic History*, 2 (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 67–85.

¹⁰ Compare T. Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', *Scottish History* 12 (1968), 15–27 (25), with D. Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts of the Mid-Twelfth Century', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 56 (2008), 45–57 (54–57).

¹¹ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xxxv–xliv.

question of the exact date of its composition is a complex one.¹² What is clear, however, is that the original compilation was intended to contextualise the history of medieval Wales as an extension to the grand narrative of Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum*. This is clear from the starting point of the narrative in all three versions, the death of Cadwaladr ap Cadwallon and the loss of British sovereignty over the island, taking up the narrative where Geoffrey left off. The compiler also marks his intention in this continuation by emphasising a terminological shift: Ifor son of Alan rules after Cadwaladr *nid megys brenin namyn megys tywysawc*, not as a king but as a leader/prince.¹³ The chronicle is formulated to fulfil one of the tasks given by Geoffrey to his contemporaries in the colophon to his history:

Reges autem eorum qui ab illo tempore in Gualii successerunt Karadoco Lancarbanensi contemporaneo meo in materia scribendi permitto, reges uero Saxonum Willelmo Malmesberiensis et Henrico Huntendonensi, quos de regibus Britonum tacere iubeo, cum non habeant librum illum Britannici sermonis quem Walterus Oxenfordensis archidiaconus ex Britannia aduexit, quem de historia eorum ueraciter editum in honore praedictorum principum hoc modo in Latinum sermonem transferre curauit.¹⁴

The version of *Brut y Tywysogion* entitled *Brenhinedd y Saesson* responds to the challenge put forth in Geoffrey's colophon in a somewhat different way. It is a

¹² T. Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh, p. 23. For a fuller discussion of these issues, see chapter 5, pp. 233–48.

¹³ *BT P20*, p. 1.

¹⁴ 'The Welsh kings who succeeded one another from then on (the death of Cadwaladr) I leave as subject-matter to my contemporary, Caradog of Llancarfan, and the Saxon kings to William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon; however, I forbid them to write about the kings of the Britons since they do not possess the book in British which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, brought from *Britannia*, and whose truthful account of their history I have been at pains in honour of those British rulers to translate into Latin', *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 280–81.

translation of a Latin work whose author or authors combined a version of the Latin chronicle which was the basis for the Peniarth 20 and *Llyfr Coch Hergest* versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* with material relating to the history of England.¹⁵ Though the attempt to synchronise Welsh and English history increasingly loses momentum as the chronicle moves on, the later part of the text from 1095 onwards shows the influence of a marcher chronicle which has led J. Beverley Smith to suggest Neath or Whitland as the centre where these materials were combined with the Latin 'Chronicle of the Princes' to produce the Latin original of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*.¹⁶ The translation of this work into Welsh may have been undertaken at the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis, as will become apparent from its manuscript context.¹⁷

The third historical work under consideration here is *Ystoria Dared*. Whereas Geoffrey's history has strong Welsh connections, and *Brut y Tywysogion* is essentially a native text, the origins of *Ystoria Dared* lie in late antiquity. A narrative of the Trojan war purporting to be an eyewitness account by Dares Phrygius, a Trojan soldier, in reality its origins lie sometime between the fifth and late sixth centuries. The version popular in the middle ages is probably an abridgement of a fuller work, explaining the text's brevity and monotonous style. The text was the most popular narrative of the Trojan war in the middle ages, its unadorned, matter-of-fact style and eyewitness credentials commending it to a medieval audience often concerned with learning the true events of the war to which many of them traced their origins.¹⁸

Claims of Trojan origins in the middle ages were a means of placing one's own nation within a historical framework derived from the classical world, and of

¹⁵ This material consisted of Winchester annals associated with Richard of Devizes as well as a text of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. J. B. Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales: The Composition of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*', *Studia Celtica* 42 (2008), 55–86 (60–65).

¹⁶ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 67–81.

¹⁷ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 53; Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 81–84.

¹⁸ B. G. Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius* (*Ystoria Dared*), eu Tarddiad, eu Nodweddion, a'u Cydberthynas' (MA thesis, University of Wales, 1951), pp. ix–xx.

asserting equality with the Romans.¹⁹ In this sense the process can be compared to Virgil's assertion of Trojan origins on the part of the Romans as a means of establishing them within the framework of Greek myth and legend.²⁰ In medieval Europe, Trojan origins were first claimed by the Franks, and this appears independently in both the seventh-century history of Fredegar and the eighth-century *Liber historiae Francorum*.²¹ By the ninth century, Trojan origins were claimed for the Britons in *Historia Brittonum*, a text which eventually influenced Geoffrey's account of the foundation of Britain.²²

Dares Phrygius' account of the Trojan war was also known to Geoffrey, who started his narrative where the account of Dares terminated. This is reflected in the close association between the two Latin texts, and the even closer association between the Welsh translations and *Brut y Brenhinedd*. B. G. Owens, in his authoritative study of the Welsh texts, explains the likelihood of the Welsh translations being undertaken around the turn of the fourteenth century, essentially as a preface to *Brut y Brenhinedd*.²³ Four distinct recensions represent three independent medieval translations, with version IA occurring in seven manuscripts, IIA in two, IIB in three and III in just one.²⁴ Version IIB is an adaptation of IIA, as will be discussed below.²⁵

¹⁹ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 220.

²⁰ S. Frederico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, Medieval Cultures 36 (Minneapolis, MN, 2003), especially pp. xii–xv; S. Reynolds, 'Medieval *origines gentium* and the community of the realm', *History* 68 (1983), 375–90.

²¹ I. Wood, 'Defining the Franks: Frankish Origins in Early Medieval Historiography', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by S. Forde, L. Johnson and A. V. Murray, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series 14 (Leeds, 1995), pp. 47–57; see below, p. 61.

²² *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. by J. Morris, Arthurian Period Sources 8 (Chichester, 1980), pp. 60–61.

²³ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. xxvii–xxxiv; E. Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares's *De Excidio Troiae Historia*. An Exercise in Textual Typology', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 19.2 (2009), 253–99 (260–65).

²⁴ Version IB is a version of IA dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. clxxii–clxxiv.

²⁵ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. clxxxix, ccxxiv.

MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING ANY OF THE THREE TEXTS

The three texts, or groups of texts, relevant to this study having been discussed, their manuscript context will now be examined. This work is indebted to Daniel Huws' forthcoming *Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes*, which I have kindly been allowed to consult.²⁶ Overall, there are thirty-three medieval manuscripts currently known which contain a version of one or more of these texts.²⁷ There are twenty-six manuscripts which contain a version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*. Of these twenty-six, eight are fragmentary or missing beginning and end and are therefore unlikely to hold any clues as to whether they initially shared a manuscript with texts that extended the narrative of *Brut y Brenhinedd*.²⁸ A further three manuscripts contain only *Brut y Brenhinedd* as a stand-alone text.²⁹ Another three contain *Brut y Brenhinedd* along with shorter texts, such as genealogies or triads, with the bulk of each manuscript being devoted to the *Brut*.³⁰ Of the twelve remaining manuscripts, five contain *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Ystoria Dared*, in all but one case (Cardiff 1.362) with *Brut y Brenhinedd* following *Dares* in chronological order.³¹ In every one of these five

²⁶ Given the impossibility of providing page numbers at this stage, references to the *Repertory* will be to the names of individual manuscripts, that is the location and shelf-mark. These manuscripts are expected to be the subject of the first part of the work, a summary catalogue of manuscripts in the Welsh tradition before about 1800. This is loosely defined as Welsh literature and scholarship, British history as seen by the Welsh, genealogy, Welsh law, science and medicine in so far as there was a continuum of learning from medieval times found in Welsh. The tradition is seen as including manuscripts relating to these fields which are in Latin or English. Reference will also be made to scribes, expected to be the subject of the second part of the *Repertory*, with named scribes listed alphabetically and unnamed scribes given a number preceded by the letter X. D. Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming).

²⁷ My definition of medieval here is a broad one, with the dissolution of the monasteries as its end-point (1536–1539). I have therefore included manuscripts currently thought to belong to the early sixteenth century and excluded those dated later in the century.

²⁸ These manuscripts are: Aberystwyth, NLW, Peniarth MSS 16 (s.xiv/xv); 21 (s.xiii/xiv); 24 (1477); 44 (s.xiii^{med}); and 47.i (s.xiv¹); Aberystwyth, Llansteffan MSS 1 (s.xiii^{med}); and 5 (s.xv/xvi); and London, British Library Add. MS 14967 (s.xvi^{med}).

²⁹ Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MSS 23 (s.xv/xvi); and 46 (s.xiv^{med}); and Aberystwyth, NLW MS 5266B (Dingestow 6) (s.xiii²).

³⁰ Aberystwyth, NLW MS 3036B (Mostyn 117) (s.xiv¹); Peniarth MS 45 (s.xiv¹); Cardiff, Central Library MS 1.363 (Hafod 2) (s.xiv¹).

³¹ Cardiff, Central Library MS 1.632 (Hafod 1) (s.xiv^{med}); London, British Library Add. MS 19709 (s.xiv²); Philadelphia, Library Company of Philadelphia MS 8680 (s.xiv²); Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MSS 25 (s.xv/xvi); and 263 (s.xv¹).

manuscripts the two texts are the only lengthy works. A further two manuscripts contain a version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* followed by *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, the version of *Brut y Tywysogion* where the Welsh chronicle is combined with annals relating to English rulers.³² The remaining five manuscripts contain *Ystoria Dared* followed by *Brut y Brenhinedd* and then either *Brut y Tywysogion* or *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, and will be discussed more fully below.³³ One of these five also prefaces *Ystoria Dared* with *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*.³⁴

The Welsh translations of Geoffrey's *Gesta* therefore frequently occur in manuscripts in association with historical texts which extend their narrative, *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Tywysogion*. Indeed, in every medieval manuscripts where *Brut y Brenhinedd* occurs together with a text of any great length, that text is invariably one of the versions of these two works. Attention will now be given to manuscripts of *Ystoria Dared*, and then to those containing *Brut y Tywysogion/Brenhinedd y Saesson*.

The five manuscripts which combine *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* have already been mentioned, as well as the five which combine both with a version of *Brut y Tywysogion*. This covers ten of the thirteen medieval manuscripts of *Ystoria Dared*. Of the remaining three, Peniarth MS 47.ii (s.xiv^{med}) is a fragment, though of an unique version of the text, and Peniarth MS 227.ii only has a section from the close of the *Ystoria* narrative, occurring in a short manuscript consisting mainly of lists, written in 1491. The third manuscript, Cotton Cleopatra B.v, part iii, dates from around 1330 and contains no other text, despite the fact that it is currently bound together with the text of *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* from a manuscript of a similar date originating from the same scriptorium, probably the

³² London, British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra B.v (s.xiv¹); Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MS 22 (Hengwrt 318) (1444).

³³ Oxford, Jesus College MSS 111 (*Llyfr Coch Hergest*) (s.xiv²); and 141 (s.xv²); Aberystwyth, NLW MSS 3035B (Mostyn 116) (s.xiv²); 7006D (*Llyfr Du Basing*) (s.xv²); and Peniarth 19 (s.xiv/xv).

³⁴ For which see below, pp. 49–50.

abbey of Valle Crucis. It can therefore be said that the text most associated in manuscripts with *Ystoria Dared* is overwhelmingly *Brut y Brenhinedd*, with *Brut y Tywysogion* being the only other work occurring with the *Ystoria* on a regular basis.

Turning to *Brut y Tywysogion/Brenhinedd y Saesson*, henceforth *BT/BS*, seven of the nine medieval manuscripts have been discussed above as associated with *Brut y Brenhinedd*, five of these also containing *Ystoria Dared*. One of the remaining manuscripts is incomplete, Peniarth MS 18 (s.xiv^{med.}), and may initially have contained other texts. The second, Peniarth MS 20 (s.xiv¹), has *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, a Welsh version of the *Promptuarium Bibliae* attributed to Petrus Pictaviensis, preceding the text of *BT*, and a bardic grammar following.³⁵ With the exception of Peniarth 20, then, the same close association with the other historical texts can be seen in the case of *BT/BS*, although it may be that the exception is a significant one. Of the three versions of the chronicle, namely the *Llyfr Coch* version, the Peniarth 20 version and *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, both *Brenhinedd y Saesson* and the *Llyfr Coch* versions are always connected with the historical sequence under discussion, albeit sometimes without *Ystoria Dared*. This cannot be said of the Peniarth 20 version, since the only surviving medieval version of that text occurs with quite different material, grammatical and biblical, sharing the same manuscript. Only two of the three versions of *BT/BS* can therefore be said to have a close association with *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* as far as occurring in the same manuscripts, although *BS* draws partially on the Peniarth 20 version in its fifteenth-century continuation (see below under *Llyfr Du Basing*).³⁶

³⁵ *Bibyl Ynghymraec*, ed. Jones, pp. lxxxviii–xc; *BT P20*, pp. xlv–xlix.

³⁶ If there were any other medieval manuscripts containing the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, it is unlikely to have long survived the medieval centuries, since all later copies of this version are dependant on the Peniarth 20 manuscript. *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlv–xlv; B. F. Roberts, 'The Red Book of Hergest Version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*', *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977–1978), 147–86 (158).

The different versions of *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* are also important in considering the relationship between various manuscripts where the two texts are associated and will be discussed below, but it will first be useful to describe in detail the five manuscripts where all three texts occur together. Other, related manuscripts will also be considered and the details of the development of this historical continuum of three associated texts will be sketched as far as possible, with some indication of the date and location of this historiographical achievement. This work will build on Brynley Roberts' discussion of this historical sequence as well as Thomas Jones and B. G. Owens' editions of *BT/BS* and *Ystoria Dared*.³⁷

MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING ALL THREE TEXTS

1. Aberystwyth, NLW MS 3035B (Mostyn 116)

This manuscript contains only *Ystoria Dared* in Owens' IA version, the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, and the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, the last of these being incomplete.³⁸ It should be noted that the designation '*Llyfr Coch Hergest* version' does not imply that the texts were copied from that manuscript, merely that they belong to the same family as the versions of the same texts represented in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*. The version of *Brut y Tywysogion* in this manuscript, for example, is closer to the text of Peniarth MS 18 than to *Llyfr Coch Hergest*.³⁹

This manuscript was initially dated to c.1310–30, though it is now thought to date to the latter half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁰ Its scribe, Daniel Huws' X92, also

³⁷ Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 157–59, 171–72, 179–86; *BT P20*; *BT P20 Tr.*; *BT RB*; *BS*; Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*'.

³⁸ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. xxxvii–xxxix; Roberts, 'The Red Book of Hergest Version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*', 172–73; *BT RB*, pp. xxi–xxv.

³⁹ *BT RB*, pp. xxi–xxv, l.

⁴⁰ Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 173; Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 60.

wrote London, British Library Add. MS 19709, a manuscript which contains both *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* in the same versions as in NLW 3035B though in a far worse state, with the beginning and end of both texts wanting.⁴¹ The geographical origin of both manuscripts is uncertain though there are some indications of a northern origin for NLW 3035B, namely three *englynion* by Rhisiardyn added in a fifteenth-century hand as well as annotation in a hand of the sixteenth century showing interest in Oswestry and Degannwy. Daniel Huws favours a Cistercian origin and suggests Aberconwy/Maenan as a centre of production, perhaps because Rhisiardyn is known to have composed a poem in praise of its abbot Ieuan ap Rhys in the later fourteenth century, but this connection is tenuous and it is best to keep an open mind with regard to the provenance of these manuscripts.⁴²

2. Oxford, Jesus College MS 111 (*Llyfr Coch Hergest*)

This well-known manuscript could be considered the most important manuscript to survive from medieval Wales, given the extent and variety of its contents. The largest and heaviest medieval Welsh book, it is a compendium of Welsh literature, particularly historical and narrative prose although there is also a good collection of poetry. The collection opens with the sequence of three historical texts, with *Ystoria Dared* in the IA version and both *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brut y Tywysogion* in the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version.⁴³

⁴¹ Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: X92.

⁴² 'Gwaith Rhisiardyn', ed. by N. A. Jones in *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisiardyn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch*, ed. by N. A. Jones and E. H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 1996), pp. 45–122 (pp. 74–75).

⁴³ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. xxxix–xl; Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', pp. 174–75; *BT RB*, pp. xxvi. The manuscript's contents can be summarised as follows: *Ystoria Dared*; *Brut y Brenhinedd*; *Brut y Tywysogion*; *De Carolo Magno*; *Pererindod Siarlymaen*; *Delw y Byd*; *Walter de Henley*; *Seith Doethon Rufein*; *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*; *Sibli Ddoeth*; *Cyfoesi Myrddin*; *Proffwydoliaeth yr Eryr*; Triads; *Enweu Ynys Prydein*; *Owein*; *Peredur*; *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*; *Lludd a Llefelys*; *Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi*; *Geraint*; *Culhwch ac Olwen*; *Bown o Hamtwn*; *Meddygon Myddfai*; Proverbs; *Brut y Saesson*; *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*; *Hengerdd* poetry;

The manuscript was produced for Hopcyn ap Tomos of Ynysforgan in Gŵyr soon after 1382. Hopcyn's expertise in *brut*, history and prophecy, was well known to his contemporaries, and in 1403 he was consulted in this capacity by Owain Glyndŵr, then campaigning in Carmarthenshire.⁴⁴ The manuscript was written by three main scribes, one of whom, Hywel Fychan, we know by name from a colophon in another manuscript he produced for Hopcyn (Philadelphia, Library Company of Philadelphia MS 8680) which contains both *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd*, again in the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version. Hywel Fychan also wrote manuscripts containing *Ystoryaeu Seint Greal*, the Welsh translation of the Grail legend (Peniarth 11), a large collection of religious prose (*Llyfr Coch Talgarth*, Aberystwyth, NLW Llansteffan MS 27) and a manuscript of *Cyfraith Hywel*, medieval Welsh law.⁴⁵

Another of the scribes, Daniel Huws' X91, is known to have collaborated with other scribes on Peniarth 32, '*Y Llyfr Teg*', a book which contains legal material along with annals including *Brut y Saeson* and *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*. Though shorter than *BT/BS*, these two texts are comparable to it as it is possible to interpret them as continuations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, as will be discussed below. X91 also wrote the entirety of Llansteffan 4, a collection of narrative and religious prose, Peniarth 190, consisting of religious prose, and Peniarth 19, the next manuscript under consideration.⁴⁶

Amlyn ac Amig; Bardic Grammar; *Gogynfeirdd* poetry.

⁴⁴ B. F. Roberts, 'Un o Lawysgrifau Hopcyn ap Tomos o Ynys Dawy', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 22 (1966–1968), 223–28; *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, ed. by H. Ellis, second series (4 vols., London, 1827), I., 21–23; for Hopcyn see C. James, "'Llwyr Wybodau, Llên a Llyfrau": Hopcyn ap Tomas a'r Traddodiad Llenyddol Cymraeg', in *Cwm Tawe*, ed. by H. T. Edwards (Llandysul, 1993), pp. 4–44.

⁴⁵ Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: Hywel Fychan.

⁴⁶ Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: X91.

3. Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MS 19

The fact that its scribe worked on *Llyfr Coch Hergest* is our best guide to dating this manuscript to the late fourteenth century, and is also an indication of its geographical origins. It should however be borne in mind that tracing the origin of a manuscript to a particular centre, or even a particular region of Wales is an inexact process. Many professional scribes may have been active in more than one area throughout their lives, and the problems this presents are only exacerbated by the importance of Cistercian abbeys as centres of production for manuscripts of native literature. The interconnectedness of the monasteries of this order must have meant the exchange of personnel between daughter, mother and sister houses, with obvious implications for scribal activity.

With this caveat in mind, locating particular manuscripts by association with other, more easily locatable scribes and books must be taken as being only broadly indicative of their provenance. The texts in Peniarth 19, however, are also close to those in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, with *Ystoria Dared* in the IA version and *Brut y Brenhinedd* as well as *Brut y Tywysogion* also in the *Llyfr Coch* versions. They are also versions which are closer to *Llyfr Coch Hergest* than those in NLW 3035B or BL Add. 19709, although this similarity could be due to a common archetype rather than one manuscript being copied from the other.⁴⁷ The only other text in Peniarth 19 is also shared with *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, *Brut y Saeson*. This work, a relatively brief account of the reigns of English kings from the death of Cadwaladr to the reign of Richard II forms a companion to *Brut y Tywysogion* in this manuscript, with one text

⁴⁷ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. xl–xli; *BT RB*, pp. xxviii–xxix; Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 176, 184. The inclusion of the ending of the IIA recension of *Ystoria Dared* after the IA text had run out, and the fact that this was apparently done first in *Llyfr Coch Hergest* (Hywel Fychan adding the continuation in a slightly smaller script), is an argument in favour of Peniarth 19 being a copy of Jesus 111. Poppe, 'Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares', 261–62.

dealing with the later, degraded rulers of the Welsh and the other outlining the continuation of monarchy under the Saxons and, subsequently, the Normans.⁴⁸ The two texts together therefore fulfil both tasks given by Geoffrey of Monmouth to his 'successors' in the colophon to his history.⁴⁹ The manuscript is therefore an intriguing parallel to *Brenhinedd y Saesson* in terms of content.

Whilst scribe X91's association with Hopcyn ap Tomos is apparent from his work in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, it may not be that Peniarth 19 was composed for the same patron, especially considering Daniel Huws' suggestion that the lack of legal and religious prose in the former book was due to Hopcyn owning this material in other manuscripts.⁵⁰ If this were true the inclusion of the same historical texts in both *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and Peniarth 19 would be unnecessary. On the other hand, the number of manuscripts known to have been produced by scribes who worked for Hopcyn ap Tomos and his brother Einion make this family significant enough patrons to have sponsored the production of both manuscripts, and Peniarth 19 can be said to have been produced by the same scribal school as *Llyfr Coch Hergest*.⁵¹

London, BL MS Cotton Cleopatra B.v

This manuscript, though it cannot be classed as one of those containing all three texts in order, is nevertheless of the utmost importance to our understanding of the development of the historical continuum formed by the combination of *Ystoria Dared*, *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *BT/BS*. The manuscript is a composite one made up of three

⁴⁸ *Brut y Saeson* finishes with Richard II in both *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and Peniarth 32. Despite the loss of the final quire of Peniarth 19, then, it is likely that its version of the text also went up to that king's reign. Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: Peniarth 19.

⁴⁹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 281.

⁵⁰ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 82.

⁵¹ C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Welsh Books in the Fifteenth Century', in *Poetica: An International Journal of Linguistic-Literary Studies* 60 (Special Issue: The History of the Book in Fifteenth Century Britain, Tokyo, 2003), 1–13 (1–2).

originally separate parts, with only the first and third parts being of relevance to this discussion. The first part consists of a text of *Brut y Brenhinedd* entitled *Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn ac ev Henweu o'r Kyntaf hyt y Diwethaf*, an original translation of Geoffrey's history notable for its fluent, free style and its addition of material from native Welsh literature as well as from further afield, including classical material and chronological synchronism.⁵² This is immediately followed by our earliest text of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, a text which, as noted above, synchronised Welsh and English history. The impetus for this undertaking is suggested in the colophon to Geoffrey's history as preserved in translation in the Cotton Cleopatra *Brut y Brenhinedd* (or *Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn*), which leaves out William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, making it seem that Geoffrey left the task of writing the later history of the Saxons *and* the Welsh to Caradog of Llancarfan.⁵³

No Latin manuscript of Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum* has survived with the same peculiarity in its colophon, but the Welsh text suggests that one was present in the version from which the Cotton Cleopatra *Brut y Brenhinedd* was translated. That both translations in part i of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript were the work of the same man is suggested by certain stylistic features, and it is therefore likely that the Latin original of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* already occurred in a manuscript together with the version of Geoffrey's history which was the basis for the Cotton Cleopatra translation. As has been suggested, the colophon's recommendation of combining Welsh and English history may have spurred the original compiler of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* to his task, though Smith also stresses the importance of pre-existing Latin

⁵² 'The History of the Kings of the Island of Britain and their Names from the First to the Last'. B. F. Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn: A Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', in *Narrative in Celtic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Edgar M. Slotkin*, ed. by Joseph F. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 8–9 (Hamilton, NY, 2011), 215–27 (223–25); for the texts see *Brut y Brenhinedd: Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. by J. J. Parry (Cambridge, MA, 1937), and *BS*.

⁵³ *BS*, pp. xii–xiii; *Cotton Cleopatra*, ed. Parry, pp. 217–18.

manuscripts in this context.⁵⁴ The compiler's response was therefore quite different to that of X91 who, in compiling Peniarth 19, fulfilled Geoffrey's charge with two separate texts, outlining the history of the Welsh with *Brut y Tywysogion* and the later history of the Saxons in the shorter *Brut y Saesson*.

The first part of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript is relatively easily datable, since it is part of a group of manuscripts which have been associated with the abbey of Valle Crucis. The scribe of this part of the manuscript, Huws' X89, also wrote the continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Peniarth MS 20.⁵⁵ This continuation of the chronicle indicates sufficient interest in north-east Wales to argue for its composition at a centre in that area, and Valle Crucis abbey suggests itself strongly.⁵⁶ The continuation finishes at 1332, giving a date of c.1330 to both the Cotton Cleopatra and Peniarth 20 manuscripts.

The other scribe of Peniarth MS 20, Huws' X88, was responsible for the third part of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript, a text of the version of *Ystoria Dared* classed as IIA by B. G. Owens.⁵⁷ Whilst this cannot have originally formed part of the same manuscript as part one of Cotton Cleopatra, they should nevertheless be seen as products of the same scriptorium, one where all three of the works which made up the historical continuum were available. There are, however, no indications that the versions of the three texts available here were combined into one narrative in the fourteenth century.

⁵⁴ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 65–67.

⁵⁵ Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: X89.

⁵⁶ The indications of an interest in this area occur *s.a.* 1304, 1330 and 1331. There is also a clear interest in the bishopric of St Asaph, *s.a.* 1292, 1314, 1330. The strong connections between Valle Crucis and St Asaph can make these notices indicative of an origin at the Cistercian monastery, but a centre of production at St Asaph cannot be ruled out, especially given that St Asaph is known as a centre of scribal activity. There is also a marked interest in the affairs of Morgannwg, interesting given the South Walian dialectical features Thomas Jones saw in the work of X88. For St Asaph see below, pp. 73–74, 80, 93–94; Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 53; G. Edwards, review of *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS. 20*, ed. by T. Jones, *English Historical Review* 57 (1942), 373–75; *BT P20*, pp. xlvi–xlix.

⁵⁷ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. lxvi–lxviii; Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: X88.

4. Aberystwyth, NLW MS 7006D (*Llyfr Du Basing*)

The availability of these texts was capitalised on in the following century. *Llyfr Du Basing* opens with *Ystoria Dared* in what Owens calls recension IIB. The relationship of the texts in this manuscript to Cotton Cleopatra has caused considerable discussion, and it has in the past been argued that *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* in *Llyfr Du Basing* were not derived directly from Cotton Cleopatra B.v part iii, both recensions instead drawing on a common exemplar.⁵⁸ However, given how accurately *Llyfr Du Basing* reflects the peculiarities of the third part of Cotton Cleo it is difficult to see how its text was not dependent on this manuscript.⁵⁹ The exemplar of the NLW 7006D Dares may have been available at the same library as the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript.⁶⁰ A few quires into the text of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the hand changes to that of Gutun Owain, who completed the manuscript, with about three quarters of the book being in his hand and the first quarter in the hand of an older contemporary. This copy of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* finishes at 1461, providing a *terminus post quem* for the completion of the manuscript.⁶¹

There are strong indications that the exemplar of the *Llyfr Du Basing* texts of *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was the first part of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript itself, despite variations between the texts of these manuscripts making it difficult to determine precisely the relationship between them. This indicates that faithful copying cannot always be expected of Welsh scribes, something particularly true of Gutun Owain, whose active interest in the texts is apparent from

⁵⁸ *BS*, pp. xix–xx, xxv–xxxii.

⁵⁹ Dumville, *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, p. ix and n. 44.

⁶⁰ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', p. ccxxiv.

⁶¹ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: NLW 7006D; *BS*, pp. 276–77.

his scribal activity.⁶² Gutun Owain's section of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in *Llyfr Du Basing* contains considerably more variants from the Cotton Cleopatra text than that of his older contemporary who began the manuscript.⁶³ More weight should therefore be given to the indications that *Llyfr Du Basing* was derived from the Cotton manuscript. These include a blank space left for lines of Latin verse which are almost illegible in Cotton Cleopatra as well as the fact that, after the point where the Cotton manuscript's version of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* breaks off in 1197, the chronicle is continued with a combination of both the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and Peniarth 20 versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*, with the continuation up to 1332 in Peniarth MS 20 used by Gutun Owain as part of his continuation of the text to 1461.⁶⁴

All these are indications that this manuscript was produced at the centre where Peniarth 20 and both the first and third parts of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript were written over a hundred years earlier. That this may have been Valle Crucis is further suggested by the career of Gutun Owain, the poet, scribe and herald who composed poetry in praise of the abbots of that monastery, fourteen such poems surviving.⁶⁵ Gutun also composed poetry in praise of abbot Tomos Pennant of Basingwerk, and the strong connections between *Llyfr Du Basing* and the abbey from which it takes its name should not be forgotten. The manuscript certainly belonged to that monastery in the early sixteenth century, when annotations were written in the manuscript's

⁶² Compare the discussions in Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', p. ccxxiv, T. Jones, *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, pp xviii–xx, xxv–xxxi and Roberts, 'A Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', pp. 222–23. The three variations which Jones found difficult to explain without recourse to a shared exemplar could be explained by Gutun Owain having access to the original Latin version of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* against which he could have checked the Cotton Cleopatra text, which he nevertheless used as the basis for his Welsh text.

⁶³ Roberts, 'A Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', pp. 222–23.

⁶⁴ *BS*, p. xiv.

⁶⁵ *L'oeuvre poetique de Gutun Owain*, ed. by E. Bachellery (Paris, 1950), XVIII–XXXII (pp. 117–85); J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Gutun Owain', in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282–c.1550, Volume II*, ed. by A. O. H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes, 2nd edn, revised by D. Johnston (Llandybïe, 1997), pp. 240–55.

margins which may be in the hand of abbot Tomos Pennant.⁶⁶ It is perhaps best to think of a network of connections between various centres in north-east Wales rather than insisting on assigning manuscripts to particular monasteries.

5. Oxford, Jesus College MS 141

Gutun Owain produced another manuscript comparable to *Llyfr Du Basing* in content if not in grandeur. Whilst *Llyfr Du Basing* is a large (225x160 mm), high-status parchment manuscript in textura script with illuminations, sometimes in gold, Jesus College 141 is a smaller, mainly paper manuscript in a less high-status Anglicana script.⁶⁷ Badly misbound in its current state, the manuscript contains a compilation of British history probably of Gutun Owain's own devising, which includes *Ystoria Dared*, *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson*. Though he abbreviates and paraphrases throughout the compilation, his ultimate source for these texts was shared with *Llyfr Du Basing*.⁶⁸ The most innovative feature of this manuscript, however, is the extension of the narrative backwards through the addition of a version of *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, a Welsh translation of the *Promptuarium Bibliae* attributed to Petrus Pictaviensis.⁶⁹ In the Welsh version the Biblical genealogies are linked to Trojan material in order to cast the work as an historical preface to *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd*.⁷⁰

Despite the fact that Jesus 141 is the only surviving medieval manuscript to contain *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec* as a preface to *Ystoria Dared*, it is clear that a conceptual link existed between the texts in the earliest manuscript of *Y Bibyl*. This is Peniarth

⁶⁶ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: NLW 7006D.

⁶⁷ *Llyfr Du Basing* is one of only two examples of gold being used in the decoration of a Welsh manuscript. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 19.

⁶⁸ Roberts, 'A Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', 223.

⁶⁹ *Y Bibyl Yngymraec*, ed. Jones, pp. lix–lxi.

⁷⁰ *Y Bibyl Yngymraec*, ed. Jones, pp. xlv–xlvii.

MS 20, where *Y Bibyl* occurs alongside *Brut y Tywysogion*. Here the text, describing King Priam of Troy, finishes with the lines *ac am hwnnw a'y etiued y traethir yn Ystoria Daret*.⁷¹ This suggests that *Y Bibyl* may have served as a preface to *Ystoria Dared* in an earlier manuscript, since the version in Peniarth 20, a manuscript dating to around 1332, was itself a copy of an earlier version.⁷² *Y Bibyl* was initially translated around 1300, a similar date to *Ystoria Dared*, a text which Owens saw as being translated specifically as a preface to the Welsh versions of Geoffrey.⁷³ The early link between these two texts and the fact that the latter was from its beginning an element of the Welsh Historical Continuum therefore suggests that, despite first occurring in such a manuscript in the second half of the fifteenth century, *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec* could be thought of as part of the Welsh Historical Continuum from an early date. The fact that it is contained in none of the fourteenth-century manuscripts of the Continuum discussed here does however limit its role in this discussion.

The manuscript also contains a description of Britain derived ultimately from Ranuf Higden's *Polychronicon* as well as *Llyfr Disgrifiad Arfau*, a tract on heraldry, both occurring after the historical sequence.⁷⁴ The last dated event in the historical material provides a *terminus post quem* of 1471 for the book's completion.⁷⁵ The relationship of Jesus 141 to Cotton Cleopatra and *Llyfr Du Basing* is a complex one. It seems to have been copied from a manuscript containing an already abbreviated combination of Dares, *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, probably of Gutun Owain's work. This manuscript was copied from another containing these three texts, which was itself derived from an exemplar shared with the Cotton Cleopatra

⁷¹ 'and him and his heir are spoken of in *Ystoria Dared*', *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, ed. Jones, p. 63.

⁷² *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, ed. Jones, pp. xlvii, lxxxi.

⁷³ *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, ed. Jones, pp. liii–liv; Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. xxvii–xxxiv.

⁷⁴ *BS*, pp. xxix–xxx; E. J. Jones, *Medieval Heraldry: Some Fourteenth Century Heraldic Works* (Cardiff, 1943).

⁷⁵ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: NLW 7006D.

manuscript.⁷⁶ Given Gutun Owain's connections and the north-eastern provenance of these other manuscripts, Jesus 141 is certainly of north-eastern provenance, and in terms of ecclesiastical centres of production the abbeys of Valle Crucis and Basingwerk should be borne in mind. The less high-status nature of the manuscript itself, however, may suggest a secular patron or even that it was created for Gutun Owain's personal use. Such would be the implication of such personal touches as its list of the names of poets and musicians who were Gutun Owain's contemporaries. This list now forms a detached portion of the manuscript found in Aberystwyth, NLW MS 1585D.⁷⁷

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

1. The *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version

With each of the manuscripts described, attention can now be devoted to the question of the origin and development of this compilation of three historical texts to form a continuous narrative of Welsh history. The importance of the different versions of each text to tracing this development was realised by Brynley Roberts, who compared his own conclusions concerning the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* to those already reached by B. G. Owens concerning *Dares Phrygius* and Thomas Jones concerning *Brut y Tywysogion*. It is clear from the discussion of the manuscripts above that the first three manuscripts share the same versions of each of the three texts, and when the stemmata suggested for each text are compared it is apparent that all three of these manuscripts of the historical continuum, which contain the *Llyfr Coch* versions of the texts, go back to a common archetype, a manuscript

⁷⁶ B. F. Roberts, discussion at a symposium held at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 15–16 June 2011, 'From the *Historia regum Britanniae* to the European Bruts, Part I: Towards a Typology of the Vernacular Adaptations of Geoffrey of Monmouth'.

⁷⁷ D. Huws, 'Rhestr Gutun Owain o Wŷr Wrth Gerdd', *Dwned* 10 (2004), 79–88.

which must itself have contained the historical sequence (in the diagrams I include only medieval manuscripts of the texts).

It is also apparent that two of the manuscripts which contain only *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Ystoria Dared* (LICH and IA versions), BL Add. 19709 and Peniarth 263, are derived from archetypes older than that shared by the three manuscripts containing the full sequence of texts. This might be taken to imply that the shared archetype of all eight manuscripts did not contain the full sequence of three texts. A caveat to this conclusion is provided by Philadelphia 8680, a manuscript which, according to Brynley Roberts' analysis, was derived from an exemplar shared with Peniarth 19 and *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and therefore likely to have contained the full run of three texts, despite Hywel Fychan's decision to include only two in the Philadelphia manuscript.⁷⁸

As Brynley Roberts suggests, overall it is likely that all the manuscripts containing the *Llyfr Coch* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, and therefore all manuscripts containing the *Llyfr Coch* version of *Brut y Tywysogion* and the IA version of *Ystoria Dared*, go back to a common archetype, and that the translation of the two texts supplementary to *Brut y Brenhinedd* may have been undertaken especially for inclusion in this collection.⁷⁹ This version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, on the other hand, was assembled from two pre-existing translations, the first part from the 'Dingestow' version and the second from the 'Llansteffan 1' version.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ The relationship of the Philadelphia text to the other texts of *Ystoria Dared* was not discussed by Owens, the Philadelphia manuscript then being unknown. An anomaly with regard to the *Llyfr Coch* version is Cardiff, Central Library MS 1. 632 (Hafod 1) where the Dingestow version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* is followed by the IA (*Llyfr Coch*) version of *Ystoria Dared*. This text of the *Ystoria* was copied from an exemplar of BL Add. 19709, and so Brynley Roberts suggests that BL 19709 reflects the order of texts in his exemplar whereas the scribe of Cardiff 1. 632 copied the Dingestow *Brut* and then *Dared* from BL 19709's exemplar 'in a personal attempt to combine the *Brut* and *Dares*'. B. F. Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 158, 182–4.

⁷⁹ Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 157–59.

⁸⁰ J. J. Parry, 'The Welsh Texts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*', *Speculum* 5 (1930), 424–31.

Professor Roberts' interpretation of the development of this historical continuum needs reassessment in the wake of the work on scribal activity and manuscript provenance undertaken in the last thirty years, mainly by Daniel Huws. Roberts emphasises the south-western associations of many of the manuscripts in question, associations which can in some cases be challenged. In particular, the argument for seeing both NLW 3036B and BL Add. 19709 as North Welsh manuscripts considerably expands the geographical area within which these texts circulated. Nevertheless the south-western provenance of many of the manuscripts still stands. The scribe of Peniarth 263 can be associated with the area around Llandeilo, and Peniarth 18 is in the hand of the 'Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi', who also worked for a patron in Cantref Mawr. The Anchorite also worked on *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (Peniarth MSS 4 and 5), a manuscript with associations with Strata Florida, the Cistercian abbey where the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* is thought to have been composed, and the fact that Peniarth 18 is the work of two collaborating scribes may indicate that it is a product of this Strata Florida scriptorium.⁸¹ *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and Philadelphia 8680 were produced for a secular patron, Hopcyn ap Tomos of Gŵyr, and Peniarth 19 by a scribe who had worked for him, and they can both be seen as products of a school of scribes associated mainly with a great lay patron.⁸²

The *Llyfr Coch* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* being derived from the Dingestow and Llansteffan 1 texts, it is appropriate to consider the provenance of manuscripts containing those versions. Brynley Roberts notes that the manuscripts closest to the Dingestow text included in the *Llyfr Coch* version are Aberystwyth, NLW MSS 5266B (*Brut Dingestow*), Peniarth 45 and Peniarth 46. The Dingestow

⁸¹ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 252–54; Jones, *BT P20*, p. xxxix.

⁸² Lloyd-Morgan, 'Welsh Books in the Fifteenth Century', p. 1.

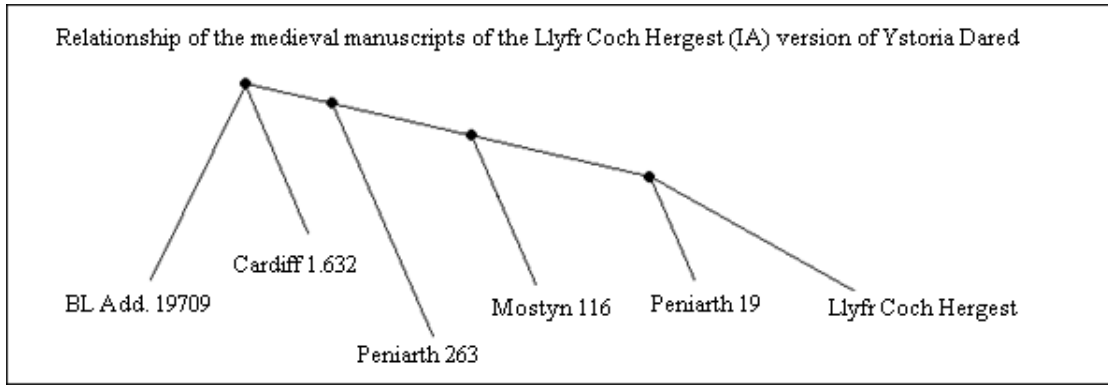


Table 1: simplified stemma based on B. G. Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', p. xx

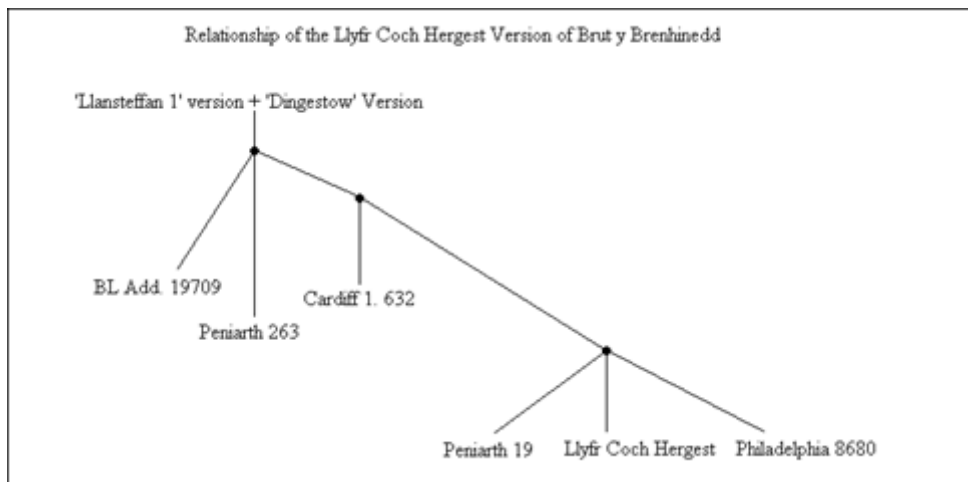


Table 2: simplified stemma based on B. F. Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', p.

184

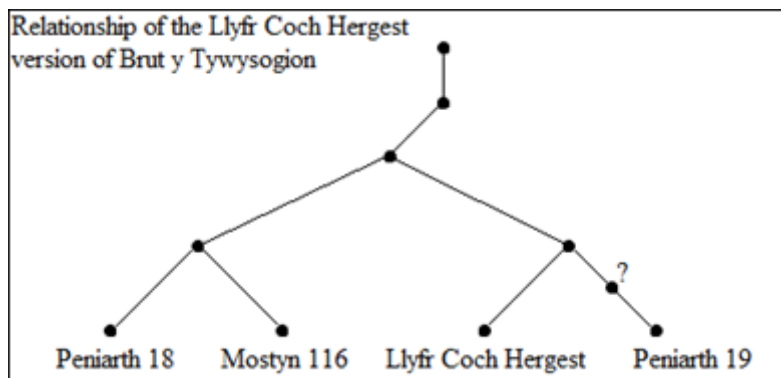


Table 3: simplified stemma based on *BT RB*, pp. xx–li

manuscript (5266B) was in north-east Wales in the fifteenth century when its version of the prophecies of Merlin was collated with the version in Cotton Cleopatra B.v, and therefore might be associated with Valle Crucis.⁸³ The only clue to the provenance of Peniarth 45 is that Llansteffan MS 5, a manuscript of the fifteenth century and probably of Brecknockshire origin, derives from it. Peniarth 46, on the other hand, is in the hand of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi, the scribe of the Peniarth 18 *Brut y Tywysogion* and may therefore be associated with Strata Florida.⁸⁴ The Llansteffan 1 text of the *Llyfr Coch Brut y Brenhinedd* is closest to Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llansteffan 1 and Cardiff, Central Library MS 1.363 (Hafod 2). The provenance of Cardiff 1.363 is uncertain, but Llansteffan 1 is thought by Daniel Huws to derive from Valle Crucis abbey.⁸⁵

The texts used to create the *Llyfr Coch* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* appear therefore to have been available at the abbey of Valle Crucis, though the association of one of the Dingestow texts with the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi coupled with the fact that he also wrote Peniarth 18 support an association with Ceredigion/Cantref Mawr and probably Strata Florida. Full and partial texts of the historical continuum can, in the fourteenth century, be associated with North Wales, perhaps Aberconwy, and South Wales, particularly under the patronage of Hopcyn ap Tomos. The picture which emerges is therefore far less clear-cut than the localised, south-western spread of manuscripts initially envisaged by Roberts. What becomes apparent is a wide geographical spread as well as association with Cistercian monasteries, two features which complement each other given the interconnectedness of the houses of that order as well as their involvement in Welsh culture.

⁸³ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: NLW 5266B (Dingestow 6).

⁸⁴ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: Peniarth 45; Peniarth 46; Llanstephan 5; Peniarth 18.

⁸⁵ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: Llansteffan 5; Cardiff 1.363; *idem*, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 189–92.

As far as the development of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of the historical continuum goes, we should envisage the initial assembling of a composite text of *Brut y Brenhinedd* as well as the translation of *Dares Phrygius* and the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* at a Welsh Cistercian house, with Valle Crucis being a contender, although the question of an exact location should be left open. This can be dated before the mid-fourteenth century since manuscripts of this version become apparent from that date onwards. A suitable gap should perhaps be allowed between the earliest probable date for the compilation of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* and its translation. Both the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of the *Brut* and the Peniarth 20 version refer to the 1286 fire at Strata Florida, and the *Llyfr Coch* version refers to St Louis, so it could not have been translated before his canonisation in 1297.⁸⁶

By the latter half of the fourteenth century this translated compilation had become known in both south and north Wales, probably as a result of its spread between Cistercian houses. In the North, the same scribe produced BL Add. 19709 which contained *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* as well as NLW 3035B, a manuscript containing all three. In South Wales, the compilation provided much of the material for Peniarth 19 and Philadelphia 8680, both of whose scribes worked on *Llyfr Coch Hergest* for Hopcyn ap Tomos of Gŵyr (also the patron of the Philadelphia manuscript) using the compilation to begin that great book. Peniarth 263 and Peniarth 18 indicate that the work was also known in Cantref Mawr and probably Ceredigion. By this time the historical compilation, aided by the network of interlinked monastic centres, was popular with the lay gentry, a class of men most of whom had no knowledge of Latin and for whose benefit the initial translation and

⁸⁶ See below, pp. 244–45.

compilation may have been undertaken, a class who must have played an important role alongside the Cistercian houses in the spread of the work.

2. The North-Eastern Version

The versions of the three texts which make up the historical continuum present in *Llyfr Du Basing* and Jesus College 141 have a history considerably different to those of the *Llyfr Coch* version. The compiler of the *Llyfr Coch* version combined two pre-existing translations of *Brut y Brenhinedd* with two newly translated works. The *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* in part one of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript, on the other hand, were probably translated together, as suggested by a number of similar lexical features.⁸⁷

If the structure of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was inspired by the peculiar form of Geoffrey of Monmouth's colophon to his history as preserved in the translated Cotton Cleopatra *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the Latin text of both must already have been attached as they reached the translator. Another great difference between this north-eastern version of the historical continuum and that of the *Llyfr Coch* is the nature of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* as compared to *Brut y Tywysogion*. Professor Smith's recent study of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* has revealed a fascinating background to the work, with influence from Welsh, English and Marcher texts. He demonstrates the influence of the Annals of Winchester, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum* and Marcher annals now surviving in the Breviate of Domesday manuscript, added to an abbreviated version of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion*.⁸⁸ The extra material included in the twelfth-century section of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* is argued to derive from Neath, and the scribal activity known to have been undertaken at that abbey's

⁸⁷ These include the favoured phrases *yn olofrud*, *hyryt lawen gorawenus*, *gloes angeu*, *heb olud*, *kyfranc caled ac aerva vavr* and *gwychyrr crevlon*. Roberts, 'A Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', 223.

⁸⁸ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 60–70.

scriptorium, indicated by the production of a now-lost cartulary, suggests that the compilation of the Latin text translated as *Brenhinedd y Saesson* might have been undertaken there. Overall, however, he prefers Whitland as the centre for compilation, since this house had the required range of resources and was receptive to both marcher and native influences.⁸⁹

Professor Smith nevertheless argues for a number of axes of transmission which were vital to the production of this historical text, connecting the abbeys of Valle Crucis, Strata Florida, Whitland and Neath. The Glamorgan house's historiographical connections to the monasteries of *Pura Wallia* certainly suggest a perfect environment for the transformation of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* into a chronicle which traced both the fate of the Welsh under their princes and the later history of the monarchy of the island of Britain. These historical undertakings had, by the early fourteenth century, resulted in there being a Latin manuscript where Geoffrey's history was extended by the addition of the Latin original of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, and this manuscript being present probably at the abbey of Valle Crucis, a monastery clearly active in historical writing and translation. It was here that the two texts together were translated into Welsh, at the same scriptorium where a translation of both *Ystoria Dared* and the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogion* were being copied, perhaps undertaken at the monastery itself. There are indications that the scribe who wrote these texts in Cotton Cleopatra B.v part i (Huws' X89) was the scriptorium's editor and foremost historian, since he corrected the Peniarth 20 scribe's work and wrote the continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in that manuscript.

There are no signs of the two texts of part one of the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript being combined with *Ystoria Dared* until the second half of the fifteenth

⁸⁹ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 72–79.

century, a gap of over a hundred years. Whilst the lack of evidence for the production of manuscripts in this textual tradition in the later fourteenth century is surprising, especially given the contrasting picture offered by the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* texts, the gap in the first half of the fifteenth century is more easily understandable given the dramatic fall in manuscript production after Glyndŵr's war.⁹⁰ The later fifteenth century saw a dramatic increase in scribal activities, of which our fifteenth-century manuscripts are representatives.

It has already become apparent that manuscripts of the *Llyfr Coch* version of the historical continuum were present in North Wales from the fifteenth century, and NLW 3035B is known to have remained in the North during the following century. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether the inclusion of *Ystoria Dared* in *Llyfr Du Basing* to form another version of the full historical continuum was inspired by the scribe's knowledge of the *Llyfr Coch* version. The fact that the lacuna at the end of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was filled with a combination of the Peniarth MS 20 and *Llyfr Coch Hergest* versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* suggests that this may indeed have been the case.⁹¹ Gutun Owain's interest in historical matters would have made it likely that he was aware of such works.⁹²

The first scribe of *Llyfr Du Basing* used a version of *Ystoria Dared* which was also the archetype of the version copied into Cotton Cleopatra part three over a hundred years previously. This may indicate that the book was begun at the same centre which saw the production of the Cotton Cleopatra/Peniarth 20 historical texts, a point perhaps in favour of Valle Crucis. Whether produced at Valle Crucis or Basingwerk, the manuscript was a prestigious production, and indicates the respect this history commanded in late fifteenth-century Wales. Its second scribe, Gutun

⁹⁰ Lloyd-Morgan, 'Welsh Books in the Fifteenth Century', 2–3.

⁹¹ See below, p. 239.

⁹² See below, pp. 113–18.

Owain, took a personal as well as professional interest in this material, and this is apparent in his treatment of the texts in Jesus 141, where the three works are edited in order to provide, in Gweogvryn Evans' words, 'a sort of continuous history of the world from Adam to A. D. 1471'.⁹³ It was also at this stage that Biblical material was added to the narrative in order to give the history a firmer place in the framework of Christian history. This manuscript is also evidence for the continuing and increasing interest shown in this material by the lay gentry, since its size, script and material suggest it was compiled for more private use rather than as a prestigious volume for a renowned institution, as is the case with *Llyfr Du Basing*. The later manuscripts, therefore, demonstrate that the interplay between monastic historiography and the interests of the local *uchelwyr*, as indicated by the role of the scribes associated with Hopcyn ap Tomos in the production of versions of the historical continuum, continued to shape these histories in the fifteenth century.

THE LATIN MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT

The above survey of the development of the Welsh historical continuum through the manuscripts that contain it will now be broadened by considering the extent to which the narrative of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* was similarly extended in its Latin manuscript context through the addition of historical texts as a preface or continuation. The key work of reference in this is Julia Crick's catalogue of manuscripts containing the work.⁹⁴

To start with the *De Excidio Troiae* attributed to Dares Phrygius. Despite this text's origins in late antiquity, its importance in the medieval period was as a supposed

⁹³ J. Gweogvryn Evans, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language* (2 vols., London, 1898–1902), II. 35.

⁹⁴ J. C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth III: A Summary Catalogue of the Manuscripts* (Woodbridge, 1989).

eyewitness account of the Trojan war. Dares' sympathy with the Trojans rather than the Greeks commended the text to those historians who saw their own nations as descendants of the Trojans, such as Fredegar with the Franks, Otto of Freising with the Germans and Geoffrey of Monmouth with the Britons.⁹⁵ The historical section of *De gestis Britonum* opens with the words *Aeneas post Troianum bellum excidium urbis cum Ascanio filio diffugiens Italiam nauigio adiuit*, and therefore the narrative connection between Geoffrey and the most popular account of the Trojan war would have been apparent from early on.⁹⁶

This is indeed apparent from the manuscripts of Geoffrey's work. *De Excidio Troiae* is the work which most often shares a manuscript with *De gestis Britonum*, the two texts occurring in the same manuscripts 28 times. This is out of a total 213 medieval manuscripts of Geoffrey's history and 136 medieval manuscripts of the complete text of Dares Phrygius. Geoffrey's history is also the text which most frequently occurs in manuscripts containing *De Excidio Troiae*.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Owens, 'Y Fersiynau Cymraeg o *Dares Phrygius*', pp. ix–xiii. For Fredegar's descriptions of Frankish origins, see R. Collins, 'Fredegar', in *Authors of the Middle Ages: Historical and Religious Writers of the Latin West*, vol. 4, no. 13 (Gateshead, 1996), pp. 102–3. Although it is unknown whether Fredegar used Dares Phrygius, the text was circulating in Francia at the time, and a version of Dares became incorporated into Fredegar's compilation by the mid-eighth century. This theme of Trojan origins is unlikely to have been Fredegar's invention, as it appears independently in the *Liber historiae Francorum* of the mid-eighth century and is prefigured in the work of Ammianus Marcellinus in the fourth century, who describes Trojans settling in Gaul. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, book XV, chapter 9, ed. by W. Seyfarth, *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1978), I., pp. 60–62; *Liber historiae Francorum*, chapters 1–2, ed. by B. S. Bachrach (Lawrence, KS, 1973), p. 23–24; Fredegar, *Chronicon*, book II, chapter 4, ed. by B. Krusch, *Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum, 2: Fredegarii et aliorum chronica, vitae sanctorum* (Hanover, 1888), pp. 45–6; Otto of Freising, *Chronicon*, book I, chapter 25, ed. by R. Wilmans, *Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptorum, 20* (Hanover, 1868), pp. 139–40.

⁹⁶ 'Aeneas, after the Trojan war, fled the ruined city with his son Ascanius and sailed to Italy'. *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 7. This sentence can be thought to link the two works in a similar fashion to the opening paragraph of *Brut y Tywysogion* or *Brenhinedd y Saesson*. Roberts, 'Red Book of Hergest Version', 157.

⁹⁷ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, pp. 37–39; L. Faivre d'Arcier, *Histoire et géographie d'un mythe: la circulation des manuscrits du De excidio Troiae de Darès le Phrygien (XVIIIe-XVe siècles)*, Mémoires et documents de l'École des chartes, 82 (Paris, 2006), pp. 33–118, 151–53. Faivre d'Arcier adds one extra manuscript to the twenty-seven noted by Crick.

The connection between the two texts is clearly strong, but it should be noted that not all of these manuscripts represent a relationship between the two texts similar to that of *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd* in the Welsh historical continuum. Sixteen of them have *Dares Phrygius* preceding *De gestis Britonum* more or less directly.⁹⁸ Another six have lengthy texts between the two works, but where the sequence could nevertheless be considered a narrative history.⁹⁹ Most often in this case, Dares is followed by the Sibylline prophecies, a text which could be read as having the same relevance to this history as *Prophetiae Merlini*, the 'Prophecies of Merlin', book seven of Geoffrey's history. Whereas in some cases the occurrence of Dares together with *De gestis Britonum* would seem to be due merely to the classification of both as historical/legendary texts, a fact which accounts for the frequent appearance of popular texts such as *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, alongside Geoffrey, in many manuscripts it would seem that the two works are deliberately associated in order to construct a continuous narrative history from the two.¹⁰⁰

The picture is fairly similar when we look at efforts to continue *De gestis Britonum* at the other end. It is here relevant to consider the two authors named by Geoffrey as his successors in writing the history of the Saxon kings, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury.¹⁰¹ Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* could therefore be

⁹⁸ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, nos. 1, 4, 34, 55, 59, 60, 66, 67, 68, 70, 110, 129, 138, 163, 189, 212.

⁹⁹ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, nos. 14, 54, 74, 80, 121, 164.

¹⁰⁰ *De gestis Britonum* is found in the same manuscript as *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* in sixteen manuscripts. The classification of texts as historical also no doubt partially accounts for the seven manuscripts where *DGB* occurs together with the *Historia Brittonum*, with *DGB* always following *Hist. Brit.* in the MSS. This is also due to the similarity between both texts in subject as well as the fact that a version of the *Historia Brittonum* attributed to Gildas, like five of the copies found here, was used by Geoffrey as a source. Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, pp. 22–29, 51; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. lviii–lix.

¹⁰¹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 281.

thought of as ideal continuations of Geoffrey's narrative.¹⁰² To start with William of Malmesbury, there are five manuscripts which contain both *De gestis Britonum* and *Gesta regum Anglorum*, with another manuscript once having included both.¹⁰³ Two of these manuscripts have William's work preceding Geoffrey's, though interestingly one of these, dating from the twelfth century, originated at the Cistercian abbey of Margam. Two of the remaining manuscripts have a number of other works in between Geoffrey and William's histories and cannot therefore be said to constitute a continuous history. There is therefore only one manuscript where the two texts have such a relationship, a late twelfth-century manuscript in Philadelphia (The Free Library MS E.247), of unknown provenance. The book which once contained *Gesta regum Anglorum* but now no longer does is particularly relevant, however, since it is a Cistercian manuscript which also prefaces Geoffrey's work with Dares Phrygius. If the manuscript were complete, then, it would represent a continuous narrative composed of Dares, Geoffrey and William of Malmesbury comparable to the phenomenon apparent in Welsh manuscripts.¹⁰⁴

Turning to Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, it becomes apparent that there is more often a sequential relationship between the texts than is the case with William of Malmesbury's work. Of the five manuscripts where Henry's history appears alongside Geoffrey, the former work follows the latter in four instances.¹⁰⁵ Two of these examples come from the late twelfth century, indicative of the early date of this association, and one of them may have originated at the Cistercian house of

¹⁰² *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People by Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon*, ed. by D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996); *William of Malmesbury: Gesta regum Anglorum, the History of the English Kings*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Oxford, 1998–1999).

¹⁰³ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 73; *eadem*, *Summary Catalogue*, nos. 4, 35, 112, 113, 132, 192.

¹⁰⁴ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 4: Aberystwyth, NLW MS 13210.

¹⁰⁵ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, pp. 48–49; *eadem*, *Summary Catalogue*, nos. 32, 40, 70, 200, 210, with 40 not sequential.

Kirkstall in Yorkshire.¹⁰⁶ One manuscript worth mentioning is Durham, Ushaw College, MS 6, a conflation of the text of Geoffrey's history with that of Henry of Huntingdon. Parts of the manuscript were physically combined and discarded to form a comprehensive and up-to-date history of Britain down to the twelfth century. The superfluous part of Geoffrey, which was discarded in order to maintain a narrative continuity between his work and that of Henry, was bound at the end of the manuscript.¹⁰⁷

The most interesting of the manuscripts containing both Geoffrey and Henry of Huntingdon, however, is Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514.¹⁰⁸ The text of *De gestis Britonum* in this manuscript dates from the end of the thirteenth century. This portion of the manuscript, where Geoffrey's work is prefaced by Dares Phrygius, was added to the front of a manuscript already containing Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. The *De gestis Britonum* section of the manuscript also contained genealogies from Adam to Cadwaladr via Brutus and genealogies of Welsh and Trojan royal figures. Attached to the end of the *Historia Anglorum* manuscript was a section containing the *Cronica de Wallia*, a Welsh Latin chronicle closely related to *Brut y Tywysogion*, as well as genealogies relating to the dynasty of Deheubarth.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 210: Durham, Ushaw College MS 6.

¹⁰⁷ D. N. Dumville, 'The Origin of the C-Text of the Variant Version of the *Historia regum Britannie*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26 (1974–1976), 315–22 (316).

¹⁰⁸ J. Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 70; see below, pp. 195–96, 334–35.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 77–78. A detailed description of the manuscript's contents is found in Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, and in *eadem*, 'The Power and the Glory: Conquest and Cosmology in Edwardian Wales (Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3514)', in *Textual Cultures: Cultural Texts*, ed. by Orietta Da Rold and Elaine Treharne (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 21–42 (pp. 36–38). It can be summarised thus: Pseudo-Methodius; genealogy of English kings from Adam to Edward I; annals of St Neot's to 734; death of Bede; genealogy of French kings from Trojans to Philip IV; Honorius of Autun, book 1; world map surrounded by extract from Isidore; genealogy of British kings from Adam to Cadwaladr; genealogy of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd; genealogy of Brutus; genealogy of West Saxon kings from Æthelwold to Noah; genealogy of Norman rulers to Henry III; description of Britain; genealogy of French and Normans; Dares Phrygius; *De gestis Britonum*; *Historia Anglorum* of Henry of Huntingdon; account of Norman and English rulers; *Cronica de Wallia*; Deheubarth genealogies; Welsh chronicle to 1285.

Some of this content indicates that the material was added to the manuscript in south-west Wales, at around the turn of the thirteenth century.¹¹⁰ The inclusion of *Cronica de Wallia* and other material suggests that this may have taken place at the Cistercian abbey of Whitland, where a manuscript of Henry of Huntingdon's history was extended at both ends in order to provide a continuous narrative history from the Trojan war to the present day.¹¹¹ The original manuscript of Henry of Huntingdon may also have been copied there.¹¹² At the end of Henry's *Historia* the *Cronica de Wallia* continues the narrative to 1284, where it ends, and this chronicle has been called 'the nearest we can come to the Latin original of Brut y Tywysogion'.¹¹³ It is therefore clear that this manuscript was produced in the same learned environment which saw the compilation of *Brut y Tywysogion*, and it represents an attempt to create a continuous history based on Geoffrey's history in the same Cistercian intellectual milieu which, at around the same time or slightly later, oversaw the compilation of a continuous historical narrative of the Welsh in the vernacular, formed from similar ingredients.

Cistercian houses are also prominent in the production of other manuscripts indicative of the creative editorial impulses which gave rise to these continuous historical compilations. The manuscript which once contained Dares Phrygius, *De gestis Britonum* and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, Aberystwyth, NLW 13210, was produced at the Cistercian abbey of Robertsbridge in Sussex in the late thirteenth century, a date comparable to that of the Exeter Cathedral manuscript. This represents the only manuscript of the 'First Variant', a particular recension of

¹¹⁰ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, p. 117.

¹¹¹ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 76–80.

¹¹² Crick, 'Conquest and Cosmology', pp. 30–32.

¹¹³ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 78.

Geoffrey's history, which can be connected with a religious house outside Wales, indicating perhaps some connection with the Welsh Cistercians.¹¹⁴

Another manuscript which should be mentioned is Dublin, Trinity College MS 515 (E.5.12). It contains genealogical material related to that in the Exeter manuscript, as well as prefacing *De gestis Britonum* with Dares Phrygius and terminating it with a list of English kings from Alfred to Edward I. The triad of Dares, Geoffrey and the king list were written together and form the core of the manuscript, and the king list appears to have been contemporary with Edward I's reign. Although the third text is a short list, this manuscript nevertheless indicates an attempt both to preface Geoffrey with Dares and to bring the close of the history up to the present day. It agrees with the Exeter manuscript and contrasts with the vernacular continuum in using English, rather than Welsh, history as a coda to Geoffrey's narrative. Later additions to the manuscript in the fourteenth century expanded the compendium with Trojan and Welsh genealogies as well as Bede's epitaph for king Cædwalla of Wessex, a figure with whom Cadwaladr was often conflated.¹¹⁵ The manuscript's contents as well as glosses in Middle Welsh point to a Welsh provenance around the turn of the fourteenth century.¹¹⁶ It therefore becomes increasingly clear that the atmosphere of historical creativity which saw the compilation of a continuous vernacular history also spurred the production of comparable Latin manuscripts. The importance of these manuscripts as evidence for the reception of Geoffrey in Wales is discussed further in the sixth chapter.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 197.

¹¹⁵ J. Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 67; Wright, *First Variant*, pp. lxxx–lxxxii.

¹¹⁶ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 84, describes this manuscript as containing a text of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, but I find no support for this in Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 67.

¹¹⁷ See below, pp. 334–44.

It should also be noted that texts comparable to *Brut y Tywysogion* in both their continuation of Geoffrey and their annalistic form are noticeable in some manuscripts. The fullest guide to these works concentrates only on the manuscripts of the British Library, a small proportion (36) of all the manuscripts of *De gestis Britonum*.¹¹⁸ Four of these manuscripts can be said to contain chronicles which continue Geoffrey's narrative, here with English history rather than Welsh. These manuscripts date from around 1300 to the fifteenth century, comparable in date therefore to the Welsh historical continuum. But none of them occur in manuscripts where Geoffrey's history is preceded by Dares Phrygius, and overall they fall short of *Brut y Tywysogion* in length and quality, being more comparable to the shorter Welsh texts discussed below, *Brut y Saeson* and *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*. Laura Keeler's 1946 survey of the use of Geoffrey by Latin chroniclers in England between 1300–1500 concentrates on works which base parts of their narratives on Geoffrey's history, and although comparison of such use to the situation in Wales would no doubt prove illuminating, it falls outside the scope of this current study.¹¹⁹

SUMMARY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WELSH HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

This chapter began by asking when and how the Welsh Historical Continuum was created and how it spread, and the information of the Latin manuscripts brings a new level to conclusions reached above concerning the development of two versions of the Continuum in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That Latin manuscripts provided a model which was reflected in the close association between *Brut y Brenhinedd* and

¹¹⁸ *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, ed. by H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert (3 vols, London, 1883–1910), I., 242, 244, 249–50; Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, nos. 90, 98, 103, 116.

¹¹⁹ L. Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers 1300–1500* (Berkeley, CA, 1946).

Ystoria Dared is undeniable, and Latin manuscripts where Dares Phrygius preceded *De gestis Britonum* inspired the translation of the former text into Welsh. The rare examples of Latin manuscripts which extend Geoffrey's history with the addition of both this preface and a continuation of some kind are Cistercian in origin, and at least one can be firmly connected with a Cistercian house in West Wales, probably Whitland, whereas a Welsh connection could be postulated for another.

The Exeter manuscript shows the compilation of a narrative history comparable to that in vernacular manuscripts at around the turn of the fourteenth century, a date slightly earlier than that of the earliest version of the vernacular historical continuum, the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version.¹²⁰ It may be that we should think of these as similar products of the same intellectual milieu rather than supposing one to have been inspired by the other. The *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version is clearly not a translation of a Latin sequence of the three texts it includes, since its version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* is a compilation of two earlier translations. What we have is an environment where, in Welsh Cistercian monasteries, men were compiling majestic narratives that contextualised Geoffrey's history in relation to the Classical past as well as the present day.

The circumstances which caused them to do this will be discussed more fully in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that the date of these developments strongly indicate that this need to compile an authoritative narrative of the history of the Welsh people was spurred by uncertainty over their own present and future, the promising developments of the thirteenth century towards a defined Welsh principality having been abruptly terminated by Edward I's conquest of Gwynedd. The circumstances of the production of these historical texts were therefore similar to

¹²⁰ Though *Llyfr Coch Hergest* itself dates to the later fourteenth century, the historical continuum it contains can be thought to have been assembled and translated in the first half of the fourteenth century.

the circumstances Richard Southern saw as causing a revival of historical writing in England in the generation after the Norman conquest.¹²¹ The widespread interest in historical activity among the Cistercian order as well as the support which the monasteries of native Wales had given to the efforts of the princes of Gwynedd to establish their authority more than explains the role of this order in the construction of this historical narrative.

Keeping in mind the caveat that, given the nature of these Cistercian abbeys the ascription of certain manuscripts to definite scriptoria is tenuous at best, Valle Crucis' status as a remarkably prominent centre has the weight of cumulative evidence. On the other hand it does appear that axes of transmission between various establishments rather than concentration at a single monastery is the more useful model. This has been demonstrated in relation to the Welsh manuscripts when the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version was seen to be dependent on texts present in northeast Wales but to have spread over western and southern Wales by the second half of the fourteenth century. The text of *Brut y Tywysogion* itself is a reminder of these axes of transmission, encapsulating as it does material known from a number of Welsh Latin chronicles.

The second version of the continuum, developed between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is dependent on interaction between the annalistic tradition of independent Wales and the historical traditions of England and the March, and as Smith demonstrates this enables us to add the marcher abbey of Neath to this network of centres of historical production. Whether either the translation which produced part one of Cotton Cleopatra B.v or its subsequent elaboration in *Llyfr Du Basing* were undertaken by someone who was aware of what had already been achieved in the

¹²¹ R. W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 4: the Sense of the Past', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1973), 243–63 (246–56).

narrative of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version would not seem to be a point of particular importance, given that the Latin manuscripts demonstrate that the formation of this narrative was a product of the intellectual environment of the Cistercian houses around the Conquest, a point which is further emphasised by the existence of two versions of the Welsh Historical Continuum. The political and social circumstances of these developments will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

VALLE CRUCIS AND MEDIEVAL WELSH HISTORICAL WRITING: A CASE STUDY

The previous chapter has already indicated that the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis was an important centre of historical manuscript production in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The purpose of this chapter will be first to review and assess the evidence for this, and then to suggest reasons for the apparent prominence of this particular abbey in the manuscript record. Then, attention will be given to evidence for links of patronage between the local *uchelwyr* (a term roughly equivalent to gentry) of the area and the abbey, particularly from the monastery's unrivalled collection of carved sepulchral slabs. The work of the poets who praised these families will then be discussed, indicating connections between the local elite who had ties with the abbey, the historical work undertaken at the abbey and the historical and legendary references in these poems. Thus it is hoped that the interplay between the abbey, the local lay elite and the poets who praised them will become apparent through these various categories of evidence. The focus of the chapter will be on the post-conquest period, reflecting the main period for the sepulchral evidence in the fourteenth century and the period of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, the poets of the *uchelwyr*, in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.¹

¹ Translatable as the 'poets of the gentry' or 'poets of the nobility', contrasted with *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, the 'poets of the princes'. *Uchelwyr* is a difficult term to translate, since 'nobility' implies too great a degree of landed wealth in a British context and the term 'gentry' does not adequately reflect the importance of noble descent alongside landed wealth as indicators of these patrons' status. For a discussion of the term *uchelwyr*, see Helen Fulton, 'Literature of the Welsh Gentry: Use of the Vernacular in Medieval Wales', in *Vernacularity in England and Wales c.1300–1550*, ed. by E. Salter and H. Wicker, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 17 (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 199–223 (pp. 204–6).

MANUSCRIPTS AND VALLE CRUCIS

Throughout the previous chapter, although the probable links of manuscripts with various centres of production, particularly abbeys, were made clear, it was stressed that caution should be exercised and that the evidence does not enable us to declare a manuscript's place of production with any certainty. The reasons for linking numerous manuscripts with Valle Crucis will therefore be discussed at length before moving on to consider reasons for the production of these manuscripts at the abbey.

Manuscripts are linked to centres of production in numerous ways, but rarely in Wales through anything as simple as a direct scribal colophon or a monastery's *ex libris*. They are generally pieced together from distinctive marginalia, such as annotations to the text itself, particularly annotations showing an interest in place-names in a certain area or the marginal addition of poetry. The physical makeup of certain manuscripts can indicate the nature of their centre of production, for example a Cistercian monastery. The content of some texts, such as in the case of the continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Peniarth 20 or the chronicles and genealogies in Exeter 3514, can also be helpful. The later provenance of a manuscript can also be indicative.² Once a particular manuscript is located in these ways, other manuscripts by the same scribe can also be given a suggested provenance, although the movement of scribes between one centre and another was a reality.³

Turning now to Valle Crucis, two thirteenth-century manuscripts of *Brut y Brenhinedd* are the earliest of the historical manuscripts under discussion here. Both written by the same scribe, the rationale for locating him at Valle Crucis comes partially from a third manuscript he produced, London, BL Cotton Caligula A.iii. Daniel Huws has argued that the manuscript is of Cistercian provenance. Marginal

² D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), pp. 34–35, 51–53.

³ The Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi, for example, is linked with *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*, probably produced around Strata Florida. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 53.

annotations include a reference to a locality where the abbeys of Basingwerk and Ystrad Marchell owned land as well as the occurrence of a rare word for a lime kiln, perhaps indicating a location close to the limestone-belt of north-east Wales, as is the case with Basingwerk and Valle Crucis. Sixteenth-century annotations mention men connected with north-east Wales of the Edwards and Eyton (Eutun) families, discussed in more detail below, who certainly had connections with Valle Crucis.⁴ All this leads Huws to suggest a north-east Wales provenance, with Valle Crucis being the strongest candidate.

The two historical manuscripts, Peniarth 44 and Llansteffan 1, have also been connected with Valle Crucis, although largely it seems on the basis of the evidence in Cotton Caligula A.iii.⁵ The provenance of these manuscripts cannot, therefore, be said to be Valle Crucis with any certainty, with this abbey in particular being only a preference, although it would be difficult to argue against a Cistercian monastery in north-east Wales.

Arguments for the provenance of the fourteenth-century manuscripts are somewhat more secure, based as they are on the continuation to Peniarth MS 20's version of *Brut y Tywysogion*. Frequent mentions of the bishops of St Asaph, events at Wrexham and the death of a prominent *uchelwr* of Iâl all indicate a north-eastern origin, while an interest in the Warenne lords of Maelor Gymraeg and Iâl would be a further pointer towards Valle Crucis, which lay in Iâl.⁶ Nevertheless, the prominence of St Asaph indicates another possibility, and although the cathedral lay on the other side of Dyffryn Clwyd from Iâl and Maelor Gymraeg, it is known to have possessed

⁴ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 189–92.

⁵ B. F. Roberts, *Brut Tysilio* (Llandysul, 1980), pp. 18–20.

⁶ G. Edwards, review of *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS. 20*, ed. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1941), *English Historical Review* 57 (1942), 373–5; G. and T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Peniarth MS.20', in *Ysgrifau a Cherddi Cyflwynedig i Daniel Huws*, ed. by T. Jones and E. B. Fryde (Aberystwyth, 1994), pp. 293–305 (p. 301).

an active scriptorium in the early years of the fourteenth century. This is known from the existence of a now-lost manuscript, *Llyfr Coch Asaph*, a bishop's register which D. L. Evans suggested was begun in the fourteenth century, during the episcopate of Bishop Llywelyn ap Llywelyn ab Ynyr (1293–1314), and continued in the time of his successor, Dafydd ap Bleddyn (1314–1346).⁷ Owen Jones, however, points out that there is some doubt about the manuscript's origins in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and emphasises that the manuscript was worked on or added to between 1334 and 1371, and possibly as late as the mid-fifteenth century.⁸ Much of the manuscript's contents now survive in later transcripts. Had the manuscript itself survived, it might have changed our impression of scribal activity in this area, and even of historiographical activity, particularly if, for example, it shared a scribe with any of the fourteenth-century manuscripts associated with Valle Crucis. After the conquest, Archbishop John Peckham warned the clergy of this diocese against the promulgation of ideas of the Trojan origins of the Welsh.⁹ The Maelor Gymraeg and Iâl connections of the annals do, however, point more strongly to Valle Crucis.

The provenance of Peniarth MS 20 and its version of *Brut y Tywysogion* is, as discussed above, used as an argument in favour of ascribing two more historical manuscripts in shared hands to Valle Crucis. These two manuscripts, containing on the one hand a version of *Ystoria Dared* and on the other a distinctive version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* followed by *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, are now both part of Cotton Cleopatra MS B v. The eventual combination of these manuscripts, their annotations and the fact that they both share different scribes with the Peniarth 20 manuscript is a

⁷ D. L. Evans, 'Llyfr Coch Asaph', *National Library of Wales Journal* 4 (1946), 177–83.

⁸ O. E. Jones, 'Llyfr Coch Asaph: a Textual and Historical Study' (2 vols., MA thesis, University of Wales, 1968), I, xxxviii–xlvi.

⁹ G. Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (second edition, Cardiff, 1976), p. 41; *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. by C. T. Martin (3 vols., London, 1882–1885), ii., 737–43.

strong indicator that these were all products of the same scriptorium, rather than being the work of professional scribes who worked at different centres at different times.¹⁰

The Cotton Cleopatra version of the *Brut* not only reveals attempts to harmonise Geoffrey's history with native traditions, it also shows that its translator or compiler had access to a wide range of historical texts.¹¹ These included vernacular texts such as *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* and *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*, as well as probably some oral tradition. But there is also evidence of broader reading, such as lists of the Seven Sages of Greece and the legend of Archdeacon Theophilus.¹² Features such as the inclusion of the Prophecy of the Eagle of Shaftesbury, unique in Welsh vernacular translations, as well as the Latin verses on Arthur's supposed grave in Glastonbury, show the translator or compiler's engagement with recent developments in Arthurian matters.¹³ Overall the content of this version demonstrates that its creator had access to a relatively wide-ranging library of historical works, which may have been at Valle Crucis.¹⁴

The provenance of the fifteenth-century manuscripts, NLW 7006 (*Llyfr Du Basing*) and Jesus College 141, is partially informed by that of the fourteenth-century manuscript discussed above on whose texts they are reliant. But for the first time we also have detailed knowledge of their scribe, the poet Gutun Owain, who will be discussed in greater detail below but whose poetry in praise of the abbots of both Valle Crucis and Basingwerk demonstrates his close association with those houses.¹⁵ The number of poems to two abbots of Valle Crucis make it clear that his connections

¹⁰ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 241.

¹¹ B. F. Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn: a Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', in *Narrative in Celtic Tradition: Essays in Honor of Edgar M. Slotkin*, ed. by Joseph F. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 8–9 (Hamilton, NY, 2011), pp. 215–27 (p. 221).

¹² *Brut y Brenhinedd: Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. by J. Parry (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), pp. 54, 167.

¹³ *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, pp. 30–33, 193.

¹⁴ Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn', pp. 24–26.

¹⁵ *L'oeuvre poetique de Gutun Owain*, ed. by E. Bachellery (Paris, 1950), XVIII–XXXII (pp. 117–85).

with that house were stronger, and this as well as the fact that *Llyfr Du Basing* is dependent on Cotton Cleopatra B.v support the idea that this manuscript was compiled at Valle Crucis. Its name, however, indicates that it found its way to Basingwerk, and a possible scenario would be that it was copied by Gutun Owain and another scribe for abbot Tomos Pennant of Basingwerk, his connections with Valle Crucis enabling him to access a manuscript available there. Gutun Owain's close association with both houses indicates how difficult it is to pinpoint the place of production of manuscripts to a particular centre when both the manuscripts and the personnel working there are themselves likely to have moved around. *Llyfr Du Basing*, one of only two Welsh vernacular manuscripts to use gold decoration, was clearly the product of a monastic centre of considerable resources.¹⁶ The same cannot be said for Jesus College 141, which is less of a high-status production and therefore probably less dependent on the resources of a monastic scriptorium.

To summarise, then, the thirteenth century manuscripts can be associated with north-east Wales with some certainty, but a Valle Crucis provenance is only a vague probability. The fourteenth-century manuscripts are somewhat more certain, and the evidence of communal scribal activity in this case suggests a centre of some importance.¹⁷ Gutun Owain's strong links with Valle Crucis and textual association make it very likely that the abbey played a part in the production of *Llyfr Du Basing*, although Basingwerk should not be discounted, and it may be that the high status of the book is an argument in favour of ascribing it to Valle Crucis, given the evidence for scribal activity there in the previous century.

¹⁶ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 19.

¹⁷ This relative certainty is further indicated by the inclusion of Peniarth MS 20 in the supplement to *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*. *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: a List of Surviving Books. Supplement to the Second Edition*, ed. by Andrew G. Watson, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks 15 (Bury St Edmund's, 1987), p. 66.

It may be, however, that we should guard against allowing the ascription of certain manuscripts to Valle Crucis to gain its own momentum, whereby a Valle Crucis provenance is more likely because of the known production of similar texts there. It may be that similar work was unlikely to be replicated at a particular abbey because the limited resources of a scriptorium would militate against the reduplication of work. In the case of *Llyfr Du Basing*, the known availability of the texts contained within at Valle Crucis could mean that such a high-status manuscript is inherently likely to have been created for or at another house, in this case Basingwerk. It could either be a product of Basingwerk's scriptorium or created at Valle Crucis with Basingwerk in mind.

This problem is also of relevance to the act of translation as well as manuscript production. Does the possible association of both the Llansteffan 1 and Peniarth 44 manuscripts with Valle Crucis make it likely that the act of translation was also undertaken there? Are we to see Valle Crucis as a centre for translation of historical texts to such a degree that two separate translations of *De gestis Britonum* were undertaken there? Or if one of these translations was made at Valle Crucis does that mean that another is unlikely to have been made there, since devoting resources to two translations of what was essentially the same work would be a waste of resources? In the case of the scribes associated with Valle Crucis in the fourteenth century, we have both the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogion* and the version entitled *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, translations of essentially the same chronicle. The translation of both at the same centre might be understandable here given the considerable differences between their Latin texts. But both these and the *Brut y Brenhinedd* translations pose the question of whether we should expect to see one monastery specialising in producing multiple translations or whether these are more likely to

have been undertaken at separate institutions, and the Valle Crucis manuscripts indicating later collection rather than translation there.

The current state of understanding does not permit a satisfactory answer to this question, and so it should be borne in mind as unresolved in the following discussion. Nevertheless there is sufficient reason to view Valle Crucis as an important scribal centre in the fourteenth century, with manuscripts produced in this period still of interest in north-east Wales in the fifteenth. The thirteenth-century manuscripts, even if not from Valle Crucis, nevertheless indicate an active Cistercian interest in such historical material in north-east Wales before the conquest. It must therefore be asked why the abbey was such an important centre for historiographical activity, and whether this is due to any peculiarities of Valle Crucis in terms of its history, social role or endowment. The focus of the following discussion of the abbey will therefore be on these issues, with its foundation and political history in a wider Cistercian context being explored more fully in the final chapter.

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY

From its foundation in 1201, Valle Crucis was closely connected with the rulers of Powys Fadog, northern Powys.¹⁸ Its location at the centre of the dynasty's power was emphasised when its founder's son, Gruffudd ap Madog, built the castle of Dinas Brân nearby later in the century.¹⁹ The earlier importance of the area to the kingdom of Powys is clear from the presence of the ninth-century inscribed cross from which the abbey took its name, now known as the Pillar of Eliseg, less than four hundred metres from the abbey itself.²⁰

¹⁸ See above, p. 25.

¹⁹ D. Stephenson, '*Potens et Prudens*: Gruffudd ap Madog, Lord of Bromfield 1236–1269', *Welsh History Review* 22 (2005), 409–31 (427–8).

²⁰ N. Edwards, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Volume*

The rulers of Powys Fadog were generally close allies of the rulers of Gwynedd throughout the thirteenth century, and in this sense the loyalties of Valle Crucis reflect those both of its patrons and of the Welsh Cistercian order generally. Llywelyn the Great's enthusiasm for this new monastery might be suggested by the similarity between the grave slab probably commemorating its founder, Madog, and that of Llywelyn's wife, Siwan or Joan, raising the possibility that the memorial was created at Llywelyn's instigation.²¹ The wars of independence saw the abbey suffer considerable damage, surpassing that of most other Cistercian houses in Wales. The cathedral of St Asaph was also largely destroyed. King Edward and Archbishop Peckham were eager to secure the co-operation and support of these monasteries, and as such compensated the monks of Valle Crucis for the damage suffered to the tune of £160, although this generally conciliatory approach to the Welsh church does not appear to have affected the tendency of these Cistercian houses to support native Welsh causes.²² Links with the remaining descendants of the royal house of Powys Fadog remained strong, with the abbey still serving as their chosen place of burial.²³ The controversy at Ystrad Marchell (Strata Marcella) between 1329 and 1333 relating to the native political sympathies of the house will be discussed in detail below, but the involvement of Valle Crucis indicates that links with its mother house of Ystrad Marchell were strong, as indicated by Guto'r Glyn's poem to the abbots of both houses in the fifteenth century.²⁴

III: North Wales, with J. Horák, H. Jackson, H. McKee, D. N. Parsons and P. Sims-Williams (Cardiff, 2013), pp. 322–36; O. W. Jones, 'Hereditas Pouoisi: The Pillar of Eliseg and the History of Early Powys', *Welsh History Review* 24 (2009), 41–80.

²¹ C. Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales* (Cardiff, 1968), pp. 65–67; Stephenson, 'Potens et Prudens', 417–18.

²² R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), p. 376; Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 44.

²³ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, p. 137

²⁴ See below, pp. 386–87; *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward III, A.D. 1333–1337*, ed by A. B. Hinds (London, 1898), pp. 93–94, 130; *Gwaith Guto'r Glyn*, ed. by I. Williams and J. Llywelyn Williams (Cardiff, 1961), pp. 308–9.

A characteristic of Valle Crucis was its strong ties to St Asaph. In the thirteenth century, Anian ap Maredudd, the abbot of Valle Crucis, became bishop of St Asaph, a position he held in tandem with his abbacy.²⁵ Llywelyn of Maelor, who was elected bishop after Anian's death in 1293, was brother to the Gruffudd Llwyd whose tombstone originally lay in Valle Crucis.²⁶ This path became particularly well-trodden in the course of the fifteenth century. Both Robert of Lancaster and Dafydd ab Ieuan held the two positions. Ties became very close after the Glyndŵr revolt, when, due to the destruction of the bishop's palace at St Asaph, the bishop became resident in the Abbey itself, which he held *in commendam*.²⁷ The incumbent at this time was Robert of Lancaster, who was both abbot of Valle Crucis and bishop of St Asaph from 1410 to 1433.²⁸ These strengthening of ties between the bishopric and the monastery can be thought of as indicative of increasing secularisation at Valle Crucis.²⁹

The abbey was from an early time unusual among Welsh Cistercian houses in that the majority of its income was derived from spiritualities rather than temporalities. Whereas Cistercian abbeys were generally expected to receive their income from land, mainly from sheep farming, over three quarters of Valle Crucis' income was derived

²⁵ D. Williams, 'Fasti Cistercienses Cambrenses', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1970–1972), 181–229 (187, 191).

²⁶ E. Roberts, 'Llys Ieuan, Esgob Llanelwy', *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society* 23 (1974) 70–103 (79); Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp. 182–83.

²⁷ This was the situation from about 1410, when Abbot Robert of Valle Crucis was elected bishop of St Asaph, to October 1419, when it was extended for five years. It was again extended in September 1424. The bishop's palace was still under repair in 1426. *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, volume vi: A.D. 1404–1415*, ed. by J. A. Twemlow (London, 1904), pp. 198–99, 228; *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, volume vii: A.D. 1417–1431*, ed. by J. A. Twemlow (London, 1906), pp. 117, 177, 363–64, 466.

²⁸ Williams, 'Fasti Cistercienses Cambrenses', 187, 191.

²⁹ This tendency was exacerbated throughout the fourteenth century by the Great Schism, which broke the connection between Cîteaux and her daughters. This caused the abbeys to become more dependent on secular authority and more inward-looking in general. Contact with Cîteaux was resumed in the course of the fifteenth century. Williams, *Welsh Church*, pp. 143–45, 397.

from the tithes of appropriated churches.³⁰ These churches were given to the abbey throughout the second quarter of the thirteenth century by the bishops of St. Asaph, and the monks successfully defended their continued possession of these churches against the claims of Bishop Anian in the 1270s.³¹ They included Wrexham, half of which was given in 1224 and the other in 1227, and Llangollen which they gained in 1240, along with its chapelries of Rhiwabon, Chirk, Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog and Llandegla.³²

Although forbidden by the statutes of the Cistercian order, the guaranteed income received from appropriated churches, especially the relatively wealthy ones owned by Valle Crucis, gave the abbey a financial security which farming could not provide, especially in the worsening economic circumstances of the fourteenth century.³³ Cistercian estates, particularly dependent on sheep, suffered from decreasing profits from wool sales in this period.³⁴ The increasing importance of these churches to the abbey's income can be gauged from the abbey's wealth compared to other Cistercian houses recorded in various taxations and subsidies. Although many of these accounts pose their own distinct problems, and absolute comparison is impossible given their different circumstances and priorities, in terms of comparative value they can serve as a useful gauge.³⁵ In the 1291 *Taxatio ecclesiastica*, which indicates the gross value of each house, Valle Crucis comes fourth at £91 after the marcher houses of Margam (£256), Neath (£235), and Tintern (£128), ahead of all

³⁰ This proportion compares with a third for Aberconwy and Cymer. D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), pp. 272, 274–75.

³¹ G. V. Price, *Valle Crucis Abbey* (Liverpool, 1952), pp. 78–79.

³² P. Richards, 'The Cistercian Abbeys of Wales with Particular Reference to Denbighshire', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 1 (1952), 1–19 (10–11).

³³ The ban on the appropriation of churches was in reality rather short-lived, complicated as early as 1147 by the admission into the order of Savigniac monasteries, which had no such ban. Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 272.

³⁴ F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349*, *Studies in Welsh History*, 1 (Cardiff, 1977), p. 236.

³⁵ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 166–69, 299.

other Welsh Cistercian houses of the family of Whitland.³⁶ It is followed by Aberconwy (£76) and Basingwerk (£68). The Cistercian tax book of 1355 shows a similar picture although it gives taxes paid rather than gross value, with Valle Crucis equal with Cwm Hir at £32, behind only Margam (£34) and Ystrad Marchell (£33) and ahead of Whitland (£30).³⁷ By the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, Valle Crucis (£188) appears as the second richest Cistercian house in Wales, behind only Tintern (£192), with the closest native house, Aberconwy, at £162.³⁸ The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* lists gross value and spiritualities separately, and Valle Crucis stands out as the house which received the most money from spiritualities.³⁹

Valle Crucis was therefore a relatively rich house which received a high proportion of its income from a stable source which required little administration. Indeed the lack of attention given to the running of appropriated churches was a bone of contention in the dispute between Valle Crucis and Anian, with Cistercian houses frequently preferring the guaranteed income of the church to their obligation to provide pastoral care.⁴⁰ Valle Crucis' churches were also notably wealthy ones.⁴¹ Returning to the question of whether any particular features of the abbey might explain its prominent role in the production of vernacular historical texts, it is likely that the nature of the abbey's income which would have required little detailed administration could have supported a community of monks who had the time and financial security to indulge their scholarly interests. It is not far fetched to envisage something of an academic, collegiate community. Furthermore, its possession of these important parish churches must also have strengthened its connections with the

³⁶ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 299.

³⁷ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 299.

³⁸ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 562.

³⁹ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 299. The amounts in the preceding paragraph are rounded to the nearest pound.

⁴⁰ J. B. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 379–80.

⁴¹ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 351.

lay elite. The abbey's sources of income were distributed in such a way as to increase the integration between monastic and lay society in the area, and this is also true of its fishing rights and mills along the Dee.⁴² This may have encouraged a community which was able to devote time and resources to historiographical activity to do so in the vernacular, in a language familiar both to the monks and to the *uchelwyr* with whom the community had strong connections.

CONQUEST AND CONTEXT

Before considering the inscribed stones which provide the best evidence for connections between the abbey and the lay elite, the effect of the Edwardian conquest must be discussed. The focus of this chapter is on the post-conquest period, but the likely role of the conquest in providing a catalyst for historical activity has been discussed briefly in the previous chapter. Peniarth MS 20 provides evidence of communal scribal activity at the abbey in the early fourteenth century, and along with Cotton Cleopatra B.v demonstrates a considerable interest in vernacular history on the part of the monks. A source text common to both these manuscripts is the original Latin chronicle from which the Peniarth 20 *Brut y Tywysogion* was translated and which formed the main source for the chronicle translated as *Brenhinedd y Saesson* in the Cleopatra manuscript.⁴³

The original Latin chronicle was compiled probably at the abbey of Strata Florida at some point after 1286.⁴⁴ This was a chronicle assembled from disparate sources tracing the history of the Welsh from the death of the last king of Britain,

⁴² D. Pratt, 'Valle Crucis Abbey: Lands and Charters', *Transaction of the Denbighshire Historical Society* 59 (2011), 9–55 (17); *Acts of Welsh Rulers*, ed. H. Pryce (Cardiff, 2005), nos. 496, 499, 500, 501, 505, 501, 506, 509, 513, 514

⁴³ J. B. Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales: the Composition of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*', *Studia Celtica* 52 (2008), 55–86 (56–60).

⁴⁴ For a discussion of possible dates of composition and their implications, see below, pp. 240–47.

Cadwaladr, through the age of the princes until the late thirteenth century.⁴⁵ As such it is not only a continuation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* but also a product of the conflicts of the thirteenth century in which the Cistercian houses were involved. There is a gap of just under half a century between the last annal common to all versions of this work and our earliest manuscript copy of translations and adaptations of it. These years can be characterised as ones of turmoil for the native elites of Wales followed by gradual accommodation with the new order represented by the Edwardian settlement. The conquest itself is therefore an essential part of the context not only of *Brut y Tywysogion* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* but also of the manuscripts of historical prose produced at Valle Crucis which contain them.

At the death of Gruffudd ap Madog in 1269, Powys Fadog or Northern Powys was divided between his four sons, although a degree of unity may have been maintained, with the eldest brother, Madog, enjoying superiority over the others in his possession of Maelor Gymraeg and Dinas Brân.⁴⁶ The conquest itself saw the death or forfeiture of all four, and whereas King Edward would keep Gwynedd Uwch Conwy intact to create the northern portion of the Principality of Wales, Northern Powys and the Perfeddwlad were carved up to provide lordships for his chief field commanders.⁴⁷ Of the lands of Powys Fadog, Maelor Saesneg was to be included in Flintshire, a county which was administratively part of the County Palatine of Chester, Maelor Gymraeg and Iâl formed the Marcher lordship of Bromfield and Yale, given to John de Warenne, whereas Cynllaith, Nanheudwy and Mochnant Is Rhaeadr became the lordship of Chirk, granted to Roger Mortimer.

⁴⁵ Although not up to the death of Llywelyn, as is sometimes stated. See below, p. 241.

⁴⁶ J. B. Smith, 'Dynastic Succession in Medieval Wales', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 33 (1986), 199–232 (228–29).

⁴⁷ D. Pratt, 'Anatomy of Conquest: Bromfield and Yale 1277–84', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 56 (2008), 17–58 (46–52).

Although divided to some degree before the conquest, Powys Fadog was at least in the hands of one dynasty which recognised a common origin and, in the person of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, a common and nearby overlord. The division of land after the conquest would create entirely different and powerful jurisdictional areas, under lords who were pursuing private war against each other as soon as 1286.⁴⁸ The extent to which these new divisions cut across the *gwlad* of Powys Fadog is apparent from the fact that Dinas Brân, the former seat of the dynasty, although geographically in Chirkland, was under the control of the de Warenne lords of Bromfield and Yale.⁴⁹

The very heartland of Northern Powys was carved up, and this may account for the enthusiastic patronage of Valle Crucis by the native noblemen of the area immediately after the conquest, exemplified by the epigraphic evidence discussed below. Deprived of the natural focus of loyalty that the dynasty provided, their lords now largely absentee English aristocrats, the abbey of Valle Crucis which was the centre of the dynasty's devotion provided an alternative focal point which symbolised the integrity of Northern Powys. Its contemporary audience would have seen echoes of the division of land and lordship which the conquest brought in the historical texts themselves. *Brenhinedd y Saesson* opens with a description of the aftermath of the Saxon conquest of Britain:

A'y rannasant yn pypm ran ryngthunt. Ac yna y symudassant henweu y
dinessyd a'r trefi a'r randiroed a'r cantrefoed a'r sswideu a'r ardaloed herwyd
ev yeith wynt ehun.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Pratt, 'Anatomy of Conquest', 52.

⁴⁹ Pratt, 'Anatomy of Conquest', 47, 51.

⁵⁰ 'And they divided it between them into five parts. And they changed the names of the cities and the towns and the districts and the *cantrefi* and the *swyddau* and the areas in the manner of their own language', *BS*, p. 2. It is worth noting that the word *swydd* to mean a division of land seems to have been characteristic of Powys Wenwynwyn, particularly the area of the Severn valley around Valle

The account which follows of the imposition of new terms for these divisions by the Saxons was probably the work of the author himself, or possibly of the translator.⁵¹ The disregard shown for ancient custom in the name of the conquerors' authority would certainly have been very familiar to the work's audience.

In the period following the conquest the English authorities were to tap in to the ideas embodied in these histories. King Edward's securing of the heirlooms of the Venedotian house, the Groes Naid (a fragment of the true cross) and the crown of Arthur, is noted in English chronicles.⁵² The purported discovery of the body of Magnus Maximus at Caernarfon in 1283, and indeed the entire structure of the castle at Caernarfon, with its imperial eagles and banded masonry evocative of Roman construction, was intended to echo and to appropriate the inheritance that the Welsh claimed as historical equals of the Romans.⁵³ This appropriation went hand in hand with discouragement. In June 1284 Archbishop Peckham issued injunctions for the clergy of the diocese of St Asaph reminding them of their responsibility to reconcile Welsh and English, and specifically warned against Welsh tales of their glorious descent from the Trojans.⁵⁴ This specific warning against such histories in the diocese

Crucis' mother house of Ystrad Marchell, but it is also found for the cantref containing Cynllaith, Mochnant Is Rhaeadr and Nanheudwy, that is the lordship of Chirk. M. Richards, *Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units, Medieval and Modern* (Cardiff, 1969), pp. 199–200, 322; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 386.

⁵¹ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 61. For parallels in other vernacular Galfridian accounts of the Anglo-Saxon conquest, see below, pp. 161–62.

⁵² *Flores Historiarum*, ed. by H. R. Luard (3 vols., London, 1890), III., 59; 'Annales Londonienses', in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by W. Stubbs (2 vols., London, 1882–1883), I., 91.

⁵³ Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, p. 360; A. J. Taylor, *The Welsh Castles of Edward I* (Bristol, 1986), pp. 77–79; A. Wheatley, 'Caernarfon Castle and its Mythology', in *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales: the Proceedings of a Conference Held at Bangor University, 7–9 September 2007*, ed. by D. M. Williams and J. R. Kenyon (Oxford, 2010), pp. 129–39; *Flores Historiarum*, ed. Luard, III., 59. *Flores Historiarum* relates the discovery of the grave of Maximus, father of the noble Constantine. *Historia Brittonum* had earlier referred to a tomb of Constantine there. *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. by J. Morris, Arthurian Period Sources 8 (Chichester, 1980), p. 65.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 41; *Reg. Johannis Peckham*, ed. Martin, II., 737–43.

in which Valle Crucis lay casts the historical activity which continued at this house as a form of historiographical resistance.

Indeed, the numerous consciously dramatic events which followed the conquest can be interpreted in ideological terms, as a deliberate demonstration by Edward I that the conquest of Gwynedd was final not only in the sense of the destruction of the kingdom itself, but also in the sense that the Welsh could no longer hope for a promised delivery, a resurgence of British power over the island.⁵⁵ That the appropriation of a British past went hand in hand with discouraging its promotion among the Welsh should therefore come as no surprise, since both served to sever the ties between this historical narrative and hopes for political independence. This promotion of links with the Galfridian past formed part of Edward I's political ideology between the war of 1277 and that of 1282, when he and his queen visited Glastonbury for the ceremonial reburial of Arthur and Guinevere's purported bodies.⁵⁶ It would continue to be of political importance as part of the propaganda used to justify his claims of sovereignty over Scotland.⁵⁷

English chroniclers bring in the Galfridian past when recording the conquest.⁵⁸ Ranulph Higden refers to Llywelyn as *fex Trojanorum*, 'the dregs of the Trojans', in a poem quoted on his death.⁵⁹ *Flores Historiarum* notes that Llywelyn was encouraged by his people to believe that he could expect victory, since Merlin's prophecy predicted that he would be crowned with the diadem of Brutus, and this is repeated

⁵⁵ L. Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers 1300–1500* (Berkeley, CA, 1946), pp. 50, 102

⁵⁶ M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 120.

⁵⁷ See especially the letter of Edward I to Pope Boniface VIII in 1301. *Fœdera, Conventiones, Litteræ et Acta Publica*, vol. 1.2 (Edward I), ed. by T. Rymer and R. Sanderson (London, 1816), pp. 932–33; Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 492; Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers*, pp. 51–54; 87–88.

⁵⁸ Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers*, pp. 49–51, 59–61, 67.

⁵⁹ *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by C. Babington and J. R. Lumby (9 vols., London, 1865–1886), VIII., 268.

almost verbatim in *Annales Londonienses*.⁶⁰ Both these chronicles also list the seizure of the Groes Naid and the crown of Arthur, and the discovery of Maximus' body together, indicating that they were conscious of the significance of these events in transferring a right to the Galfridian past from the Welsh to the English. *Annales Londoniensis* expresses it thus:

Et sic gloria Walensium, qui primo Brittones vocabantur, Anglorum legibus subditorum, per Dei providentiam omnino et translata. Et quicquid princeps Walliæ debuisset perfecisse, secundum prophetias, jam per dictum Edwardum completum est.⁶¹

The fifty years following the conquest saw activity in Wales which can be interpreted as the codification and re-interpretation of the Welsh past, and of intellectual life in general, after the trauma of conquest. Strata Florida, as well as being the centre where the Latin chronicle was likely compiled, saw the production of a manuscript containing an unrivalled collection of praise poetry. This Hendregadredd Manuscript (Aberystwyth, NLW 6680B) was intended to define and preserve a classical period of Welsh poetry, the work of the court poets of the princes. It was a large undertaking, which required at least nineteen scribes, a full scriptorium.⁶² This Cistercian monastery was dedicating considerable resources to the glorification of the age of the princes.

⁶⁰ *Flores Historiarum*, III., 57–59; 'Annales Londonienses', I., 90–91.

⁶¹ 'And thus the glory of the Welsh, who were first called Britons, and had been subdued by the laws of the English, was entirely transferred through the providence of God. And whatever the prince of Wales was destined to accomplish, according to prophecies, has now been completed by the said Edward'. 'Annales Londonienses', I., 91.

⁶² Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 213–18.

Such work also served the practical purpose of providing an authoritative body of poetry for contemporary poets to refer to, poets whose primary patrons had now vanished and may only gradually have been finding new patronage among the *uchelwyr*. Another body of work which was intended to give a greater degree of cohesion to this threatened class were Welsh adaptations of Donatus' Latin grammar which formed the basis for a handbook of grammar and poetic instruction, the earliest copies of which are associated with Einion Offeiriad.⁶³ The composition of this work can be associated with the circle of Ieuan Llwyd ap Rhydderch of Parc Rhydderch, in whose home the Hendregadredd manuscript was to rest.⁶⁴

The work undertaken at Valle Crucis can be seen as part of the same endeavour. Einion Offeiriad's grammar appears in a Valle Crucis manuscript which also contains *Brut y Tywysogion*, Peniarth 20, not long after the composition of either. Against the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury the history of the Britons was articulated as a grand narrative spanning over two thousand years. The Hendregadredd manuscript was probably written under the influence of the family of Parc Rhydderch. Similarly, the production of historical manuscripts at Valle Crucis may have been undertaken under lay influence. In order to assess the likelihood of this the evidence for connections between lay society and the abbey will now be discussed.

EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE AND LOCAL FAMILIES

In the early fourteenth century the best evidence for interactions between the abbey and local lay society is the unrivalled collection of grave stones either in the abbey

⁶³ Iestyn Daniel, however, argues that the grammars date originally to the thirteenth century, with some interference in the fourteenth century. 'Awduriaeth y Gramadeg a Briodolir i Einion Offeiriad a Dafydd Ddu Hiraddug', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* 13 (1985), 178–208.

⁶⁴ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 216–18; J. B. Smith, 'Einion Offeiriad', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 20 (1962–1964), 339–47.



Map 1: the area around Valle Crucis, with locations connected with the abbey and with poetic patrons discussed below.

itself or now in surrounding churches but originating at the abbey. The presence of stones commemorating members of a particular family can be taken as evidence of ties with the abbey itself, and therefore of an interest in the abbey's activities. In the case of the family of Glyndyfrdwy, the evidence is of direct patronage, but other families' links with the abbey can be thought of in comparable terms. The latter

should be thought of as donors or sponsors rather than as patrons in the strict hereditary sense, but many nevertheless acquired the right of burial in the monastery and must have had an active interest in its affairs.⁶⁵

As already noted, ties between the princely dynasty of Powys Fadog and the abbey are evident in the corpus of carved stones. Continued ties with a branch of this family which survived the conquest, that of Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd Maelor who became lords of Glyndyfrdwy, is indicated by the carved gravestone of Gruffudd's son Madog.⁶⁶ Featuring a lion rampant which has been associated with house of Mathrafal, it has been described as 'perhaps the finest monument of its kind in North Wales'.⁶⁷ It has been suggested that another two stones, those commemorating Owain ap Madog and Gwerica ferch Owain, also belong to this family.⁶⁸ The ties of patronage between this family and the monastery they founded persisted into the fourteenth century, and are likely to have continued up to the time of their direct descendant, Owain Glyndŵr, Gruffudd ap Madog's grandson.

Another family known to have had strong ties to the abbey, ties which only strengthened throughout these centuries, were the Trefors of Pengwern. Some of these descendants of Tudur Trefor can be associated with stones in the abbey, such as that commemorating Ieuaf ab Adda. The presence of this stone makes it likely that the inscription commemorating 'Awr Vo...' is a memorial to Awr Foel, Ieuaf's grandfather and lord of Sonlli and Eutun. The effigy of Awr's son Iorwerth is at Rhiwabon, one of the parish churches owned and operated by the abbey.⁶⁹ It is likely that a member of

⁶⁵ K. Stöber, "'Duwioldeb, Statws a Thraddodiad": Tai Crefydd Cymru a'u Noddwyr yn yr Oesoedd Canol', *Cof Cenedl* 21 (2006), 1–30 (10–11, 18–19).

⁶⁶ For the dynasty's history after the Edwardian conquest, see J. E. Lloyd, *Owen Glendower: Owen Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1931), pp. 8–17.

⁶⁷ The preponderance of lions rampant found on carvings in this area and period, however, mean that it cannot be tied exclusively to a specific family. Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp. 137–40.

⁶⁸ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp. 79, 82–84.

⁶⁹ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp. 113–16, 179–80, 186–88.

the same family is commemorated by the stone now at Pengwern but said to have originated at the abbey commemorating Gronwy ab Iorwerth, since although his identification with the Gronwy ab Iorwerth Ddu so prominent in the family's history is precluded by the likely date of the carving, the name itself as well as the stone's location suggests a member of that family.⁷⁰

The family of Bodidris in Iâl are also represented in this corpus. The stone of Tangwystl ferch Ieuf, now in Bryn Eglwys church but originally at Valle Crucis, commemorates the heiress of that house, which she brought to her husband, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ab Ynyr. Gruffudd, of Gelligynan, near Llanarmon yn Iâl, was also buried in the abbey although his stone, similarly, was moved after the dissolution.⁷¹ Gruffudd's brother, Llywelyn, became bishop of St Asaph at the close of the thirteenth century, another indication of the close ties between the abbey and the cathedral.⁷² Their family had a long association with the abbey, with their father appearing as a witness to a Valle Crucis deed of 1247.⁷³ The family of Pengwern also had existing ties with the pre-conquest ruling class, and may have derived their prominence partially from their descent from the seneschals of Powys Fadog.⁷⁴

All of the monuments discussed above date from the early fourteenth century. These years after the conquest saw a boom in carved stone monuments, but the second half of the century saw a sharp decline which was never truly reversed in terms of quality or quantity of monuments. The reasons for this may be linked with the Black Death, and the social changes which followed. Epigraphic evidence is common for the first half of the century, but vernacular verse becomes more common

⁷⁰ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp. 94–96.

⁷¹ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, pp.140–41, 182–85.

⁷² Roberts, 'Llys Ieuan', 79–80.

⁷³ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 513.

⁷⁴ A. D. Carr, 'Pengwern: a Medieval Family', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 31 (1982), 5–27 (6–7).

in the second half, which has the effect of creating an imbalance between these two kinds of sources in both halves of the century. The monumental record does not show the rise of various families in the years following the Black Death, and although the prominence of the descendants of the princes of Powys Fadog, the family of Pengwern and Trefor and the families of Bodidris and Gelligynan as patrons of the abbey is established, it will now be necessary to discuss more generally the prominent native families of the area.

Wealth was not the only determining factor of status and nobility. It has been seen how, despite the turmoil of the conquest, the social position of these *uchelwyr* was rooted in the past. They were men of small wealth compared to their counterparts in South-East England, but social standing was decided by descent and kindred as well as ability and wealth. Solidarity among kinship groups was therefore a distinctive feature of society in this period.⁷⁵ The most significant family with regards to Valle Crucis in this period were undoubtedly the Trefors of Pengwern, with their significance only increasing after the early fourteenth century.⁷⁶

The family were able to increase their landed wealth as a result of opportunities afforded by the drop in population and increasingly anachronistic status of bond settlements following the Black Death. The years up to 1391 see Iorwerth ab Ednyfed Gam of Pengwern amassing lands in Nanheudwy in a cloud of semi-legality.⁷⁷ Two fourteenth-century bishops of St Asaph were Trefors, as well as two fifteenth-century abbots of Valle Crucis, Siôn ap Rhisiart and Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Iorwerth. Their dominance of ecclesiastical positions in the fourteenth century is well illustrated by the fact that when Siôn Trefor I was chosen as bishop of St Asaph by

⁷⁵ Ll. B. Smith, 'The Lordships of Chirk and Oswestry, 1282–1315' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1970), pp. 366–67.

⁷⁶ Carr, 'Pengwern: a Medieval Family', 5–27.

⁷⁷ Smith, 'Lordships of Chirk and Oswestry', pp. 318–20.

the Pope in 1346, it was in preference to Gruffudd Trefor, a canon of the church who had been chosen by the cathedral chapter and belonged to the same family. Siôn's relatives included Matthew Trefor, a canon of Bangor, as well as Edmwnd Trefor, also a Bangor canon and rector of Manafon.⁷⁸

The importance of this family to the abbey continued throughout the fifteenth century. Inevitably, other prominent families were linked with the Trefors of Pengwern by ties of marriage and descent. The Edwards family were, like the Trefors, descended from Ednyfed Gam of Pengwern, and were prominent in Nanheudwy and Mochnant. In the fifteenth century Siôn Edwards of Chirk was a patron of both Gutun Owain and Guto'r Glyn and held office in the borough of Chirk, as well as being a man of great learning.⁷⁹ His son, William, was also constable of Chirk as well as being renowned for his genealogical expertise.⁸⁰

Another family prominent in Nanheudwy and Mochnant, or the lordship of Chirk, were the Cyffins. Represented in the great extent of 1391 by Hywel Cyffin , they achieved greater prominence in the following century and came increasingly into conflict with the descendants of Ednyfed Gam.⁸¹ In the fifteenth century their number included Sieffre Cyffin, constable of Oswestry, and Richard Cyffin the dean of Bangor, both patrons of Guto'r Glyn.⁸²

The links between the family of Eutun in Maelor Gymraeg and Valle Crucis are apparent from the mention of one of the family in the continuation of *Brut y*

⁷⁸ Roberts, 'Llys Ieuan', 73–75.

⁷⁹ Ll. B. Smith, 'The Grammar and Commonplace Book of John Edwards of Chirk', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 34 (1987), 176–83; A. T. E. Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit: the Welsh Bardic Grammar and its Cultural Context in Northeast Wales', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 54 (2004), 154–169 (165).

⁸⁰ D. Bowen, 'I William ap Siôn Edwart, Cwnstabl y Waun', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* XVIII (1992), 137–59 (153–54).

⁸¹ *The Extent of Chirkland (1391–1393)*, ed. by G. P. Jones (London, 1933), p. 84. The two families were later said to contend continually for control over the area. Smith, 'Lordships of Chirk and Oswestry', pp. 367–68.

⁸² *Guto'r Glyn*, LXX, XCIV (ed. Williams, pp. 186–88, 245–46).

Tywysogion in Peniarth MS 20, undertaken at the abbey. Madog ap Llywelyn, the grandfather of the poet Madog Benfras, is described in this obituary as *y gwr oreu a fu ym Maelor Gymraeg*.⁸³ Another of Madog ap Llywelyn's grandsons, Madog ab Ieuan, was one of Owain Glyndŵr's earliest supporters, showing the family's connections with both the abbey and its patrons.⁸⁴ His contemporary, Dafydd Eutun ap Llywelyn, was constable of Holt in 1391.⁸⁵ Members of the family are prominent among Gutun Owain and Guto'r Glyn patrons in the following century, and Edward ap Rhosier Eutun of Rhiwabon was one of the most important genealogists of this period.⁸⁶ Other families who were prominent in the area, such as the Pilstwns of Emral and that of Bodidris, are also prominent in the poetry of both centuries, as will become apparent in the discussion which follows.

POETRY AND PATRONS

The translation into Welsh of these historical texts shows Valle Crucis engaging with native Welsh vernacular culture, the primary representatives of which were the poets. The poetry they produced can be used to illustrate the historical awareness of this culture by their frequent references to historical/legendary characters and events. These provided a standard with which to compare the generosity and exploits of their contemporary patrons, as well as a general backdrop to much of the increasingly sophisticated poetry of this period which was not solely concerned with praise of noble benefactors. An examination of some poets connected with the area and with patrons who were part of the lay elite of Powys Fadog will expose some illuminating connections with the historical texts produced at Valle Crucis. A three-way interaction

⁸³ 'the best man there ever was in Maelor Gymraeg'. *BT P20*, p. 237.

⁸⁴ R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1995), p. 142.

⁸⁵ D. Pratt, 'The Medieval Borough of Holt', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 14 (1965), 9–74 (24).

⁸⁶ Smith, 'John Edwards of Chirk', p. 183.

between the monastic community, the *uchelwyr* and the poets in terms of sponsorship and shared intellectual culture will therefore become apparent.

The Edwardian conquest, and rebellions in the decade which followed it, brought an end to the Welsh princely court as an institution.⁸⁷ The effect for those bards which depended on the patronage of such a court was considerable. Very little poetry survives from the early fourteenth century, and this may indicate that it was only gradually following the conquest that the bardic order was able to re-establish itself as the poetic class serving the surviving native gentry, the *uchelwyr*. The period saw concerted efforts to reinforce the status of the bards as a professional and organised class and as the recorders of the nobility of the Britons, best encapsulated in the compilation of the Hendregadredd manuscript of Gogynfeirdd poetry and in the codification of standards in Einion Offeiriad's bardic grammar or *Dwned*.

These activities took place around the same time as the compilation of translated historical texts at Valle Crucis. Although the actual corpus of poetry which survives from this early period is very small, the contemporaneity of the redefinition of the bardic order with historiographical developments at Valle Crucis suggests that it would be fruitful to consider both as parallel developments. Parallel but not separate, since the evidence of the poetry itself suggests a relationship with the development of historical texts at the abbey. This relationship manifests itself through allusions to characters or themes present in the texts which make up the Welsh Historical Continuum.

Our view of early fourteenth-century poetry in Wales is dominated by the poetry in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, much of which is connected with the family of

⁸⁷ A. D. Carr, 'An Aristocracy in Decline: the Native Welsh Lords after the Edwardian Conquest', *Welsh History Review* 5 (1970), 103–29 (110–12).

Penmynydd on Anglesey.⁸⁸ This family, although they were certainly generous patrons of the bards, appear to be over-represented in this corpus, possibly due to the survival of their family's collection of poetry, including poetry to other, connected houses by bards whom they sponsored as well as to the Penmynydd family itself, which was then copied into *Llyfr Coch Hergest*.⁸⁹ The immediate post-conquest period is therefore dominated by north-western and south-western verse, although some early post-conquest poetry can be connected with the family of Pengwern in Nanheudwy, some three miles south of Valle Crucis. More specifically it is associated with Myfanwy ferch Iorwerth Ddu of that family, whose marriage to Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur of Penmynydd, probably in the third quarter of the fourteenth century, accounts for her prominence in the surviving corpus.⁹⁰

Poems survive to her by Sefnyn, Rhisieryd and Hywel ab Einion Llygliw, although most of these are to be associated with her time on Anglesey. Hywel ab Einion Llygliw can be linked with north-east Wales, but the genre of his poem means that it contains few relevant historical or literary references.⁹¹ Sefnyn's literary output indicates a strong connection with Anglesey.⁹² Rhisieryd is also associated with Anglesey, but the geographical range of his patrons appears broader than Sefnyn's, partially because five of his poems survive to the latter's three. Although none of the surviving poetry is to patrons in the area of Valle Crucis, we know from references in

⁸⁸ *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd. I: Canu i Deulu Penmynydd*, ed. by B. Lewis (Aberystwyth, 2003), pp. 10–19; *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd. III: Canu Amrywiol*, ed. by A. P. Owen (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 1–5.

⁸⁹ Many of the poets here are preserved nowhere else, and although they are often characterised as 'Late Gogynfeirdd' this is partially due to the conservative nature of the poetry chosen for inclusion in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, reflecting the taste of its owner, Hopcyn ap Tomos. *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd III*, ed. Owen, pp. 4–5.

⁹⁰ G. Roberts, *Aspects of Welsh History* (Cardiff, 1969), p. 200.

⁹¹ *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a'r Llygliwiaid Eraill*, ed. by Rh. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2000), pp. 1–31.

⁹² 'Gwaith Sefnyn', ed. by E. H. Rheinallt, in *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisieryd, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch*, ed. by N. A. Jones and E. H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 1995), pp. 1–42.

Gruffudd Fychan's poetry that Risiart ap Syr Rhosier Pilstwn of Emral in Maelor Saesneg was a patron of Rhisierdyn.⁹³

With his surviving poetry very much within the main stream of traditional praise poetry, Rhisierdyn's historical and legendary references are rich and varied. Figures of the Old North and from other aspects of native legend occur frequently, as well as figures from Arthurian legend.⁹⁴ There are also references which betray an awareness of historical material translated into Welsh. Of particular interest here are some references to figures more prominent in, or first attested in, Welsh translations of Geoffrey, such as Lleon Gawr and Gweirydd, as well as a reference to Dared (Dares Phrygius) and to Echel (Achilles).⁹⁵ References to figures of translated historical literature are particularly frequent in his praise of Goronwy Fychan of Penmynydd, although the size of the surviving corpus makes the significance of this uncertain.

One of the hallmarks of the Welsh poetic tradition is its homogeneity and the interconnectedness of the bardic order. It is therefore a difficult task to distinguish distinctive historical references which speak of a bard's familiarity with a specific text from the general patterns of allusions and reference which could be expected of any bard during this period. The difficulty is compounded when speaking of the Welsh Historical Continuum, in that many of its key figures, particularly those from *Brut y Brenhinedd*, were themselves derived from native Welsh tradition.⁹⁶ It is impossible

⁹³ 'Gwaith Rhisierdyn', ed. by N. A. Jones, in *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierdyn et al*, p. 47.

⁹⁴ 'Gwaith Rhisierdyn', ed. Jones, p. 50.

⁹⁵ 'Gwaith Rhisierdyn', ed. Jones (references are to poem number and line). Lleon Gawr, 4.2; Gweirydd, 6.98; Dared, 4.47; Echel, 6.22, 6.68 (pp. 52; 67; 53; 65, 67). For the relationship between the names in the Welsh translations of Geoffrey and the Latin original, see B. F. Roberts, 'The Treatment of Personal names in the Early Welsh Versions of *Historia regum Britanniae*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 25 (1973), 274–90 (276, 282, 283).

⁹⁶ The distinction between native and non-native literature is of course fairly artificial, especially given that the bardic class of this period would have considered Geoffrey's *Historia Regum* as a translation of a Welsh historical text describing the true history of the Britons. It is here used as a convenient term to distinguish the material which was influenced directly or indirectly by

in many cases to tell whether references to figures such as Arthur and Beli are the result of direct contact with texts dependent on Geoffrey's work, or of contact with vernacular prose tales which feature them independently, or part of the common stock of bardic reference best exemplified by *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*. References such as Rhisierdyn's to Leon Gawr and Gweirydd, unknown in Welsh tradition outside *Brut y Brenhinedd*, can be taken as indicative of the influence of that text, but otherwise there are only certain contexts when the influence is clearly seen, as in the case of some of Gruffudd Llwyd's poetry, discussed below.⁹⁷

Rhisierdyn is also significant in being the author of the earliest surviving poem to a Cistercian abbot, his praise of Ieuan ap Rhys of Aberconwy (Maenan).⁹⁸ Dating from c.1379–1398, it predates most of the other praise of Cistercian abbots by at least fifty years. The existence of this poem, along with the dominance of North-West Wales in the surviving praise poetry of the fourteenth century, suggests that links of patronage between poets and the abbots of Valle Crucis could have predated the time of Guto'r Glyn.

That such ecclesiastical praise was important is confirmed in the bardic grammars which survive from this century, in which religious are given precedence over lay patrons as objects of praise.⁹⁹ Rhisierdyn's poem in praise of Ieuan ap Rhys, however, has the feel of a conventional secular praise poem given a religious spin by the use of religious rather than legendary references, such as Bede, St Bernard and Dyfrig.¹⁰⁰ Ieuan is still primarily praised for his generosity and his noble descent, with his learning and piety mentioned but not centre-stage. The primacy given to religious

translations of Geoffrey and Dares Phrygius from material which was influenced by historical works largely independent of these translations.

⁹⁷ Roberts, 'Treatment of Personal Names', 282–83.

⁹⁸ 'Gwaith Rhisierdyn', ed. Jones, 7 (pp. 74–75).

⁹⁹ *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, ed. by G. J. Williams and E. J. Jones (Cardiff, 1934), pp. 15–16.

¹⁰⁰ 'Gwaith Rhisierdyn', ed. Jones, 7.17, 7.18, 7.38 (pp. 74–75).

praise may therefore be more ideal than reality, given the relative prominence of praise to lay patrons. The hospitality which Rhisierdyn praised was one of the duties of Cistercian abbots, but the entertainment of poets at the monastery could make this hospitality look more like that of a secular lord. The lack of praise poetry to the abbots of Valle Crucis in this century could be down to accidents of survival or to the abbots themselves abiding more closely to the Cistercian rule than their Maenan counterparts. The products of Cistercian scriptoria, however, betray their support of the bardic order as well as their interest in vernacular history.

Some poets are of interest for their origins and connections rather than the historical content of their verse. Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed, believed to have been from Marchwiall in Maelor Gymraeg, was like Rhisierdyn patronised by Risiart ap Syr Rhosier Pilstwn of Emral, but the historical references in his poetry are fairly conventional.¹⁰¹ Similarly, in the case of Madog Benfras, whose surviving poetry is in the new and more personal style of the *cywyddwyr* than in the professional idiom of praise poetry, it is his origins and family which are indicative of the social and familial connections between these poets and the nobles they praised. Madog was of a noble family of Maelor Gymraeg, from Eutun. The son of Gruffudd ab Iorwerth ab Einion Goch of Sonlli, on his mother's side he was descended from the lords of Eutun and also from the princes of Powys Fadog.¹⁰² His maternal grandfather was Madog ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, named in the continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Peniarth MS 20 as *y gwr goreu erioed a vu y Maelor Gymraec*.¹⁰³ Madog's maternal family was therefore connected with Valle Crucis, probably benefactors of the house.

¹⁰¹ 'Gwaith Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed', ed. by E. H. Rheinallt, in *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierdyn, et al*, pp. 123–209 (p. 123).

¹⁰² 'Gwaith Madog Benfras', ed. by B. Lewis, in *Gwaith Madog Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, ed. by B. Lewis with T. Morys (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 11–97 (pp. 11–16).

¹⁰³ 'the best man there ever was in Maelor Gymraeg'. *BT P20*, p. 237.

Whilst none of his surviving poetry is of the type to include historical allusions, his background is nevertheless illustrative of the links between the bards, the native aristocracy and the monastery, with prominent figures being drawn from the same social class.

The most fruitful source for evidence of bardic engagement with the historiographical tradition current at Valle Crucis in the fourteenth century is the work of Gruffudd Llwyd. A nephew of Hywel ab Einion Lygliw who praised Myfanwy of Dinas Brân, his origins lay in Powys Wenwynwyn. He praised a number of Powysian *uchelwyr* as well as the families of Glyn Aeron in Ceredigion and Nannau in Meirionethshire, but it would appear that he had a particular association with Owain Glyndŵr, two of his twenty surviving poems being addressed to him and another to his brother in law, David Hanmer. The family of Mathafarn in Cyfeiliog were also patrons of his, as were the family of the Neuadd Wen in Powys.¹⁰⁴

Gruffudd's most remarkable poem is in praise of Owain Glyndŵr, written, like most of the surviving poetry to Glyndŵr, before the rebellion. In it he complains of social change and the pitiful state of the Welsh,

Cymry, rhag maint eu camrwysg,
Cenedl druain fal brain brwysg.¹⁰⁵

He seeks inspiration from the glorious history of the Britons, and specifically from the example of three kings who were ruled beyond the sea,

Tri amherodr tra moroedd

¹⁰⁴ 'Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd', ed. Ifans, pp. 75–89.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Welsh, because of the greatness of the oppression which is upon them, are a pitiful people, like scattered crows'. *Gruffudd Llwyd* 12.9–10 (ed. Ifans, pp. 146–50).

A fu onaddun'; un oedd,
 Brenin brwydr, Brân briodawr,
 Brawd Beli camwri mawr;
 Custennin a wnaeth drin draw,
 Arthur, chwith fu neb wrthaw.

 Diau o beth ydyw bod
 Brenhinoedd, bro iawn hynod,
 Bum hugain ar Lundain lys,
 Coronog, ceirw yr ynys.¹⁰⁶

These lines can be read as a direct reference to Geoffrey's work, and very likely the Welsh translation. It must be emphasised that the historical framework of the poem is very much indebted to *Brut y Brenhinedd* rather than to native Welsh texts. This has led to some misunderstanding, particularly as regards Brân's relationship to his brother Beli. The poem's editor, Rhiannon Ifans is troubled by this relationship as native tradition dictates that Brân (taken to refer to Bendigeidfran of the second branch of the *Mabinogi*) was the nephew of Beli Mawr, and modernises the line as *o'r un tylwyth a Beli*, 'of the same family'.¹⁰⁷ *Brut y Brenhinedd*, however, provides no such difficulty, as here Beli and Brân are brothers, sons of Dyfnwal Moelmud, who rule beyond the sea through their conquest of Rome.¹⁰⁸ They are the

¹⁰⁶ 'From them (the Britons) came three emperors who ruled beyond the sea. One was the king of battles, rightful Brân, the brother of Beli of great heroism. Cystennin fought overseas, and no-one dared wrong Arthur. It is a particular thing to be a king, a truly noteworthy position. Five score reigned over the court of London, wearing crowns, the stags of the island'. *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 12.29–38 (ed. Ifans, p. 146).

¹⁰⁷ 'Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd', ed. Ifans, p. 261.

¹⁰⁸ *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, pp. 45–53. This is a version probably available at Valle Crucis in the fourteenth century. Confusion with regard to Beli also affects Rachel Bromwich, who regards Einion Offeiriad's reference to *Beli Mawr, Amherawdr Romani* as 'curious'. No such thing, to a poet familiar with *Brut y Brenhinedd*! Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* (third edition, Cardiff, 2006), pp. 288–89.

vernacular versions of Geoffrey's Belinus and Brennius, sons of Dunvallo Molmutius.¹⁰⁹ The reference to *pum ugain* kings of London is also likelier to mean 100 than the 25 understood by Ifans, given that *Brut y Brenhinedd* names rather over a hundred kings of Britain.¹¹⁰

Owain Glyndŵr was the great grandson of Madog ap Gruffudd Fychan, whose tomb lies in the abbey. This epigraphic evidence, indicating that Glyndŵr's family continued as patrons of Valle Crucis, makes it possible that Gruffudd himself made use of the abbey's collection of manuscripts. Not only does Gruffudd Llwyd here show a detailed awareness of the legendary history of Britain, he also relates this history to contemporary events in a sophisticated manner. The current piteous state of the *Cymry* is contrasted with the past, when they are termed *Brytaniaid*, echoing the change in terminology which *Brut y Brenhinedd* places after the Saxon takeover of Britain.¹¹¹ Thus, the injustices complained of are compared with the loss of Britain, the plight of the *enedl druain* contrasted with their past status as *blaenaf un blaid o fryd dyn*.¹¹²

The *cywydd* was written as a complaint against the failure of the English crown to grant Owain a knighthood, but by bewailing the lack of a *marchog urddawl...tros Gymry*, a Welsh knight over Wales, Gruffudd implicitly links this injustice with the lack of a British king over Britain.¹¹³ Skilful parallels are drawn between contemporary events and the legendary history of the Britons, and by seeking inspiration from this past Gruffudd contextualises Owain's lack of a knighthood as a symptom of the fall of the Britons, implying that only through restoring the glory of

¹⁰⁹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 49–59.

¹¹⁰ 'Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd', ed. Ifans, p. 262.

¹¹¹ *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, p. 217.

¹¹² 'a pitiful people', 'the foremost company in men's understanding'. *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 12.10, 12.25–26 (ed. Ifans, p. 146).

¹¹³ *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 12.39–40 (ed. Ifans, pp. 147, 259).

the past British kings can salvation come to the Welsh. Such interlinking of the legendary past with contemporary politics is appropriate in the context of a praise poem to Glyndŵr. A tendency to justify the revolt which was to follow with reference to an ideology of the past drawn mainly from the Galfridian historical traditions of *Brut y Brenhinedd* is apparent throughout the revolt.

A noteworthy instance of this is Glyndŵr's letter to the king of Scotland, where the opposition of both the Scots and the Welsh to the English was contextualised as deriving from the Saxon invasion, with Glyndŵr portrayed as the heir of Camber and Cadwaladr, and Robert of Scotland seen as the descendant of Albanactus.¹¹⁴ Another illuminating example is Glyndŵr's consultation with Hopcyn ap Tomos, a master of *brut*, history and prophecy, during his southern campaign of 1403.¹¹⁵ Hopcyn himself was possessed of a different version of the Welsh Historical Continuum, that of *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, and in Philadelphia MS 8680, a manuscript of his which also contained these texts, a colophon by his scribe Hywel Fychan relates the contemporary stauts of the Welsh to this history in a way strikingly similar to Gruffudd Llwyd.¹¹⁶

Given these indications of Glyndŵr's interest in this matter, coupled with his family's close relationship with the abbey of Valle Crucis, it is not unreasonable to credit his family with some role in the production of historical texts at the abbey. Granted, the only fourteenth-century manuscripts which can be linked with the abbey date from the 1330s, but it is likely that the interest of both poet and patron in such historical material drew on the continued importance of the work undertaken there earlier in the century. This work may itself have been encouraged by Glyndŵr's

¹¹⁴ *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. by C. Given-Wilson (Oxford, 1997), pp. 148–50.

¹¹⁵ Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 159–60; G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (Cardiff, 1948), p. 11; *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, ed. by H. F. Ellis, second series (4 vols., London, 1827), I, 21–23.

¹¹⁶ Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, p. 69; see below, p. 385.

forebears in the time of his grandfather, who oversaw a period of increasing prosperity and social standing as his family became increasingly integral to the post-conquest power structures of north-east Wales.¹¹⁷

There are echoes of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in Gruffudd Llwyd's other poem to Glyndŵr, when Owain's fury in battle is likened to that of Uthr Bendragon when assaulting the Saxons in revenge for their slaying of his brother Emrys.¹¹⁸ Further evidence of Gruffudd Llwyd's appreciation of *Brut y Brenhinedd* is evidenced by his *cywydd* in praise of Owain ap Maredudd, like Owain Glyndŵr a noble of Powys, the lord of y Neuadd Wen in Llanerfyl. The poem praises Owain's beard by referring to Arthur's battle with Rhita Gawr, the giant who claimed his beard as tribute in Geoffrey's *Historia*.¹¹⁹ In both the first poem to Glyndŵr and the praise of Owain ap Maredudd's beard, *Brut y Brenhinedd* is used to provide the framework of the entire *cywydd*.

References to other literature in Gruffudd Llwyd's work betray a poet of wide reading and sophisticated interests. They include references to native Welsh material such as *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Iarlles y Ffynnon* and *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd*, as well as to literature of the wider European tradition.¹²⁰ The latter include references to the legends of Charlemagne, Alexander and the Seven Sages of Rome, as well as a refutation of the arguments of the *Elucidarium* of Honorius Augustodunensis concerning the sinfulness of receiving pay for praise poetry.¹²¹ The three poems which most clearly show the influence of *Brut y Brenhinedd* are to nobles of Powys,

¹¹⁷ Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, p. 136; Lloyd, *Owen Glendower*, pp. 13–16.

¹¹⁸ *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 11.36–38 (ed. Ifans, p. 134).

¹¹⁹ *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 16 (ed. Ifans, pp. 168–69); *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, p. 179.

¹²⁰ *Gruffudd Llwyd* 11.39–46; 13.41–46; 17.21–22 (ed. Ifans, pp. 135; 152; 174).

¹²¹ *Gruffudd Llwyd*, 13.33–36; 14; 15 (ed. Ifans, pp. 151; 157–59; 164–65).

which may be an indication that the appetite for such material was strongest among the Powysian elite.¹²²

To contextualise these references somewhat, let us turn to consider some other poets briefly. The only surviving work of Gruffudd ap Tudur Coch, *Awdl y Breuddwyd*, is heavily indebted to native tradition, and its structure of a dream-vision seems itself indebted to tales such as *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* and *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*. The rare poetic references to Gwydion and Modron, and an allusion to the love of Cynon ap Clydno Eidin for Morfudd ferch Urien Rheged, indicate a more traditional, native range of references, including the work of the *Gogynfeirdd* in a mention of Prydydd y Moch's praise of Gwenllian of Caerleon.¹²³ Gronw Gyriog is another poet who shows some familiarity with the more native aspects of Welsh tradition, referring to Arthur's court as Celliwig and showing some knowledge of the first branch of the Mabinogi.¹²⁴ Gwilym Ddu o Arfon is perhaps more typical of the fourteenth-century poets, in that his references to figures such as Urien and to heroes of the royal house of Gwynedd are intermingled with occasional references to Rholant and Echel.¹²⁵ A mixture of traditional, Galfridian and imported references is more typical of the poetry of this period in general, with Gruffudd Llwyd and Gruffudd ap Tudur Coch providing examples of poets who show greater familiarity with one particular aspect. The poet with the strongest connection to Powys is also the one

¹²² Although it should be noted that Owain ap Maredudd was based in the heart of Powys Wenwynwyn, rather than Powys Fadog, whereas Owain Glyndŵr had land in both areas. Even if this precludes Owain ap Maredudd's inclusion as a nobleman who can be associated with the area immediately around Valle Crucis, it should be remembered that Valle Crucis was itself a daughter house of Strata Marcella, the chief abbey of Southern Powys.

¹²³ 'Gwaith Gruffudd ap Tudur Coch', ed. by Rh. Ifans, in *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog, Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, Mab Clochyddyn, Gruffudd ap Tudur Coch ac Ithel Ddu*, ed. by Rh. Ifans, A. P. Owen, W. D. Rowlands and E. H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 1997), pp. 117–39 (pp. 119–20).

¹²⁴ 'Gwaith Gronw Gyriog', ed. by W. D. Rowlands and A. P. Owen, in *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog et al*, 1.34; 2.15 (pp. 8, 13).

¹²⁵ Roland and Achilles. 'Gwaith Gwilym Ddu o Arfon', ed. by R. Iestyn Daniel, in *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur; Gwilym Ddu o Arfon, Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr ac Iorwerth Beli*, ed. by N. G. Costigan, R. Iestyn Daniel and D. Johnston (Aberystwyth, 1995), pp. 45–86. See especially 6.5–6; 6.67–74; 7.30; 7.41–46 (ed. pp. 51–52, 57–58).

showing the clearest indications of the influence of texts such as *Brut y Brenhinedd*. Rhisierdyn, known to have had links of patronage with North-East Wales, also shows more of a tendency to allude to such material, including a reference to Dares.

This survey of fourteenth-century poets will end with Iolo Goch, active throughout the second half of the century. Originally from Dyffryn Clwyd, his relatively large corpus of surviving verse allows us to assess his ties of patronage rather more fully.¹²⁶ His patrons included the Tuduriaid of Penmynydd, the family of Hywel y Fwyall of Eifionydd and Owain Glyndŵr. One of his most prominent patrons was Ithel ap Robert of Coedmynydd near Caerwys in Tegeingl, who became archdeacon of St Asaph in 1375. Ithel was connected with a number of prominent churchmen, his father's brother being Madog, a bishop of Bangor to whom Gronw Gyriog sang. His mother was the cousin of Bishop Dafydd ap Bleddyn of St Asaph.¹²⁷

Iolo had strong connections with St Asaph himself, composing two poems in praise of Bishop Ieuan or John. Enid Roberts argues persuasively that the two poems were composed for different bishops, the first John Trefor holding the position from 1346 to 1357 and the second from 1394 to 1410. These men both belonged to the Trefor family who were so prominent in ecclesiastical appointments in North Wales and who also provided two fifteenth-century abbots of Valle Crucis. John Trefor I's will reveals that he possessed a large collection of thirty-three books, although only the religious works are named.¹²⁸

Iolo's *Ymddiddan Rhwng yr Enaid a'r Corff*, where a poetic circuit around Wales is presented as a dialogue between the soul and the body, speaks of staying at

¹²⁶ *Gwaith Iolo Goch*, ed. by D. R. Johnston (Cardiff, 1988), pp. xvii–xviii; *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, ed. by H. Lewis, T. Roberts and I. Williams (second edition, Cardiff, 1937), pp. ix–xii.

¹²⁷ C. Ashton, *Gweithiau Iolo Goch: Gyda Nodiadau Hanesyddol a Beirniadol* (Oswestry, 1898), pp. 325–27.

¹²⁸ Fourteen of the books are unnamed. Roberts, 'Llys Ieuan', 78, 96.

the Cistercian abbeys of Whitland and Strata Florida.¹²⁹ Although Valle Crucis does not feature on this itinerary, the links between two of his patrons (the bishops of St Asaph and Owain Glyndŵr) and this house suggest that Iolo would have been familiar with the abbey. Certainly later tradition suggests a close association between the poet and this house.¹³⁰

The general impression given by the historical and legendary references in his work is of an accurate knowledge of native lore interspersed with indications of an awareness of Galfridian material and translation literature. For example, he has clear allusions to the cycle of *englynion* focussing on Urien Rheged, and to the story of the Twrch Trwyth.¹³¹ He also shows an interest in the more recent history of the house of Gwynedd, his *marwnad* to Ithel ap Robert echoing Gruffudd ab yr Ynad's Coch's *marwnad* to Llywelyn the Last, with references to the heirlooms of the Venedotian house, the Groes Naid and Talaith Aberffraw.¹³² References to Ercwl, Amlyn ac Amig and Ffwg Fitzwarin indicate his familiarity with translation literature.¹³³ Some references clearly betray the influence of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, such as the reference to London as Caer Ludd.¹³⁴ His statement that Ieuan ab Einion possessed *golud fal Beli* is again likelier to refer to Beli son of Dyfnwal Moelmud, who received great wealth from Rome, than to the Beli Fawr ap Manogan of native literature as suggested by the poem's editor.¹³⁵

Overall, there is an unselfconscious mix of all these traditions in most of the poems, displaying a comfortable familiarity with different texts without distinguishing between native, Galfridian and translated literature. There is no conscious emulation of

¹²⁹ *Iolo Goch*, XIV (ed. Johnston, pp. 64–67).

¹³⁰ G. Vernon Price, *Valle Crucis Abbey* (Liverpool, 1952), pp. 159–61.

¹³¹ *Iolo Goch*, II.19, V.52 (ed. Johnston, pp. 6, 23).

¹³² *Iolo Goch*, XV.22, XX.67–68 (ed. Johnston, pp. 69, 85).

¹³³ *Iolo Goch*, I.28, III.41, XXII.60, XXXIII.50 (ed. Johnston, pp. 2, 14, 94, 148).

¹³⁴ *Iolo Goch*, VI.89 (ed. Johnston, p. 30).

¹³⁵ *Iolo Goch*, III.64 (ed. Johnston, p. 14), and *contra* Johnston, p. 196.

the structure of the Welsh Historical Continuum in Iolo's work to be compared to Gruffudd Llwyd's poem, but there is enough to enable us to see such texts as one influence among many on the historical background of his poetry. His *marwnad* to Ithel ap Robert, with its echoes of Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch's elegy for Llywelyn, indicates a willingness to look to earlier literary models comparable to Gruffudd Llwyd's evocation of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in his poem to Glyndŵr.

It would be this man, a patron of both Gruffudd Llwyd and Iolo Goch, who would lead the revolt at the turn of the fifteenth century that affected and disrupted all aspects of Welsh society, including the bardic order. The heartland of Powys Fadog, around Valle Crucis, was where the revolt began, and prominent *uchelwyr* and churchmen of the area were present from its very start.¹³⁶ Not only was the historical literature compiled at the abbey, and the bardic poetry which shared some of its features, important to the revolt itself, but both were affected by the disruption caused by the revolt. The turbulence of fifteen years of war no doubt ensured that many bards were unable to train apprentices, and combined with the poverty of patrons as a result of the revolt as well as the prescriptive effect of the penal laws ensured a lean period for Welsh literature. The political content of any poetry composed during the war no doubt made its preservation impolitic in the years immediately afterwards, and the delicacy of the subject for many *uchelwyr*, some of whom had joined or abandoned Glyndŵr at different times, is reflected in the relative paucity of references to the man and the revolt in the poetry of the fifteenth century.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Those present at Glyndyfrdwy at the start of the revolt on 16th September 1400 included Owain, his eldest son, his brother, his wife's two brothers, his sister's husband, Hywel Cyffin, dean of St Asaph, Hywel's two nephews, Madog ab Ieuan ap Madog of Eutun (whose grandfather is mentioned in the continuation to the Peniarth 20 *Brut*), John Astwick, and Crach Ffynnant (a poet referred to as Owain's 'prophet'). Lloyd, *Owen Glendower*, pp. 30–32.

¹³⁷ B. Lewis, 'Late Medieval Welsh Praise Poetry and Nationality: The Military Career of Guto'r Glyn Revisited', *Studia Celtica* 45 (2011), 111–30 (120).

Nevertheless, the fifteenth century was to be a period of great productivity and great achievement in Welsh poetry, described by Saunders Lewis as *Y Ganrif Fawr*, 'The Great Century'.¹³⁸ Far more of the work of the poets of this period is preserved than for those of the fourteenth century. Attention here will therefore be given to two poets closely associated with Valle Crucis and its abbots, Gutun Owain and his older contemporary, Guto'r Glyn. Before considering these men's careers, connections and poetry, however, the social context of the area and the abbey itself during the fifteenth century will be discussed briefly.

The abbots who ruled the abbey during the time of Guto'r Glyn and Gutun Owain, Siôn ap Rhisiart and Dafydd ab Ieuan, were both members of the Trefor family. Siôn appears to have found the abbey in a bad state of neglect after the abbacy of the Englishman, Richard Mason. His abbacy was therefore not only a return to prosperity but also a return to native rule of the monastery, a fact not lost on Gutun Owain.¹³⁹ Gutun Owain was in fact Siôn's nephew, a fact that no doubt strengthened the strong connections between the poet and the abbey.¹⁴⁰ By his own testimony, Gutun Owain spent nearly forty years of his life at Valle Crucis, though it is doubtful that this refers to continuous residence.¹⁴¹ Both Gutun Owain and Guto'r Glyn seem to have spent their last years mainly at the abbey from the evidence of their poems.¹⁴²

Both Siôn and Dafydd were to be great builders, and their abbacies represented the reassertion of control over the abbey by the Trefor family, who had been notable patrons since the beginning of the previous century. The interests of these abbots and their family may explain the enthusiasm for historical texts evident

¹³⁸ S. Lewis, *Braslun o Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg, y Gyfrol Gyntaf: Hyd at 1535* (Cardiff, 1932), p. 115.

¹³⁹ *Gutun Owain*, XVIII.57–60 (ed. Bachellery, p. 119).

¹⁴⁰ Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn', pp. 222–23.

¹⁴¹ *Gutun Owain*, XXI.33–54; XXIII.19–32 (ed. Bachellery, pp. 139, 147).

¹⁴² *Guto'r Glyn*, CXIV (ed. Williams, pp. 293–95); *Gutun Owain*, LXIII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 323–27).

at the abbey in this period. The Trefor family had many distinguished men of letters in their midst, such as Siôn Trefor Hen, the translator of the Life of St Martin found in Mostyn MS 88 and object of Gutun Owain's praise, and this scholarly interest is also evident among the related family of the Edwardses of Chirk.¹⁴³

This family's influence on the church in North-East Wales is evident from the expectation that these abbots would become bishops of St Asaph, as had two of their relatives in the fourteenth century. Whilst Siôn was to be disappointed, despite the urgings of Gutun Owain, his successor was indeed confirmed as bishop.¹⁴⁴ These men had the historical interests characteristic of their family, Siôn's evident from Gutun Owain's praise poetry to him and Dafydd's interest in the Grail legend clear from the poem *Guto'r Glyn* addressed to Trahaearn ab Ieuan of Caerleon to request a book of the Holy Grail for this abbot of Valle Crucis.¹⁴⁵ Remembering that Gutun Owain's work on *Llyfr Du Basing* has been linked with Valle Crucis, it is clear that the atmosphere of the abbey would have been conducive to such undertakings during the abbacies of both men. Basingwerk should not be forgotten either. The abbacy of Tomos Pennant there (1481–1522) saw a Welshman become abbot after a time of considerable disruption, with him and his family exercising firm control over the abbey up to the Dissolution.¹⁴⁶ He was a patron of Gutun Owain during the early years of his abbacy.¹⁴⁷ A learned man as well as a patron, annotations to *Brenhinedd y Saesson* in *Llyfr Du Basing* are in his hand.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ M. Owen, 'Prolegomena i Astudiaeth Lawn o Lawysgrif NLW 3026c, Mostyn 88 a'i Harwyddocad', in *Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Cymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol*, ed. by I. Daniel, M. Haycock, D. Johnston and J. Rowland (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 349–84 (p. 351); Smith, 'John Edwards of Chirk', 176–83.

¹⁴⁴ *Gutun Owain*, XX.29–36 (ed. Bachellery, p. 133).

¹⁴⁵ *Guto'r Glyn*, CXVIII (ed. Williams, pp. 303–4).

¹⁴⁶ Williams, *Welsh Church*, pp. 232, 354, 401, 408.

¹⁴⁷ *Gutun Owain*, XXXII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 183–85).

¹⁴⁸ Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 164.

The dynastic control of the Pennants over Basingwerk was paralleled at by the dominance of Valle Crucis by the Trefors. At Valle Crucis, this period also saw the further secularisation of the abbey's administration, a development evident from the fourteenth century. The families discussed above played an important role in the administration of the marcher lordships and boroughs of the area, albeit a somewhat ambiguous one. This tradition of administration went back into the thirteenth century, and it is possible that the family of Pengwern were descended from the seneschals of Powys Fadog.¹⁴⁹ In these marcher lordships, and particularly in the boroughs, English appointees were preferred, and only two out of thirteen receivers of Chirk in the fourteenth century were Welsh, although the proportion of Welsh to English is far different in a post such as forester, more concerned with the hinterland of the lordship than the planted borough. In that office, only three out of eleven holders were English.¹⁵⁰ Men such as Dafydd Eutun, mentioned above in connection with Madog Benfras, could nevertheless hold important posts such as constable of Holt Castle. The opportunities afforded to such men is well demonstrated by the career of Edward ap Rhys ap Dafydd of Eglwyseg, who had been steward of Ewyas, auditor of the lordship of Powys, deputy-steward of Valle Crucis, receiver of Chirk, bailif of the Llanegwestl lands of Valle Crucis and clerk to the court of Chirk.¹⁵¹ This was around 1500, when the restrictions on Welsh appointments were more relaxed, but is nevertheless indicative of the ambitions of such men to hold these posts.

The harsh penal laws imposed at the outbreak of the Glyndŵr revolt banned the Welsh from holding any such positions, and whilst the ban was not universally enforced, it nevertheless severely curtailed the prospects of administrative posts for

¹⁴⁹ Carr, 'Pengwern', pp. 6–7.

¹⁵⁰ I. Jack, 'Welsh and English in the Medieval Lordship of Ruthin', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 18 (1969), 23–49 (28–9).

¹⁵¹ Smith, 'John Edwards of Chirk', 183.

Welshmen. In such circumstances the opportunities offered by ecclesiastical positions, on which there were no such proscriptions, became even more important. This increased interest in ecclesiastical administration came after a difficult period for monasteries. The late fourteenth century, following the Black Death, saw a decline in numbers at Cistercian houses with a concurrent need to bring in laymen to more effectively administer monastic finances. This coincided with a period of opportunism for lay families who, as discussed above, seized on the chance to amass wealth and land in the social upheaval.¹⁵² Whilst Valle Crucis, with most of its income derived from tithes, needed fewer officials than most abbeys its size, it was like most other abbeys to come under increasing lay control, and the control of abbots who acted like secular lords.¹⁵³ The fine poetic praise of Abbot Siôn and Abbot Dafydd discussed below, though testimony to their generosity, gives a poor impression of their virtue as ascetic Cistercian abbots. The extent of the Trefor family's involvement in the abbey is indicated by the fact that it came into their hands at the dissolution.¹⁵⁴

This, then, was the social and monastic background for the involvement of the fifteenth-century poets with Valle Crucis and the lay gentry of the area. In a time of increasing closeness between *uchelwyr* and the monasteries, it is hardly surprising to see a correspondingly close connection between the poets and Valle Crucis. This is particularly true of Gutun Owain. Gutun Owain, or Gruffudd ap Huw ab Owain, came from the parish of Dudlust in the lordship of Oswestry, although his family originated in Upper Arllechwedd, and was active between the 1450s and the turn of the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁵ Gutun was both a scribe and a poet, and Daniel Huws lists ten manuscripts

¹⁵² Williams, *Welsh Church*, pp. 265–7.

¹⁵³ Williams, *Welsh Church*, pp. 373–4.

¹⁵⁴ Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving*, p. 188.

¹⁵⁵ Owen, 'Prolegomena i Astudiaeth Lawn', 349–50; J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Gutun Owain', in *A*

which are either partially or entirely in his hand.¹⁵⁶ The contents of these are varied and include calendars, theological texts, saints' lives, a bardic grammar and a large number of pedigrees alongside the historical texts which are of particular interest here. *Llyfr Du Basing's* name indicates that it was kept at Basingwerk for a time, although the evidence of Gutun's poetry shows that he had stronger connections with Valle Crucis, praising its abbots in fifteen poems compared to one for the abbots of Basingwerk.¹⁵⁷ This, along with the relationship between the texts in his historical manuscripts and Cotton Cleopatra B.v, whose scribe can be associated with the monastery, means that Valle Crucis has been seen as a more likely centre for the production of *Llyfr Du Basing*.¹⁵⁸ However, the fact that the hand of Tomos Pennant, abbot of Basingwerk, is found in the manuscript, means that it may have reached that monastery within Gutun Owain's lifetime.¹⁵⁹ The first part of the manuscript is in the hand of an older contemporary of Gutun Owain's, but Gutun may nevertheless have acquired the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript from Valle Crucis for copying at Basingwerk. It seems likely that his relationship with the abbots of both houses was an instrumental factor in the acquisition by Basingwerk of historical material from Valle Crucis.

Turning to consider his other poetic patrons, there is a great deal of continuity between the families praised by Gutun Owain and the ones praised by his predecessors in the previous century. The family of Eutun whose links with Valle Crucis are apparent in manuscript and funerary remains are represented in four poems, as are the Pilstwn family of Emral, earlier sponsors of Rhisierdyn and of Gruffudd

Guide to Welsh Literature 1282–c.1550, ed. by A. O. H. Jarman and G. R. Hughes, revised by D. Johnston (second edition, Cardiff, 1997), pp. 240–55.

¹⁵⁶ Huws, *Repertory*, Scribes: Gutun Owain.

¹⁵⁷ *Gutun Owain*, VIII, XVIII–XXXI to Valle Crucis; XXXII to Basingwerk (ed. Bachellery, pp. 70–71, 117–85).

¹⁵⁸ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 62, 190.

¹⁵⁹ Huws, *Repertory*, Manuscripts: NLW 7006D.

Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed.¹⁶⁰ The Edwardses of Chirk, and the families of Bodidris and of Trefor are also prominent as patrons of Gutun Owain, the last of these with four poems but with the total rising substantially if the poems to the abbots of Valle Crucis are included.¹⁶¹ The most conspicuous individuals are the abbots of Valle Crucis, with seven poems surviving to Siôn ap Rhisiart and eight to Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Iorwerth.

Gutun therefore provides the clearest example of a connection between the bardic tradition current in the area and the copying and editing of Welsh historical manuscripts at the abbey. This is well reflected in the historical background to his verse, which shows an awareness of the historiographical framework of the Welsh Historical Continuum to a greater degree than any other poet. The more traditional references are here, such as those to Myrddin, Gwenddydd and Arderydd, or to Math fab Mathonwy, alongside references to characters such as Guy of Warwick and Foulkes de Fitzwarin.¹⁶² Other references in Gutun's work, to triadic and genealogical material, show his enthusiasm for many of the texts he is known to have copied. But the overwhelming frequency of references to figures from *Ystoria Dared* or *Brut y Brenhinedd* accurately reflects Gutun's role in the compilation of manuscripts of the Welsh Historical Continuum. It has been shown that Gutun did not know Latin, and so he belongs to the class for whom these translations were made.¹⁶³

Gutun's poem in praise of the three sons of Siôn Trefor Hen begins by praising them as *y trywyr o waed Troya*, and this reference to the Trojan descent of those

¹⁶⁰ *Gutun Owain*: Eutun XIV, XLVIII, XLIX, L (ed. Bachellery, pp. 95–99, 255–67); Pilstwn XII, XIV, XVII, LIII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 87–89, 95–99, 109–111, 277–81).

¹⁶¹ *Gutun Owain*: Edwards LV, LVI (ed. Bachellery, pp. 285–93); Bodidris XXXIX, XL, XLI (ed. Bachellery, pp. 217–227); Trefor XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII, XXXVIII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 199–217).

¹⁶² *Gutun Owain*, XXVI.55–60; XVII.3; X.27–46 (ed. Bachellery, pp. 161, 109, 79–81).

¹⁶³ T. Roberts, 'Llawysgrifau Gutun Owain a Thymor ei Oes', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 15 (1952–1954), 99–109 (101).

praised is a common element of Gutun's work.¹⁶⁴ The poem goes on to detail the immediate pedigree of the family, before going deeper into history to describe them as *plant Kystenin...dan sidan Consdans*.¹⁶⁵ One brother is compared to Emrys Wledig and the other to Uthr Bendragon, preserving the fraternal relationship of these figures in *Brut y Brenhinedd*, and the Trojan history is again evoked when they are described as the spears of Laomedon.¹⁶⁶

The influence of the historical texts with which Gutun was working goes beyond individual references and examples, influencing the framework of the poems in ideological as well as structural terms, and in this sense he can be compared with Gruffudd Llwyd. The comparison is particularly striking in the case of Gutun's *marwnad* for Elisau ap Gruffudd ab Einion of Plas yn Iâl, who died in 1489.¹⁶⁷ The opening of this poem will be quoted in full,

Llwyr o beth! Lle aur a bwyd
 Llin Troya, oll yn treiwyd!
 Issel ym, gwaith wasel oedd,
 A'n hynaif yn vrenhinoedd.
 Kan koron kynn Saeson sydd
 O'n kronigl a'nn kyrenydd,
 Kann t'wysog rrowioc o 'rtrain,
 A'i diwedd vv hyd Ywain.

¹⁶⁴ 'the three men of Trojan blood'. *Gutun Owain*, XXXVII.1 (ed. Bachellery, p. 209).

¹⁶⁵ 'the children of Constantine ... adorned with the silk of Constans'. *Gutun Owain*, XXXVII.16–20 (ed. Bachellery, p. 209).

¹⁶⁶ *Gutun Owain*, XXXVII.21–26, 32 (ed. Bachellery, p. 209).

¹⁶⁷ A. T. E. Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 167. Despite his dynastic connections with Corsygedol in Ardudwy, on the basis of Gutun Owain's poems Bachellery would appear to be correct in associating him with Plas yn Iâl near Gwyddelwern, land for which his mother was the sole heiress.

Y kyff hwn, oedd y'n koffav,

A l s pan aeth Elisav.¹⁶⁸

The death of Elisau is here contextualised by outlining the history of the fall of the Britons from their noble Trojan origins, with Elisau's death being seen as the last event in this sad chain of disasters. The exact structure of the Welsh Historical Continuum, Trojans, kings, princes and all, is replicated in the opening lines of this poem, and arguably directly referred to as the *kronigl*. Close familiarity with *Brut y Brenhinedd* is certainly indicated by the *gwaith wasel*.¹⁶⁹ Such are the parallels with Gruffudd Llwyd's poem to Owain Glynd wr that it can be taken to have inspired Gutun's later work, similar to the way that Iolo Goch modelled his *marwnad* to Ithel ap Robert on Gruffudd ab yr Ynad's Coch's to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Glynd wr himself is here seen as the last of the princes. Elisau was a relative of Glynd wr, his mother being the daughter of Tudur, Owain Glynd wr's younger brother, who was killed at the battle of Pwll Melyn in 1405.¹⁷⁰ Elisau is therefore cast as the last representative of this line, the tragedy of his death expressed as the culmination of the long history of the Britons with which Gutun was so familiar.

References to Trojan and *Brut y Brenhinedd* figures appear to be particularly frequent in poems to certain patrons. They appear often in poems to patrons of the Trefor family, and particularly in those to Si n Trefor ap Rhisiart, abbot of Valle

¹⁶⁸ 'A complete thing! Where once was the gold and food of the lineage of Troy, they have ebbed away entirely! We are low (it was the work of a *waes hael*), and our ancestors were kings. There were a hundred crowns before the Saxons, according to our chronicle and our lineage, and a hundred noble princes from these, and their end was not until Owain. This branch, which kept our memory, was killed when Elisau departed.' *Gutun Owain*, XLIII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 233–37).

¹⁶⁹ This being a reference to the *was hael* exchanged between Gwrtheyrn and Rhonwen, daughter of Hengest, at the feast after which the Saxons were given Kent. *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, p. 113.

¹⁷⁰ *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400*, ed. by P. C. Bartrum (8 vols., Aberystwyth, 1974), Bleddyn ap Cynfyn 5; *Welsh Genealogies AD 1400–1500*, ed. by P. C. Bartrum (18 vols., Aberystwyth, 1983), Osbwrn 1 (A1); Davies, *Owain Glyn D wr*, p. 326.

Crucis. One of these poems opens by calling him a second Gweirydd, the son of Cynfelyn who fights manfully against the Romans in *Brut y Brenhinedd*. This is a peculiar way to praise a Cistercian abbot to say the least. He is also compared to Emrys Wledig, although the latter's piety makes him slightly more appropriate. The poem also includes more usual comparisons of Siôn to Deiniol, Dunod and Beuno, but overall it is Gweirydd who is given pride of place at the poem's opening and closing stanzas.¹⁷¹ This may indicate a particular enthusiasm for this historical material on Siôn's part, or perhaps on the part of his family in general. Such references occur, but are not as common, in Gutun's praise of Dafydd who was abbot between 1480 and 1503. Of these two historical manuscripts in Gutun's hand discussed above, one can be dated after 1461 and the other after 1471, and if they were written at Valle Crucis it might be that both were written during the abbacy of Siôn, from 1455 to 1480.

Guto'r Glyn's surviving poetry also provides a wealth of referential information. Although he does not demonstrate familiarity with such texts to the same extent as Gutun Owain, his poetry nevertheless indicates his familiarity with this historical material. Guto appears to have been particularly fond of references to the Trojan legend, to figures such as Ector, Troilus or Alexander.¹⁷² Nevertheless Guto also uses characters and episodes from *Brut y Brenhinedd*. In his poem to Helen ferch Robert Pilstwn he compares her to three Helens of history, Helen of Troy, Helen daughter of Coel of *Brut y Brenhinedd* and Helen daughter of Eudaf, wife of Maxen,

¹⁷¹ *Gutun Owain*, XX.3, 7–8, 29, 83 (ed. Bachellery, pp. 131–37); *Cotton Cleopatra Version*, ed. Parry, pp. 82–85, 140.

¹⁷² Because of the present incompleteness of the website for the ongoing Guto'r Glyn project (<http://www.gutorglyn.net/>), which will include new editions of the entirety of Guto'r work, references here are to *Gwaith Guto'r Glyn*, ed. by I. Williams and J. Llywelyn Williams (Cardiff, 1961). *Guto'r Glyn*, XXIII.17–22; XXVII.4; XLIX.15–34; XCIX.35–36; etc. (ed. Williams, pp. 62; 73; 132–33; 260). Although often referring to Alexander the great, references to an Alexander in the midst of other Trojan references, as in XXIII, are no doubt to Paris.

common to both *Brut y Brenhinedd* and to *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig*.¹⁷³ Another poem refers to the feast of Caswallon after his victory over the Romans, and another compares the disasters of the battle of Banbury to the treason of the long knives.¹⁷⁴ Guto also refers directly to the *Brut* in his poem to Rhys ap Siancyn of Glyn Nedd.¹⁷⁵

There are countless references to individual figures, from native literature, other translated literature and from these historical texts. There are also a large number of references to saints and Biblical material, and in general many of Guto's poems have a religious framework of references, certainly to a far greater degree than Gutun Owain.¹⁷⁶ Guto has been seen as generally the superior poet, and his poetry does tend to show greater variety.¹⁷⁷ His familiarity with a wide European literature as well as native Welsh material is evident from the range of references in his works.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless he was a less scholarly poet than Gutun Owain and perhaps less conservative, without Gutun Owain's strong historical mindset. Guto shows as much awareness as Gutun Owain of genealogical material, for example, with direct references to texts such as *Bonedd Gwŷr y Gogledd*.¹⁷⁹ But whereas both are equally concerned with the genealogy and descent of their patrons, it is Gutun Owain who is concerned with the lineage of the Britons as a nation, seeing the more immediate descent of his patrons as a microcosm of the entire history of a people.

¹⁷³ *Guto'r Glyn*, LXXVIII.17–24 (ed. Williams, p. 205); *Breudwyt Maxen Wledig*, ed. by B. F. Roberts, Medieval and Modern Welsh Series 11 (Dublin, 2005), p. 8. For the confusion regarding to which of the latter two Helens the epithet *Lluyddawg* was properly applied, see pp. lxiv–lxvii, lxxxvi–lxxxvii.

¹⁷⁴ *Guto'r Glyn*, L.1–4; LVI.1–12 (ed. Williams, pp. 135; 150).

¹⁷⁵ *Guto'r Glyn*, XCII.45–46 (ed. Williams, p. 241).

¹⁷⁶ For example, *Guto'r Glyn*, XXVII; LXXXVIII (ed. Williams, pp. 73–75; 230–32).

¹⁷⁷ Caerwyn Williams, 'Gutun Owain', pp. 247–51.

¹⁷⁸ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Guto'r Glyn', in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282–c.1550*, ed. by A. O. H. Jarman and G. R. Hughes (second edition, Cardiff, 1997), pp. 197–221. For a survey of the religious aspects of Guto's works, which reveals a comparable engagement with both local saints' cults and broader European devotional trends, see K. Olson, 'Late Medieval Christianity, Saints' Cults and Popular Devotional Trends: Guto'r Glyn and Fifteenth-Century Religious Culture in Britain and Europe', in *Gwalch Cywyddau Gwŷr: Essays on Guto'r Glyn and Fifteenth-Century Wales*, ed. by B. Lewis (Aberystwyth, 2013), pp. 327–74.

¹⁷⁹ *Guto'r Glyn*, LXXXII.61–62 (ed. Williams, p. 218).

Guto's patrons are to be found in every corner of Wales, and include prominent families such as the Earls of Pembroke. In North-East Wales, the pattern accords well with that of Gutun Owain and previous poets, with the families of Pilstwn, Hanmer and Eutun evident, along with the Edwardses of Chirk and the Cyffins.¹⁸⁰ Although the family of Trefor are also evident, they are not as prominent as patrons of Guto as they are of Gutun Owain, perhaps because of the more historical nature of Gutun Owain's verse. This would accord with the tendency for Gutun Owain's poems to them to be of a more historical flavour.

Guto'r Glyn, then, shows a great deal of familiarity with the historical texts which were produced at Valle Crucis, although not to the same extent as his younger contemporary. This is only to be expected given Guto's connections with the monastery and his friendship with Gutun Owain. Guto, or Gruffudd ap Siancyn, may have come originally from the area of Valle Crucis, although Glyn Ceiriog and Glyndyfrdwy are also possibilities.¹⁸¹ His early life may have been spent at Ystrad Marchell, and his connection with Cistercian houses is evident from early on in his career, when he sang to Abbot Rhys of Strata Florida, at some point before 1441.¹⁸² After a varied career which saw him undertake military service in France, he spent his last years at Valle Crucis as a corrodian, where he composed several poems in praise of abbot Dafydd.¹⁸³ Their shared time at the abbey no doubt saw Gutun Owain and

¹⁸⁰ *Guto'r Glyn*: Pilstwn XXIII, LXII (ed. Williams, pp. 62–64, 166–67); Hanmer LXIII (ed. Williams, pp. 168–69); Eutun LXXXI (ed. Williams, pp. 213–15); Edwards XVI, XVII, CV (ed. Williams, pp. 44–48, 270–72); Cyffin XL, LXX, LXXIII, LXXXVI, XCIV, XCV, XCVI, XCVII, XCVIII, CXI (ed. Williams, pp. 106–8, 186–88, 194–96, 225–26, 245–58, 285–86); Trefor XVIII (ed. Williams, pp. 49–51).

¹⁸¹ For Glyndyfrdwy, see Barry Lewis, notes to poem 20, 'Ymryson Guto'r Glyn a Hywel Dafydd yn llys Syr Wiliam Herbert', www.gutorglyn.net (last accessed 23/9/2013).

¹⁸² *Guto'r Glyn*, ed. Williams, p. 321.

¹⁸³ D. Bowen, 'Guto'r Glyn a Glyn-y-Groes', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* XX (1995), 149–83; *Guto'r Glyn*, CXII, CXIII, CXIV, CXV, CXVI, CXVII, CXX (ed. Williams, pp. 287–302, 308–9).

Guto'r Glyn become friends, as when Guto died Gutun Owain composed a *marwnad* to him.¹⁸⁴

The close relationship by the fifteenth century between the intellectual life of Valle Crucis and that of the lay gentry of the surrounding area is exemplified in particular by the career of Gutun Owain. His poetry and scribal work fit the pattern of influences envisioned at the start of this chapter, in his close relationship with the abbots, his active role in historical writing connected with the abbey, and the way in which these historical texts influence his poetry, itself indicative of his links of patronage with leading families of the area. It has been said that he 'provides a lens through which we can study the social and cultural milieu of northeast Wales in the second half of the fifteenth century', and his dealings with the Welsh Historical Continuum have wider implications in that they are indicative of the key role of this area and its *uchelwyr* and monasteries in the development and reception of this historical material.¹⁸⁵

Whilst the uncertainty of ascribing the production of manuscripts to particular monasteries in Wales has been emphasised, and still more the gap between having a manuscript associated with a monastery and seeing the translation itself as having been undertaken there, nevertheless north-east Wales has emerged as an enormously important area for the translation of Geoffrey and its development into a Welsh Historical Continuum. The abbey of Valle Crucis does seem to have played a central role in this process in the same way that it assumed a central role in post-conquest society in Powys Fadog. The thirteenth-century manuscripts may indicate that translation was undertaken at Valle Crucis in that period, but not with absolute certainty, whereas the fourteenth-century manuscripts can be associated with the

¹⁸⁴ *Gutun Owain*, LXIII (ed. Bachellery, pp. 323–27).

¹⁸⁵ Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 160.

monastery with greater certainty and indicate considerable historiographical activity at the abbey as well as the presence of a wide-ranging historical library there.

It is in this century that we find considerable evidence for enthusiastic involvement with the abbey on the part of the *uchelwyr* of its hinterland, and it is likely that they benefitted from the vernacular historical work undertaken there. This is particularly true of its patrons, the lords of Glyndyfrdwy, whose involvement with this material becomes particularly apparent in the time of Owain Glyndŵr. Gruffudd Llwyd's use of the themes of this history in praise of Owain foreshadows, in its indication of an active involvement with these texts on the part of both patron and poet, developments in the fifteenth century.

In the fifteenth century there is considerable evidence for a strong bond between patron and poet in the reading of such historical texts, as well as continued evidence that historical undertakings at Valle Crucis fed this appetite. The interest of a patron in this material is evident for example in Guto'r Glyn's praise of Rhys ap Siancyn of Glyn Nedd, where he lists the interest of his patron in *brud*, *cronigl*, *buchedd seintiau*, and *bonedd Owain Gwynedd*, before describing their mutual interests,

Dwyn ar fyfyrdod ein dau

Drioedd ac ystorïau.¹⁸⁶

Similar mutual reading and discussion, in this case of *Ystoriau Brutus o Dro*, is apparent in Lewys Glyn Cothi's praise of Llywelyn and Henri, sons of Gwilym.¹⁸⁷

There is a clear didactic role for the poet in some of these cases, particularly clear in

¹⁸⁶ 'prophecy', 'chronicles', 'saints' lives', 'the lineage of Owain Gwynedd', 'We both consider the Triads and the histories', *Guto'r Glyn* XCII.47–48 (ed. Williams, p. 241).

¹⁸⁷ *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, ed. by Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff, 1995), 51.17–22 (p. 121).

Lewys' praise of Wiliam Siôn.¹⁸⁸ The poets themselves therefore assumed the role of teachers, relaying learning which included Galfridian history to their patrons, who belonged to a class who were becoming more involved in administration and also more literate.¹⁸⁹ That they could assume this role without the necessity of learning Latin was largely due to the work of translation undertaken at monastic houses.¹⁹⁰ Poets and monasteries and, as becomes increasingly apparent in the fifteenth century, a combination of both, reacted to and formed the cultural interests of these *uchelwyr*.

In Gutun Owain's case, his scribal activities also came together with the interests of his patrons, in that he copied Siôn Trefor's translations of the Latin *vita* of St Martin and of *Llyfr Disgrifiadau Arfau*.¹⁹¹ It has been suggested that Jesus College MS 141, a heavily condensed version of the Welsh Historical Continuum with the addition of other material, may have been created for practical use as a guide to this history either for Gutun Owain himself or for a patron of his.¹⁹² If the latter is the case, then the Trefor family, with their clear interest in such material, would be likely candidates, and their links with Valle Crucis again indicate the means by which historical interests of the abbey, of lay patrons and of the poets intersected.

The relationship between the texts of Jesus 141 and manuscripts available at Valle Crucis suggests that Gutun Owain may have compiled the manuscript, or the one on which it is based, there.¹⁹³ This means that the inclusion in this manuscript of a Welsh translation of the first part of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, entitled *Disgrifiad a Gosodiad Ynys Prydain*, could be seen as evidence for the continued

¹⁸⁸ Lewys Glyn Cothi, 58 (ed. Johnston, pp. 135–36).

¹⁸⁹ A. T. E. Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and his Orbit', p. 163; Roberts, *Brut Tysilio*, p. 16–18.

¹⁹⁰ For Gutun Owain's ignorance of Latin see *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, ed. Williams and Jones, p. xlvii.

¹⁹¹ Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 167; E. Roberts, *Y Beirdd a'u Noddwyr ym Maelor: Darlith Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Wrecsham a'r Cylch, 1977* (Wexham, 1978), p. 13.

¹⁹² Roberts, *Brut Tysilio*, p. 17.

¹⁹³ For this textual relationship, see above, pp. 50–51.

existence of an impressive historical collection at the abbey.¹⁹⁴ The continued interest of its abbots in maintaining such a collection is evinced by Guto'r Glyn's poem to Trahaearn ab Ieuan ap Meurig of Caerleon requesting that he loan his copy of a History of the quest for the Holy Grail to Abbot Dafydd of Valle Crucis.¹⁹⁵ This is likely to have been in reference to the Welsh translation, *Ystoryaeu Seint Greal*.¹⁹⁶

CONCLUSION

The enthusiastic involvement with the abbey on the part of the lay gentry in the fourteenth century has been seen as in some ways a reaction to the Edwardian conquest. This has been cast as a parallel development to the interest shown in vernacular historical writing in that period, and although this drew on older developments which will be explored in more detail in the last chapter, this historical re-evaluation has been seen as part of the same redefinition and retrenchment of native Welsh culture during the post-conquest years which saw the production of the Hendregadredd manuscript and the creation of the bardic grammars, offering the bardic order an opportunity for redefinition and a renewal of the philosophical justification for their art whilst at the same time reaffirming its ties to ancient tradition.¹⁹⁷ The Welsh Historical Continuum offered a secure foundation for understanding the history of a conquered nation, also provided the opportunity for a redefinition of political concerns and historical grievances in response to

¹⁹⁴ Roberts, *Brut Tysilio*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁹⁵ *Guto'r Glyn*, CXVIII (ed. Williams, pp. 303–4).

¹⁹⁶ Fulton, 'Literature of the Welsh Gentry', p. 219; *Ystoryaeu Seint Greal. Rhan 1: y Keis*, ed. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1992); C. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Manuscripts and Monasteries', in *Monastic Wales: New Approaches*, ed. by J. Burton and K. Stöber (Cardiff, 2013), pp. 209–27 (pp. 220–21).

¹⁹⁷ Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 156–59.

contemporary developments. This much is clear from the poetry of Gruffudd Llwyd, as well as the general use of this material during the Glyndŵr revolt.

The poets and their patrons were men who had ties with Valle Crucis, and the work of translation and codification of historical texts undertaken there would serve to help these men understand their origins and their status as heirs to the Trojans, as well as the latest part of a sequence of leadership over the Welsh, from kings to princes to nobles. In the wake of the Glyndŵr revolt, the importance of this history changed along with the political ambitions of its exponents. The search was now for a man who could ensure the success of the Welsh within the English state, who came to assume the role of the *mab darogan*.¹⁹⁸ These histories, particularly elements of Galfridian prophecy which could be found in the *Bruts*, were widely used in the tradition of the prophetic *Cywyddau Brud*.¹⁹⁹

Again, it is Gutun Owain who provides an excellent exemplification of the process by which this history was adapted to changed political circumstances. In the wake of the event which many in Wales saw as a fulfilment of the prophesied re-assertion of British control over the island, the victory of Henry Tudor, Gutun Owain was appointed as part of a royal commission into Owain Tudor's ancestry, to prove Henry's descent from British kings.²⁰⁰ Another member of the eight-man panel was, appropriately enough, Abbot Dafydd ab Ieuan of Valle Crucis, and it seems that the main work of transcription was Gutun Owain's.²⁰¹ The history which, during the time

¹⁹⁸ G. Williams, 'Prophecy, Poetry and Politics in Medieval and Tudor Wales', in *British Government and Administration*, ed. by H. Reader and H. Loyn (Cardiff, 1974), pp. 104–16.

¹⁹⁹ Roberts, *Brut Tysilio*, p. 16. For the intimate connection between history, *brut*, and prophecy, *brud* (the differentiation being a Modern Welsh one), see Jerry Hunter, *Soffestri'r Saeson: Hanesyddiaeth a Humaniaeth yn Oes y Tuduriaid* (Cardiff, 2000), especially pp. 22, 78–107.

²⁰⁰ D. Powel, *The Historie of Cambria Now Called Wales* (London, 1584), p. 391; S. Anglo, 'The British History in Early Tudor Propaganda', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 54 (1961–1962), 17–48.

²⁰¹ Anglo, 'Early Tudor Propaganda', 47. Anglo's contention that this manuscript is unlikely to be the work of a royal commission (24–25) seems based more on a willingness to play down the importance of British descent to Henry Tudor rather than on any textual concerns.

of Glyndŵr, formed the ideological basis for an attempt to create an independent Welsh state, had by this point morphed into a prop supporting the English crown, albeit under the influence of a man of Welsh descent.²⁰² That it did this indicates the changed priorities of the *uchelwyr* who formed such an important element in its translation and popularisation and who were now finding advancement within the English state.

The continued activity of poets and *uchelwyr* in the fifteenth century to promote, articulate and define Welsh culture, especially through the grammars, has been seen as a reaction to a process of Anglicisation which was paradoxically the means by which these men acquired status and position.²⁰³ A similar interpretation could be applied to these historical texts, and their continuing popularity into the sixteenth century taken as a measure of their continuing relevance to Welsh identity. The broadening interests of these *uchelwyr* of the later fifteenth century went beyond historical learning to include the astrological, religious and medical texts which came into Wales as the vanguard of the Renaissance. Morfydd Owen has argued that such tendencies, and the ideal of the gentleman scholar, reflect contemporary fashions in England and the Tudor court, suggesting that Valle Crucis or a similar church had an important role in the process of transmitting these texts and ideas.²⁰⁴ Ironically, these Renaissance ideals led to the sidelining and ultimately the discrediting of Geoffrey's history as a reliable historical source, and to the undermining of the *British History* which was such a formative influence on these men.²⁰⁵

²⁰² The argument that the 'British History' and Welsh identity were of minor importance to the Tudors detracts little from the importance of these factors within Wales. Anglo, 'Early Tudor Propaganda', 20.

²⁰³ Matonis, 'Gutun Owain and His Orbit', 168.

²⁰⁴ Owen, 'Prolegomena', pp. 352, 374.

²⁰⁵ A. O. H. Jarman, 'Y Ddadl Ynghylch Sieffre o Fynwy', *Llên Cymru* 2 (1952), 1–18; B. F. Roberts, 'Ymagweddu at *Brut y Brenhinedd* Hyd 1890', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 122–38; C. Davies, 'Syr John Prise ac Amddiffyn Hanes Prydain', *Y Traethodydd* 158 (2003), 164–85. See also the conclusion, pp. 394–399.

Regardless, it would seem that the continued interest shown in this historical material drew substantially on the traditions of the area on which this chapter has focussed.²⁰⁶ Men such as Gruffudd Hiraethog, Elis Gruffudd, Hywel ap Syr Mathew, Syr Thomas ab Ieuan ap Deicws, and Roger Morys ensured the continued popularity of this material, particularly the condensed version known as *Brut Tysilio*. It is especially appropriate that this version is likely to have been the work of Gutun Owain.²⁰⁷ He encapsulates the three-way exchange between the historiographical activities of the monks at Valle Crucis, the native gentry of the surrounding area and the bards who praised them, a process which nevertheless went on throughout this period and where influence was felt in every direction.

²⁰⁶ Roberts, *Beirdd a'u Noddwyr*, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ Roberts, *Brut Tysilio*, pp. 19–20.

CHAPTER 3

THE BROADER EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The creation of a continuous history of the Welsh in the vernacular has been outlined above, and it has become apparent that it was first achieved in the early fourteenth century. Given the central importance of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, translated from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De Gestis Britonum*, this chapter will ask to what extent this influential history inspired similar attempts at expansion into a continuous history in other European vernaculars. This will serve to contextualise the Welsh Historical Continuum in terms of its uniqueness or otherwise in a European dimension. It has already been demonstrated that Geoffrey's British history was often prefaced with Trojan history in Latin manuscripts, though cases where the work was continued with the addition of a chronicle such as the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* appear to be far rarer. Attention will here be given to examples of historical works which expand Geoffrey's British history in ways comparable to the Welsh texts in three other vernacular languages: Anglo-Norman French, Middle English, and Icelandic. The earliest translations of *De Gestis Britonum* into the vernacular were into Anglo-Norman French, and the Middle English texts are in many ways a further development of this process, most of them being translated from the French texts rather than from Geoffrey's Latin original. It will become apparent that they share many characteristics, particularly the difficulty posed by continuing what is essentially a history of the Britons after the Britons' loss of sovereignty to the Saxons. The Icelandic texts, on the other hand, being translated directly from Latin versions of Dares Phrygius and Geoffrey, are in some ways similar to the Welsh translations although their relative importance to the history of their country is very different.

ANGLO-NORMAN FRENCH

The adaptation of Geoffrey's work into Anglo-Norman French began almost as soon as the work was completed. Indeed, it may even be the case that this translation used Geoffrey's source material, or at least a work which represented an earlier stage in the development of *De Gestis Britonum*, whether of Geoffrey's authorship or not. The scope for assessing what exactly were the sources of this earliest vernacular version of the British history is limited since the work is lost, Wace's slightly later translation having displaced the earlier history due to its greater popularity. This lost poem was the work of Geffrei Gaimar and preceded his surviving *Estoire des Engleis*, a history of the English from the arrival of Cerdic, founder of the Wessex dynasty, to the death of William II in 1100, based largely on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.¹ The earlier portion is known only from the preface and epilogue to the existing poem. In the prologue, Gaimar states that the previous volume included the accession of Constantine to the throne after Arthur's death, although whether this was the end-point of the narrative is unknown. However, it is likely that the earlier work ended soon after Arthur's death, in view of the fact that the narrative of *Estoire des Engleis* begins with the landing of Cerdic and the subsequent portions make virtually no mention of Geoffrey's account of the sixth and seventh centuries, as well as Gaimar's preference for continuity in his narrative, which will be discussed in more detail below.

It is the epilogue which contains the most detailed information regarding the preceding work. In it Gaimar mentions four written sources, two of which must have been used in the composition of the earlier part of the poem.² According to the epilogue Robert of Gloucester, one of those to whom Geoffrey dedicated his history,

¹ *Geffrei Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis- History of the English*, ed. by I. Short (Oxford, 2009), p. ix.

² *Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 6435–6532 (ed. Short, pp. 348–52).

had a translation made of books belonging to the Welsh concerning British kings, which Gaimar then obtained through his patron, lady Constance. For his narrative he used both this book and another, *le bon livre dē Oxeford*, the good book of Oxford, that belonged to Archdeacon Walter, who Geoffrey again mentions as having provided him with the ancient British book he claims to have translated. This second book, says Gaimar, contained supplementary material not present in Robert of Gloucester's translation. Ian Short has suggested that these references may be to works which represented an earlier stage in the development of *De Gestis Britonum*, one or both of which may not have been of Geoffrey of Monmouth's authorship.³ His argument is bolstered by the date of Gaimar's writing, between 1136 and 1137, whereas Geoffrey of Monmouth is only known to have completed his History by 1139, when Henry of Huntingdon was introduced to the work in the library at Bec.⁴ It is unlikely that either of these books was a version of the 'First Variant' text of *De Gestis Britonum* given the date at which Gaimar was writing.⁵

Had the first part of Gaimar's poem survived the sources it used could be identified. It may have drawn directly on some of Geoffrey's unknown sources without *De Gestis Britonum* as an intermediary. If this were true it would mean that the translation into the vernacular of this material dealing with the history of the Britons was not necessarily dependent on the popularity of Geoffrey's work, and raises the question of whether the enthusiasm with which *De Gestis Britonum* was received indicates the popularity of Geoffrey's work per se or rather an appetite for

³ I. Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 323–43.

⁴ N. Wright, 'The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the Text-History of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*: a Preliminary Investigation', in *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. by G. Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 71–113; *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568*, ed. by N. Wright (Cambridge, 1984), p. xii.

⁵ *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth II: The First Variant Version. A Critical Edition*, ed. by Neil Wright (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. xvi, lxx.

such material regardless of its author. This earlier stage in the development of Geoffrey's history may have been lost for similar reasons to the loss of the relevant section of Gaimar, the greater popularity of a later work which eclipsed it: *De Gestis Britonum* in the one case, Wace's *Roman de Brut* in the other.

This line of argument should, however, be tempered with reference to Gaimar's peculiarly English outlook as an historian. Gaimar's sympathies in his work are indicative of his location within the Danelaw, his interest in Danish history apparent from his inclusion of the story of Haveloc as well as his generally positive treatment of the Danes.⁶ His sympathy with the English over the Normans is apparent in the later part of his work, and it has been noted that he treats the Norman Conquest,

as little more than a legitimate change of dynasty, effected with minimum disruption, certainly not as a military, social and cultural cataclysm. The violence is reduced to a minimum ... Gaimar presents the outcome more as a union than as a conquest.⁷

This smoothing of historical turning points into occurrences in a continuous narrative is a product of Gaimar's attempt to write this history of the English as a complete work. By lessening the impact of the Norman conquest he increases the relevance of the preceding history to the England of his day. It may be that similar motives led him to end his dependence on Geoffrey or his material with the death of Arthur.

It is an intriguing question as to why Gaimar chose to start his historical narrative with the history of the Britons, indeed their prehistory, the Trojan War, since

⁶ *Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis*, ed. Short, pp. xliii–xliv.

⁷ *Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis*, ed. Short, p. xliv.

he notes that his history began with Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece.⁸ There was certainly no need to, considering that earlier Anglo-Saxon narratives had seen fit to begin their story with the invasions of either the Romans or the English.⁹ Other twelfth-century historians, such as William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, and Henry of Huntingdon, began their accounts where Bede did or saw themselves as heirs to the Bedan historiographical tradition.¹⁰ Gaimar's use of pre-English history is perhaps an attempt to justify the turbulence of the Norman conquest and the situation in his own day by emphasising the continuity of the history of the kingdom which the English could call their own, despite the culture of the kingdom's aristocracy. Indeed, Gaimar's poem exemplifies an attempt to bring both the English and the Normans into a continuous and seamless history of the land they occupy, minimising the disruptions of the past in the process.

Despite the fact that Gaimar's poems, had they both survived, would provide the earliest example of combining the British history (a term used here to reflect the uncertain nature of his source material) with later history in an attempt to create a continuous narrative of the island's history almost to the author's own time, the fact the earlier portion has not survived limits what can be said about it. The reason for its loss was the popularity of Wace's translation of Geoffrey's *De Gestis Britonum*, the *Roman de Brut* or *Geste des Bretuns*. Born in Jersey, Wace completed the poem in

⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 6528–6532 (ed. Short, p. 352).

⁹ Notable examples of the former include Bede and most versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, whilst the idea that the Anglo-Saxon invasions were the starting-point of English history is seen in the Brunanburh poem. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969); *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS A*, ed. by J. M. Bately, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 3* (Cambridge, 1986); *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS B*, ed. by S. Taylor, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 4* (Cambridge, 1983); *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS C*, ed. by K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 5* (Cambridge, 2001); *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS E*, ed. by S. Irvine, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 7* (Cambridge, 2004); *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. by A. Campbell (London, 1938), ll. 65–73 (pp. 94–95).

¹⁰ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England i: c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), pp. 150–55, 169, 198.

Caen in 1155, the year Geoffrey of Monmouth died, and though the work is significantly longer than Geoffrey's history it substantially represents a translation of the First Variant version of *De Gestis Britonum* for the most part, with the Vulgate version being used from about half-way through.¹¹

The narrative begins and ends in the same place as Geoffrey. The *Brut* is however associated with other texts which extend its narrative. In four medieval manuscripts of *Estoire des Engleis* Gaimar's work is preceded by Wace's *Brut*, illustrating how the later poem displaced Gaimar's earlier translation.¹² Another significant association is with three other verse works, the *Roman d'Eneas*, based on Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, a narrative of the Trojan war based on Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis,¹³ and the *Roman de Thèbes*, narrating the Theban cycle. There are two medieval manuscripts which contain the *Roman de Troie*, the *Roman d'Eneas* and Wace's *Brut*, as well as two with just the *Eneas* and the *Brut*.¹⁴

Michael Zink has interpreted links between Wace's *Brut*, the *Roman d'Eneas* and *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* as evidence that the three texts were viewed as a continuous history, though Laura Ashe adds the caveat that 'to state that a body of texts were received as continuous is not to state that they were conceived as such'.¹⁵ The strength of the association between these various texts does not appear to be as

¹¹ *Wace's Roman de Brut: a History of the British*, ed. by J. Weiss (Exeter, 1999). For Wace, see C. Foulon, 'Wace', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: a Collaborative History*, ed. by R. S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959), pp. 94–103; F. Le Saux, 'Wace's *Roman de Brut*', in *The Arthur of the English: the Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. by W. R. J. Barron, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, 2 (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 18–22; J. Marvin, 'The English *Brut* Tradition', in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. by H. Fulton, *Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture* 58 (Oxford, 2009), pp. 221–34 (223–8).

¹² Foulon, 'Wace', p. 94.

¹³ P. Eley, 'The Myth of Trojan Descent and Perceptions of National Identity: the Case of *Eneas* and the *Roman de Troie*', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 35 (1991), 27–40 (29).

¹⁴ L. Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 124–8; Eley, 'Myth of Trojan Descent', 30.

¹⁵ M. Zinck, 'Une Mutation de la conscience littéraire', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 24 (1981), 3–27 (12–13); Ashe, *Fiction and History in England*, p. 126.

strong as between the Welsh historical works, but nevertheless suggests that Wace's poem was seen as a history which could potentially be added to at both start and finish in order to provide a more complete history.

The question which then arises is: a complete history of what? The myth of Trojan descent was not exclusive to the Welsh, being shared most significantly by the French and the Normans. The context of Wace's translation, and the works with which it became associated, is therefore relevant, since the work was commissioned by Henry II, a king who can be said to have ruled over the three peoples mentioned above. It has been argued that the promotion of a Trojan myth of origin for both the Normans and the Britons at Henry's court was a means of justifying the king's rule over both.¹⁶ These translations would have made these histories accessible to a wider public than the Latin-reading *literati*.

The lost work of Gaimar represents an attempt to use the British history as the preface to a narrative of the history of the English, and Wace's translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, taking the place of Gaimar's earlier narrative in four manuscripts, was used similarly. Furthermore, Wace's work is associated with vernacular narratives of the classical past, along with material relating to the history of a people claiming Trojan ancestry alongside the Britons. The impulse to both extend Geoffrey's narrative with reference to the classical past, and to bring the story down to the present day, was a feature of the earliest vernacular adaptations of *De Gestis Britonum*. Present also is the tendency towards ethnic history, the history of a particular people, which is a feature of the Welsh translations, as well as its extension to include other peoples who saw their origins in the Trojan war.

¹⁶ Eley, 'Myth of Trojan Descent', 29.

Laura Ashe sees in Wace's work a move away from the ethnic history of Geoffrey and towards a history of the land itself which, termed *Engleterre*, itself foretells the dominance of the English.¹⁷ In terms of English historiography this move towards thinking of history in geographical or institutional terms could be seen as a product of the Norman conquest, which had created a situation where ethnicity was no longer synonymous with polity.¹⁸ Some movement towards an institutional rather than an ethnic conception of the kingdom in the twelfth century is suggested by a change in the royal style of English kings in their charters, from *rex Anglorum* to *rex Anglie*.¹⁹ With this conception of political authority, the history of the land or the kingdom can be seen as a continuous one despite changes in ethnic dominance. But the attempt to tie Geoffrey's story to the later history of the English kingdoms presented its own particular problems. That Gaimar may have ended his dependence on British, rather than Anglo-Saxon, material with the death of Arthur has already been suggested, and using the British history in this way did indeed present the problem of how to join a history of the Britons' rule over the island, a history which had a definite end-point with the death of Cadwaladr and the Britons' loss of sovereignty, to the history of the English kingdom. This English kingdom was widely known to trace its ethnic origins to the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the early middle ages, and this fact remained even if the monarchy was cast as the same as that which Brutus founded.

¹⁷ Ashe, *Fiction and History in England*, pp. 59–64.

¹⁸ Although it should be noted that the same could be argued for the earlier eleventh-century Danish conquest, for which see M. K. Lawson, *Cnut: the Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (Harlow, 1993).

¹⁹ This usage only became standard during the reign of John, but the term *rex Anglie* was used increasingly from the time of Henry II. R. L. Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History*, ed. by A. L. Poole (Oxford, 1934), pp. 305–6; N. Vincent, 'Regional Variations in the Charters of King Henry II', in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by M. T. Flanagan and J. A. Green (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 70–106 (p. 76).

MIDDLE ENGLISH

The problem of the passage of dominion, as it is termed by Leckie, which arose when Geoffrey's history was joined onto an English historical narrative, will be discussed in more detail below.²⁰ Consideration must now be given to the work of Lazamon, the first to produce a Middle English narrative based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative. Lazamon's *Brut* was not translated directly from Geoffrey's Latin, however, being translated rather from Wace's Anglo-Norman French *Brut*. A noticeable feature of the Middle English vernacular versions of the Galfridian narrative is their dependence on Anglo-Norman French translations, a feature which underlines the fact that the Anglo-Norman French poems are just as much a part of the English reception of Geoffrey's narrative as the later Middle English adaptations. Indeed, it was this Anglo-Norman tradition which produced some of the earliest works of French literature.²¹ The French translations, particularly Gaimar's, were produced for an aristocracy with roots in both France and England, and the English adaptations signify both the embracing of this English-continental tradition by writers of English as well as a greater appreciation of the English language by the gentry.²²

Lazamon's translation is somewhat isolated, however, its early date marking it apart from other Middle English translations. Composed sometime between 1185 and 1216, the *Brut* is earlier than most of the other translations by up to a century, though its influence on them was slight.²³ In addition to the obvious linguistic difference, Lazamon's poem differs from his source material in a number of important respects.

²⁰ For the term, see R. William Leckie, Jr, *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1981), and below, pp. 158–64.

²¹ I. Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 14 (1991), 229–49.

²² Marvin, 'English *Brut* Tradition', pp. 223–5

²³ For a detailed discussion of arguments concerning the poem's date, which comes to a conclusion of 'between 1185 and 1216', see Françoise Le Saux, *Lazamon's Brut: the Poem and its Sources* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1–10; J. I. McNelis III, 'Lazamon as *Auctor*', in *The Text and Tradition of Lazamon's Brut*, ed. by F. Le Saux (London, 1994), pp. 253–69.

His verse can be seen in many ways to echo the conventions of Old English poetry, resulting in a more archaic, heroic tone which changes the chivalric character of Wace's heroes.²⁴

Perhaps the most significant change is Lazamon's greater sympathy for the Britons. Whereas Wace indicates that the degenerate state of the Welsh precluded them from ever ruling again over England, Lazamon makes it clear that the prophesied resurgence of the Britons is to be expected, in verse reminiscent of the Welsh prophetic tradition.²⁵ Lazamon also makes clear his respect for the laws and customs of the Welsh, which he sees as derived from those of the Britons.²⁶ It has been postulated that Lazamon's attitude derives in part from his background, since he lived at Areley on the Severn, and it has been argued that he depended on Welsh acquaintances for oral source-material.²⁷

His respect for the Britons is paralleled by a disdain for their enemies, the Saxons, a puzzling position given Lazamon's English heritage.²⁸ Indeed, there is an ambiguity in Lazamon's attitude which exposes the difficulty posed by treating a history of the Britons and therefore, by extension, the Welsh, as a history relevant to the English nation. James Noble and Françoise Le Saux have argued that there is a distinction in Lazamon's work between the Saxons who Arthur fights and who are expelled during his reign, and the Germanic settlers who arrive in the wake of

²⁴ F. Le Saux, 'Lazamon's *Brut*', in *The Arthur of the English: the Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. by W. R. J. Barron, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, 2 (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 22–32 (p. 23).

²⁵ *Wace's Roman de Brut*, ll. 14845–14854 (ed. Weiss, p. 372); Lazamon, *Brut or Historia Brutonum*, ed. and trans. by W. R. J. Barron and S. C. Weinberg (Bath, 1995), ll. 16018–16029 (p. 822), quoted in Le Saux, 'Lazamon's *Brut*', pp. 28–9.

²⁶ Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 16088–16090 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, p. 824), quoted in Le Saux, 'Lazamon's *Brut*', pp. 29–30.

²⁷ Le Saux, *Lazamon's Brut: the Poem and its Sources*, pp. 118–54.

²⁸ Perhaps most clearly seen in his reference to Hengest as *þe leod-swike*, meaning 'archtraitor' or 'betrayed of nations', and in his identification with the Britons against the Saxons in battle scenes. Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 7590, 9755–9765 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, pp. 390–91, 502–3); E. G. Stanley, 'Lazamon's Antiquarian Sentiments', *Medium Ævum* 38 (1969), 23–37 (34).

Gormund's invasion, with Lazamon sympathising with the latter.²⁹ Although this reduces the seeming contradiction of Lazamon's negative portrayal of the Arthurian Saxons, considerable ambiguity remains in terms of his sympathies. For example, despite his acknowledgement of the Britons' coming deliverance, he nevertheless casts Arthur's return as being of benefit to the people of England (my italics),

Bruttes ileueð zete	þat he bon on liue,
and wunnien in Aualun	mid fairest alre aluen;
and lokieð euere Bruttes zete	whan Arður cumen liðe.
...	
Bute while wes an witeze	Mærlin ihate;
he bodede mid worde	—his quiðes weoren soðe—
þat an Arður sculde zete	cum <i>Anglen</i> to fulste. ³⁰

The difficulty implicit in this passage, which contradicts Arthur's explicit statement just earlier that he will return to dwell with *mine Bruttes*,³¹ reflects a difficulty which is present throughout the work.³² Whilst Le Saux notes that the cultural boundaries between Britons and English become blurred towards the end of the poem and claims that Lazamon's appropriation of the Brittonic past goes a long way towards explaining his ambivalence, Lazamon's preservation of Geoffrey's

²⁹ Le Saux, *Lazamon's Brut: the Poem and its Sources*, pp. 174–75; J. Noble, 'Lazamon's "Ambivalence" Reconsidered', in *The Text and Tradition of Lazamon's Brut*, ed. by F. Le Saux (London, 1994), pp. 171–82 (181).

³⁰ 'The Britons yet believe that he is alive, and dwells in Avalon with the fairest of all fairy women; and the Britons still await the time when Arthur will come again ... But there was once a seer called Merlin who prophesied — his sayings were true — that an Arthur should come again to aid the people of *England*.' Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 14290–14292, 14295–14297 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, pp. 732–33); Le Saux, 'Lazamon's *Brut*', p. 30.

³¹ 'my Britons', Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 14272–14282 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, pp. 732–33).

³² D. Donoghue, 'Lazamon's Ambivalence', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 537–63 (554–63).

narrative, particularly its final passages dealing with the Saxon takeover and the Britons' confinement to Wales, means that any such appropriation remains imperfect.³³ The history of the island from Brutus' settlement cannot be appropriated by the English as long as it remains clear that the Britons survive, dispossessed but waiting for the return of heroes who will restore them to sovereignty.

Lazamon retained the narrative structure he found in Wace and Geoffrey without continuing the narrative down to his own time, though he made some attempt to link the British history with the English of his own day.³⁴ Though a comprehensive and accomplished work, the impact of Lazamon's *Brut* on later Middle English works of a similar nature was limited. The next writer to compose an English version of Geoffrey's narrative, Robert of Gloucester, continued the history down to his own day. It is apparent that in the later, post-Galfridian sections of his work Robert used Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury's histories, and his knowledge of Latin would therefore suggest that *De Gestis Britonum* was his source for the earlier part, which follows Geoffrey's narrative fairly closely. Knowledge of post-Geoffrey developments is however apparent, for example in the mention of Arthur's round table.³⁵ Much work remains to be done on the question of Robert's sources, although it appears that most of them were in Latin, a fact which underlines the point that later English developments of this history rely on Latin or Anglo-Norman French texts to a greater degree than they rely on Lazamon.³⁶

³³ Le Saux, 'Lazamon's *Brut*', p. 30 and n. 55.

³⁴ An example which encapsulates the poem's ambiguity is at the beginning of the poem, where Lazamon says he will relate the noble origins of the English. Lazamon, *Brut*, ll. 6–10 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, pp. 2–3). For the possibility that Lazamon knew *De Gestis Britonum* at first hand, see Le Saux, *Lazamon's Brut: the Poem and its Sources*, pp. 94–117.

³⁵ *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. by W. A. Wright (2 vols., London, 1887), ll. 3880–3882, p. 273.

³⁶ *Robert of Gloucester*, ed. Wright, pp. xiv–xxxii; L. Johnson, 'Metrical Chronicles', in *The Arthur of the English: the Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. by W. R. J. Barron, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, 2 (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 38–46 (41–42, n. 95). The shorter version of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* does, however, contain some material drawn directly

Although uncertainty surrounds the ascription of the *Chronicle* to Robert of Gloucester, the name provides a convenient shorthand for the man who shaped the text which forms the basis for the versions which survive today.³⁷ It was initially composed probably towards the end of the thirteenth century somewhere around Gloucestershire.³⁸ The *Chronicle* represents the first attempt in English to include the history of the Britons as presented by Geoffrey within a longer history of England down to the author's own day, and as such it will prove fruitful to examine the way the author combined his various authorities.

Where Geoffrey provides a narrative, Robert of Gloucester is mostly content to follow it, particularly in the poem's earlier sections. Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* is used for various supplementary details, and as the narrative enters the period of Saxon settlement and expansion Robert comes to depend on Henry of Huntingdon more and more, until with the death of Cadwaladr and the end of Geoffrey's history he becomes Robert's main source, with the addition of William of Malmesbury as soon as the narrative reaches King Alfred.³⁹ The overall pattern of Robert's narrative of British history nevertheless reflects that of Geoffrey of Monmouth in its broader features up until the death of Cadwaladr. The initial expulsion of the Britons from much of England in the time of Gormund, however, sees the establishment of the heptarchy, an innovation not found in Geoffrey though developed somewhat in Wace,⁴⁰ and details on the establishment of Wessex and Northumbria are taken from Henry of Huntingdon, as is the description of St

from Lazamon's *Brut*. Johnson, 'Metrical Chronicles', pp. 280–81, n. 92.

³⁷ This text has complex problems of authorship, in addition to there being different versions. Johnson, 'Metrical Chronicles', n. 92 (pp. 280–1); E. D. Kennedy, *Chronicles and Other Historical Writing*, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500, vol. 8 (Hamden, Connecticut, 1989), pp. 2617–2619.

³⁸ *Robert of Gloucester*, ed. Wright, pp. ix–xiv.

³⁹ *Robert of Gloucester*, ed. Wright, pp. xiv–xix.

⁴⁰ See below, p. 161.

Augustine's mission.⁴¹ A British resurgence is described following the defeat of the Saxons after the battle of Chester, which results in British dominance south of the Humber and sets the scene for the reigns of Cadwan (Cadfan), Cadwal (Cadwallon), and Cadwallad (Cadwaladr), and a return to Geoffrey's narrative.⁴²

The poem shows a willingness to follow the overall structure of Geoffrey's history even in the last chapters of *De Gestis Britonum*, those periods nevertheless being tempered by the author's knowledge of competing historical narratives such as Henry of Huntingdon's, as well as his desire to link the history of the Britons as detailed by Geoffrey with the later history of the English and their monarchy. As a result, the confinement of the Britons to Wales is seen as following the conquests of Godmound (Gormund) rather than the death of Cadwallad, and though the reign of Cadwan sees the restoration of British monarchs over Britain, and the flight of the Saxons *ouer humber uaste*, it is clear that the Britons' primary association is now with Wales.⁴³ This is apparent when Cadwan's rule is said to be over *Soupe Homber & al is owe lond Walis*.⁴⁴ The effect of this is to enable Robert to have the Saxon heptarchy established, including the landing of Cerdik (Cerdic) of Wessex and other details drawn from Henry of Huntingdon, utilising much of Geoffrey of Monmouth's historical framework but minimising the anomaly that keeping the final confinement of the Britons to Wales and Cornwall after the death of Cadwaladr presents. By increasingly confining the Britons to Wales after Gormund's invasion, by association if not in terms of rule, Robert diminishes the importance of Cadwaladr's reign as a

⁴¹ *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 4655–4692 (ed. Wright, pp. 328–31)

⁴² *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 4861–5143 (ed. Wright, pp. 343–74).

⁴³ *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 4633–4654, 4869 (ed. Wright, pp. 327–28, 343).

⁴⁴ The stronger association of the Britons with Wales is also apparent from the reference to Saint David as specifically bishop of Wales, rather than archbishop of Caerleon. *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 4607, 4881 (ed. Wright, pp. 325, 344); *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 255.

turning-point. This is characteristic of his syncretic approach to his sources as well as being symptomatic of English treatment of Geoffrey's history.

This is not to say that Cadwaladr's death is not seen as a significant event: indeed it is then that Britain is renamed England, and the Britons renamed the Welsh.⁴⁵ But the foreshadowing of this event beforehand decreases the scale of the change. Neither should it be thought that the text seeks to minimise the differences between the Britons and the English, or deny the hopes of the Britons to regain the crown of London. Nevertheless Robert also changes this prophecy from the restoration of British rule over the whole island to the reconquest by the Britons of the land between the Thames and the Humber, as far as London, which seems a fairly good approximation of Mercia. Whilst this could be interpreted as a lessening of British ambitions, it perhaps better indicates the pragmatic streak which is apparent in Robert's reconciliation of his sources.⁴⁶

THE PROSE BRUT

There are a number of signs in Robert's work of the inherent difficulty of including Geoffrey's narrative as part of the history of England which becomes increasingly apparent at the point when Geoffrey's history ends and the narrative depends on Anglo-Saxon sources. This is a feature which Robert's *Chronicle* shares with the *Prose Brut*. The general significance of this problematic 'passage of dominion' will be treated more fully below, after the *Prose Brut* has been discussed and compared with the Welsh Historical Continuum.⁴⁷ The *Prose Brut* is the name given to a group of closely-related chronicles composed first in Anglo-Norman French in the late

⁴⁵ *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 5124–5129 (ed. Wright, pp. 372–73).

⁴⁶ *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 5124–5145 (ed. Wright, pp. 372–74). For Robert of Gloucester, see also M. R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100–1300*, (Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 87–94.

⁴⁷ See below, pp. 158–64.

thirteenth century and subsequently translated into both Middle English and Latin. The original version of the French *Prose Brut* was written in the reign of Edward I and originally ended with the death of Henry III in 1272. Most of the manuscripts of this version begin with a preface which relates to the original settlement of Albion by giants, based on the Anglo-Norman French poem *Des Grantz Geanz*. It then largely follows Wace's adaptation of Geoffrey's history, though there is some indication that the author also had first-hand knowledge of Geoffrey's history.⁴⁸ After this, the Anglo-Saxon portion of the narrative is loosely based on Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, and from the turn of the twelfth century to 1272 the main source is a chronicle related to the annals of the Cistercian abbey of Waverley.⁴⁹

This Anglo-Norman French text exists in two major recensions known as the Long and Short Versions, with continuations into the fourteenth century in both versions.⁵⁰ It was subsequently used as the main source for two distinctive Latin translations.⁵¹ The French text was also translated into Middle English sometime during the fourteenth century, probably towards the later end, from the Anglo-Norman Long Version.⁵² There is a considerable degree of interrelation between these various versions of the *Prose Brut*, continuations of different length and detail which supplement the original narrative, as well as the addition of material from independent sources into the many translated and updated versions. It is best therefore to think of

⁴⁸ L. M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: the Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 180 (Tempe, Ariz., 1998), p. 30; J. Marvin, 'Sources and Analogues of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle: New Findings', *Trivium* 36 (2006), 1–31 (2–4).

⁴⁹ Matheson, *Prose Brut: the Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, pp. 1–5, 30–37. The standard edition of the oldest Anglo-Norman French *Brut* is *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle: an Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. by Julia Marvin, Medieval Chronicles, 4 (Woodbridge, 2006). The short version to 1332 in Anglo-Norman French has been edited by Heather Pagan, *Prose Brut to 1332*, Anglo-Norman Text Society 69 (Oxford, 2011). The standard edition of the text of the Middle English *Prose Brut* is still *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, ed. by F. W. D. Brie (2 vols., London, 1906–1908).

⁵⁰ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 30–37.

⁵¹ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 37–47.

⁵² Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 47–48.

the *Prose Brut* as a family of related works, but the general features of the narrative as well as peculiarities of specific versions offer instructive parallels to the Welsh Historical Continuum.⁵³ As will be seen, the status of the *Prose Brut* as a national history as well as its diverse source material means that it shares a large number of similarities with the Welsh texts, similarities which nonetheless make the differences all the more apparent.

It was noted that in Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, emphasis is shifted from a decisive moment at Cadwaladr's death when sovereignty over the island is lost by the Britons to a more gradual passage of dominion from the Britons to the Saxons. In the *Prose Brut* this tendency is taken even further. The confinement of the Britons to Wales, the Saxon takeover of Britain and their renaming of the island and its cities are stated to have occurred at the end of the reign of Certik and the invasion of Gurmund of Africa. Subsequently, Cadwalein son of Cadwan (Cadwallon ap Cadfan: the names are given as in the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut*) recaptures Britain south of the Humber, but his last mention in the narrative is as the overlord of Peanda (Penda of Mercia). Cadwalein is sidelined in the text, with the focus shifting to his Anglo-Saxon successors. The *Prose Brut* seeks to minimise ethnic difference, being reluctant to identify either Cadwalein or Edwin as Briton or Saxon and emphasising instead their relative piety.⁵⁴

It is apparent from this treatment of Cadwalein's reign that the author of the *Prose Brut* was uncomfortable with the details of the Britons' loss of sovereignty as described by Geoffrey. This becomes even clearer later on, when Cadwaladr,

⁵³ W. R. J. Barron, 'Prose Chronicles', in *The Arthur of the English: the Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. by W. R. J. Barron, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages 2 (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 32–38 (33).

⁵⁴ J. Marvin, 'Narrative, Lineage and Succession in the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* Chronicle' in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, ed. by R. Radulescu and E. D. Kennedy (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 205–220 (210–12).

Cadwallon's son, is left out entirely. This deliberate dismissal of the king whose reign closes the narratives of Geoffrey and Wace has been described as 'one of the *Brut's* most surprising features'.⁵⁵ The *Prose Brut* goes further than Robert of Gloucester in minimising the importance of the revival of the power of the Britons before their final fall, but in doing so it is responding to the same tensions which arise from treating Geoffrey's narrative as English history. The episode is also characteristic of the attitude towards dynastic or ethnic upheaval in general in the *Prose Brut*, as exemplified by the section where a lengthy aside draws a line of descent between the eleventh-century king Edmund Ironside and Empress Matilda, mother of King Henry II, bridging the disruption of the Norman Conquest. The just nature of the Norman Conquest is also emphasised in the text.⁵⁶

William Marx describes the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* as reflecting a very Norman view of history, with the Britons' loss of sovereignty being passed over so as not to break the narrative of 'progress and development leading up to the Norman dynasty', a feature which also explains the attitude towards the Norman Conquest.⁵⁷ Given the identification of the Anglo-Norman elite with the English nation by the time of its writing, it is best to eschew the ethnic connotations of the term 'Norman', but Marx's point, that this minimisation of disruption presented an historical progression which led to the contemporary English monarchy, still stands.⁵⁸ But the translation of the work from Anglo-Norman French to Middle English brought with it changes in the text, with one of the most significant being the re-insertion of the

⁵⁵ Marvin, 'Sources and Analogues of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut', 7. As Marvin argues, The decision is likely to have been deliberate, rather than reflecting omissions in the source-material, since the author had access to both Wace and Geoffrey.

⁵⁶ Marvin, 'Narrative, Lineage and Succession in the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut', pp. 212–14.

⁵⁷ C. W. Marx, 'Middle English Manuscripts of the Brut in the National Library of Wales', *Cylchgrawn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/ National Library of Wales Journal* 27 (1991–92), 361–82 (379).

⁵⁸ H. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066–c. 1220* (Oxford, 2003), especially pp. 56–82.

Cadwaladr episode. Present in none of the Anglo-Norman French versions, it occurs in more than half of the Middle English manuscripts of the *Prose Brut*.⁵⁹ This suggests that the smoothing of the transition from Britain to England by the complete omission of Cadwaladr and the Britons' loss of sovereignty was a step too far on the part of the *Prose Brut's* author, his efforts to produce a smooth, single lineage of English history incorporating the Britons, Saxons and Normans having required too great a departure from his sources.⁶⁰ Marx, speculating on the reasons for the re-introduction of the Cadwaladr episode in Middle English versions, suggests that political and propagandistic reasons might be found, such as a growing sense of their descent from British kings on the part of English monarchs, particularly Edward I. He also suggests that it might be indicative of 'a more general sense of history in which the Welsh kings were as prominent and important as those of the English'.⁶¹ It has been noted in the previous chapter that the Edwardian conquest saw attempts to appropriate the British past and reduce its potency as a justification for Welsh resistance.⁶² The conquest of Wales may also have lessened the sense of discomfort which came from treating British history as English history: since the Welsh were now politically assimilated into the English realm, their history could without difficulty be incorporated into that of England. This is a point to which we will return below.

Where the Welsh Historical Continuum opens with *Ystoria Dared*, many manuscripts of the *Prose Brut* open with a text based on the Anglo-Norman French poem *Des Grantz Geanz*.⁶³ This poem was probably written in the early fourteenth

⁵⁹ E. J. Bryan, 'The Afterlife of Armoriche', in *Lazamon: Contexts, Language, and Interpretation*, ed. by R. Allen, L. Perry and J. Roberts (London, 2002), pp. 118–55 (p. 152, n. 47).

⁶⁰ Marvin, 'Narrative, Lineage and Succession in the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut*', pp. 219–20.

⁶¹ Marx, 'Middle English Manuscripts of the *Brut* in the National Library of Wales', 379–80.

⁶² See above, pp. 86–88.

⁶³ *Des Grantz Geanz: an Anglo-Norman Poem*, ed. by G. E. Brereton, *Medium Aevum Monographs* 2

century and explains the origin of the giants who inhabited Britain before the arrival of Brutus.⁶⁴ The poem became appended to the Short Version of the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut*, but as the prologue to the Long Version it was rewritten in prose. It was this prose version which was translated to form a prologue to the Middle English *Prose Brut*.⁶⁵ The story, with considerable variation in detail between the different versions, tells of the expulsion of the daughters of the king of Syria or Greece for killing, or planning to kill, their husbands. Landing in an uninhabited Britain, they are visited by an incubus, who sleeps with them and impregnates them with the giants whose descendants the Trojans encountered.

The significance of this strange narrative has caused some speculation. Julia Marvin argues that the text 'provided an alternate (and disturbing) foundation story for the island, one that foregrounds rather than minimises the killing and displacement of one people by another'.⁶⁶ Margaret Lamont sees the narrative as a response to the use of the Scots foundation myth by fourteenth-century Scots, a deliberate parallel which parodied and lessened the importance of foundation of Scotland by an exotic, eastern woman.⁶⁷ I would however argue that opening the *Prose Brut* with this settlement narrative serves the same purpose as dropping Cadwaladr. The latter minimises the disruption caused by the Anglo-Saxon takeover, and the former serves the same purpose, in that it undermines the status of the Britons as the original founders of Britain in a way that lessens the importance of their fall from power. The Britons themselves displace a population to settle the island, and by foregrounding this process at the start of the narrative, the reduced centrality of such an act later on

(Oxford, 1937).

⁶⁴ M. E. Lamont, 'The "Kynde Bloode of Engeland": Remaking Englishness in the Middle English *Prose Brut*' (PhD, University of California, 2007), p. 74; *Des Grantz Geanz*, ed. Brereton, pp. xxi–xxxiii.

⁶⁵ Lamont, 'Remaking Englishness', pp. 74–75.

⁶⁶ Marvin, 'Narrative, Lineage and Succession', p. 217.

⁶⁷ Lamont, 'Remaking Englishness', pp. 75–81.

becomes understandable. The text's purpose of reducing objections to the establishment of English dominance later on in the *Prose Brut* is also noted by Lamont, who argues that the narrative establishes the centrality of the island as a unified political territory, reducing the importance of the piecemeal, amalgamative Trojan foundation which follows, with its divisions between Cornubia, Cambria, Loegria and Albany.⁶⁸

The existence of a Welsh version of this story is worth noting. Only the sixteenth-century C-version is derived from the *Prose Brut*, but the earliest version of the story, A, is included in a manuscript of the Welsh Historical Continuum, Oxford, Jesus MS 141. It forms part of the *Description of Britain* derived from Ranulph Higden, but the story itself is not derived from the *Polychronicon*.⁶⁹ It is nevertheless characteristic of the additions made by Gutun Owain to his abridged version of the Welsh Historical Continuum in Jesus 141.⁷⁰

Quite separately from this link, the *Prose Brut* as a compilation of texts bears comparison with the Welsh Historical Continuum. The basis of the compilation is a text composed shortly after 1272, a date comparable with that of the compilation of *Brut y Tywysogion* towards the end of the thirteenth century. The *Prose Brut* reflected Wace's adaptation of Geoffrey's history as well as showing knowledge of the original work, and extended this narrative down to the author's own day with the addition of material derived from monastic chronicles. In addition to this lengthening of the narrative to include more recent history, in many versions the work is given a prologue with the addition of *Des Grantz Geanz* in a similar way to the addition of *Ystoria Dared* to the Welsh continuum. The translated nature of the Middle English text might be thought of as another similarity, though the differences here must be

⁶⁸ Lamont, 'Remaking Englishness', pp. 80–81.

⁶⁹ B. F. Roberts, 'Ystori'r Llong Foel', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 18 (1960), 337–62.

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 49–51.

noted. The Anglo-Norman French version was itself based on translation from Latin, and its language could be thought of as a vernacular in thirteenth-century England, although the translations of the work into Middle English around 1400 show a further process of vernacularisation.⁷¹ The earliest version of the Welsh Historical Continuum, however, consisted of at least one text already translated into the vernacular, *Brut y Brenhinedd*, although the other two texts might have been translated specifically for inclusion in the collection.⁷²

Whilst the importance of the Welsh Historical Continuum to medieval and indeed early modern Welsh historiography is clear, the *Prose Brut* was similarly seen as a chronicle of national importance.⁷³ It is the second most common Middle English text after Wycliff's Bible, was the first chronicle printed in English and exerted a 'major influence in shaping national consciousness in medieval and post-medieval England'.⁷⁴ The presence of Cistercian houses among the medieval owners of manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman French *Prose Brut* is strong, though its popularity among the nobility is also apparent, whilst the audience for the Middle English translation was apparently primarily among the landowning gentry.⁷⁵ The fact that, for the later part of the work, the compiler used annalistic material ultimately derived

⁷¹ Anglo-Norman French and Middle English were both commonly spoken languages in thirteenth-century England, and although official use of Anglo-Norman French increased from the late thirteenth to the fifteenth century, this period also saw increasing use of English among the elite. Anglo-Norman French, despite its use and influence in the March and beyond, did not have quite the same status in native Wales, as the use of the vernacular among the Welsh Cistercians indicates. This is most clearly seen in the case of Tracton in Ireland, a daughter-house of Whitland where its Welsh monks were castigated for their use of Welsh in 1228. S. Lusignan, 'French Language in Contact with English: Social Context and Linguistic Change (mid-13th–14th centuries)', in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: the French of England c.1100–c.1500*, ed. by J. Wogan-Browne, C. Collette, M. Kowaleski, L. Mooney, A. Putter and D. Trotter (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 19–30; W. M. Ormrod, 'The Language of Complaint: Multilingualism and Petitioning in Later Medieval England', in *French of England*, pp. 31–43; P. Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 18–19; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 47.

⁷² See above, p. 52.

⁷³ T. Drukker, 'I Read Therefore I Write: Readers' Marginalia in Some *Brut* Manuscripts', *Trivium* 36 (2006), 97–113 (97).

⁷⁴ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 8–9.

⁷⁵ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 9–15.

from the Cistercian house of Waverley indicates a connection between this order and the *Prose Brut* which bears comparison with the role of the Cistercians in vernacular Welsh historical writing.

These similarities can serve to highlight the differences between the two traditions, differences which indicate the peculiar characteristics of the reception of Geoffrey in Wales when compared to England. One of the most striking differences is the character of the material used to preface the sequence. The Welsh compilation begins with the Trojan war, a natural enough preface to the narrative of Geoffrey's *De Gestis Britonum* and one which was inspired by the associations of the two Latin texts. This indicates the purpose of the historical continuum here assembled: to follow the history of the Britons as a people, first during the Trojan war, then from the settlement of Britain to their loss of sovereignty over the island and then from that point until their final conquest by the English. The *Prose Brut*, on the other hand, starts with the previous settlement of the island by giants, then describes the rulers of the island after Brutus. It glosses over the Saxon conquest and the Britons' loss of sovereignty and minimises the upheaval of the Norman conquest, emphasising the Anglo-Norman kings' position as the natural culmination of this history. Whereas the one history is primarily ethnic, with the institutions it describes and the geographical scope of its narrative changing with the whereabouts and political status of its subject, the Britons or the Welsh, the other is primarily institutional, concentrating on the island of Britain and its monarchy, on the rulers that dominated it and continued to do so.

The discrepancy between the institutional history the *Prose Brut* narrates and the reality of the ethnic mix of Britain becomes evident in the continuation of the *Brut* to 1333, here describing the years of baronial opposition to Edward II, when

so miche vnkyndenesse was neuer seyne bifore in Engeland amonges folc of on nacioun ... and hit was no wonder, for þe grete lordes of Engeland were noȝt alle of o nacioun, but were mellede wiþ oþere naciouns, þat is forto seyn, somme Britons, somme Saxones, somme Danois, somme Peghtes, somme Frenchemen, somme Normans, somme Spaignardes, somme Romayns, some Henaudes, some Flemyngus, and of oþere diuerse naciouns, þe wiche naciouns acorded noȝt to þe kynde bloode of Engeland. And if þe grete lordes of Engeland hade bene onelich wedded to Englisshe peple, þan shulde pees haue bene, and reste amongus ham, wiþouten eny envy.⁷⁶

There is here some indication that the streamlined narrative of British/English history provided by the original Anglo-Norman French *Prose Brut* caused some unease to the continuator. The *Prose Brut* minimises the effect of the change between one ethnic group and another in their dominance of Britain, but the continuator clearly feels that it is this very ethnic mix in the nobility who dominate the kingdom, so long unremarked on in the original *Prose Brut*, which explains the conflicts of the early fourteenth century, the unresolved tensions of the previous centuries bursting forth in the form of 'unkindness' among the English.

More work has been done on the audience and reception of the *Prose Brut* in England than for the Welsh historical texts in Wales. The earlier, Anglo-Norman French version has been seen as aimed at the lay nobility on the grounds of its style, content and chivalric tone.⁷⁷ The English translation proved even more popular, appealing to the audience of the French original but also expanding its audience to take in the

⁷⁶ *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, ed. Brie, I., 220. Quoted in A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii: c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), p. 76.

⁷⁷ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 73–76.

merchant classes, particularly in the fifteenth century.⁷⁸ The greater appeal of the English version is illustrated by the fact that its manuscripts outnumber those of the French version by about three to one, despite the French *Brut's* popularity.⁷⁹ Manuscripts of the work were owned 'by the crown, monasteries, university libraries, noblemen, and the well-to-do gentry. It is probable that anyone in England in the fifteenth century who owned more than a single volume, had a copy of the prose *Brut*'.⁸⁰

Whilst the text's popularity made it an important book for monastic libraries, it is nevertheless apparent that its primary appeal was to the secular nobility and gentry.⁸¹ This was also apparently the case for Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, none of the twelve surviving manuscripts of which originated in monastic libraries.⁸² Texts such as these indicate a growing tendency towards literacy among the English laity from the thirteenth century onwards, not just for practical purposes but as 'cultivated readers'.⁸³ While the popularity of vernacular texts is evidence for a similar tendency in Wales, the Welsh Historical Continuum is intimately associated with monastic centres both in its production and dissemination. The above study of the manuscripts has demonstrated that Cistercian houses such as Whitland, Strata Florida, and Valle Crucis were centres of historical writing and manuscript production with which the manuscripts of the Historical Continuum and their scribes were intimately associated.

⁷⁸ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 12–14. The use of French among merchant classes in towns was widespread throughout the fourteenth century, and reached a peak in terms of its use in official records in the latter half of that century. However it was quite rapidly replaced by English from the early fifteenth century, and the use of French in an official capacity can be seen as part of the same shift towards the vernacular which resulted in the widespread use of English. R. Britnell, 'French Language in Medieval English Towns', in *French of England*, pp. 81–89.

⁷⁹ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, p. 73.

⁸⁰ Drukker, 'I Read Therefore I Write', 97.

⁸¹ An audience which was itself adopting monastic apparatus and customs for handling written text. Drukker, 'I Read Therefore I Write', 98.

⁸² Kennedy, *Chronicles and Other Historical Writing*, p. 2619.

⁸³ M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by D. Daiches and A. Thorlby, *Literature and Western Civilization 2* (London, 1973), pp. 555–77.

The extent to which this picture contrasts with that of the audience for the *Prose Brut* depends on whether the impetus behind the production of the vernacular Welsh Historical Continuum can be seen as largely monastic or whether the monasteries simply served as centres for the production of a text whose primary appeal was to the Welsh gentry. The previous chapter has indicated that it was a combination of both.

Despite this strong association with Cistercian monasteries, secular patrons are also prominent as sponsors and owners of the Welsh manuscripts. The most obvious example is Hopcyn ap Tomos of Ynysforgan, but his prominence in the historical record as well as the unusually high status of one of his manuscripts, *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, suggests that, as a prominent and independent patron of such historical manuscript production, he may be the exception rather than the rule. Perhaps more illustrative of the relationship between the monasteries and secular elites is the career of the 'Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi', scribe of Peniarth MS 18, a fragment of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, perhaps a remnant of a full version of the Historical Continuum. He was one of the scribes of *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*, a book which Daniel Huws has argued was produced at Strata Florida. The scribe himself, however, is known to have produced work for a patron in Cantref Mawr, and as his name suggests he was associated with the collegiate church of Llanddewibrefi as well as with Strata Florida.⁸⁴

Rhydderch, his patron, a man of the same class as Hopcyn ap Tomos, came from a family known to have sponsored the translation of texts from Latin into Welsh.⁸⁵ Though he is not known to be specifically connected with any manuscript of the Welsh Historical Continuum, his family can be thought of alongside Hopcyn's as representatives of the class for whom such work was undertaken in the fourteenth

⁸⁴ D. Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming), Manuscripts: Oxford, Jesus College 119.

⁸⁵ D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), pp. 249–50.

century. Rhydderch's family were descendants of the princes of Deheubarth, though by the fourteenth century they could hardly be thought of as royal. Rhydderch had performed military service of some kind in the English army, possibly as an interpreter, and was renowned as a patron of poets as well as a legal scholar.⁸⁶ Hopcyn was also a great sponsor of poets, as well as being renowned for his knowledge of *Brut*, the historical traditions of the Welsh which the Welsh Historical Continuum came to represent.⁸⁷

Some of the Welsh historical manuscripts were therefore produced for patrons who could be considered gentry of noble descent. Often representatives of the old native princely lines or their administrators, they fulfilled a prominent role in local society, serving under the English crown and marcher lords in military as well as administrative capacities as well as frequently being experts in Welsh law. The men who produced books under their patronage reflect the interests of their sponsors, often producing both legal and historical manuscripts, for example the scribe of Peniarth MS 263 and Wynnstay MS 36, as well as poetic grammars, such as in the case of the scribe of Cotton Cleopatra MS B v and Peniarth MS 20.⁸⁸ Their associations were however more ecclesiastical than those of their sponsors. An obvious example is the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi, but the cumulative evidence of the Cistercian associations of many of the manuscripts also point in this direction.

It is also apparent that the lay gentry was probably not the only audience for these works. The scribe of Peniarth 20 and Cotton Cleopatra B.v has been described as 'a decisive editor and historian as well as a scribe', and it may be thought that he performed this role as a service to the abbey of Valle Crucis as well as to its secular

⁸⁶ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 250–51.

⁸⁷ G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (Cardiff, 1948), pp. 9–16, 19–21; see above, p. 104.

⁸⁸ Huws, *Repertory*, scribes: X25, X88.

patrons.⁸⁹ The continued presence of such manuscripts at the monastery, for which fifteenth-century manuscripts such as *Llyfr Du Basing* provides evidence, argues for this. Overall, then, the Welsh Historical Continuum can be seen as embracing both monastic and secular audiences. The monasteries should certainly be seen as centres of production, from which secular patrons commissioned historical works, but their role was not limited to this. The historical writing was of interest to the monks themselves, and as such should be thought of as a continuation of the interest they had shown in Latin manuscripts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history. The move into the vernacular, though it must have been beneficial to the lay elites, should not be thought of exclusively in those terms, especially given the role of Cistercian abbots as patrons of vernacular poets.

The place of the Cistercians as promoters and defenders of the idea of a Welsh nation is central to all this, and can be thought of as a link between these monasteries and the secular elite. The *Prose Brut* was a national chronicle for England, and the greater role of Cistercian monasteries in the reception as well as the production of the Welsh equivalent is indicative of the scale of their investment in the idea of the Welsh nation. Whereas the popularity of the *Prose Brut* in England is indicative of the deepening engagement of the lay nobility and gentry with the idea of an English nation, in Wales the gentry, leaders of native society after the Edwardian conquest, interacted with Cistercian houses which were themselves coming to terms with the status of the Welsh as a conquered people, and it is this interaction, based on the previous Latin historical writing undertaken at these monasteries, which produced a Welsh Historical Continuum in the vernacular.

⁸⁹ Huws, *Repertory*, scribes: X89.

It is interesting to note the possibility of some overlap in the audiences for the *Prose Brut* and the Welsh Historical Continuum. In discussing Aberystwyth, NLW MS 21608D, containing the text of the Middle English *Prose Brut* with a continuation to 1461, William Marx notes a probable north-east Wales provenance for the manuscript. It was in the possession of Lewys Dolgellau, mercer of Rhuthun in Denbighshire, in the mid sixteenth century, and is likely to have been produced in the same area. The text includes additional verse epitaphs on Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in English drawing on material from Higden's *Polychronicon*. Though the manuscript's connections are with an English borough rather than with the Welsh hinterland of Dyffryn Clwyd, Lewys Dolgellau's name suggests he came from Dolgellau in Meirionnydd. Overall, we see here some evidence for an audience for the Middle English *Prose Brut* in the area which saw the production of one version of the Welsh Historical Continuum, as well as an indication of how the production of the Middle English text in such an environment changed it with the addition of more material of Welsh interest.⁹⁰

Historical texts translated into Welsh were most often either from Latin or from French, but if this manuscript of the *Prose Brut* does indeed originate in north-east Wales it is important evidence for interest in this English Galfridian history among the same audience as for the Welsh Historical Continuum. It may be coincidental, but it is interesting to note that the *Llyfr Du Basing* version of the Welsh Historical Continuum also ends with the deposition of Henry VI in 1461.⁹¹ Although it does not amount to evidence of direct influence from one tradition upon the other, it nevertheless indicates an overlap in their audiences. Whilst the support of the *uchelwyr* for native literature can be seen as a reaction against Anglicising influences

⁹⁰ *An English Chronicle 1377–1461: a New Edition* (Woodbridge, 2003), ed. by W. Marx, pp. xii–xxii; *idem*, 'Middle English Manuscripts of the Brut in the National Library of Wales', 373–77.

⁹¹ *BS*, p. 276.

in which they were themselves complicit, an interest in the English *Prose Brut* could be seen as an aspect of these Anglicising influences, or perhaps as curiosity regarding a history which served a similar role to the Welsh Historical Continuum among the English elite.

The *Prose Brut* in England was initially composed for an Anglo-Norman French speaking elite, but was increasingly embraced by the merchant classes and gentry in the fifteenth century along with its translation into English. It is reasonable to ask whether the fifteenth century saw a noticeable change in the production and reception of the Welsh Historical Continuum. It was in this period that the North-Eastern version was compiled, building on the work of translating *Brenhinedd y Saesson* and a version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* undertaken at Valle Crucis in the earlier fourteenth century. J. Beverley Smith's analysis would lead us to conclude that the significant change here was the translation into Welsh in the fourteenth century, which saw historical works developed through the links between different Cistercian monasteries translated for the benefit of the lay gentry.⁹²

Another shift of sorts may be perceptible. Whilst the Cotton Cleopatra manuscript provides evidence for historical and scribal activity focussed around a monastic scriptorium, though for the benefit of the local *uchelwyr*, a manuscript such as Jesus College, Oxford 141 suggests a less specialised environment. A paper manuscript, in a low-status script, it shows that there was demand for practical, rather than high-status, manuscripts of the Historical Continuum, designed for reading rather than as impressive volumes. That the more prestigious manuscripts were still being produced is however apparent from *Llyfr Du Basing*, and whilst Jesus 141 may indicate the spread of the work's appeal, it is probably seen as indicative of its

⁹² Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 83.

continuing popularity among the *uchelwyr*, although it is possible that the manuscript was produced for Gutun Owain's personal use.⁹³ The close relationship between the scribe and his patron which is clear from the colophon to Philadelphia MS 8680 also remains evident from the poems of Gutun Owain, the scribe of both Jesus 141 and *Llyfr Du Basing*.⁹⁴ It should be noted that *Prose Brut* manuscripts similarly vary from prestigious high-status volumes to less ostentatious paper copies.⁹⁵

THE PASSAGE OF DOMINION

The difficulty raised in the English histories which used Geoffrey's narrative by the combination of a British narrative with that of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman kings is a point which can be discussed more fully. Because of the usefulness of this issue for the way it illustrates the conceptual differences between English and Welsh vernacular adaptations, discussion of the point has been reserved until after a general discussion of the Anglo-Norman French and English histories. The historical episode which caused the most difficulty was the point at which the Britons lost control of the island, and dominance over it passed to the Anglo-Saxons. A close study of the significance of this event with reference to twelfth-century historians was undertaken by R. William Leckie, Jr, who terms it the 'passage of dominion'.⁹⁶ He draws attention to the novelty of Geoffrey's depiction of the Britons as ruling Britain until the late seventh century, as well as the establishment of unified Saxon rule having to wait

⁹³ Brynley Roberts raised the possibility that the version of the *Brut* in Jesus 141, one of the most abridged versions surviving, could have been intended for use by professional poets as part of their training, with the manuscript being of practical use to poets rather than their patrons. He decides however that it is likelier to have been intended for the gentry themselves. B. F. Roberts, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Cyfieithiad Cymraeg Cynharaf o *Historia regum Britanniae* Sieffre o Fynwy, Yngyd ag "Argraffiad" Beirniadol o Destun Peniarth 44' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1969), p. li.

⁹⁴ *L'Œuvre Poétique de Gutun Owain*, ed. by E. Bachellery (Paris, 1950–1951), p. 215, ll. 29–32. For the colophon, see below, p. 385.

⁹⁵ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 73–74.

⁹⁶ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*.

until Æthelstan more than two centuries later. Leckie sees Geoffrey as emphasising unified rule as a prerequisite of true control over the island: even with the Saxons temporarily in the ascendant, after Gormund's donation of much of Britain to them, the fact that they are divided under three kings puts them on a par with the Britons, similarly divided.⁹⁷ Geoffrey's emphasis on unified rule rather than territorial control allowed him to sideline the traditional Anglo-Saxon narrative, which saw the establishment of enclaves developing into the kingdoms of the heptarchy and then into a unified English realm, in favour of a narrative where the Britons' loss of the crown, by pestilence and the judgement of God rather than conquest, did not by default confer dominance to the Saxons, who had to wait until they emulated the earlier British institution of a single monarch. Even then, Athelstan's rule is specifically confined to Loegria in Geoffrey's history rather than being over the whole of Britain, so that the Saxons never fully succeed the Britons as rulers of the whole island.⁹⁸

This narrative was hard to accept for twelfth-century historians more familiar with texts like Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Leckie demonstrates that although the difficulty of reconciling Geoffrey's narrative with these Anglo-Saxon sources remained the same, as the twelfth century progressed less attention was devoted to this problem, due in part to increasing acceptance of Geoffrey as an historical authority as well as to a decline in the number of historians focussing on the pre-Norman history of Britain.⁹⁹ He also discusses the early vernacular versions of *De gestis Britonum*, as well as the 'First Variant'. Leckie's conclusions must be reviewed in the light of the discussion above, particularly bearing in mind the comparison between developments in Wales and England. Leckie's study indicates that the

⁹⁷ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, p. 66.

⁹⁸ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 70–71; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 281.

⁹⁹ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 73–101.

treatment of the passage of dominion, particularly the development of a compromise position of focussing on Gormund's donation as the point at which this occurred, must be understood in the context of attempts to reconcile Geoffrey's British history with the English sources used by William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon. The further development, in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of narratives which combined Geoffrey's narrative with that of later English history on the one hand exacerbated and highlighted the difficulties presented by Geoffrey's narrative, and on the other led to attempts to ignore or minimise these.

The 'First Variant' version of *De Gestis Britonum* provides a clear and early example of an attempt to deal with Geoffrey's characterisation of the end of British rule. The exact relationship of the First Variant to the Vulgate text of Geoffrey's history has been a vexed question, but Neil Wright advances conclusive arguments in favour of seeing the First Variant as a revision of the Vulgate text of *De Gestis Britonum*, written before 1155 by someone other than Geoffrey of Monmouth.¹⁰⁰ The *terminus ante quem* depends on the fact that Wace drew extensively on the First Variant whilst writing his *Roman de Brut*, almost exclusively so in the pre-Arthurian section but also as his primary source for the passage of dominion.¹⁰¹

Given the dependence of the subsequent vernacular adaptations on Wace, the handling of the passage of dominion in the First Variant is clearly essential to understanding the link between Geoffrey's history and later narrative in subsequent English texts. Leckie notes a number of significant innovations in the First Variant through which the redactor reduces the time-lag between Gormund's donation and the unification of the Saxons under Æthelstan. Whereas the Vulgate depicts the situation after Gormund's invasion to be one where the Britons and the Saxons are each divided

¹⁰⁰ *First Variant Version*, ed. Wright, pp. liii–lxx.

¹⁰¹ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 109–17.

under three kings, implying parity, the Variant emphasises stability for the Saxons and barbarity for the Britons.¹⁰² The significance of this change as a first step is apparent from the treatment of this period in subsequent texts: Wace has the Saxons agreeing to share the kingdom between many kings, Lazamon between five, Robert of Gloucester has them divide the land into six kingdoms which he then describes, and the Prose Brut similarly describes the division of the land into kingdoms, seven in Marvin's edition of the Anglo-Norman text and six in the English version edited by Brie.¹⁰³ The changes in the First Variant become the springboard from which an account of the establishment of the Heptarchy intrudes into the narrative of Geoffrey's history.

A similar example is the issue of the change in the island's name, from Britannia to Anglia. Geoffrey makes no mention of this change: the Vulgate is consistent in terming the part of Britain under Saxon domination *Loegria* right to the end. But the First Variant explains that Loegria, the land the Saxons held, was renamed Anglia at the time of Gormund's donation, and goes on to say that the island itself lost the name Britannia.¹⁰⁴ Despite the fact that this change of name is not carried through consistently, the redactor returning to the Vulgate version's terminology after Augustine's mission, this represents a significant reinterpretation of Geoffrey's original narrative. Whilst Geoffrey reserves the passage of dominion to Æthelstan's reign, and even then without a change of name and restricted to Loegria, the redactor of the Variant places this shift as early as Gormund's donation.

In this he is followed by Wace, who takes the change a step further, describing the Saxons renaming the towns as well as the island itself, and Lazamon takes this

¹⁰² Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, p. 105.

¹⁰³ *Wace's Roman de Brut*, ll. 13663–13670 (ed. Weiss, p. 342); *Lazamon: Brut*, ll. 14684–14690 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, p. 754); *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 4655–4728 (ed. Wright, I, 328–33); *Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle*, ll. 2154–2164 (ed. Marvin, p. 186); *Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, ed. Brie, I, 95–96.

¹⁰⁴ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 70, 104–5; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 256–81; *First Variant Version*, ed. Wright, p. 177.

even further with the Saxons renaming *moniee of þan burzen and monie of þan tunen, and monie of þan londen and of þan hamen*.¹⁰⁵ The *Prose Brut* similarly sees the change of name as occurring after Gormund's donation.¹⁰⁶ Robert of Gloucester, on the other hand, reserves the change of name until the time of Cadwaladr, which may reflect his dependence on Geoffrey rather than Wace, or possibly on a conflate manuscript of the Vulgate and First Variant.¹⁰⁷

Leckie argues that conflate manuscripts of the First Variant, where the variant text is combined with that of the Vulgate and episodes such as the aftermath of Gormund's donation are taken closer to Geoffrey's original text, indicate the lessening importance of the conflict between the English historical narrative and Geoffrey's, suggesting a growing acceptance of Geoffrey as an historian.¹⁰⁸ Though the scepticism of William of Newburgh and Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century must be understood as more nuanced than outright rejection on critical grounds, Leckie's point about increasing acceptance is valid.¹⁰⁹ He sees this as the reason for his impression that such matters are of less importance to *Lazamon* than to Wace, arguing particularly on the basis of Wace's greater understanding of the identity of

¹⁰⁵ 'Many of the cities and many of the towns, and many of the regions and of the homesteads', *Lazamon: Brut*, ll. 14679–14680 (ed. Barron and Weinberg, pp. 754); *Wace's Roman de Brut*, ll. 13661–13662 (ed. Weiss, p. 342).

¹⁰⁶ *Brut, or Chronicles of England*, ed. Brie, I., 95.

¹⁰⁷ *Robert of Gloucester*, ll. 5121–5125 (ed. Wright, p. 372). The question of Robert's sources is one that has yet to be answered conclusively.

¹⁰⁸ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 108–9.

¹⁰⁹ William of Newburgh's doubts about the historicity of Geoffrey's account, sometimes seen as an expression of his critical honesty, was reappraised by Antonia Gransden as indicative of political and propagandistic aims, discrediting a history which was a source for Brittonic political resistance and rejecting the 'un-Bedan, un-English' narrative of *De gestis Britonum*. Julia Crick has argued that similar claims of Gerald of Wales' scepticism towards Geoffrey's history fail to take into account his active propagation of it as a source for the British past, and that his main point of disagreement was with regard to Geoffrey's promised revival of Welsh political dominance over Britain. E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain* (London, 1927), pp. 106–8; N. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: the Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago, IL, 1977), pp. 62–63; A. Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32 (1981), 397–425 (416–419); J. Crick, 'The British Past and the Welsh Future: Gerald of Wales, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Arthur of Britain', *Celtica* 23 (1999), 60–75.

Æthelstan.¹¹⁰ It is, however, equally possible that Wace's greater understanding of Anglo-Saxon history is dependent on the relative status of the two authors, one possibly a royal courtier, the other a rural priest. It is also apparent that, although Leckie's argument that the increasing acceptance of Geoffrey as an historian is reflected in an increasing reluctance to challenge his account is valid, the evidence of the *Prose Brut* in particular indicates that the question of the transfer of dominion from the Britons to the Anglo-Saxons remained a contentious issue in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Given that Geoffrey was by this time accepted as an historical authority, another reason must be sought for this uncertainty, a reason which might also shed further light on Leckie's twelfth-century debate.

This reason must be the difficulty of treating Geoffrey's history as part of an English narrative, one where *De Gestis Britonum* is seen as narrating both the history of the Britons and the events which led to the establishment of the English nation in Britain. In the twelfth century Leckie sees this as essentially a historiographical debate revolving around the relative weight to be given to Geoffrey's testimony as opposed to that of English sources such as Bede or the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, one which was resolved to an extent when Geoffrey became an accepted authority. However, the texts discussed above, notably Robert of Gloucester's history and the *Prose Brut*, are works where the issue of the passage of dominion remained a central one, because both texts attempted to transform Geoffrey's narrative into a continuous history of the English kingdom. The issue of the passage of dominion did indeed rest on Geoffrey's incompatibility with earlier narratives, but the historiographical acceptance of Geoffrey did not resolve this difficulty, since the acceptance of his work as a fundamental authority for early Britain meant that his deviation from earlier

¹¹⁰ Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 118–19.

authorities was bound to arise whenever an attempt was made to construct a history which saw both the Anglo-Saxons and Geoffrey's Britons as integral parts of the narrative.

The first such attempt, that of Geoffrey Gaimar, is largely lost to us. It is apparent from the surviving portion, however, that he began his history with Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece and narrated the Trojan War before narrating the history of the Britons, for which he was dependent both on Geoffrey's *De Gestis Britonum* and on an unknown source.¹¹¹ It is likely that the portion of his history dealing mainly with the Britons ended with the death of Arthur, and that Gaimar saw Mordred's donation of Northumbria, and the Saxons' subsequent expansion, as the starting point of Saxon dominance over the island.¹¹² In this and other idiosyncrasies Gaimar was not followed by subsequent authors, and his impact was minimal compared to Wace, but importantly his work was a model for a continuous history of Britain which included the history of both the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons. Wace's translation of Geoffrey displaced Gaimar's work, and stands at the head of much of the subsequent tradition. It ensured that the First Variant redactor's adaptation of Geoffrey's narrative passed into the later vernacular tradition.

Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, though little-studied, can be thought of as a successor to Gaimar's work in that it linked the British history with that of the English down to his own day. Whilst the lack of work done on Robert's sources inhibits discussion of the peculiar features of his narrative somewhat, it is obvious that he saw the need to adapt the tone as well as the details of Geoffrey's narrative in order to present a smoother transition to a narrative of Anglo-Saxon history based mainly on Henry of Huntingdon. It is with the *Prose Brut*, though, that the inclusion of

¹¹¹ *Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 6528–6531 (ed. Short, p. 352).

¹¹² *Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 1–16 (ed. Short, p. 2); Leckie, *Passage of Dominion*, pp. 80–85.

Geoffrey's narrative into a history of the English was done most successfully, at least in terms of the popularity of the work. It is also here that the difficulty of including Geoffrey's history, though mediated through the First Variant and Wace, into a narrative of English history becomes most apparent.

It is here also that the similarities and differences between Welsh and English attitudes to Geoffrey's narrative become most obvious. The Welsh Historical Continuum extended Geoffrey's narrative with the addition of a work describing the Trojan War and one detailing the subsequent history of the Britons in Wales. The connecting thread of this composite work are the Britons as a people. Apart from that, there is no continuous geographical or institutional basis for the history. The *Prose Brut*, by contrast, is a history largely focussed on the island of Britain and on its monarchy, seeking to depict the Anglo-Norman kings as inheritors of both. Seeking to minimise the change which accompanies the assertion of control over the island by different peoples, it also lessens the role of the Britons as the first settlers of the land through the inclusion of *Des Grantz Geanz* as a preface in some versions.

In Wales Geoffrey's work was expanded so as to elaborate on the history of the Britons in classical antiquity as well as in more recent times, after their glorious reign over the island. It can be argued that these additions were in the spirit of the original history, whose title, *De gestis Britonum*, reflected its primary focus on the race of Britons. The English composite history, using British history as a precursor to English history and with a greater focus on the institution of the monarchy, is closer to the conception of Geoffrey's history under the by now more familiar title of *Historia regum Britanniae*, seeing the current kings of England as their successors.

NORSE VERSIONS

Having undertaken a thorough survey of parallel developments in Anglo-Norman French and Middle English, attention will now be given to a more unfamiliar, but in some ways more similar, insular culture. Both Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* and the *De excidio Troiae* attributed to Dares Phrygius were translated into Old Norse between the early thirteenth century and the early fourteenth. Some work has already been done on the subject by Erich Poppe, whose typological study of the reception of Dares Phrygius in the insular world demonstrated some similarities between Welsh and Icelandic attitudes towards this material.¹¹³ The following section of the study will in a sense be narrower and broader in focus, narrower through concentrating on Old Norse versions specifically, albeit more closely, and broader in giving more consideration to the combination of Dares and Geoffrey into a continuous history rather than to the content associated with Dares in manuscripts generally.

Stefanie Gropper has argued that *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* were used by the Icelanders and Norwegians to trace their origins to Troy and so integrate their history with that of the wider world.¹¹⁴ Part of the purpose of this study will be to test this interpretation of the significance of these texts, since if this assessment is correct the Norse versions would indeed provide a close parallel to Welsh Galfridian texts. The creation of a history of the Welsh which emphasised their relationship with Geoffrey's Britons and with their Trojan ancestors was a function of the Welsh Historical Continuum. It will be seen that the historiographical significance of these Norse versions to an Icelandic audience was indeed to do with national origins, but in a more indirect way.

¹¹³ E. Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares's *De Excidio Troiae Historia*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 19 (2009), 253–98.

¹¹⁴ S. Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', in *The Arthur of the North: the Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. by M. E. Kalinke, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, 5 (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 48–60 (p. 52).

The first translation into Old Norse of material connected with Geoffrey's history appears to have been the *Merlinusspa* of Gunnlaugr Leifsson, a monk of the Benedictine monastery of Þingeyrar in northern Iceland who died in 1218 or 1219.¹¹⁵ It is unknown whether this translation of the *Prophetiae Merlini* section of Geoffrey's history was completed as a stand-alone work or as part of a full translation of *De gestis Britonum*, although it is clear that Gunnlaugr had access to the rest of Geoffrey's work rather than to a stand-alone copy of the *Prophetiae Merlini*.¹¹⁶ It therefore seems probable that Gunnlaugr translated the entirety of the work, though it cannot be proven, and an alternative theory sees *Breta sögur*, the Old Norse translation of Geoffrey, as the product of King Hákon of Norway's programme of translating of French Arthurian romances in the mid thirteenth century.¹¹⁷ The likelier scenario overall is the translation of *Breta sögur* in Iceland at the beginning of the thirteenth century, around the same time as *Merlinusspa* or soon afterwards.¹¹⁸

The translation was certainly completed by the early fourteenth century, when *Breta sögur* appears in *Hauksbók* (Copenhagen, the Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 544 4to), a large manuscript written between 1301 and 1314 for the Icelandic lawman Haukr Erlendsson. This manuscript contains a very diverse collection of texts, but the strong historical content is clear.¹¹⁹ There are two versions of *Breta sögur*, and the version occurring in *Hauksbók* is characterised as the 'shorter version'. This version only exists in *Hauksbók* and in copies taken directly from this manuscript. The second,

¹¹⁵ Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 48.

¹¹⁶ G. Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford, 1953), p. 202.

¹¹⁷ M. E. Kalinke, 'The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia', in *The Arthur of the North: the Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. by M. E. Kalinke, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* 5 (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 5–21 (pp. 9–11); *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, ed. by E. F. Halvorsen, *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana* 19 (Copenhagen, 1959), pp. 22–23.

¹¹⁸ Kalinke, 'The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia', p. 6; Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 48.

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of the manuscript and its purpose, see E. A. Rowe, 'Literary, Codicological, and Political Perspectives on *Hauksbók*', *Gripla* 19 (2008), 51–76.

the 'longer version' is preserved in Copenhagen, the Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 573 4to, a fourteenth century Icelandic manuscript, and Stockholm, Royal Library, Papp. fol. nr 58, a seventeenth-century paper copy taken from a lost fourteenth-century Icelandic manuscript, *Ormsbók*.¹²⁰ The two versions are reworkings of an original translation which does not survive, and in addition to this it is clear from the content of *Breta sögur* that the Latin version of Geoffrey's History from which it was translated had already been augmented and somewhat fictionalised in a similar way to Wace's source for his *Roman de Brut*.¹²¹

Before turning to consider the manuscript context of *Breta sögur* attention must be given to the work with which it is commonly associated, *Trójumanna saga*, a text whose surviving versions have many similarities to *Breta sögur*. There are two versions, both ultimately derived from the same translation into Old Norse of the *De excidio Troiae* attributed to Dares Phrygius. The shorter version, probably the earlier although only preserved in late transcripts, is almost entirely derived from Dares, whereas the longer version combines the Dares narrative with material drawn from *Ilias Latina* (the 'Latin Homer'), Virgil's Aeneid and Ovid's Heroides and Metamorphoses.¹²² This reworking was done subsequent to the original translation.¹²³ The debate about the provenance of the original translation of *Trójumanna saga* reflects that around *Breta sögur*, and it is similarly likely that it was translated in Iceland, probably around 1250.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Gropper, 'Bretasögur and Merlínússpá', pp. 49–50.

¹²¹ Gropper, 'Bretasögur and Merlínússpá', pp. 51, 57–58; H. Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid* and Related Sources in the Old Icelandic *Brut*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), 490–514 (493).

¹²² *Trójumanna Saga: The Dares Phrygius Version*, ed. by J. Louis-Jensen, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, 9 (Copenhagen, 1981), pp. xi–xiii.

¹²³ *Trójumanna Saga*, ed. Louis-Jensen, p. xxx.

¹²⁴ Halvorsen, *Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, pp. 22–23, argues for translation in Norway, whereas Louis-Jensen, *Trójumanna Saga*, pp. li–lvi, argues for an Icelandic translation.

It is the second, longer version which is particularly associated with *Breta sögur* in medieval manuscripts. All three medieval manuscripts which contain versions of *Breta sögur* also contain the longer version of *Trójumanna saga*, providing a striking parallel to the Welsh translations. Closer consideration of *Hauksbók* only strengthens this impression. In this manuscript the longer version of *Trójumanna saga* was followed directly by the 'shorter version' of *Breta sögur*, with the closing colophon of the former referring to the latter work. In addition to this, the end of *Breta sögur* here contains a regnal list which traces the descent of the kings of Wessex from *Kaðvalla* (Cædwalla) to *Aðalsteinn* (Æthelstan), with the closing statement that Aðalsteinn fostered King Hákon of Norway relating the entirety to Norse/Icelandic history.¹²⁵ The manuscript itself contains texts dealing with Icelandic and Norwegian History as well as this Trojan/Brittonic material in addition to cosmographical and theological material which has led to it being described as a comprehensive encyclopedia with a focus on history.¹²⁶

The second of these manuscripts, AM 573, is noticeably different in focus. Like all surviving manuscripts of the 'longer version' of *Breta sögur*, its translation of Geoffrey's history is incomplete. *Breta sögur* is again preceded by *Trójumanna saga*, but its more detailed reworking of its Latin source continues the narrative only as far as the death of Arthur. It is then followed by *Valvens þáttr*, a translation of the conclusion of Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval* dealing with Gawain. Though the manuscript is fragmentary, it is clear from the treatment of the text in the surviving section that here *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* are seen primarily in the context

¹²⁵ *Trójumanna saga ok Breta sögur, efter Hauksbók*, ed. by Jon Sigurdsson (2 vols., Copenhagen, 1848–1849), ii. 144; *Hauksbók udgivet efter de Arnemagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4^o, samt forskellige papirhåndskrifter af det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1892–1896), pp. 301–2. References to the Hauksbók version of *Breta sögur* and *Trójumanna saga* will be to Jónsson's edition of Hauksbók.

¹²⁶ Gropper, '*Bretasögur and Merlínússpá*', pp. 52–53.

of chivalric romance.¹²⁷ The same can be said of the now-lost *Ormsbók* manuscript, the surviving contents list of which shows that it contained translations of French Arthurian romances and *lais* along with native Icelandic texts of a similar genre, as well as *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*.¹²⁸ The seventeenth-century Stockholm manuscript copied from *Ormsbók* shows that its version of *Breta sögur* was copied from the same exemplar as that of AM 573.¹²⁹

Although it has been argued that the differences in length and style between the two versions of *Breta sögur* were not due to elaboration and fictionalisation of the Old Norse translation on the part of the redactor of the 'longer version', but rather reflect the Latin source of the original translation, it is clear that the different presentation and contextualisation of *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* in *Hauksbok*, on the one hand, and AM 573/*Ormsbók*, on the other, reveal two different attitudes towards the Trojan/Galfridian narrative in medieval Iceland.¹³⁰ On the one hand, these texts are seen as complementary to Norse historical texts and as an essential component of world history.¹³¹ On the other, they provide a background to translations of continental chivalric literature.¹³²

To draw a distinction between both situations on the basis that one presents the works as 'history' and the other as 'romance' would of course be anachronistic, but to say that the texts in one case provide contextualisation for a larger body of translated European literature and in the other are treated as historical accounts on a

¹²⁷ Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid*', 494; Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 49.

¹²⁸ Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 53.

¹²⁹ Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 49.

¹³⁰ Gropper demonstrates as convincingly as can be done before the appearance of a critical edition that the 'longer version' of *Breta sögur* reflects the idiosyncrasies of the Latin source for the Old Norse translation rather than elaboration of the 'shorter version', which is heavily abridged. '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', pp. 54–58.

¹³¹ This is further demonstrated by the late fourteenth-century manuscript Copenhagen, the Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 764 4to, intended as a history of the world and containing excerpts from the 'longer version' of *Breta sögur*. Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid*', 490, 501.

¹³² Poppe, 'Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares', 275.

par with the foundational narratives of Iceland is simply to describe the manuscripts in which they occur. By foundational narratives, I refer to *Landnámabók*, an account of the settlement of Iceland, and *Kristni saga*, an account of its Christianisation. Both of these occur in *Hauksbók*, which opens with *Landnámabók* and then follows it directly with *Kristni saga*.¹³³ This particular version of *Landnámabók* was produced by Haukr Erlendsson himself, but older versions survive from the late thirteenth century and draw on a tradition which originated with the first Icelandic historian, Ari Þorgilsson (died 1148).¹³⁴ *Kristni saga*, similarly dependent on the tradition begun by Ari, probably dates from around the mid-thirteenth century, and interestingly it has been seen as part of a projected history of Iceland from its initial settlement down to the time of the family sagas.¹³⁵ Its possible role in such a historical narrative brings to mind the use of Geoffrey in Wales. It also highlights an important difference between Wales and Iceland, since in Wales Galfridian and Trojan history formed part of a narrative of national origins, whereas in Iceland they could be understood as complementary to but distinct from Icelandic traditions concerning the settlement and Christianisation of the island. Overall the similarities between these Icelandic histories and *Breta sögur*, which describes the settlement and Christianisation of Britain, is striking. *Hauksbók* also contains *Völuspá*, a prophetic poem to which *Merlinusspa* could provide a parallel, as well as other sagas of a broadly historical character.¹³⁶

Before turning to consider the comparative applications of these two typological contextualisations of the Old Norse texts, it is worth establishing the exact

¹³³ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, pp. 3–125, 126–49.

¹³⁴ J. Jesch, 'Geography and Travel', in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. by R. McTurk, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 31 (Oxford, 2005), pp. 119–35 (pp. 119–20); Á. Jakobsson, 'Royal Biography', in the same volume, pp. 388–402 (p. 389).

¹³⁵ *Íslendingabók – Kristni Saga: the Book of the Icelanders – the Story of the Conversion*, ed. by S. Grønlie, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series 18 (Exeter, 2006), pp. xxxii–xxxv.

¹³⁶ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, pp. 188–92, 350–69, 370–416, 425–44, 445–55.

relationship between *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*, especially given the significance it holds for evaluating the relationship between *Ystoria Dared* and *Brut y Brenhinedd*. Despite the link already discussed between Dares and Geoffrey in Latin manuscripts, it is not certain whether the Norse version of Dares was translated together with or independently of *Breta sögur*.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, it is clear that in the manuscripts in which they occur they form a coherent historical narrative. The end of the *Hauksbók* version of *Trójumanna saga* refers to the text which follows it,

Ok er nv yfir farit þa sogv er agiætvz hefir verit i verolldvnni i heiðni at allra manna virðingv þeira er vitrir erv ok flestar frasagnir erv kvnnar en her eftir hefir sogv fra Enea ok þeim er Bretland bygðv.¹³⁸

This link is also made clear in the AM 573 version, which states,

Her eftir hefiaz upp Breta sogur fyrst fra Enea oc hans ætt monnum. Turno oc Bruto oc Arturo oc odrum þeim er bygdu Bretland.¹³⁹

These statements give valuable clues as to the significance of this continuous narrative in Iceland. It is clear that both versions share the common purpose of narrating the history of the Britons. But in *Hauksbók* it is clear that this history is also

¹³⁷ Whilst Tétrel maintains that 'There is evidence of an original link between *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*', Poppe says that they were translated independently of each other, and Gropper states that the Latin exemplars of both came to Iceland independently, though her reasons for this are unclear. Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid*', 495; Poppe, 'Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares', 271–76; Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 51.

¹³⁸ 'And now we have told the story which was the most famous in the world in heathen times, in the opinion of those who are wise and know the greatest number of tales. Hereafter the story turns to Eneas and to those who settled Britain'. *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, p. 226. Thanks to Victoria Cribb for the translation.

¹³⁹ 'Here begin the stories of the Britons; first, about Enea and his descendants, Turnus, Brutus, and Arthur and all the men who inhabited/founded Britain'. Text and translation from Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid*', 495.

justified with reference to the significance of one part of the narrative, the Trojan war, to the history of the world. In AM 573, however, the story of the Britons is framed in terms of the exploits of its most significant characters, with Arthur the last-mentioned. These linking passages therefore support the interpretation of the differences in purpose between the two versions based on their manuscript context.

The *Hauksbók* version is worth discussing in greater detail, especially since it offers the closest parallel to the Welsh family of texts. There are, however, issues which make it difficult to decide whether certain idiosyncrasies of *Breta sögur* were the product of the translation of Geoffrey's work into Old Norse or whether they were present in the Latin text available to the translator. It has already been noted that there are signs that this now-lost Latin version was similar in some ways to that used by Wace, and it should therefore come as no surprise that *Breta sögur* shows some hallmarks of the First Variant version of Geoffrey, though the source was probably a combination of the Vulgate and First Variants, as in many manuscripts.¹⁴⁰ There are some details which suggest distinct features of the Latin source. Most noticeable is the re-arrangement of Geoffrey's distinctive ecclesiastical infrastructure to correspond better with the contemporary situation in England. For example, the Norse text places the three British archbishoprics at London, York and Canterbury, with Canterbury replacing Geoffrey's Caerleon.¹⁴¹ This trend is continued at the point of Arthur's death, when he is said to have been taken to the island of Avolló for a short time before dying and being buried at Christ Church, Canterbury. Soon after this, St David dies as

¹⁴⁰ M. E. Kalinke, 'Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission', in *The Arthur of the North: the Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. by M. E. Kalinke, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, 5 (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 22–47 (pp. 24–26). Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Aeneid*', 497.

¹⁴¹ A. G. Van Hamel, 'The Old-Norse Version of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* and the Text of Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Études Celtiques* 1 (1936), 197–247 (210).

archbishop of Canterbury, not Caerleon as in Geoffrey's History.¹⁴² These features led Van Hamel to conclude that *Breta sögur*'s Latin source was compiled at Canterbury, though a preference for contemporary English archiepiscopal divisions over those of Geoffrey might be a product of many English ecclesiastical centres. It could even be an extrapolation based on a Norse translator's confusion as to the location of Caerleon, rationalised with reference to what he knew about the contemporary importance of Canterbury in England.

Some other distinctive features of *Breta sögur* are likelier to be the work of the Norse translator. In general the translation is a close one, with some passages translated verbatim, though many are heavily abridged.¹⁴³ The AM 573 version is fuller, but this is likely to reflect the original translation rather than later expansion in Norse, with the *Hauksbók* version being more condensed and abbreviated. In both versions detailed descriptions of kings' reigns tend to be balanced out to the same length, the translator here reflecting the practice of Norwegian synoptic historians.¹⁴⁴ Extra details concerning Norwegian history are also probably the work of the translator. These include, in *Hauksbók*, the association of Thidrik of Bern with Hengist and Horsa, the statement that Loth, when made king of Norway by Arthur, had his palace at Alreksstaddir, and the specification of the province of Hórðaland twice where Geoffrey simply refers to Norway.¹⁴⁵

Many distinct features cannot be ascribed to the Old Norse translator with a great degree of certainty, but are nevertheless worth discussing in this context given the light they may shed on attitudes towards the text in Old Norse. The 'passage of dominion' between the Britons and the Saxons has above been discussed in detail with

¹⁴² *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, p. 295.

¹⁴³ Kalinke, 'Sources, Translations, Redactions', pp. 24–25.

¹⁴⁴ Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ Van Hamel, 'Old-Norse Version', 201, 207.

reference to French and Middle English translations. When we turn to consider the relevant parts of *Breta sögur*, it is apparent that there is some inconsistency and confusion towards the end of the Galfridian narrative. The aftermath of Gormund's invasion sees the renaming of the land as England.¹⁴⁶ In the following sections, some of the subtleties of Geoffrey's narrative are lost, due partially to the lack of detail, abbreviation or removal of rhetorical speeches and occasionally simple misunderstanding. Christianity is said to have been destroyed in most places throughout the land, rather than being completely destroyed in Loegria but flourishing under the Britons, as in Geoffrey.¹⁴⁷ Kaðall, equivalent to Geoffrey's Cadwallo, is driven from Northumbria, described as 'riki Aðalraðs konvngs', King Aðalraðr's realm, and when he returns he is said to attack 'England', 'ok naði hvergi a land at koma fyri samnadi landz manna',¹⁴⁸ the implication here being that the Saxons are now the inhabitants, being invaded by the Britons.

If the translator was drawing on a Latin text adapted to suit southern English tastes, many of the above features could already have been present, particularly the treatment of Christianity before and during Augustine's mission, which results in the monks at the battle of Chester being on Augustine's side. This may be true of one of the Old Norse text's most distinctive changes, namely the addition of a list of the kings of Wessex and England at the very end. Van Hamel believed this to have been achieved at Canterbury, compiled partially from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and partially from a similar list in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*.¹⁴⁹ This need not be the case, however, since the purpose of the list appears to be to link the last-named king, Thedvallus, with Norse history via King Æthelstan's fostering of King

¹⁴⁶ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, p. 296.

¹⁴⁷ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, p. 296; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 259.

¹⁴⁸ 'but could not go ashore anywhere because the inhabitants had gathered to defend their land', *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, p. 297.

¹⁴⁹ Van Hamel, 'Old Norse Version', 246.

Hákon of Norway. *Breta sögur* has two different forms of name for Cadwaladr/Cædwalla, the name Thedvallus deriving from the alternative name given for him by Geoffrey on the authority of Bede, Chedualla.¹⁵⁰ He is clearly to be equated with the Kaðvalla of the closing king-list, however. The Old Norse translator may have seen the name Æthelstan at the close of Geoffrey's history, recognised him in the context of Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri, the Norwegian king reputedly fostered at his court, and decided to explicitly link the end of this history to that of Norway/Iceland using an English king-list to which he had access.¹⁵¹

In so doing, the Old Norse translator/compiler achieved something comparable to the continuation of the Welsh text with *Brut y Tywysogion*, albeit with a much lesser degree of effort and complexity. Towards the other end of the narrative, however, is an area where the achievement of the Old Norse version can be counted as greater. At the beginning of *Breta sögur* the very beginning of Geoffrey's work, containing the description of Britain, is replaced by a short summary of Virgil's *Æneid*. The presence of this connecting interpolation reinforces the continuous nature of the Old Norse narrative. Tétrel has demonstrated the similarities between this section of the text, in terms of sources and purpose, with comparable connective sections in French works of the thirteenth century such as *Croniques des Bretons*, which is preceded by preamble summarising travels of three generations of Trojans.¹⁵² These French histories function as part of universal histories rather than as stand-alone narratives, a point which along with their source material precluded them from detailed discussion in the earlier sections of this chapter, but which highlights the fact that the continuous narrative of *Hauksbók* formed, it has been argued, part of a

¹⁵⁰ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 277.

¹⁵¹ A hypothesis which would give the Icelandic translator somewhat less agency would be that the king-list followed directly on from Geoffrey's history in the Latin manuscript, far from unknown in manuscripts of Geoffrey, with the translator simply carrying the text forward.

¹⁵² Tétrel, 'Trojan Origins and the Use of the *Æneid*', 499–501.

similarly encyclopaedic compilation.¹⁵³ This treatment of the text is comparable to Gutun Owain's compilation in Jesus MS 141.

Having discussed both versions of *Breta sögur*, and the *Hauksbók* version in particular, it will now be possible to reach some broad conclusions regarding what the context and content of this continuous translated history tells us about attitudes towards this narrative in Old Norse, and how this compares with the situation in Wales. The first question to be answered is what the narrative was perceived to be about in essence. The second is why this was of consequence to an Icelandic audience.

The answer to the first question can be found in the linking passages at the end of *Trójumanna saga* discussed above, essentially brief summaries of the essence of the following text. The *Hauksbók* passage justifies the *Trójumanna saga* story in terms of its fame, then describes the following material as relating to 'Aeneas and those who settled Britain'. The AM 573 version similarly describes the narrative in terms of the settlement of Britain, naming Brutus and Arthur among Aeneas' descendants. In light of both these passages it can be concluded that the narrative was thought to be about the famous war at Troy, the settlement of the island of Britain, and (in AM 573, supported also by the manuscript context) about Arthur.

Turning to the question of why, the importance of the Trojan war to Icelandic and Norwegian history is a complex issue. The ancestry of Norwegian kings, and by extension of many important Icelandic families, was traced back to the Norse gods via a legendary Swedish dynasty known as the Ynglings in the poem *Ynglingatal*. These gods themselves were said by Snorri Sturluson in the prologue to his prose *Edda* to have originated in Troy, and later in the work Thor is equated with Hector and Loki with Ulysses. The prologue, however, shows a very hazy knowledge of the actual

¹⁵³ Rowe, 'Literary, Codicological, and Political Perspectives on *Hauksbók*', 66–71, where she discusses Rudolf Smiek's idea that *Liber floridus* served as a model for *Hauksbók*.

story of Troy, not mentioning the war itself, and it is likely that more accurate knowledge apparent in later sections of the work are later additions reflecting the direct influence of *Trójumanna saga*.¹⁵⁴

Given that the date range of the initial composition of the *Prose Edda* in the first half of the thirteenth century covers the suggested dates for the translation of *Breta sögur* and *Trójumanna saga* it is difficult to argue that an awareness of Icelandic and Norwegian dynastic origins in the Trojan war formed part of the impulse for the original translations, and it is more convincing to maintain that both the translation of the two Latin works and the ascription of a Trojan origin to the euhemerised Norse gods are indicative of the same interest in Trojan material at this time.¹⁵⁵ This interest was probably due to an awareness of the importance of this story to the origin legends of other European peoples, such as the Franks and the Britons.¹⁵⁶ A link with Brittonic origin legends is apparent in the later *Langfeðgatal*, Icelandic genealogies of Scandinavian kings, where genealogical links between Icelanders and the Trojans, via the Ynglings, are traced back to Noah and Adam in a manner closely comparable to twelfth- and thirteenth-century Welsh genealogies.¹⁵⁷

Whether or not an awareness of Trojan origins formed part of the impulse for the original translation, greater knowledge of these origins would have increased the relevance of this history to a Norse audience. It is, however, necessary to note the

¹⁵⁴ A. Faulkes, 'Descent from the Gods', *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1978–1979), 92–125 (111, 122).

¹⁵⁵ P. Orton, 'Pagan Myth and Religion', in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. by R. McTurk, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 31 (Oxford, 2005), pp. 302–19 (pp. 308–311).

¹⁵⁶ Faulkes, 'Descent from the Gods', 112–16.

¹⁵⁷ Faulkes, 'Descent from the Gods', 101–6. The genealogies referred to are *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, *Mostyn 117*, and *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru*, in *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, ed. by P. C. Bartrum (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 36–9, 95. But for the first entry, see now Paul Russell, ed., *Vita Griffini filii Conani* (Cardiff, 2005), p. 54. This probably dates to the second half of the twelfth century. It is difficult to say whether this material was available at the time of the Icelanders' initial appreciation of the Trojan legend or whether its availability was secondary to this, but if the former it is arguable that a manuscript of Geoffrey's *De Gestis Britonum* containing Anglo-Saxon genealogies, as argued above for the source of *Breta sögur*, would be likely to contain Welsh genealogies tracing ancestry back to Troy and beyond.

caveat that the story of Troy is justified in the text in terms of its fame rather than its significance as an origin legend, and the inclusion of material from *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* in the late fourteenth-century world history of AM 764 4to strengthens this impression. Overall it could be said that the broader European significance of the Trojan legend was a more important reason for the interest shown in it in Iceland than its significance as an origin legend, given that the existence of this origin legend itself rests on the story's international importance.

Moving on to the part of the narrative based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, the interest of an Icelandic audience in this requires more justification than simply the importance of the Trojan legend. Geoffrey's history was itself popular across Europe. Discussion of the reasons for this pan-European appreciation is beyond the scope of the present study, but the Old Norse text offers clues as to specifically Icelandic reasons for the interest shown in it. In both versions the story is summarised as relating the history of the men who settled or founded Britain, and this feature is highlighted by the translator as well as Haukr Erlendsson, who included these texts alongside *Landnámabók*, the story of the settlement of Iceland. It is difficult to overemphasise the significance of *Landnámabók* as the foundational narrative of Iceland, and I suggest that part of the reason for the interest shown by the Icelanders in Geoffrey's history is that it provided a parallel story to their own history, that of a people colonising a new, relatively uninhabited land.¹⁵⁸ The inclusion of *Kristni saga* in the same manuscripts also suggests the parallel of Christianisation.

The interest shown in the Arthurian legend should not be minimised, being in itself an aspect of the broader European appreciation of Geoffrey's work. AM 573 as a manuscript contains later translations of chivalric romances, contextualised with the

¹⁵⁸ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, pp. 3–125; *Íslendingabók, Landnámabók*, ed. by J. Benediktsson, Íslenzk Fornrit 1 (Reykjavík, 1968).

use of a version of *Breta sögur* which can be said in at least one way to be drastically changed from the original translation, in as much as it cuts off after Arthur's reign.¹⁵⁹ It could therefore be argued that, while the European popularity of Geoffrey's work was a fundamental reason for the Norse translation, its appreciation as *essentially* an Arthurian narrative is a secondary product of the translation and popularity of romances and *riddarasögur*.

Gropper argued that *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* were used by the Icelanders and Norwegians to promote their Trojan origins, integrating their history with that of the wider world.¹⁶⁰ Whilst the interest shown in the Trojan legend must have involved Icelandic/Norwegian legendary origins, it would be inaccurate to say that the continuation of *Trójumanna saga* into *Breta sögur* relates specifically to Icelandic/Norwegian *origins*. Mentions of Norway are expanded on, and the addition of a genealogy at the end relates the history to that of Norway more directly, but in far too indirect a way see *Breta sögur* as essentially Norse history. Hákon, the king whose fostering by Æthelstan links the end of the text to Norwegian/Icelandic history, is after all only the foster-son of a king belonging to a dynasty which is explicitly noted as being devoid of British, and therefore Trojan, blood.¹⁶¹ *Breta sögur* rather offers a parallel to Icelandic history, of a people whose origins are to be found in classical antiquity and who settled and civilised a desolate land.

CONCLUSIONS

The above discussion has clarified the nature and purpose of the Welsh Historical Continuum discussed in the previous two chapters by comparing it to similar

¹⁵⁹ Notwithstanding Gropper's convincing arguments that the additional detail of this version, previously seen as 'courtly' embellishments, was part of the original translation.

¹⁶⁰ Gropper, '*Bretasögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 52.

¹⁶¹ *Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, pp. 301–2.

vernacular adaptations of *De gestis Britonum* to form a continuous history in Anglo-Norman French, Middle English and Norse. As such it has built substantially on work already undertaken in those fields, but the comparison of this material with the situation in Wales has not only contextualised the Welsh material but has also suggested new interpretations of the significance of these historical narratives in the other vernacular languages. It has become apparent that although there are other European vernacular texts comparable to the Welsh Historical Continuum in their chronological span and dependence on Galfridian history, there are significant differences between these which reveal the unique circumstances of their composition and their distinct historiographical purposes.

The earliest example of a vernacular narrative which used the British History as the basis for a continuous narrative was that of Gaimar, and it might even be seen as broadly contemporary with, rather than dependent upon, Geoffrey's history. The loss of the first part of the work that continued with the *Estoire des Engleis* means that the question of the nature of his sources can never be finally answered, but it is clear that the use of the British history as part of an English narrative was an aspect of this material from the beginning. How problematic an aspect, however, is clear from the First Variant, Wace and the English adaptations of Geoffrey's history. The tensions which the ethnic break of the passage of dominion created in narratives which primarily served the purpose of explaining the history of the kingdom of England are clearest in the *Prose Brut*, where the deletion and subsequent re-introduction of Cadwaladr exposes the difficulty of treating Geoffrey's institution of the monarchy of Britain as a precursor to the English kingdom.

The English narrative is primarily institutional in focus; the Welsh is primarily ethnic. Despite considerable similarities between the *Prose Brut* and the Welsh

Historical Continuum in terms of audience and purpose as an authoritative national narrative, this difference remains fundamental to the conception of both composite histories. The Welsh one emphasises the ethnic claim of the contemporary Welsh to the Galfridian history of Britain and to Trojan ancestry, whereas the English affirms the connection between the present-day English kingdom and its ancient roots as the kingdom of Britain. Both were produced for elites who had a stake in asserting their possession of the Galfridian past.

This cannot be said for the Norse versions, which indicate two distinct attitudes to Geoffrey's work. The first of these sees it as a narrative of European importance, particularly with regard to its relationship to the famous Trojan war, but also as a narrative which provided a parallel to the settlement and Christianisation of Iceland. A relationship exists between *De gestis Britonum* and Dares Phrygius in Latin manuscripts, but this is not reflected in the English versions. Its presence in the Old Norse translations indicates a similarity of attitude with the Welsh, in that both saw it as a narrative that related the history of the British descendants of the Trojans, not of the English state. This is despite idiosyncrasies in the Norse versions which prioritise Canterbury over Caerleon and may derive from a distinctive version of Geoffrey's history originating at the former.

The Icelanders saw the history of the Britons as a parallel for their own, but with the increasing influence of translated chivalric tales this narrative came to be seen as part of the framework of an international Arthurian narrative. This was however a later development to its initial translation and reception in Iceland, and can be thought of as secondary. It is the primarily historical interest shown in Geoffrey which is initially most apparent, but this was an historical interest in which the Icelanders had only a minor personal stake, seeing it as analogous to their own experience. To the

English and the Welsh, however, this was their own history, and in this sense their different approaches to the contextualisation of Galfridian history are indicative of a similar personal involvement in its definition.

PART II: CHRONICLES AND CISTERCIANS

CHAPTER 4

BRUT Y TYWYSOGION

This chapter investigates in some detail several *aspects* of the three closely-related Welsh chronicles known collectively as *Brut y Tywysogion*. The purpose is to re-assess the nature of this family of chronicles and the hypothetical Latin chronicle on which they are based. Beginning with some general comments on the nature of the chronicles, it then considers the relationship of the original Latin chronicle from which the three Welsh versions are derived to other Latin chronicles from Wales. Detailed comparison of one closely-related chronicle, *Cronica de Wallia*, with the Welsh chronicles leads to a reconsideration of the role of the compiler of the original Latin *Brut* as envisaged by Thomas Jones, who produced the standard editions of the texts. This forms the basis of a re-assessment of recent critical interpretations of *Brut y Tywysogion*, which argues that the compiler had less influence on several aspects of the chronicle than has previously been held.

Brut y Tywysogion is a complex family of texts, and the structure of this chapter must reflect that complexity. In order to maintain an ordered structure, certain points which are key to our understanding of the nature of these texts are reserved for discussion in the later parts of the chapter. The description of the Welsh and Latin texts and their relationship to each other with which the chapter opens forms a basis for a comparison of the Welsh chronicles and their nearest Latin relative, but the discussion of the date of composition of the presumed Latin ancestor of the Welsh *Brutiau* comes after both this comparison and a review of the scholarship concerning the relative historical merits of the Welsh and Latin chronicles. This is because the

issues of the date of composition and the chronicle's original form are dependent on an assessment of the editorial attitudes of the original compiler which the earlier sections seek to answer. The relationship of the three Welsh chronicles to the hypothetical Latin original as outlined by Thomas Jones has been questioned recently, and although this issue is not investigated in great detail, this caveat is borne in mind in the discussion of *Brut y Tywysogion*'s date of composition and the form of the original Latin chronicle.¹ Only after this is it possible to discuss the Welsh chronicles in a more historiographical light, first in relation to a section which can be seen as a twelfth-century historical work and then in relation to the three surviving Welsh versions.

The detailed discussion of a distinctive early twelfth-century section of the chronicle pays particular attention to its depiction of political authority and to similarities with comparable twelfth-century texts. The discussion then turns to consider differences between the three Welsh chronicles, and how their creation saw not only the translation of the Latin text but also its re-interpretation and continuation. The close studies of various aspects of the chronicle which form this chapter enable general conclusions to be drawn concerning the nature of *Brut y Tywysogion* as a work of historical writing. These conclusions demonstrate that detailed investigation of these Welsh chronicles exposes serious problems with the way *Brut y Tywysogion* is thought about as an historical work in secondary literature. Nevertheless there are many indications that, as well as being something which can only be glimpsed through the prism of the three Welsh chronicles, the original Latin *Brut* can be seen as a collection of disparate materials itself.

¹ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The Kings of the English', A.D. 682–954: Texts P, R, S in Parallel*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, Basic Texts for Medieval British History 1 (Aberdeen, 2005), p. vi, and below, pp. 233–48.

DEFINITION

The closely related chronicles known collectively under the title *Brut y Tywysogion* are all derived from an original chronicle compiled in Latin in the thirteenth century, but this family of chronicles is often referred to in the singular, with the presumption that the original Latin chronicle is being discussed. It is therefore important to establish consistent terminology for this discussion. References to *Brut y Tywysogion* or BT are to all three surviving versions as a group unless otherwise specified, and generally when the original Latin chronicle is discussed, the term Latin BT is used. The term Latin BT therefore refers to the hypothetical Latin text from which all three Welsh versions are *ultimately* derived. Continued use of the title *Brut y Tywysogion* is justifiable despite the objections of David Dumville, who argues that the earliest attestation of the title is in the early modern rather than medieval period. Dumville instead proposes the title *Brenhinedd y Saesson*. However, the earliest usage of the title *Brut y Tywysogion* is in the *explicit* to the work in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 19, a manuscript of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version from c.1400, and it is therefore medieval in origin.² Though the title *Brenhinedd y Saesson* is attested in an earlier manuscript of c.1330, it refers specifically to the combination of the Welsh chronicle with English annalistic material. This was a work with a distinct historiographical purpose and as such it is doubly inappropriate to refer to the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and *Peniarth MS 20* versions of the chronicle by the same name.³ The surviving versions are grouped into the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version, the *Peniarth MS 20* version and *Brenhinedd y Saesson*. Dumville's edition refers to these texts as P

² Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 19, f. 143r., col. a, an *explicit* to *Brut y Tywysogion* in red ink, in the same hand as the main text (Daniel Huws' X91), which reads *Dywededic yu hyt hynn o Vrutt y Tywyssogyon, ac o Vrutt y Saeson rac llau*.

³ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, p. v.

(Peniarth MS 20 version), R (*Llyfr Coch Hergest* or Red Book of Hergest version), and S (*Brenhinedd y Saesson*), and this terminology is adopted in the following discussion.⁴

In the past *Brut y Tywysogion* has been used primarily as a source for information about the events it records, reflecting its importance as our most detailed native narrative for the period up to the loss of Welsh independence. Though some work has been done on its dependability compared to Welsh Latin chronicles of the same period, discussion of it as a work in and of itself has been relatively limited.⁵ For example, although it is often noted that BT was consciously compiled as a continuation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*, this has not been applied to the actual content of the chronicle in any systematic way.⁶ One of the aims of this chapter is to address this gap in scholarship, considering the historiographical purpose of *Brut y Tywysogion* and its significance to the chronicle as a whole, and relating this to the conclusions already reached about the compilation of vernacular historical works in Wales in previous chapters.

⁴ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, pp. v–x. It must be understood that they refer to the three versions, as established by Thomas Jones, rather than to separate manuscripts. This is an important distinction in the case of R, where *Llyfr Coch Hergest* is not used as the base-text for the 'Red Book of Hergest' version. Thomas Jones' edition of the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* consist of four volumes, with the Peniarth 20 version divided between the edition and translation/notes: *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS. 20*, ed. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1941); *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes, Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1952); *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes, Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1955); and *Brenhinedd y Saesson or the Kings of the Saxons, BM Cotton MS. Cleopatra B v and the Black Book of Basingwerk, NLW MS. 7006*, ed. and trans. by T. Jones (Cardiff, 1971).

⁵ See below, pp. 226–28.

⁶ *BT P20*, pp. xxxviii–xxxix; J. B. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 587–88; R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), p. 435; H. Pryce, 'Modern Nationality and the Medieval Past: the Wales of John Edward Lloyd', in *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths*, ed. by R. R. Davies and G. H. Jenkins (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 14–29 (24–25); P. Williams, *Historical Texts from Medieval Wales* (London, 2012), pp. xxv, xxix. More in-depth treatments include B. F. Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', in *y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol (Darlithau Dewi Sant)*, ed. by G. Bowen (Llandysul, 1974), pp. 274–302 (pp. 288–98), and J. B. Smith, *Yr Ymwybod â Hanes yng Nghymru yn yr Oesoedd Canol: Darlith Agoriadol* (Aberystwyth, 1989), especially pp. 7–10.

It is first essential to establish that in its present form(s), *Brut y Tywysogion* is not only a multi-layered text but a text whose conception as a Galfridian narrative is itself multi-layered. That the original late thirteenth-century Latin chronicle was envisaged as a continuation of *De gestis Britonum* is clear from the starting-point of all three surviving versions, 682.⁷ When it was translated into Welsh in the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version (R), before around 1350, it was combined with *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Ystoria Dared* to form a continuous narrative. The translation, as noted above, may have been undertaken specifically for inclusion in this collection, giving the translation itself a Galfridian dimension.⁸ The Peniarth 20 (P) version survives in only one medieval manuscript, which has no Galfridian connections, but *Brenhinedd y Saesson* occurs in a similar context to R.⁹

Brenhinedd y Saesson (S) shows evidence of association between the chronicle and Geoffrey's history on several levels. Firstly, a version of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion* was combined with English annalistic material in an attempt to create a work relating the history of the Welsh in a framework which continued the history of the British/English monarchy after it had passed under the control of the Saxons. It has been suggested that this represents a response on the part of the compiler to Geoffrey's statement at the end of his work that the subsequent history of the Britons and of the Saxon kings should be undertaken by different men.¹⁰ The compiler of the Latin original undertook the task which Geoffrey had assigned to

⁷ Or a date corresponding to 682, and the death of Cadwaladr. In the following discussion, when referring to particular years in *Brut y Tywysogion*, the reference will be to the actual dates established by Thomas Jones in his editions rather than to the dates according to the chronology of the three separate chronicles. *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. lxiv–lxv.

⁸ The Latin original may have been combined with a copy of Geoffrey's history, but if so the compiler of the *Llyfr Coch* version chose not to translate the work, opting instead for a combination of two pre-existing translations of *De gestis Britonum*. The only Latin manuscript from Wales containing a continuum comparable to that surviving in the vernacular is Exeter Cathedral MS 3514, but as discussed above the narrative created here relates more to English history.

⁹ For Peniarth MS 20, see above, pp. 39, 46, 73–74.

¹⁰ *BS*, pp. xi–xy; J. B. Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales: The Composition of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*', *Studia Celtica* 42 (2008), 55–86 (60–65).

Caradog of Llancarfan, but the compiler of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, probably at Whitland or Neath, disagreed with the idea that these tasks should be undertaken separately and attempted to combine the histories into one narrative.¹¹ It is extremely likely that this Latin version of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was already attached to a version of *De gestis Britonum* in Latin, with both being translated into Welsh together by 1330, perhaps at Valle Crucis.¹² At a later stage, this narrative, now in Welsh, was further extended with the addition of *Ystoria Dared*.

It is therefore clear that any discussion of the text as a planned historical work must take into account these various layers of composition. Any assessment of, for example, style or particular terminology must take into account the Welsh of all three surviving versions before gaining any understanding of the original Latin work, the original text of which is of course irrecoverable. Anything present in all three can be assumed to have been present in the Latin original, but something present in only one version was not necessarily an innovation on the part of the translator and may have been part of the original work: it is known that both R and P occasionally abbreviated their source, and S is heavily condensed throughout.¹³

The various incarnations are also distinct historical works. Though conceived as a continuation of Geoffrey's history, there is no indication that the Latin original formed part of a continuous narrative. This only becomes the case with R and S. But whereas the creation of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* continuum was probably part of the process of translation, with *Brenhinedd y Saesson* it seems to have been done before translation. These issues will be discussed more fully below.

¹¹ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 67–81.

¹² See above, pp. 44–46, 57. For the idea that the form of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was in some way based on the form of the colophon found in the version of Geoffrey's history translated with it, see *BS*, p. xiii; Smith, 'Historical Writing', 66; B. F. Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydeyn: a Fourteenth-Century Welsh Brut', in *Narrative in Celtic Tradition: Essays in Honor of Edgar M. Slotkin*, ed. by J. F. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 8–9 (Hamilton, NY, 2011), pp. 215–27 (226).

¹³ Jones, *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. lix–lxi.

Before this, however, the source materials of the Latin original must also be taken into account. The extent of the influence of each compiler/translator on the text is a difficult issue, but one which in the case of the Welsh versions can be partially determined by comparing the three to determine shared features. Something present in any of the surviving texts clearly did not go against the translator's conception of the work to such an extent that it required changing, and features shared between all three can be thought of as appropriate to the work in all its stages. That this is true of much of the material is unsurprising, since despite the subtle differences outlined above, the work in all its stages was conceived of in similar terms, as a narrative of the later history of the Britons, though sometimes in combination with that of the Saxons. But this is not necessarily true of the source materials used by the original Latin compiler, which opens up vexed questions about the nature of these materials and the extent to which a late-thirteenth century compiler left them unchanged or adapted them to his historiographical purposes. Though it may seem premature to enter into discussion of the treatment of source materials in a chronicle not now surviving in its original version or language given the reservations expressed above, it is essential to consider this question of sources in detail to provide firm ground for the following discussion.

THE LATIN CHRONICLES

The question of the exact date of the initial composition of Latin BT is one which will be discussed later, but the evidence of the text itself suggests a date some time after March 1282, when the continuous narrative shared by P and R ends.¹⁴ It is clear that the compiler used a number of sources, some of which are named in the text itself. These included annals of Strata Florida, the Prophecies of Myrddin, and a history of

¹⁴ See below, pp. 241–48.

the English kings called *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined*.¹⁵ It has however been appreciated for some time that the majority of *Brut y Tywysogion*'s source material derives from a body of Welsh Latin chronicles now represented by four surviving chronicles usually referred to collectively as *Annales Cambriae*.¹⁶ Given the importance of these texts to understanding the nature of the compiler's source material, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of them.

The earliest of these chronicles appears in London, British Library MS Harleian 3859, and its entries conclude at 954, its likely date of composition. This is now usually known as the A-text, and both the Cottonian and PRO chronicles, as well as the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*, are dependent on the ultimate source of this chronicle for much of their earlier sections. It should be noted, however, that this source contained material not now in the Harleian chronicle. In the present manuscript the Harleian chronicle occurs together with genealogies, a version of *Historia Brittonum* and *De mirabilibus Britanniae*, all of which together form a distinct unit. The chronicle is a copy of one compiled at St David's in the mid-tenth century.¹⁷

¹⁵ Strata Florida annals: *BT P20*, p. 203; *BT RB*, p. 240; not in *Brenhinedd y Saesson* but material taken from it is present, *BS*, p. 236. Prophecies of Myrddin: *BT P20* p. 226; *BT RB*, p. 268; *BS*, p. 256. It may be, however, that this reference is drawn from English chronicles. See L. Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chronicles* (Berkeley, CA, 1946), pp. 50, 102; *Willelmi Rishanger, quondam monachi s. Albani, et quorundam anonymorum, chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico tertio et Edwardo primo*, ed. by H. T. Riley (London, 1865), p. 94. *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined* is mentioned only in the *Llyfr Coch* version, but with reference to material also occurring in Peniarth 20 and *Brenhinedd y Saesson*: *BT RB*, p. 260.

¹⁶ K. Hughes, *The Welsh Latin Chronicles: 'Annales Cambriae' and Related Texts*, The Sir John Rhÿs Memorial Lecture for 1973 (London, 1974). This was also published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* 59 (1973), 233–58, and subsequently in Kathleen Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, *Studies in Celtic History* 2 (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 67–85. References in this chapter are to the last version. There are two connected Latin chronicles discussed by Hughes which I do not discuss in this chapter. *Cronica de Anglia* occurs in the same manuscript as *Cronica de Wallia*, Exeter, Cathedral Library MS 3514 and is composed mainly of extracts from the St David's annals and the Bury chronicle. A second set of annals in the same manuscript as the PRO chronicle (London, PRO MS E.164/1) show an interest mainly in Glamorgan and features considerable Welsh material from the 1250s onwards. *Celtic Britain*, pp. 76–77, 81–82.

¹⁷ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 68–73.

Discussion of the Welsh Latin chronicles is seriously hampered by the lack of editions of the texts. Whilst the Harleian chronicle can now be consulted in a reliable edition, the other related chronicles are only readily accessible in full in John Williams ab Ithel's Rolls Series edition of 1860, which is almost unusable.¹⁸ A transcription of the PRO chronicle is available online, and *Cronica de Wallia* is accessible in an edition by Thomas Jones,¹⁹ but the Cottonian chronicle is accessible only through consultation of the manuscript or facsimiles and the detailed work of comparing the different chronicles and determining their relationship to each other has hardly been undertaken.

The last significant work in this direction was that of Kathleen Hughes, who sketched out the development and relationship of these chronicles in a British Academy lecture in 1973.²⁰ Hughes' conclusions were further discussed and occasionally disputed by David Dumville.²¹ It is these discussions which form the main basis of the following descriptions of the remaining chronicles. Though these are sometimes called the B, C, and sometimes D and E texts, ab Ithel's terminology, here each chronicle is referred to under an individual title, taken either from the name of the manuscript in which each occurs or from a title given in the manuscript.²² Ab Ithel's terminology creates the mistaken impression that they are different versions of the same chronicle, rather than separate works. Each is attested in one manuscript only, and though sections of them are related to the other chronicles they are distinct historical narratives.

¹⁸ *Annales Cambriæ*, ed. by J. Williams ab Ithel (London, 1860).

¹⁹ PRO; "'Cronica de Wallia" and other documents from Exeter Cathedral Library MS. 3514', ed. by T. Jones, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 12 (1946), 27–44.

²⁰ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 67–85.

²¹ D. N. Dumville, review of Kathleen Hughes' *Welsh Latin Chronicles*, *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977–1978), 461–67.

²² The Harleian chronicle (A); the PRO chronicle (B); the Cottonian chronicle (C); *Cronica de Wallia*.

To begin with the annals in London, BL MS Cotton Domitian A.i, fos 138r–155r, or the 'C-version', here referred to as the Cottonian chronicle. Transcribed at the end of the thirteenth century, the chronicle opens with an Isidoran section on the six ages of the world into which the compiler inserted entries on British history derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth. This combination of Isidore and Geoffrey was the framework into which the annalist also inserted St David's annals.²³ Down to 734 he also rewrote these St David's annals according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, so the influence of Geoffrey's work is clear from this stage of Latin chronicle writing in Wales.²⁴

The Cottonian chronicle used the St David's text which was also the basis of the Harleian annals, but the Cottonian chronicle was also compiled at St David's and remains a St David's text until 1288, when it ends. Down to 1202 these St David's annals also form the basis for what has been called the B-text, the chronicle which appears in the flyleaves of London, National Archives, MS E.164/1, pp. 2–26, an abbreviated version of Domesday Book, henceforth referred to as the PRO chronicle.²⁵ Although the Public Record Office at which the manuscript was held has now been merged with the Historical Manuscripts Commission to form the National Archives, the older term 'PRO' is used here to maintain consistency with the terminology used by Kathleen Hughes. This chronicle also begins with an Isidoran section although one which differs from that of the Cottonian chronicle in being less integrated with the main text.²⁶ Though the PRO chronicle in its earlier sections has

²³ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 73–76; C. Brett, 'The Prefaces of Two Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 35 (1988), 63–73.

²⁴ For the influence of Geoffrey to 734, rather than Hughes' 689, see Dumville, *SC* 12/13, 462.

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of this text in its manuscript context, see C. A. Seyler, 'The Early Charters of Swansea and Gower, Part I', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 79 (1924), 59–79.

²⁶ It is unclear exactly when Hughes saw the Isidoran section as being attached to the chronicle, but Dumville suggests that the Isidoran sections in both the Cottonian and PRO chronicles were derived from a text preceding the annals at St David's but joined to both chronicles independently. Brett's more detailed study confirms Dumville's conclusions. Dumville, *SC* 12/13, 463–64; Brett, 'The

some features taken from Geoffrey, it is in some instances a better copy of their shared original than the Harleian annals.²⁷ It is clear that both the Cottonian and PRO chronicles are dependent on St David's annals to 1202, but they are independent derivations from this original, often differing in word order, wording and events recorded. The differences of wording are marked between 1136 and 1167, and the PRO text takes on independent features from 1189, finally diverging from the common source in 1202.²⁸

The subsequent sections of the PRO chronicle show the use of chronicles other than that of St David's. Hughes sees four distinct sections, the first being from 1189 to 1230, overlapping with the St David's chronicle to 1202. In this section the chronicle is very different from *Cronica de Wallia* and *Brut y Tywysogion* but is nevertheless clearly from native Wales and of south-western origin, which leads Hughes to suggest Whitland.²⁹ From 1231 to 1255 the chronicle draws on material from Strata Florida, very similar to the material behind the corresponding part of *Cronica de Wallia*. Hughes calls the subsequent section from 1255 to 1263 the 'fullest and most interesting part of the PRO annals'.³⁰ She argued that this detailed section came from the Cistercian house of Cwm Hir, an argument which has subsequently been confirmed in a detailed study.³¹

Prefaces of Two Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles', 70–73; see below, pp. 363–64.

²⁷ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 74.

²⁸ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 74–75. David Stephenson has questioned the tidiness of this 1202 'break' in the text, something which could in truth be done with many of the details of the process of composition of the Welsh Latin annals, and would be if they were more accessible and available. He does, however, agree that the PRO and Cottonian chronicle definitely diverge by the middle of the first decade of the thirteenth century. D. Stephenson, 'Gerald of Wales and *Annales Cambriae*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 60 (2010), 23–37 (25–28).

²⁹ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 79–80. For the argument that there is no positive evidence to link this section to a Cistercian house, see Stephenson, 'Gerald of Wales and *Annales Cambriae*', 27–28.

³⁰ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 80.

³¹ D. Stephenson, 'The chronicler of Cwm-hir abbey, 1257–63: the construction of a Welsh chronicle', in *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages*, ed. by R. A. Griffiths and P. R. Schofield (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 29–45.

These three sections have been described as speaking 'with the voice of an independent Wales', in contrast to the increasingly Anglo-Norman tone of the St David's annals from 1160 onwards, and by extension the Cottonian chronicle from 1160 to 1288.³² But from 1263 to its end in 1286, the PRO chronicle can be seen as Anglo-Welsh in tone and content, reflecting the origin of this compiled chronicle and other documents contained in the same manuscript at the abbey of Neath, where they were probably copied into the Breviate Domesday manuscript. It was at Neath, around 1300×1304 that this Welsh chronicle material was combined with English annals deriving from the Cistercian house of Waverley, annals inserted into the text from as early as the 1130s.³³

Dumville argued that the date at which the intrusive Waverley material appears in the PRO chronicle coincided with the date at which the Welsh Cistercian material appears at the end of the St David's chronicle, and that the Welsh Cistercian material (1189–1263) was therefore combined with Waverley annals at Neath and only afterwards was this composite chronicle of 1189–1286 combined with St David's annals to 1202. This was in contrast to Hughes' suggestion that the Welsh Cistercian material was combined with the St David's chronicle at Strata Florida, before arriving at Neath.³⁴ However, Stephenson's demonstration of the presence of Waverley material from the 1130s invalidates Dumville's objections.³⁵

The fourth chronicle to be discussed is in many ways the most relevant to the question of the use of sources in the original Latin version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, because for a certain period it appears to be closely related to the three Welsh versions of BT in a way which indicates that it is probably derived from the source material of

³² Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 79.

³³ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 80–84; Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 73, 78–79; Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts', 49–51.

³⁴ Dumville, *SC* 12/13, 464; Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 85.

³⁵ Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts', 49–51.

Latin BT.³⁶ A later hand entitles it *Cronica de Wallia* in the manuscript in which it occurs, which, along with its late discovery, has largely saved it from being lumped together under the name *Annales Cambriae*. The manuscript itself, Exeter Cathedral Library MS. 3514, is discussed elsewhere in the thesis, and is significant as one of the few Latin manuscripts where a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* is not only directly preceded by Dares Phrygius' *De excidio Troiae historia* but also followed by a historical work that can be seen as a continuation of Geoffrey's narrative, Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*.³⁷

The chronicle runs from 1190 to 1266, but with several gaps. There are no entries for the years 1217–1227, 1229, 1232, 1249–1253 and 1263, inclusive.³⁸ The section from 1190 to 1217 as well as the years 1228 and 1230 are very close to the surviving versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*. From 1231 to 1246 the chronicle is practically identical to the PRO chronicle. From 1254 onwards the entries become very different, and are (with the exception of 1255) a conflation of St David's annals very close to the Cottonian chronicle and the chronicle of Bury St Edmund's.³⁹

Cronica de Wallia's focus is on Deheubarth and it shows Cistercian features. The annals it shares with the PRO chronicle for its central section originate from Strata Florida, and it is likely given the close agreement between the first section and *Brut y*

³⁶ CW, 29; Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 78.

³⁷ See above, pp. 64–65, and below, pp. 334–35; J. Crick, 'The Power and the Glory: Conquest and Cosmology in Edwardian Wales (Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3514)', in *Textual Cultures: Cultural Texts*, ed. by O. Da Rold and E. Treharne (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 21–42 (p. 38).

³⁸ The chronology given in the text is often a year out. After the entry for 1205, the annal for 1206 records an event actually occurring in 1205, and the following annal for 1207 records the events of 1208. There is therefore a further gap of 1206–1207. Every year after the 1207 annal until the gap in the years 1217–1227 should be moved forward, so that the gap of 1217–1227 actually corresponds to the years 1218–1227, with the last annal before the gap reporting the events of 1217. Discussion of these annals from this point on will refer to them in terms of the years they correspond to, so that the annal entitled 1214 in *Cronica de Wallia* will be described as the entry for 1215.

³⁹ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 77–9; J. B. Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr: a Textual and Historical Study', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 20 (1962–1964), 261–82 (274–76); *The Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds 1212–1301*, ed. by A. Gransden (London and Edinburgh, 1964).

Tywysogion that this portion also derives from Strata Florida. The fact that this material went no later than 1255, however, suggests that *Cronica de Wallia* was not compiled at Strata Florida itself. The other historical and genealogical texts present in the Exeter manuscript indicate that it originated at Whitland, and this is therefore *Cronica de Wallia*'s likely place of composition.⁴⁰

In this general picture of the development of *Cronica de Wallia* there is substantial consensus, but there is some disagreement over its purpose as an historical work. J. Beverley Smith argued that it was compiled in Ystrad Tywi between 1277 and 1283 to support Rhys ap Maredudd in his attempts to regain control over all Ystrad Tywi. He saw a preference for Rhys' grandfather Rhys Gryg in the earlier part of the chronicle, and argued that this reflected the compiler's aim to depict Rhys Gryg as the ruler of a unified Ystrad Tywi centred on Dinefwr.⁴¹ Hughes found these arguments unconvincing, and regarded the omissions and emphasis in particular parts of the chronicle as evidence for the material available to the compiler and the nature of much of the chronicle as 'brief extracts' from fuller material.⁴²

This debate about the nature of *Cronica de Wallia* (henceforth CW) has some relevance to the following discussion of *Brut y Tywysogion*, since the relationship of these texts can give some indication of the process by which *Brut y Tywysogion* was compiled. The nature and purpose of CW as an historical text determines how different it is likely to be from the common source it partially shares with BT. It has already been stated that there is close correspondence between these works for the years 1190–1205, 1208–1217, and 1228–1231. CW does not contain all the

⁴⁰ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 79; Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 277–81.

⁴¹ Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 262–65, 273–74.

⁴² Though this comment about brief extracts contrasts with Hughes' statement that in the 1213 annal the compiler of *Cronica de Wallia* gives a 'short statement which has been very much amplified in the Peniarth 20 version of the *Brut*', suggesting that the relative fullness of *Brut y Tywysogion* is down to later expansion. Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 78, fn 67.

information in the three Welsh versions of BT nor vice-versa. The best way to explain the relationship between them is that CW for these years was compiled using a chronicle which was also used by the compiler of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion*. The numerous instances where BT is fuller can be explained by the use of other sources, but also by deliberate omission on the part of the compiler of CW, omissions which often indicate, according to Smith, the compiler's rejection of events which portray Rhys Gryg in an unfavourable light.⁴³ Such omissions are just as likely in Hughes' picture of CW's compilation but this interpretation leaves rather less potential for explaining them individually.

Some of Hughes' criticisms of Smith's arguments are easily answered. Her complaint that Rhys Gryg lacks an eulogy with his obituary notice is tempered by the chronicle's statement that he was buried *cum diro planctu et honore maximo*.⁴⁴ Her argument that the later entries in the chronicle are inconsistent with the presumed political motivation is more convincing.⁴⁵ Taking both Hughes and Smith's arguments into account, it is clear that CW is a text compiled retrospectively, and even if a more concrete bias is elusive it is one that focuses on the activities of the descendants of the Lord Rhys in keeping with the other texts which appear at the end of the Exeter manuscript.⁴⁶

Hughes argued that the material from which CW was compiled originated at Strata Florida, but agreed with Smith that it was most likely created at Whitland.⁴⁷ The Strata Florida document, however, went no later than 1255. A possible argument for the closeness between CW and BT for 1190–1231 is that CW was itself abstracted

⁴³ For example, Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 264.

⁴⁴ 'with fearful lamentation and great honour', CW, 38.

⁴⁵ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 78.

⁴⁶ Smith's observation on the use of the phrase *tunc temporis*, 'at that particular time', is noteworthy in this respect. 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 264.

⁴⁷ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 79.

from Latin BT. This can be considered unlikely for a number of reasons. First, the date of CW's compilation, probably in the 1280s, makes it very close to the supposed date of Latin BT's compilation. However, the discussion of the date of Latin BT below will show that the compilation of Latin BT may have taken place considerably later.⁴⁸ If it is assumed that the close similarity of 1190–1231 shows CW's dependence on an earlier stage in the work which was still the work of the ultimate compiler of BT, from perhaps the 1270s, there is the issue of why the close correspondence only extends to 1231. Overall it is likelier that this section of CW is dependent on Latin annals which were also available at Strata Florida and probably originated there, which must be thought of as different to Latin BT. The difference lies in the influence of a single compiler, marshalling and manipulating his source material to create a coherent historical work. The following discussion will indicate that the influence of such a compiler is minimal, and that we should regard Latin BT as faithfully representing the source material available to its compiler, including chronicle material kept at Strata Florida.

Cronica de Wallia should not, therefore, be seen as a sort of Ur-text lying behind *Brut y Tywysogion*, as it is an historical composition with its own agenda. It is not the source of BT. Nevertheless it is the closest we are likely to get to this source material, and a comparison of the chronicle with the three Welsh versions of BT is the closest we can get to the original Latin BT. CW was composed at some point after 1266 using a chronicle for the years 1190–1205, 1208–1217, and 1228–1231 which was very close to that used for those years in the Latin chronicle now surviving in three Welsh translations of later versions, Latin BT. There are a number of unknowns in this picture: in addition to the manipulations and changes of the CW compiler we

⁴⁸ See below, pp. 240–48.

must also contend with those of the translators into Welsh and changes made between Latin BT and the versions from which the Welsh were translated. It is also unknown exactly how close the text used by the Latin BT compiler and that used by the compiler of CW were. Furthermore, there is the possibility of literary embellishment on the part of the CW compiler. It is nevertheless hoped that a close comparison of the two with these caveats in mind will go some way to illuminating the process of the compilation of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion*. Its purpose is not to provide absolute conclusions but to offer guidelines as to how we should expect the compiler of Latin BT to have treated his sources.

COMPARISON OF *CRONICA DE WALLIA* AND *BRUT Y TYWYSOGION*

Investigation of differences between CW and BT which are arguably due to changes made by the compiler of Latin BT will indicate the way this compiler treated his source materials. Whilst all three versions of BT will therefore need to be considered, it should be noted that the Peniarth 20 version is closest to CW and may therefore best represent Latin BT for the section under consideration. After 1198, *Brenhinedd y Saesson* ceases to be an independent translation, instead combining the Peniarth 20 and *Llyfr Coch* versions, and need not therefore be considered.⁴⁹ Although the other Welsh Latin chronicles are related to BT in various ways, the emphasis here will be on the relationship of CW and BT. The lack of work done on the Cottonian and PRO chronicles means that the exact nature of the relationship remains uncertain, and they are largely ignored for the purpose of this comparison. It is acknowledged, however, that work remains to be done on these other chronicles which would illuminate the relationship between BT and the Latin chronicles generally.

⁴⁹ BS, p. xxxix.

In the first shared annal, that of 1190, it is clear that the compiler of Latin BT changed his source material little:

Annus M.C. nonagesimus ab Incarnacione Domini. In hoc anno Ricardus Anglie et Philippus, Gallorum rex, cum inmensa multitudine comitum et baronum Ierosolimnam perrexerunt, secum ducentes Cantuariensem archiepiscopum nomine Baldewinum. In hoc anno Resus Griffini filius castellum operatus est in Kedewelly [CW].⁵⁰

Deg mlyned a phedwar vgeint achant amil oed oet krist pan aeth phylip vrenhin freing arichart. vrenhin lloegyr a baldwin archesgob keint ac aneiryf o yeirll abarwnyeitalluosogrwyd ereill achroes y gaervssalem. yny vlwydyn hono y gwnaeth rys vab gruffud kastell ketweli. ac y bu varw gwenlliant verch rys blodeu athegwch kymry oll [P].⁵¹

Deg mlyned a phetwar vgein a chant a mil oed oet Crist pann aeth Phylip, urenhin Ffreinc, a Rickert, urenhin Lloegyr, a Baltwyn, archescob Keint, a diruawr luosogrwyd o ieirll a barwnyeit y gyt ac wynt y Garussalem. Yn y ulwydyn honno yd adeilawd yr Arglwyd Rys castell Ketweli; ac y bu uarw Gwenllian verch Rys, blodeu a thegwch holl Gymry [R].⁵²

⁵⁰ '1190 years from the Lord's incarnation. In this year Richard of England and Philip, king of the French, with a vast multitude of counts and barons, advanced to Jerusalem, conducting Baldwin, the archbishop of Canterbury, with them. In this year Rhys, son of Gruffudd, had a castle constructed at Cydweli'. CW, 29.

⁵¹ '1190 was the age of Christ when Philip, king of France, Richard, king of England, Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, and innumerable earls and barons, and many others, went as crusaders to Jerusalem. In that year Rhys ap Gruffudd built the castle of Cydweli and Gwenllian ferch Rhys, the flower and fairness of all Wales, died'. *BT P20*, p. 132.

⁵² '1190 was the age of Christ when Philip, king of France, Richard, king of England, Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, and a great multitude of earls and barons with them to Jerusalem. In that year the Lord Rhys built the castle of Cydweli; and Gwenllian ferch Rhys, the flower and fairness

Anno Domini .m.c.xc. yd aeth Phelyp, brenhin Freinc, a Richard, brenhin Lloegyr, a Baldewyn archescob y Gaerusalem, a dirvawr llu ganthunt o ieirll a barwnieit. Ac y gwnaeth Rys ap Grufud castell yn Ketweli. Ac y bu varw Wenlliant verch Rys, blodev gwraed Kymre o tegwch [S].⁵³

It is obvious from comparison of the three Welsh versions that Latin BT must have been almost identical to CW, with the single exception of the addition of Gwenllian ferch Rhys' obituary. In particular, the terminology of CW is so accurately reflected in the three Welsh chronicles that Latin BT must have kept it intact from their shared source. The only other addition is P's insertion of the word *achroes*, to clarify their status as crusaders.⁵⁴ *Brenhinedd y Saesson's* shortening of the annal is typical of this work as a whole.

The addition of Gwenllian's obituary is characteristic of the main difference between CW and *Brut y Tywysogion*, in that the *Brutiau* often contain information which is additional to that of CW. Such entries can be explained in two ways: either the entry was taken from another source by the compiler of Latin BT, or it was present in the common source of CW and Latin BT but the compiler of CW chose to omit it. A list of substantial additions in the *Brutiau* compared to CW, admittedly a somewhat subjective category, reveals that of 52 noted, in broad terms 22 concern

of all Wales, died'. *BT RB*, p. 172.

⁵³ 'A.D. 1190 Philip, king of France, Richard, king of England, and Archbishop Baldwin went to Jerusalem with a great host of earls and barons. And Rhys ap Gruffudd built a castle in Cydweli. And Gwenllian ferch Rhys died, the flower of the women of Wales for fairness'. *BS*, pp. 186–8.

⁵⁴ References to the use of the cross as the badge of a crusader in Medieval Latin is found from the late twelfth/early thirteenth century, and as such could have been found in Latin BT, although agreement here between CW, R and S suggests that it found its way into P's source, perhaps as a gloss. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London, 1975–present), s.v. *crucesignare*, *crucesignatio*, *crux*, pp. 521–22, 525.

Deheubarth or Deheubarth figures primarily, 13 Gwynedd, 5 Powys, 6 Rhwng Gwy a Hafren and 5 events beyond Wales.

Whilst in no way exhaustive, this indicates that the additional information, whilst relating to events across Wales and beyond, in some ways repeats the focus of CW on events in Deheubarth. Places in Ceredigion are prominent in this Deheubarth group, reflecting perhaps the compiler of Latin BT's access to additional Strata Florida material or the CW compiler's lack of interest in such material. As mentioned above, some of the details not present in CW have been explained by Smith as due to deliberate omission on behalf of its compiler, who chose to include entries showing Rhys Gryg, son of the Lord Rhys of Deheubarth, in a favourable light and to omit those critical of him.⁵⁵ This is an element of the compiler's deliberate portrayal of Rhys Gryg as the ruler of a unified Ystrad Tywi centred on Dinefwr as a precursor to the contemporary ambitions of Rhys ap Maredudd in the 1270s.

Not all of the additional material can be explained in this way, however, and a comparison of the two texts suggests that the compiler of Latin BT had other material to hand. This material is sometimes added to the end of a narrative shared by CW and BT, for example in the years 1197 and 1230. Often the additional material is included in the midst of entries common to both CW and BT. There are, however, some occasions where the narrative structure of BT entries is so different to that of CW so as to suggest that the compiler of Latin BT chose to utilise the structure of an alternative source rather than that used by CW.

These complex questions of the relationship between the two texts can be illustrated by comparing summaries of some of the annals in question. The entry for 1215 demonstrates the difficulty of determining whether the fullness and detail of

⁵⁵ Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 262–64.

Brut y Tywysogion is dependent on a source separate from that shared with CW, or whether the brevity of CW is due to its compiler's drastic curtailment of the material available to him. The summary of *Brut y Tywysogion* is dependent on P:

Brut y Tywysogion: Strife between John and Northerners/barons, because of John breaking his word and his unwillingness to follow past custom. Magnates of England and Wales make pact against the king, details given. Despite the persuasion of bishops, John refuses their request and takes the cross in fear.

Northerners and Welsh rise against him, the Northerners winning London. Llywelyn takes Shrewsbury. Giles de Breos, bishop of Hereford and one of the king's first opponents, sends his brother Robert to Brycheiniog, where he is honourably received and gains Pencelli, Abergavenny, White, Grosmont and Skenfrith castles. Giles follows on and captures Brecon, Radnor, Hay, Blaenllyfni and Builth without resistance. He leaves Painscastle, Colwyn and Elfael to Gwallter ab Einion Clud.

Meanwhile Rhys Ieuanc and Maelgwn ap Rhys overcome Dyfed and pillage Cemaes, burning Arberth and Maenclochog. Maelgwn and Owain ap Gruffudd meet Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in Gwynedd. Rhys Ieuanc captures Cydweli and Carnwyllion with a great host, along with Loughor. He lays siege to Hugh's castle at Talybont, takes it by force and kills the garrison. When he makes for Swansea, the garrison burns the town for fear of him. He camps at Oystermouth, taking and burning it the next day and gaining all Gower within three days. He returns victorious. Rhys Fychan released from king's prison after hostage exchange.

Iorwerth of Talley made bishop of St David's, and Cadwgan of Llandyfai, abbot of Whitland, made bishop of Bangor. Giles of Hereford makes peace with king for fear of Pope, but dies at Gloucester of an illness, his brother Reginald receiving his patrimony having married Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's daughter. Pope Innocent assembles a council at the Lateran which renews ecclesiastical laws and discusses aiding Jerusalem.

Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, with a great host, captures Carmarthen within five days, and then destroys Llansteffan, Laugharne and St Clear's. They enter Ceredigion and besiege Cardigan. They capture Newcastle Emlyn and the men of Cemaes surrender to Llywelyn, with the castle of Newport, which is

destroyed. The garrison of Cardigan, realising their position, surrender to Llywelyn, as do those of Cilgerran the next day. Llywelyn and all the princes of Wales return home happily rejoicing with victory. Names of the princes listed, in three groups representing Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth. Names of castles overcome listed as Swansea, Cydweli, Carmarthen, Llansteffan, St Clears, Laugharne, Newport, Cardigan, Cilgerran. Weather said to have been unusually calm and mild in winter for the expedition.⁵⁶

Cronica de Wallia: King John with many other men take the cross. Almost all the barons rebel against him, forcing their way to the sea and taking London and many castles. King attacks barons and holds the coast with some destruction. Bishop Giles of Hereford obtains his patrimony, Prince Llywelyn takes Shrewsbury, Montgomery and Cymaron, while the princes of South Wales led by Maelgwn invade the king's lands, destroying castles and burning towns. General council held at Rome under Pope Innocent at which ecclesiastical business is discussed. Almost all archbishops and bishops of all Christendom summoned to this council. Two Welshmen made bishops of St David's and Bangor: the Premonstratensian Iorwerth of Talley and Cadwgan of Whitland, described as eloquent and wise. Towards Christmas Llywelyn enters South Wales with a large army and in less than three weeks takes Carmarthen, St Clears, Llansteffan, Laugharne, Newport, Cardigan and Cilgerran with their adjacent lands and cantrefi, destroying all those castles except Cardigan and Cilgerran and returning home with joyful victory.⁵⁷

It should be apparent that *Brut y Tywysogion* has a great deal more detail than CW, but that there are no substantial points of disagreement between the two. The structure of each entry is broadly similar, and any difference is usually due to *Brut y Tywysogion* giving more information than CW, for example the long account of Welsh campaigns in the south compared with CW's brief *principes uero Suthwallie*

⁵⁶ *BT P20*, pp. 164–69; *BT RB*, pp. 200–206; *BS* pp. 210–14. The description of Giles as bishop of Hereford is placed after Robert's expedition in *BT RB*, which also fails to mention Grosmont and Castellnewydd Emlyn. *BT P20* mistakenly has Rhys gaining all Morgannwg rather than all Gower, and wrongly describes Cadwgan as abbot of Llandyfai.

⁵⁷ CW, 35–36.

*capite Mailgone terras regis inuadentes haut modica castra destruxerunt, uillas et ciuitates combusserunt.*⁵⁸ There are one or two instances where CW provides extra detail, such as the statement that Llywelyn took Montgomery and Cymaron as well as Shrewsbury, or the description of Cadwgan of Whitland as *uir mire facundie et sapiente*.⁵⁹ While there is nothing to indicate absolutely that the differences are not mainly due to drastic abridgement in CW, it may also be that *Brut y Tywysogion*'s fuller account of, for example, the southern campaigns of Rhys Ieuanc and Maelgwn ap Rhys was derived from a source independent of the common source of CW and Latin BT. Another indication of additional source material may be the list at the end of *Brut y Tywysogion*: it could be postulated that, having included the more detailed account of the Welsh campaigns of that year from his other source, the compiler of Latin BT saw that the ancestor of CW merely listed Llywelyn's conquests. He decided on this basis to list the castles taken in that year at the end of the annal, adding some of those taken in the earlier southern campaign. On the other hand, the list could have been present in the common source along with the detailed accounts of campaigns, offering a template for CW's abridging of the account.

The text of the PRO chronicle comes fairly close to both accounts. Its account of the campaigns of Maelgwn ap Rhys and Rhys Ieuanc's southern campaigns does not agree in every detail with that of *Brut y Tywysogion*, and is somewhat briefer, but it comes far closer in terms of detail than CW.⁶⁰ It suggests that any additional material in BT was derived from Cistercian material which may also have been accessible to the CW compiler. Overall, it offers no clear guidance as to the exact

⁵⁸ 'The princes of South Wales led by Maelgwn, attacking the lands of the king, destroyed no small number of castles and burned townships and major towns'. CW, 35.

⁵⁹ 'a remarkably eloquent and wise man'. CW, 35. For the significance of the latter entry, see Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 279–80.

⁶⁰ PRO, s.a. 1236=1215.

nature of CW and Latin BT's common source and to the question of which text best represents it in this annal.

The 1215 annal can therefore be said to offer some indications of the relationship between CW, Latin BT and their common source, but no clear conclusions. Consideration of another annal will therefore be necessary. The entries for 1210 are of a comparable length in both texts, and will therefore offer clearer guidance since possible abridgement on the part of CW's compiler is less of an issue. Both entries are again summarised, with *Brut y Tywysogion* P again given priority:

Brut y Tywysogion: John goes to Ireland with a great army, taking territory and castles from Hugh de Lacy's sons. Having received homage of all in Ireland and seized the wife and son of William de Breos, along with the son's wife and children, he returns to England where William de Breos' wife and son are put to a dire death in Windsor. The earl of Chester builds castles at Degannwy, previously destroyed by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth out of fear of John, and at Holywell. Llywelyn ravages the earl's territory. Rhys Gryg makes peace with the king and gets Llandovery with his help, the garrison having surrendered.

Gwenwynwyn regains his territory with the king's help, and Maelgwn ap Rhys joyously makes peace with the king, breaking his oath with his nephews Rhys and Owain, and goes against Penweddig with an army of French and Welsh, encamping at Cilcennin. Rhys and Owain, sons of Gruffudd, attack and rout Maelgwn's army at night with three hundred men. Cynan ap Hywel and Gruffudd ap Cadwgan, Maelgwn's nephew and chief counsellor respectively, captured. Einion ap Caradog among those slain. Maelgwn flees. Sheriff of Gloucester fortifies Builth in wake of Welsh attacks. Matilda de Breos dies at Llanbadarn Fawr, having taken the habit, and is buried at Strata Florida alongside her husband, Gruffudd.⁶¹

Cronica de Wallia: John takes great army to Ireland, joined by supporters there. Finds that everyone opposed to him had fled the island from excessive fear, but others ask for his mercy, of which he is devoid. Free from pity, he

⁶¹ *BT P20*, pp. 152–54; *BT RB*, pp. 188–90; *BS*, p. 202.

neither receives his barons' love nor recalls the services his lieges had given him, and he wishes to disinherit them and get everything for himself. William the younger of Brycheiniog presented to him with his mother and wife and children, and later sent to prison in England where a wondrously miserable death destroyed them. Hostages given for peace, laws enacted and king returns home, where he burdens churches with extraordinary taxes. The Cistercian order suffers especially, to the point where they are almost destroyed.

Meanwhile, the earl of Chester with many men prepares to march against North Wales and build a castle at Degannwy, which the North Welsh had not long before ruined and abandoned for fear of the earl. Sheriff Fulk of Pembroke and Maelgwn ap Rhys go at the same time to Dineirth castle which belongs to the sons of Gruffudd, but the young defenders resist their attempts to set fire to the castle, a credit to their nation that they are willing to accept death rather than retreat before an English army. Fulk and his army shamefully retreat, pursued by Gruffudd's sons.

Sheriff Engelard of Gloucester builds a castle at Builth. A small force of Welshmen bravely resist the English army, killing at least 40. The next day the English complete their aim and occupy the land around with little resistance.⁶²

The level of detail is here comparable in both texts, but there is a considerable difference in the emphasis and description of particular events. Whereas in CW John's campaign in Ireland is described in relation to the king's cruel character, in BT the events there are related in a fairly matter-of-fact way, the only judgement being the description of William de Breos the younger and his mother Matilda's deaths in Windsor as *dybryt agheu*.⁶³ The reference to extraordinary ecclesiastical taxes and their impact on the Cistercian order is missing from BT, which is in keeping with the slightly more secular focus of the chronicle.⁶⁴

⁶² CW, 33–34.

⁶³ 'a dire death', *BT P20*, p. 152. The *Llyfr Coch* version has *anrugarawc agheu*, 'a pitiless death', *BT RB*, p. 188.

⁶⁴ See below, pp. 359–60.

The emphasis in the account of the earl of Chester's campaign in Gwynedd Is Conwy is different in the two chronicles. In CW he marches against North Wales, *Norwalliam*, but in BT it is against Llywelyn specifically. In CW the North Welsh had destroyed Degannwy for fear of the earl of Chester, but in BT it is John who is feared. Similar differences exist in the account of Maelgwn ap Rhys and Sheriff Fulk of Pembroke's joint campaign: in BT Maelgwn ap Rhys is presented as leading a joint force of French and Welsh against his nephews, who attack at night with a small force and put his army to flight. In CW, however, Maelgwn and Fulk, the latter unnamed in BT, are given equal billing as leaders of the expedition, and in contrast to BT in the aftermath of the battle the focus is on Fulk's flight rather than Maelgwn's. In CW the focus is strongly on the courage of Maelgwn's nephews, his enemies, although BT also indicates sympathy with them by its description of Maelgwn as an oath-breaker. The differences are not only those of emphasis - CW details an attack on the castle of Dineirth, which lies in the commote of Anhuniog, whereas BT reports a campaign in the cantref of Penweddig, still in Ceredigion but much further north.

There are also details present in BT but not in CW. Notable among these are the death of Matilda de Breos, the restoration of Gwenwynwyn's lands, the names of those captured and dead from Maelgwn's supporters and Rhys Gryg's capture of Llandovery. The first of these can be explained by Latin BT's compiler's use of additional *Strata Florida* material, perhaps the annals of the monastery which would probably have held such information regarding the burial of prominent nobles at the abbey.⁶⁵ The last of them is particularly interesting as it involves the figure who has been seen as the focus for this part of CW, Rhys Gryg. If Rhys' capture of Llandovery can be understood as an event which conveys a negative impression of him then its

⁶⁵ See below, p. 359.

omission from CW is explicable, as Smith argues that material critical of Rhys was omitted from CW.⁶⁶ It may be that mention of Rhys' attack on Llandovery was considered unsuitable for inclusion since it was accomplished with the help of King John, a figure who came under such criticism earlier.

The differences in emphasis and specific details between the two chronicles for this annal suggest that the compiler of Latin BT may have had access to material other than the chronicle which was the source of CW. This suspicion is further confirmed when the close relationship between much of BT and CW is considered, as it suggests that the compiler of Latin BT was unlikely to change the material he used to any great degree. Another occasion when it is likely that BT contains material independent of the source of CW is in 1217, when the Welsh chronicles have a long account of Prince Louis of France's invasion of England totally lacking from CW. If the compiler of CW had chosen to leave out such material it seems unlikely that the preceding year in the text would contain information about Louis' invasion. That it does is evidence that BT's full account of the battle of Lincoln is derived from an independent source.⁶⁷

The close relationship between BT and CW can therefore only be said to exist for certain sections of the period when their accounts overlap, and there are additionally several complicating factors, not least changes on the part of the CW compiler and the BT compiler's access to additional material. Nevertheless a close comparison of the two will yield important information regarding the compiler of Latin BT's use of his source material.

It should be emphasised that in contrast to the two examples above, in most of the years for which both BT and CW have entries the two are very close. There are

⁶⁶ Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 263.

⁶⁷ CW, 36–37; *BT P20*, pp. 171–79; *BT RB*, pp. 208–14.

some years for which the correspondence is so close that it is reasonable to suppose that Latin BT echoed the phrasing of the source shared with CW exactly, for example in 1195.⁶⁸ There are, however, other years where the correspondence between the annals is close but there are small differences in phrasing, a good example being the annal for 1199:

Mailgun prouide et caute exercitum collegit; quo collecto domum quam
Griffinus apud Dineirth edificauerat, uiriliter inuasit, et quotquot ibi repperit
partim interfecit, partim incarcerationuit. Griffinus castellum de Kilgerran dolo
optinuit. Hoc etiam anno Ricardus rex Anglie castellum cuiusdam baronis sibi
obstinati obsidens et a quodam de castello ictu sagitte, que Anglice alblaster
vocatur, percussus uitam finiuit. Johannes uero frater eius regio honore
sublimatus ei successit in regnum. [CW]⁶⁹

Blwydyn wedy hyny y kynullawd maelgwn ap rys llu ac y kyrchawd am ben
kastell dineirth a wnathoed gruffud achymeint ac agauas ef yno owyr rei
aladawd arei agarcharawd. agruffud a gafas kastell kilgerran [drwy dwyll] ac
ay kynhalyawd. yny vlwydyn hono val y byd richar vrenhin yn ymlad a
chastell barwn ydaw a oed yn y erbyn y brathawd vn or castell ef achwarel

⁶⁸ The only differences here are that BT name the castle as Cymaron and CW's addition of an obituary for Rhodri ab Owain. CW, 30; *BT P20*, pp. 135–36; *BT RB*, pp. 174–75; *BS*, pp. 190–91; *BT P20 Tr.*, p. 190.

⁶⁹ 'Maelgwn cautiously and with foresight assembled an army; having collected it he manfully took possession of the fortified dwelling that Gruffudd had built at Dineirth, and of those he found there some he killed and others he imprisoned. Gruffudd obtained the castle of Cilgerran through deceit. Also in this year King Richard of England was resolutely besieging the castle of a certain baron of his, and from that castle he was struck by an arrow, which in English is called an arbalest, the strike ended his life. However, John, his brother, was raised to the dignity of kingship and succeeded him in the kingdom'. 'Cronica de Wallia', ed. Jones, 32. The Welsh versions suggest that *domus* should be understood as a fortified house or a castle, with fortified house being a meaning attested in British Medieval Latin. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London, 1975–present), s.v. *domus*, p. 720.

yny deruynawd y hoedyl. ac yna y dyrchafwyt jeuan y vrawt yn vrenhin wedy ef. [P]⁷⁰

Y vlwydyn racwyneb y goresgynawd Maelgwn ap Rys gastell Dineirth, a adeilassei Ruffud ap Rys; a chymeint ac a gauas yno o wyr, llad rei a wnaeth a charcharu ereill. Ac yna y goresgynawd Gruffud ap Rys drwy dwyll gastell Kilgeran. Y vlwydyn hono, val yd oed Rickert, vernhin Lloeger, yn ymlad a chastell neb vn varwn a oedwrthwyneb idaw, y brathwyt a chwarel; ac o'r brath hwnw y bu varw. Ac yna y dyrchafwyt Jeuan, y vrawt, yn vrenhin. [R]⁷¹

What becomes clear from comparison of the Latin and Welsh chronicles is that whilst the substance of the sentence is kept, elements such as adverbs (*prouide*, *caute*, *uiriliter*) and adjectives (*obstinatus*) are ignored, as is the passage regarding the English name of the arbalest. This assumes that these words and phrases were present in the source of Latin BT as well as that of CW, which cannot be certain. It may be that they were added by the compiler of CW, but generally this would go against the brevity and extractive nature of the text. Further study of the text as a whole would indicate the likelihood of the addition of descriptive words and phrases by its compiler. *Uiriliter*, in particular, seems a favourite word in the chronicle, but even so this need not mean they were added by the CW compiler rather than present in his

⁷⁰ 'The year after that, Maelgwn ap Rhys collected a host and fell upon the castle of Dineirth, which Gruffudd had built. And of those men he found there, some he killed and some he imprisoned. And Gruffudd got the castle of Cilgerran [through treachery] and kept it. In that year, as King Richard was attacking the castle of a baron of his who was opposing him, one from the castle wounded him with a quarrel so that his life was ended. And then his brother John was raised to be king after him.' The words in brackets were added by an early corrector of the text. *BT P20*, p. 145; *BT P20 Tr.*, p. 192.

⁷¹ 'The next year Maelgwn ap Rhys conquered the castle of Dineirth which Gruffudd ap Rhys had built, and of those men he found there, he killed some and imprisoned others. And then Gruffudd ap Rhys conquered the castle of Cilgerran through treachery. That year, as Richard, king of England, was attacking the castle of a certain baron who was opposing him, he was wounded by a quarrel, and from that wound he died. And then John, his brother, was raised to the kingship'. *BT RB*, p. 182.

source material, and for the current discussion it is assumed that they were present in his source.⁷² The shared source of CW and BT certainly had some elaborate literary features: one of the most elaborate sections of CW has been seen as indebted to sources shared with BT, namely the obituary of the Lord Rhys.⁷³ The compiler of Latin BT may have dropped some of these more elaborate features, though he certainly kept many of them. The fact that in this case both independent translations of Latin BT do not contain these features suggests that it was the Latin compiler who jettisoned them.⁷⁴

Comparison of CW and BT suggests that the Latin BT compiler, while reflecting the substance of his source, may also have had a tendency to tone down some of its more descriptive features. This is also especially apparent for the years 1228, 1230 and 1231. Taking 1228 as an example, a comparison of the annals reveals that although there are some differences, the relationship between the Welsh and Latin texts is a close one, far more so than 1210 or 1215. The main difference, indeed, is the greater detail of the Latin text. The Latin of CW is here reasonably descriptive, as in 1210, with a fair amount of adjectives and adverbs. These are sometimes reflected in the Welsh translations, with the description of William de Breos the younger as *iuuenis probitatis mirande* equivalent to the *gwr arderchawc y arueu cyt beu ieuang ef* of the Peniarth 20 version (P).⁷⁵ In the section dealing with the preceding fighting, though the Welsh texts retain a descriptive element (the *creulonyon gyrcheu* of P and the *ymlad yn duruyg* of the *Llyfr Coch* version (R)

⁷² Georgia Henley, personal correspondence.

⁷³ See below, p. 276.

⁷⁴ *Brenhinedd y Saesson* is by this point merely a compressed conflation of these two versions and has no value as an independent translation. *BS*, p. xiv.

⁷⁵ 'a young man of wondrous probity', 'a man splendid in arms though he was young'. The correspondence is not exact, and it may be that the *arueu* of Peniarth 20 is a mistake for *aruer*, giving the better translation 'a man splendid in his manner/custom, though he was young'. There is no corresponding description in the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version, characteristic of this version's tendency to be generally less detailed than Peniarth 20 here. *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. lx–lxi; *BT RB*, p. li.

paralleling but simplifying the *non inualida resisterunt* of CW),⁷⁶ the more complex narrative of repeated attacks and plundering is in the Welsh texts summarised by the phrases *diruawr deruysc* (P) and *diruawr aerua* (R).⁷⁷

This tendency to abridge is also apparent at the end of the annal for 1228, where the differences are, again, best illustrated by an extract:

Tandem ex consideracione uirorum utrumque autenticorum pace inter partes reformata et castro, quod rex construere ceperat, ad nutum principis cum dedecore prostrato, ab inuicem discessum est, homagia prius domino regi facientibus magnatibus, qui cum principe conuenerant, uniuersis. [CW]⁷⁸

Ar brenhin wedy furyfhau tagneued y rygthaw a Llywelyn a gwneuthur o wyrda Kymry a oed yno wrogaeth ydaw heb vrenhinawl anryded a ymchwelawd y Loegyr. [P]⁷⁹

Ac yna yd ymhoelawd y brenhin y Loegyr yn gewilydyus, eithyr cael gwrogaeth ohonaw y gann y tywyssogyon a oeddynt yno a phuruahu tagneued y rygtau a Llywelin ap Ioruerth. [R]⁸⁰

⁷⁶ 'cruel attacks', 'fighting strenuously', 'they resisted without feebleness'.

⁷⁷ 'great tumult', 'great slaughter'. CW, 37; *BT P20*, p. 189; *BT RB*, p. 226.

⁷⁸ 'Finally, through the decision of authoritative men acceptable to both sides, peace was restored between the two sides, and after the castle, which the king had begun to construct, was thrown down with dishonour by the will of the prince, they marched away from one another, after all of the magnates, who had gathered together with the prince, had first given homage to the lord king'. CW, 37.

⁷⁹ 'And the king, having made peace between him and Llywelyn and after the nobles of Wales who were present had done him homage, returned without kingly honour to England'. *BT P20*, pp. 189–90.

⁸⁰ 'And then the king shamefully returned to England, except for his reception of homage from all the leaders who were there and for the making of peace between him and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth'. *BT RB*, p. 228.

Again it must be stressed that it is unprovable that the source used by the compiler of Latin BT contained much of the material now present in CW, but the general impression of BT as compared to CW is that the vernacular chronicles are translated from a text which abridged the Latin of CW. It is arguable that the abridgement occurred during the translation into Welsh, but the close agreement of both independent translations in terms of content coupled with their differences of phrasing make this more unlikely. For example, P's *yn gewilydyus* and R's *heb vrenhinawl anryded* would be independent translations of a phrase in Latin BT which summarised the more lengthy relation of events present in CW.

All this taken together indicates that the compiler of Latin BT should not be seen as someone who had to hand a number of sparse Latin chronicles and worked them up into a more verbose work of history. From these few years when we have something reasonably close to the compiler's source material it would appear that the opposite is often true, that is, that he tended to be somewhat more concise and less rhetorical than at least one of his sources. This somewhat goes against what Thomas Jones concluded about the compiler's use of sources: on numerous occasions he maintained that many of the characteristic features of BT were down to literary embellishment on the part of the compiler. He saw the compiler as the reason for many of the fuller, more dramatic parts of the narrative as well as speeches attributed to historical figures, proverbs, and rhetorical panegyrics. Jones also saw the compiler's hand in the tendency to attribute the misfortunes of the Welsh to their past sins and to praise leaders who strove to keep the Welsh nation alive in the face of her enemies.⁸¹

⁸¹ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlii–xliv; T. Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', *Scottish Studies* 12 (1968), 15–27 (22–27).

Jones' interpretation has been followed by Smith, who states that 'the author of the Latin text composed a greatly expanded version of many of the annalistic entries that formed his source material, presenting a greatly elaborated rhetorical prose composition without enhancing his text with any factual information whatsoever'.⁸² Smith argues that the compiler of Latin BT influenced both the BT account of the thirteenth century and, mainly through the elaboration of existing material, the BT account of the twelfth century. He argues that CW was based on an earlier version of BT, from around 1277.⁸³ But, as has been argued above, if BT is seen as the product of a long process of compilation which spanned the period of the conquest, it is unclear whether we should see it as a product of a single process of compilation, with literary elaboration by a single compiler, rather than the end result of numerous processes of compilation. There is little reason to regard the fuller narrative of CW and BT in the years under discussion as derived from the rewriting of *Strata Florida* annals in the 1270s rather than seeing both deriving from the fullness of the near-contemporary annalistic record.

As we have seen, in the years which provide the best evidence for the compiler of Latin BT's treatment of his sources, it can be ascertained that though he added factual information when using the chronicle shared with CW, when the literary style of the Latin chronicle was slightly more elaborate, he seems to have abridged for the sake of concision rather than expanding for literary effect. This point will be of significance later in the discussion of BT's fuller account of the early twelfth century.

⁸² Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 56–57.

⁸³ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 57–58.

COMPARISON OF CW AND BT: TERMINOLOGY

There are some issues of terminology which it will be necessary to discuss. A huge burden to understanding *Brut y Tywysogion* in historiographical terms is that the original Latin text is now preserved only in Middle Welsh, undermining any appreciation of the terminology used by the compiler. Even when CW casts some light on the Latin side of the tradition it remains extremely difficult to ascertain the terminology used to describe, for example, ethnicity or rulership. A particularly complex example relates to Gruffudd Maelor. At his death in 1191, CW calls him *Powisensium princeps largissimus*, P has *arglwyd Powys yr haelaf o holl dywyssogyon y brytanyeit*, *Brenhinedd y Saesson* (S) calls him *brenhin Powys, yr haylaf o'r Kymre* and R describes him as *yr haelaf o holl tywyssogyon Kymry*.⁸⁴ On the whole it seems arguable that Latin BT used *princeps*, interpreted in different ways by the Welsh translators, but there is no certainty to this. That CW has no equivalent to *brytanyeit/Kymre/Kymry* makes it impossible to determine whether Latin BT is likelier to have had *Britonum*, *Cambrensiu*m or even *Wallensiu*m originally. The shifting significance of these overlapping ethnic terms further complicates the situation, as with another example in 1197 when the *holl Ynys Brydein* of P and R translate the *tocius Britannie* of CW, whereas S in the same place has *Cymre*, having understood *Britannia* in its more restricted earlier sense of Wales. In 1198, on the other hand, whereas the two other Welsh versions have *Kymry* for CW's *Wallenses*, S has *Brytaniaid*.⁸⁵

Descriptions of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth are particularly useful in highlighting the differences between the Latin text and the two Welsh chronicles. When Llywelyn

⁸⁴ CW, 29; *BT P20*, pp. 132–33; *BT RB*, p. 172; *BS*, p. 188.

⁸⁵ CW, 30, 31; *BT P20*, pp. 137, 144; *BT RB*, pp. 178, 180; *BS*, pp. 192, 97. H. Pryce, 'British or Welsh? National Identity in Twelfth Century Wales', *English Historical Review* 116 (2001), 775–801 (782). For the tendency of S to use 'Cambrian' rather than 'British' terminology, see below, pp. 279–80.

is given a title, as he is twelve times in the relevant section of CW, he is overwhelmingly *Lewelinus princeps Norwallie*, sometimes simply *princeps*, and *dominus* on one occasion. When P can be compared to CW it usually has *yr arglwyd Llywelyn*, but in 1212 and 1215 its description of Llywelyn as *tywysawc Gwyned* parallels the usage of CW. The use of *dominus/arglwyd* seems generally to be as a title of courtesy rather than reflecting an official style that signified a concretely defined role. Llywelyn is rarely given a title in these parts of R, and in general R refers to him by name only, though he is called *tywysawc Gwyned* in 1212. Both versions call him *tywysawc* in 1228, with reference specifically to his leadership of other Welsh rulers. The two Welsh chronicles are different from each other and from CW in the way they delineate Llywelyn's authority, and it is consequently difficult to determine to what extent these differences depend on the idiosyncrasies of one or both of the translators, changes made by the compiler of Latin BT or changes by the compiler of CW. In one case the difference in terminology appears to be due to the last reason. It has been argued that CW's hyperbolic 1216 description of Llywelyn as *tunc temporis tocius Wallie monarchiam fere atque principatum tenente* served to bolster the authority of the agreement he presided over in that year, an agreement which was beneficial to Rhys Gryg, in whom the compiler had a particular interest.⁸⁶

Thomas Jones ascribed certain features of BT to the literary influence of the compiler of Latin BT, saying that:

Like Gildas, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gerald of Wales before him he regards as punishment inflicted by God for past sins, the troubles that have befallen the Welsh, but he glories in the leaders who strove to keep the Welsh

⁸⁶ CW, 36; Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 264.

nation alive and to resist the enemies who had resolved 'that the Britannic race should be annihilated.'⁸⁷

When such passages are present in the sections of BT which can be compared with CW, however, they are generally paralleled in the Latin chronicle. One of the most notable examples focus around the events of 1198 and Gwenwynwyn of Powys' failed attack on Painscastle.⁸⁸ The characterisation of Gwenwynwyn's purpose in P as *geissyaw talu yr Kymry eu kysseuin deilygdawt ac ymchwelut eu teruyneu ar eu priodoryon, y rei a gollessynt drw luossogrwyd eu pechodeu* is exactly paralleled in CW.⁸⁹ P and CW both go on to narrate the siege of the castle by the Welsh and their subsequent routing by an English army. Towards the end of the annal there is an example of the operation of divine will in the release of hostages from the prison of Gwenwynwyn.⁹⁰ These are exactly the sort of comments which, unless we could refer to CW, we might imagine to be a characteristic authorial interpolation on behalf of the compiler of Latin BT. This is clearly not the case, although there may be some indication that the compiler's hand is perceptible in the editing of the text. The comment in CW that *Ignorabant namque quid sibi prepararent miserabiles rei euentus*⁹¹ is totally lacking from both Welsh chronicles, softening the negative portrayal of the Welsh in this entry. To be certain that this is thanks to the compiler of Latin BT would require proof that the offending sentence was not simply left out by

⁸⁷ *BT P20 Tr.*, p. xliv.

⁸⁸ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (third edition, 2 vols., London, 1939), II., 585–87; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, pp. 227–30.

⁸⁹ 'Trying to restore to the Welsh their ancient dignities and to return their boundaries to their rightful owners, things that they had lost through the multiplicity of their sins', *BT P20*, p. 143; CW has the term *proprios heres* corresponding to *priodoryon*, both terms used in Welsh law. CW, 31; *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws*, ed. by H. D. Emanuel (Cardiff, 1967), pp. 129, 131; *Llyfr Iorwerth: a Critical Text of the Venedotian Code of Medieval Welsh Law*, ed. by A. R. Williams (Cardiff, 1960), pp. 46–47.

⁹⁰ CW, 32; *BT P20*, p. 145.

⁹¹ 'They were unaware of what the wretched outcome of events held in store for them'. CW, 32.

both Welsh translators, or even added by the compiler of CW, therefore certainty is impossible. Indeed, R provides a caveat since it also lacks an equivalent passage to that quoted above dealing with the boundaries and sins of the Welsh.⁹²

There is in fact very little direct evidence for the compiler of Latin BT exercising an authorial hand, though this has much to do with the problems of the sources. The year 1211 provides a useful example. Though the entries in both versions of BT are considerably longer than that in CW, the first third of the entries in both versions of the Welsh chronicle are in fact very close in content to CW. The chronicles describe King John's two campaigns against Gwynedd in this year, the first one ending ignominiously for John at Degannwy, the second far more successful and resulting in Llywelyn's surrender.

The main differences are these: CW opens with Llywelyn attacking the English between Cynllaith and Nanheudwy, which he *uastauit, et sibi resistencium quosdam tenuit, quosdam interfecit*.⁹³ Both relevant versions of BT, however, are geographically unspecific and simply say that Llywelyn made *mynych gyrcheu/creulonyon gyrcheu* against the English.⁹⁴ CW then has an obituary of Gruffudd ab Ifor of Senghennydd, missing in BT. Whereas CW has John assemble an army of *Francorum quam Wallensium*,⁹⁵ in BT the Welsh princes aiding John are named as Gwenwynwyn, Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan, Madog ap Gruffudd Maelor, Maredudd ap Rotbert and Maelgwn and Rhys Gryg, the sons of the Lord Rhys. BT then gives details of the king's army assembling at Chester and Llywelyn moving his people and chattels of Perfeddwlad and Môn to Eryri, details missing from CW. BT also specifies that it was at Whitsun the king withdrew from Degannwy. In the king's

⁹² *BT RB*, p. 180.

⁹³ 'laid waste, and of those who resisted him some he captured, some he killed'. CW, 34.

⁹⁴ 'many attacks'/fierce attacks'. *BT P20*, p. 154; *BT RB*, p. 190.

⁹⁵ 'of French and Welsh'. CW, 34.

second campaign, BT has him build castles in Gwynedd, but CW specifies Perfeddwlad. BT specifies the ransom of the bishop of Bangor as 200 falcons, which is missing from CW.

There is then a big divergence. BT goes on to record in detail Llywelyn's terms of peace with the king and then the campaigns of the king, helped by Maelgwn and Rhys Gryg sons of the Lord Rhys, against the sons of Gruffudd ap Rhys, their brother. It then goes on to relate Maelgwn and Rhys' subsequent change of side to oppose the king and burn Aberystwyth. CW is very brief about all this, and only tells us that Maelgwn, with no hint that he was on the king's side before, burnt Aberystwyth.

Some of the main differences between the Welsh and Latin chronicles in this year could be explained by CW's support for Rhys Gryg.⁹⁶ King John comes under heavy criticism elsewhere in CW, and so Rhys' support for him was ignored by the compiler as were his subsequent activities in Ceredigion. Thus he got rid of both the list of John's Welsh supporters and the detailed description of Maelgwn and Rhys Gryg's activities after John and Llywelyn's truce. The presence of detail about Llywelyn's movement of his people and chattels as well as his treaty with John in BT but not in CW could be explained as 'literary embellishment' on the part of the compiler of Latin BT, but it is better seen as indicative of the CW compiler's lack of interest in Gwynedd, his primary focus being Deheubarth. An unwillingness to give details of a triumph for King John could have played its part, given the chronicler's obvious dislike for him.⁹⁷

It might be that the reporting of Llywelyn's activities at the start of the year shows the hand of the compiler of Latin BT. The replacement of detail about

⁹⁶ Smith, 'The "Cronica de Wallia" and the Dynasty of Dinefwr', 264

⁹⁷ CW, 33.

Llywelyn's execution or capture of those who resisted him with the far vaguer *creulonyon gyrcheu* may be a case of the compiler sanitising his source to some extent.⁹⁸ It is notable, however, that this change would have been in keeping with the general tendency to abridge some of the more descriptive elements apparent in CW's Latin. A comparable example of possible interference by the compiler of Latin BT occurs at the start of the 1228 annal discussed in some detail above. Whereas CW opens the annal saying that King Henry *filiis Wenainun exhereditatis de Powis proponens ius hereditarium restitute*,⁹⁹ BT says his intention was to *darystwng yr Arglwyd Lywelyn ar holl Gymry ydaw/darestwg Llywelin ap Ioruerth a holl tywyssogyon Kymry idaw*.¹⁰⁰

This change makes the subsequent humiliation of the king more obviously a triumph for the Welsh against the English than if the purpose had been to restore Gwenwynwyn to his rightful inheritance. It identifies Llywelyn's cause with that of the Welsh and removes the ambiguity caused by the presence of Gwenwynwyn, a Welshman disinherited by Llywelyn, who goes unmentioned in the whole of the annal in both versions of BT. If this is the work of the compiler of Latin BT, it perhaps shows a tendency to manipulate the description of some events to suit the national narrative of the chronicle he was creating. Though this is the only clear example of such a change in the years for which the Welsh and Latin chronicles can be compared, it is something to consider alongside the compiler's apparent tendency to abridge. However, the occurrence of comparable passages in CW, where English kings are intent on subjection, or the cause of the Welsh is identified with a particular leader,

⁹⁸ Though it should be noted that CW is also very supportive of Llywelyn, for example at his first mention in the text in 1201. CW, 32.

⁹⁹ 'Is proposing to restore rightful inheritance to the disinherited sons of Gwenwynwyn of Powys'. CW, 37.

¹⁰⁰ 'Subject to himself the Lord Llywelyn and all the Welsh', *BT P20*, p. 189; 'Subject to himself Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and all the princes of Wales', *BT RB*, p. 226.

shows that similar passages in the rest of BT should not be ascribed to the compiler of Latin BT on this basis as it seems they would also have been common in his source material.¹⁰¹

It will now be convenient to summarise the results of this close comparison of CW with the three versions of BT (using *Brenhinedd y Saesson* up to 1198), the purpose of which was to determine what evidence can be gleaned about the compiler of Latin BT's use of his source material. What has become clear is that, excluding expansion which is probably dependent on use of other sources by the compiler of Latin BT, and apparent expansion due to the compiler of CW excluding material present in his source, the three versions of BT show Latin BT to have been a very close representation of its source material. There is no indication of the sort of literary embellishment argued for by Thomas Jones as the primary cause of a number of BT's stylistic characteristics. The very limited evidence for authorial changes on the part of the compiler of Latin BT does not change this overall picture. Indeed it is clear that some of these characteristics, rather than being the work of the BT compiler, were present in the common source of CW and Latin BT. They were a feature of the Strata Florida annals rather than of the compilation of a narrative after 1282, and these features should be seen as characteristic of thirteenth-century Cistercian historical

¹⁰¹ Examples include: the annal for 1198 discussed above; the statement in the annal for 1211 that King John planned to *exheredare Lewelinum filium Geruasij*, 'disinherit Llywelyn ab Iorwerth'; the description of the Welsh's choice of Llywelyn as a leader in 1212; as well as the statement in 1201 that, if Gruffudd ap Rhys had not died, *Kambrie monarchiam in breui reformasset*, 'he would quickly have restored the monarchy of Wales'. This last is also interesting for the occurrence of the word *Kambria*, the only instance of it in CW which usually uses *Wallia*, as in the statement at the start of 1216 that Llywelyn was king of all Wales. *Kambria* was favoured by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and it may be under the influence of his work that it appears in the Cottonian chronicle, kept at St David's. It is extremely interesting to note here the reference to a monarchy of Cambria=Wales, an elusive concept in medieval Welsh discourse given the obsession with a lost *British* monarchy, but one which does appear in the prologues to *Cyfraith Hywel*. For more on this see the section below dealing with BT 1100–1127. The first, second and fourth of the four examples above are also echoed in at least one version of BT. CW, 31, 34, 32; *BT P20*, pp. 143, 154, 147; *BT RB*, pp. 180, 190; Pryce, 'British or Welsh?', 798; *idem*, 'The Prologues to the Welsh Lawbooks', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 33 (1986), 151–87.

writing in Wales rather than a single author or compiler. Such things as attribution of the fate of the Britons/Welsh to divine will and celebration of leaders who strove to ensure the survival of the Welsh as a people occur both in CW and BT, but also crop up throughout BT in sections which are probably not dependent on the chronicle source shared with CW. Some of these are discussed below in the section dealing with BT 1100–1127. They are therefore topoi common to historical writing in medieval Wales.

A more specific point was that the Welsh versions of BT often show evidence of abridgement when compared to CW, which can sometimes be taken to indicate a tendency for compiler of Latin BT to abridge his source material, toning down the more descriptive or literary elements by ignoring certain adjectives and adverbs. A key question here is whether this is an indication of the tendencies of the Latin compiler or of the Welsh translators. It is obvious that *Brenhinedd y Saesson* is drastically abridged compared to the other two versions, but this is to a large extent a separate issue from that of translation.¹⁰² R often lacks material present in both P and CW in the period under study, in keeping with its overall tendency to be less full than P, and much of this is likely to be a product of the process of translation.¹⁰³ This is not to say that P, fuller though it is, did not abridge Latin BT in the process of translation.

The parallel of the different Welsh translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* shows that abridging and paraphrasing were common in the process of translation from Latin to Welsh.¹⁰⁴ The occasions when both P and R agree in ignoring an adjective or adverb present in CW are persuasive but in no way conclusive, as both translators could independently have decided to translate in the

¹⁰² Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 55–86.

¹⁰³ Although the *Llyfr Coch* version is on numerous occasions fuller or more correct than P20. *BT RB*, p. li.

¹⁰⁴ This is particularly true of the Peniarth 44 and Dingestow versions, whereas Llansteffan 1 is a fuller and more faithful translation. Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', pp. 288–94.

same manner.¹⁰⁵ With these caveats in mind it can be said that the evidence for the compiler of Latin BT abridging his Latin sources is by no means conclusive, but it is present.

Moreover, this comparison has shown little evidence of the literary expansion envisaged by Jones. The study cannot be conclusive, as there are far too many unknowns mainly deriving from the inaccessibility of the original Latin BT and the fact that CW was in any case not its direct source. But it is the only evidence from which we can ascertain something of the compiler of Latin BT's process of composition. It falls a long way short of telling us everything that this compiler did with his material, but it does give us some idea of what we might expect him to have done.

THE RELATIVE HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF BT AND THE LATIN CHRONICLES

Having established what a close comparison with CW indicates about the composition of Latin BT, attention can now be given to the broader debate about the relative historical reliability of the Welsh-language chronicles and the Welsh Latin chronicles briefly discussed in the opening of this chapter. Since this debate in part focuses on the extent to which the additional detail of BT can be laid at the door of the compiler, it is clear how the conclusions of the above study have considerable implications.

As discussed above, Jones ascribed many of the 'literary' qualities of BT to the activities of the Latin compiler, including the addition of extra details, speeches and eulogies. In this he followed J. E. Lloyd, who first put the discussion of the Latin and

¹⁰⁵ This is of course assuming that both translators were acting totally independently of each other. Full discussion of this re-opened question is outside the scope of this chapter, but it is discussed to some extent below, pp. 237–40.

Welsh chronicles on a firm footing.¹⁰⁶ Without giving too much detail as to specifics, the surviving Latin chronicles were thought of as representing the kind of source material that the compiler worked up into his more fleshed-out narrative chronicle. Sometimes the link was explicit, in that BT was thought of as based on the PRO chronicle or the Cottonian, but where the correspondence between these texts and BT was limited it is clear that the depth and detail of the BT narrative was envisaged as something added by the compiler of Latin BT to a bare chronicle similar in style to the surviving Latin chronicles.¹⁰⁷

The Latin chronicles were therefore perceived by scholars as more primitive and dependable, with BT representing a later development and elaboration. This approach to the chronicles informed studies by J. Beverley Smith and Kari Maund, the first concentrating on events in 1146 and the second on the career of Owain ap Cadwgan.¹⁰⁸ In the first study, Smith prioritised the PRO chronicle's account of 1146 over that of *Brut y Tywysogion*, arguing that the lengthy annal in the latter is simply a product of literary elaboration on the part of the compiler of Latin BT, a process exposed by the compiler's mistaken identification of *castellum Guidgruc* with Mold rather than Gwyddgrug near Pencader. Maund similarly prioritised the PRO and Cottonian chronicles' accounts of the career of Owain ap Cadwgan to advocate a change of emphasis in our understanding of the activities and political integrity of the Powysian dynasty in the early twelfth century. Maund's prioritisation of these terse Latin chronicles was at the expense of the account of these years in *Brut y Tywysogion*, an account which forms part of the fullest and most elaborate section of

¹⁰⁶ J. E. Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles*, The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, British Academy (London, 1928).

¹⁰⁷ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlii–xliv; see also K. L. Maund's summary in 'Owain ap Cadwgan: a Rebel Revisited', *Haskins Society Journal* 13 (1999), 65–74 (69).

¹⁰⁸ J. B. Smith, 'Castell Gwyddgrug', *Bullein of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26 (1976), 74–77; Maund, 'Owain ap Cadwgan'.

the chronicle, from 1100 to 1121 or perhaps 1126. Maund appreciated the stylistic unity of this section but suggested a date of composition in the late twelfth century, around the time of Owain Cyfeiliog.¹⁰⁹

The similarity between Smith and Maund's approaches is clear, but they differ in that Smith sees the elaboration in 1146 as the work of the late thirteenth-century compiler of Latin BT whereas Maund suggests that the longer section after 1100 was produced in the late twelfth century. Nevertheless they both see detailed narratives developing from terse annals now represented by the Cottonian and PRO chronicles, which can therefore be considered more reliable than BT as historical sources. Their common position here as well as the specifics of their arguments have been countered by David Stephenson. In his treatment of the 1146 annal he argued that the identification of *Gwyddgrug* with Mold was just as likely as the Deheubarth identification. The main thrust of his argument, however, was that the Latin annals should not be given priority over the Welsh simply because of their relative brevity, particularly given the fact that the PRO chronicle appears to abridge its source material, sometimes wrongly.¹¹⁰

He argues further that the section of *Brut y Tywysogion* from 1132 to 1170 shows stylistic characteristics commensurate with its being the work of a single author and a near-contemporary chronicle produced at Llanbadarn Fawr.¹¹¹ This hypothesis built on his response to Kari Maund's argument about the origin of the early twelfth-century section. Whilst agreeing with Maund over the section's stylistic unity, in a detailed argument Stephenson makes a convincing case that this section was composed close to the events it describes. Though his suggestion that it is to be

¹⁰⁹ Maund, 'Owain ap Cadwgan', 74.

¹¹⁰ D. Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts of the Mid-Twelfth Century', *CMCS* 56 (2008), 45–57 (45–51).

¹¹¹ Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts', 52–57.

attributed to Daniel ap Sulien whose death is recorded in 1127 should not be taken as totally conclusive, it is nevertheless very convincing, and overall the case for a near-contemporary record linked with Llanbadarn Fawr is an extremely strong one.¹¹²

The detailed early twelfth-century section of BT will be discussed in greater detail below, but here it should be reiterated that the curious assumption that the Latin chronicles are more dependable than the Welsh because of their relative brevity has been convincingly dismissed. The conclusions reached above concerning the lack of evidence for literary expansion when BT is compared with CW supports Stephenson's general point that BT can in many sections be seen as reflecting older, near-contemporary sources. The picture which emerges is one where the Latin chronicles are compositions in their own right, in many places drawing on sources shared with the Welsh chronicles but often drastically abridging this material. Where the Latin annals are close to the *Brutiau*, it cannot be assumed that the compiler of the original Latin version of the latter expanded on his sources, since these sources themselves seem to have been relatively full compared to most of the surviving Welsh Latin annals. This is not too far from the brief conclusion reached by J. E. Lloyd.¹¹³

Thomas Jones' investigation of the relationship between the Welsh Latin annals and the Welsh *Brutiau* was not exhaustive, his main concentration being on the considerable achievement of establishing a critical text of the three related Welsh chronicles. Nevertheless it is worth considering further some of his arguments for literary expansion on the part of the Latin BT compiler, in order to give further support to the conclusions of Stephenson and those reached above. In many cases they

¹¹² D. Stephenson, 'The "Resurgence" of Powys in the Late Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 30 (2007), 182–95 (184–89). In emphasising the link with Llanbadarn Fawr Stephenson reinforces arguments made by J. E. Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles*, pp. 17–18.

¹¹³ Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles*, p. 16. This conclusion was subsequently partially endorsed by Thomas Jones, *BT P20*, pp. x–xi.

go further than the conclusion of Lloyd endorsed by Jones in his first edited volume of BT.

RHAIN WYDDEL AND 1022

One of Jones' most frequently cited examples of expansion on behalf of the compiler was in the year 1022, when the lengthy account in BT of the defeat of the Irish pretender Rhain by Llywelyn ap Seisyll contrasts with the brief but corresponding treatment in the PRO and Cottonian chronicles. Given the length of the Welsh entries, the texts are all given at the end of the thesis in appendix 3. Jones saw the Welsh entries, and therefore the Latin passage behind them, as an example of the Latin compiler having both PRO and Cottonian annals in front of him and then crafting a rhetorical passage around their bare, factual bones.¹¹⁴ The first thing to note about the passage in BT is that it was clearly not contemporary. The Welsh chronicles all use the perfect tense, and the rhetorical description of the state of Wales in the time of Llywelyn ap Seisyll has the telling phrase *yn y amser ef*.¹¹⁵ Jones sees the entry as a *combination* of PRO and Cotton, seeing the Welsh text's statement that Rhain was never seen again as a compromise between Cotton's statement that Rhain was defeated and PRO's claim that Rhain was killed.¹¹⁶ If the Latin chronicles are assumed to have greater authority then this would seem a necessary conclusion, since only PRO says that Rhain claimed *falsely* to be the son of Maredudd and only Cotton states that Eilaf came to Britain in that year.

But PRO and Cotton are not independent of each other in this year, since they both derive from the St David's chronicle argued for by Hughes, who maintains that the differences between the two Latin chronicles are due to them rewording and

¹¹⁴ Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', 25–27; *BT P20*, pp. xliii.

¹¹⁵ 'in his time', *BT P20*, p. 15; *BT RB*, p. 20; BS has *yn y oes ef*, with the same meaning. *BS*, p. 54.

¹¹⁶ Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', 26–27.

abridging their common source differently.¹¹⁷ There is therefore no need to assume that the Latin BT compiler needed to combine the annals in order to produce a narrative which shares the features of both. There is also, therefore, no need to assume that the St David's chronicle was any less verbose than the surviving Welsh annals if it is assumed that the slight differences between PRO and Cotton arose from them abridging a shared text in different ways. Given that the relevant section of PRO was abstracted from the St David's chronicle no earlier than 1202 it is perhaps likelier that the more verbose and rhetorical aspects of the BT entries were already present. The description of Llywelyn ap Seisyll as *goruchaf a chlodurussaf vrenhin holl Brydein/phenaf a chlotuorussaf vrenhin o'r holl Vrytanyeit*¹¹⁸ common to P and R indicates the use of British terminology in a Latinate context which becomes more unlikely after the third quarter of the twelfth century.¹¹⁹ After this date, it would have been far more conventional to call him the king of *holl Gymry*. It certainly makes it somewhat likelier that it was introduced in the twelfth century than in the late thirteenth, especially given indications that the compiler of Latin BT preserved the terminology

¹¹⁷ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 74–75. David Thornton notes that these St David's annals were adapted at Strata Florida before inclusion in the PRO chronicle. However, as David Dumville notes, it is unknown at what point the St David's material became attached to the succeeding parts of the PRO chronicle, whether at Neath or Strata Florida. If it was at Neath, there is no reason to assume that the closeness of the BT accounts and that of PRO is down to a common Strata Florida origin. Any perceived similarity between BT and PRO against the Cottonian chronicle, and such a similarity is by a very slim margin, may be explained by the greater amount of detail given in PRO. The important point here is that both Latin chronicles derive from a single source which they reflect differently, which offers adequate explanation for the small differences of detail between the two annals. They are never in direct disagreement, but merely differ in their fullness. D. E. Thornton, 'Who was Rhain the Irishman?', *Studia Celtica* 34 (2000), 131–48 (132–33); Dumville, *SC* 12/13, 464.

¹¹⁸ 'highest and most praiseworthy king of all Britain', *BT P20*, p. 15; 'chief and most praiseworthy king of all the Britons', *BT RB*, p. 20. BS has *y brenhin clotuorussaf a wydit o'r mor pwy gilid*, 'the most praiseworthy king of whom was known from one sea to the other', perhaps sidestepping the ambiguity of the use of *Britannia* in this context, of which the BS compiler or translator seems to have been more aware. *BS*, p. 54; *BT P20 Tr.*, p. 149, n.

¹¹⁹ Pryce, 'British or Welsh?', 782–83.

of his sources. This is particularly true in this case where the shift from British to Cambrian terminology is evident in the text itself.¹²⁰

Furthermore, the positive portrayal of Llywelyn ap Seisyll in this annal would be surprising in a thirteenth-century context, by which time his son, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn seems to have undergone something of a *damnatio memoriae*.¹²¹ The positive portrayal of Llywelyn ap Seisyll is more likely to have emanated from Llanbadarn Fawr, a centre whose links to the dynasty of Powys in the early twelfth century are discussed below. This dynasty was descended from Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's uterine brother whose mother, Angharad ferch Maredudd, had been married to Llywelyn ap Seisyll. The tone of the annal is far more easily explained in a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century context.

The events of 1022 were discussed by David Thornton, who also concluded that Jones' explanation of the BT annals as a combination of the two Latin chronicles was unnecessary. He suggests that the slight disagreement between PRO and BT in the matter of Rhain's death, with BT describing Rhain as disappearing after the battle whereas PRO states that he was killed, might be due to a misreading of *occisus est* (he was killed) as *occecus est* (was hidden).¹²² This is an attractive solution, but the difference of PRO could simply be due to the compiler summarising the fuller annal present in the St David's chronicle and interpreting the statement that Rhain was never

¹²⁰ Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts', 54.

¹²¹ M. Davies and S. Davies, *The Last King of Wales: Gruffudd ap Llywelyn c.1013–1063* (Stroud, 2012), pp. 177–78; *Giraldi Cambrensis, Opera*, ed. by J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warner (8 vols, London, 1861–1891), VI., 28–29 (*Itinerarium Kambriæ*, I. 2). Gerald's characterisation comes from a man who identified closely with the dynasty of Deheubarth, the return to power of the descendants of Rhodri Mawr having contributed to a negative portrayal of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. Walter Map's portrayal of Gruffudd (misidentified as Llywelyn) is also somewhat negative in tone. *Walter Map: De nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. by M. R. James, revised by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1983), pp. 186–96. However, that texts concerned with the dynasty of Rhodri Mawr could still remember Gruffudd in a positive light is clear from the Latin life of Gruffudd ap Cynan. *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: the Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. by P. Russell (Cardiff, 2005), p. 60.

¹²² Thornton, 'Who was Rhain?', 136.

seen as meaning he was killed. Despite his reassessment of Thomas Jones' interpretation Thornton persists in thinking of the vernacular account as 'derivative and literary' compared to the Latin annals without considering the possibility that the common source of the Latin annals, which only diverge in 1202, could have been just as literary.¹²³

The annal for 1022 in the Welsh chronicles then, though clearly not contemporary, cannot be seen as evidence for literary expansion in the late thirteenth century, and the briefer accounts of the PRO and Cottonian chronicles should not be given priority. Every other example of features indicating the literary tendencies of the compiler of Latin BT mentioned by Jones come from the section from 1100 to 1127.¹²⁴ This important section will be discussed in more detail below, but before this it is necessary to raise some questions about the nature of the Welsh chronicles as texts and translations and, more specifically, about the nature of the presumed Latin version lying behind these texts.

Let us begin with Thomas Jones' view of the relationship between the three Welsh versions and the original Latin composition. Put briefly, Jones saw the compilation of the original Latin version at some point soon after 1282. The three Welsh chronicles whose texts he established were independent translations of three different versions of this original Latin chronicle. The differences between the three Welsh chronicles were to be explained in this way. S was based on a combination of the original Latin chronicle and the annals of Winchester with a great deal of

¹²³ Thornton, 'Who was Rhain?', 136.

¹²⁴ This is true of the introduction to the translation of the Peniarth 20 version, Jones' most detailed discussion of these matters in the four volumes of BT. The references are to the years 1109, 1110 (twice), 1115, 1116 (twice), and 1121. More wide-ranging examples are given in Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', to the years 1022, 1103, 1109, 1110, 1114, 1121, 1137, 1158, and 1197, the years 1100–1127 also being prominent here. The 1197 annal is discussed above. *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlii–xliv; 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', 22–25.

abridging of Latin BT. The earliest surviving version of S only runs to 1198, the continuation of the text in the next earliest manuscript being based on a combination of P and R, therefore not representing an original translation. The main differences between P and R were the overall superior fullness and accuracy of P, but with certain portions of R being more detailed and correct.¹²⁵ Generally, R appeared more condensed than P. Close comparison of the three versions, along with due consideration of the related Welsh Latin chronicles, could therefore indicate to a great degree the content of Latin BT.¹²⁶

Recently some doubt has been cast on the hypothesis that the Welsh chronicles are derived from three separate translations of three different Latin versions. In a recent edition of the earliest shared section of the Welsh chronicles, David Dumville suggests that other hypotheses can be considered as probable, including the revision of a single translation more than once to create two other versions, and an initial translation being combined with a second partial translation. He suggests that the differences of style which led Jones to his conclusions are sometimes patchy, sometimes sustained, and are therefore better explained by these hypotheses.¹²⁷ This revised view perhaps accords better with the methods of Welsh translators, who rather than translating directly from one source texts sometimes used a number of versions of the original text, and indeed supplement an existing translation or used it as guidance.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ *BT P20*, p. xv.

¹²⁶ In this paragraph I summarise points made throughout the editions of *Brut y Tywysogion*: *BT P20*; *BT P20 Tr*; *BT RB*; *BS*.

¹²⁷ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, p. vi. Doubt has also been expressed by Julian Harrison, 'Cistercian Chronicling in the British Isles', in *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey: a Stratigraphic Edition. I: Introduction and Facsimile*, ed. by D. Broun and J. Harrison (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 13–28 (p. 27).

¹²⁸ With regard to the use of numerous manuscripts, Welsh and Latin, by the compiler of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, see B. F. Roberts, 'The Red Book of Hergest Version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*', *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977–1978), 147–86 (159–72). With regard to the translations in general, see P. Sims-Williams, *Rhai Addasiadau Cymraeg Canol o Sieffre o Fynwy*

LATIN BT: ITS DATE OF COMPOSITION

The exhaustive study which would be required to address recent doubt about Jones' hypothesis and settle the question of the relationships between the Welsh texts and the original Latin composition lies far outside the scope of this chapter. It can however be readily appreciated that doubts such as these, reflecting as they do current trends in the understanding of the process of translation and adaptation, complicate our perception of these Welsh chronicles and their unity. In particular, such a revision has the potential to call into question what exactly is meant by the original Latin version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, if this can no longer be understood as the ultimate source of three separate translations.

A way to approach this issue is to reiterate what is known about the Welsh chronicles and their shared features. Though it is first attested in a manuscript later than the other two versions, it is best to begin with R. The narrative runs from the death of Cadwallon in 682, here misdated to 680, to events early in 1282. The date of the earliest manuscript, around 1350, gives us the latest date at which the chronicle could have attained this form, but the earliest date is somewhat more complex. A reference in the annal for 1280 to a fire at Strata Florida known to have occurred in 1286 dates it in its current form to after that year.¹²⁹ Similarly, a reference to Louis IX of France as a saint dates it to after his canonisation in 1297.¹³⁰ Rather more uncertainly, a reference to Edward I's reign being recorded in *Ystoriae u y Brenhined* has been seen as indicating that Edward was already dead when it was written.¹³¹ This will be discussed in more detail below, but the date range for the composition of R can be given as 1297×1350.

(Aberystwyth, 2011), and a review of the same by B. F. Roberts in *Studia Celtica* 46 (2012), 201–2.

¹²⁹ *BT RB*, pp. liv, 268, 308.

¹³⁰ *BT RB*, pp. liv, 258.

¹³¹ *BT RB*, pp. liv, 260; *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, p. viii.

P runs from the death of Cadwaladr in 682 (misdated here to 681) up to 1332. The entries from early 1282 to 1332, however, are in a different hand to the bulk of the text, and a comparison with R shows that the change of hand occurs at the point where this version terminates. Given the agreement of two of the versions here, the succeeding entries can be classed as a continuation. P contains mention of the fire at Strata Florida but not the canonisation of Louis of France, so the composition of this version can be dated 1286×1330. The last two years of the continuation seem to be contemporary with the events recorded, meaning that the Peniarth 20 manuscript is likely to have been compiled around 1330, probably at Valle Crucis.¹³²

Brenhinedd y Saesson presents somewhat more complex problems. The earliest manuscript is of the same period as Peniarth MS 20 as it shares a scribe. This manuscript, London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra B.v, is incomplete, breaking off around 1201 though the last legible annal is that for 1197. It was probably written at Valle Crucis.¹³³ This version also differs markedly from the other two in its combination of the shared Welsh chronicle material with material of English origin which will be discussed in more detail below. In the next earliest manuscript of the text, *Llyfr Du Basing* (NLW MS 7006D), the text is continued to 1461. It is clear that the years 1282–1332 are dependent on Peniarth MS 20, and Jones saw 1197–1282 as a combination of P and R, but doubts outlined above about the validity of Jones' scheme of three separate translations means there must be some uncertainty.¹³⁴ It may be that rather than having features from both the other versions because it was compiled from both versions, S was derived from a version on which both R and P

¹³² G. and T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Peniarth MS.20', in *Ysgrifau a Cherddi Cyflwynedig i Daniel Huws*, ed. by T. Jones and E. B. Fryde (Aberystwyth, 1994), pp. 293–305.

¹³³ See above, pp. 44–46.

¹³⁴ *BS*, p. xiv.

drew. The fact that the compiler of the *Llyfr Du Basing* is known to have had access to Peniarth MS 20 does however support Jones' interpretation.

Brenhinedd y Saesson begins, like the other versions, with the death of Cadwaladr, though with a more explicit link to Geoffrey's history. A question of considerable importance is whether the original text then continued to early 1282 like PR. The earliest manuscript gives no indication that this was the case. If P and R can at this point be considered independent translations of the original Latin version, their termination at 1282 (the later parts of P being a continuation) supports the idea that the Latin version ended at this point and make it likely that this was also true of S. The composition of the Welsh text can be dated 1200×c.1330.¹³⁵ If the compilation of the Latin versions of S or its translation can be dated earlier than the 1280s, which remains a possibility, the potential for this to change our understanding of the process of composition of Latin BT would be considerable. Smith's discussion of its sources places its composition firmly in the late thirteenth century.¹³⁶

It is therefore apparent that questioning the relationship of the Welsh texts to each other raises further questions about the nature of the original Latin text. Though P and R taken together indicate that the narrative of their shared Latin source ended in early 1282, if they are not independent translations the weight of their combined testimony is considerably lessened, as is their influence on how we see the original chronological scope of S. Close agreement in terms of a starting date indicates that the Latin chronicle used as a source by all three began at the death of Cadwaladr, but its point of termination is rather more open to questioning. Given the importance of this question to how we conceive of Latin BT, its date of composition and purpose, it will be necessary to undertake a close comparison of the texts. There is some doubt

¹³⁵ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, p. x.

¹³⁶ Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales', 55–86.

concerning the relationship of each version to their common source, so it is best to include S in this comparison despite the probability that it is derivative of PR.

A close comparison of the account of the Welsh Chronicles of the years 1275–1282 offers several conclusions. These years are selected not because they form a distinctive unit within the texts but because they contain much of the evidence for the composition date of the original Latin chronicle. It seems clear that P and R are different translations. This is an impression borne out by the cumulative weight of differences in vocabulary and sentence structure.¹³⁷ This being so, the next question is whether there is any evidence that these translations relied on two different versions of an original Latin text, as Thomas Jones argued.¹³⁸ With regard to these particular years, there is no conclusive evidence for this: there are no instances where P gives an account that disagrees with R that must be attributed to differences in their source texts. There are some instances where the accounts of both differ subtly, for example early in the account of the war of 1277,

ac yn diwaethaf o holl Deheubarth y darystygawd yr Saesson deu vab
Maredudd vab Ywein, Gruffud a Chynan, a Llywelyn vab Ywein eu nei. [P]¹³⁹

ac yn diwethaf oll o Deheubarth y kyfunawd Gruffud a Chynan, meibon
Meredud ap Ywein, a Llywelin ap Ywein, y nei, a'r brenhin. Ac velly y
darestygwyt holl Deheubarth y'r brenhin. [R]¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Examples are to be found throughout the section, but see examples at *BT P20*, p. 226, col. 1.14–22 and *BT RB*, pp. 266.31–268.1; *BT P20*, p. 227, col. 1.23–27 and *BT RB*, p. 268.24–25. See also *BT P20 Tr.*, p. 215, n. 7.

¹³⁸ *BT P20 Tr.*, p. xxxvi.

¹³⁹ 'And last of all Deheubarth, there submitted to the English the two sons of Maredudd ab Owain, Gruffudd and Cynan, and Llywelyn ab Owain their nephew', *BT P20*, p. 224.

¹⁴⁰ 'And last of all from Deheubarth, Gruffudd and Cynan, sons of Maredudd ab Owain, and Llywelyn ab Owain, their nephew, joined with the king. And thus was all Deheubarth subjugated to the king', *BT RB*, p. 264.

There is here a difference in that P sees the sons of Maredudd as submitting to the English, whilst R sees them as joining with the king, with much less pejorative connotations. R however does then note that all Deheubarth was subjugated to the king, with the same term (*darostwng*) as used earlier in P. The differences between them could have arisen in a number of ways, but a possible explanation is that R preserves more faithfully the structure of the original with P being a partial abridgement, where the transference of Gruffudd, Cynan and Llywelyn's allegiance to the king was combined with the subjugation of Deheubarth to become a general submission to the English. There is therefore no need to assume that the differences between P and R here are due to their dependence on different versions of the Latin chronicle.¹⁴¹

One of the main differences between P and R in these years is that R sometimes gives more detail than P, such as its fuller description of the building of Aberystwyth in 1277, more detailed information regarding dates, and the place of Phylip Goch, the new abbot of Strata Florida in the succession of abbots. R is not always fuller: for example in the passage concerning Phylip Goch only P specifies that Thomas, bishop of St David's, celebrated mass on the high altar at Strata Florida.¹⁴² These differences in detail again provide no reason to assume the existence

¹⁴¹ That P refers to the English and R specifically to the king may be a change on the part of the translator of either version. Given that there is no use of the term *Saeson* in the annal of either version before this the difference is unlikely to be due to an ambiguous Latin pronoun. After this point, R describes Paen ap Patric (Payn de Chaworth of Cydweli)'s subjugation, *darostwng*, of three commotes of Uwch Aeron *y'r brenhin*, 'to the king', whereas P mentions Paen's subjugation of the territories but not the king. The translator of P may therefore have wanted to avoid repetition of the formula *darostwng i'r brenhin*, itself used by both versions earlier in the annal.

¹⁴² *BT RB*, pp. 266.7–13, 266.14, 266.19; 268.19–24; compare with *BT P20*, p. 225, cols. 1.17–28, 2.1, 2.11–12, and p. 227, col. 1.9–23.

of two independent Latin versions here rather than selectiveness on the part of the two translators.¹⁴³

Turning now to S, it appears that S is generally much closer to P throughout this section. There are however some occasions where particular words or phrases are closer to R.¹⁴⁴ Though these are few, there is also some evidence for the compiler of S having both P and R for a particular passage.¹⁴⁵ This bears out Jones' conclusion that the compiler of this section of S drew on both the R and P versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* here. His use of P generally is apparent from the presence in S of the continuation of BT to 1332 in Peniarth MS 20, and the inclusion of material present in R but not P in other parts of S after 1200 make it likely that he drew on both in this section. It is likely that the compiler responsible for this section of S is the manuscript's scribe, the poet and herald Gutun Owain, and although S is generally much more concise than P and R, there are some additions which show his influence. They show his interest in genealogy, for example a more detailed explanation of the relationship between King Edward and Eleanor de Montfort, and more detailed pedigrees of Dafydd ap Gruffudd in 1281 and Gruffudd ap Maredudd and Rhys Fychan in 1282.¹⁴⁶ He also adds small details such as at the first mention of *Eleanor*, *a vv dwysoges Gymry*, and the addition of the information that she was sailing towards *Gwynedd att i gwr Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ One arguable difference in specific detail concerns the description of the wedding of Llywelyn and Eleanor in 1278. Whilst R says that they were married in the *esgobty* (bishop's palace) of Worcester, P states that Eleanor was given at the door of Worcester cathedral and married *there*, referring to the door, the church or to Worcester in general. If the last is meant then this need not imply a difference in their source or even in understanding that source - the original Latin would have had Eleanor being given at the door of the cathedral and then married in the recently rebuilt bishop's palace. R picks up one detail and P another, summarising the rest. *BT P20*, p. 226, col. 2.5–8, *BT RB*, p. 268.3–7; N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 315.

¹⁴⁴ For example, *BS*, p. 256.23, *RS goresgynnodd*, *P kymyrth*; p. 256.8, *RS i gares*, *P y kefnitherw*; p. 254.30, *RS aeth*, *P ymchwelawd*.

¹⁴⁵ This can be argued for his elision of the disagreement between P and R at *BS*, p. 254.14.

¹⁴⁶ *BS*, p. 256.10–11, 256.24, 256.29–31.

¹⁴⁷ 'who was princess of Wales', 'Gwynedd to her husband, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd', *BS*, p. 252.10–11.

A detailed study of the years 1275–1282 therefore shows that, for this section at least, there is no reason to assume the existence of more than one version of Latin BT. As discussed below, however, there is some justification for this in the uniqueness of the continuation in P. It is clear that there are two different translations of Latin BT, both being combined and abridged to form a third version. Turning to consider the question of the date of composition of the original Latin text, it is clear that these conclusions reduce the authority of early 1282 as the original termination point of Latin BT, given that this date may derive from only one version of the Latin chronicle.

The place of 1282 as a deliberate point of termination is further undermined by the evidence of Humphrey Lhuyd's *Cronica Walliae* of 1559. This history, the first account of the history of Wales to be written in English, has as its main source a version in Welsh of *Brut y Tywysogion*, called the *British booke* or *Welsh historie* by Llwyd, which he tells us ended in the year 1270.¹⁴⁸ There are several indications that this version could not have been any of the three surviving. It contained material not present in any of them as well as some material unique to a particular surviving version.¹⁴⁹ The end-date of 1270, then, has more authority than if it was simply due to a single incomplete manuscript of one of PRS, as it is the only known point of termination for a distinct, though lost, version of BT.

A pre-1282 date of composition for the Latin source of S would further undermine 1282 as a point of termination, and taken together with the evidence of Humphrey Lhuyd's *Cronica Walliae*, would have considerable implications on our understanding of the source of CW. This possibility must be borne in mind as one which would require some reassessment of the conclusions drawn from the

For Gutun Owain see above, pp. 47–49, 113–23.

¹⁴⁸ *Humphrey Llwyd, Cronica Walliae*, ed. by I. M. Williams (Cardiff, 2012), pp. 16, 218.

¹⁴⁹ *Cronica Walliae*, ed. Williams, pp. 19–23.

comparison of BT and CW above, but which would serve to further undermine a conception of *Brut y Tywysogion* as a coherent historical narrative compiled around the time of the Edwardian conquest.

Despite questions raised here about the date of composition, in terms of provenance the case for the composition of Latin BT at Strata Florida is a strong one. It is by far the most prominent monastery in the narrative, with 33 entries in each of P and R.¹⁵⁰ This is to be compared with, in P, 3 references to Valle Crucis, 7 to Whitland and 7 to Aberconwy.¹⁵¹ Details given concerning Strata Florida include those which confirm that the monastery was important in the latest stages of the text's composition, for example reference to the fire of 1286 in the annal for 1280.¹⁵² The work must have been compiled at Strata Florida, but the questions when, and for what purpose, are still open.

1282: THE END-POINT OF *BRUT Y TYWYSOGION*?

The 1282 point of termination is in fact one of the most puzzling features of the chronicle. It is often stated that *Brut y Tywysogion* covers the period between the death of Cadwaladr and the Edwardian conquest, but in fact it stops just short of this.¹⁵³ The shared narrative of P and R ends in early 1282 with Rhys Fychan and Gruffudd ap Maredudd of Deheubarth's capture of Aberystwyth. The chronicler's year here began on 25 March, and so Dafydd's capture of Hawarden on March 21/22 is dated to 1281. The only events described in 1282 occur on 25 March, the feast of the

¹⁵⁰ *BT P20*, p. 268; *BT RB*, p. 385. Given the different relationship of S before and after 1198 to the other two, it is inappropriate to compare them directly, but the proportion of Strata Florida entries to those relating to other Cistercian houses is comparable. *BS*, pp. 373, 411, 433, 437.

¹⁵¹ *BT P20*, pp. 224, 251, 271.

¹⁵² *BT P20*, p. 227.

¹⁵³ *BT P20*, p. xxxvi; B. F. Roberts, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Cyfieithiad Cymraeg Cynharaf o *Historia regum Britanniae* Sieffre o Fynwy, Yngyd ag "Argraffiad" Beirniadol o Destun Peniarth 44' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1969), p. xcii; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales*, pp. 587–88; Williams, *Historical Texts from Medieval Wales*, p. xxv, but explained in more detail at p. xxix.

Annunciation. It is difficult to attribute this to a deficiency in the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version, since the character of the continuation in P, which was later used for S, suggests that it is very much a continuation, designed to rectify a perceived deficiency in the narrative of the chronicle. For example, it opens by stating that *dyw sul y blodeu y torres rwg llewelyn ap grufud ac edward brenhin lloigyr*, despite the fact that this event had already been narrated in the annal for 1281.¹⁵⁴

There are numerous reasons for seeing the narrative after 1282 as a continuation. In an assessment of the scribes of the Peniarth MS 20 continuation, Thomas and Gifford Charles-Edwards reached a number of conclusions regarding this segment. They saw it as divided into four distinct palaeographical sections which also had differences in terms of content and origin. The first section runs from the termination point of R in 1282, where there is a change of hand, up to 1290. Up until 1282 the hand is Hand A (Daniel Huws' X88), who wrote the entirety of the body of the chronicle up to this point. The second section involves a change of hand to that of Hand B (Daniel Huws' X89), who corrected and annotated the work of Hand A in the rest of the manuscript, and runs from 1282 to 1330. Despite a difference in the size of script and a perceived change of hand at 1290 according to Thomas Jones, it appears that the section 1282–1330 is written by the same scribe. The two later sections, probably contemporary records for 1331 and 1332, need not detain us here.¹⁵⁵

The Charles-Edwardses saw the section up to 1290 as a continuation of the original Brut, written at Strata Florida and translated from Latin at Valle Crucis. The reason given for this is the interest shown in the rebellion of Rhys ap Maredudd, interpreted as showing a continuing south-west Wales focus. The section after 1291, on the other hand, contains 'serious chronological dislocations' which expose it as a

¹⁵⁴ 'on Palm Sunday was the breach between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and Edward, king of England', *BT P20*, p. 228.

¹⁵⁵ Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', pp. 296–304.

set of annals compiled from sparse memories.¹⁵⁶ But in fact there is little reason to draw this particular distinction between the two sections, since 1282–1290 also contains chronological dislocations. These are the misdating of the birth of Edward of Caernarfon to 1283 rather than 1284 and, much more seriously, the misdating of the commencement of construction of Beaumaris castle to 1283 rather than 1295.¹⁵⁷ This second slip indicates that the entry for 1283 must have been written after the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn in Gwynedd, which precipitated the construction of Beaumaris, and probably a considerable time after in order to so seriously misdate its building.

The fact that the continuation appears to be a translation from Latin is a point in favour of seeing P and R as derived from different versions, or at least different manuscripts, of Latin BT. There is also the possibility that the continuation was separate from Latin BT and tacked on to the end of the narrative by the translator of P.¹⁵⁸ A third possibility is that R was translated from Latin BT before the continuation was added to the manuscript, with P being translated subsequently after the chronicle was extended.¹⁵⁹

The entire narrative from March 1282 to 1284 reads like a continuous retrospective narrative of the Edwardian conquest of Gwynedd, which could not have been compiled before 1295. The focus on Rhys ap Maredudd in the relatively short entries for 1289 (*recte* 1287) and 1290 do not alter the Venedotian focus of this segment, especially since 1289 itself contains mention of the drowning of John

¹⁵⁶ Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', p. 302.

¹⁵⁷ It has been argued that the construction of the castle was planned in 1283 but delayed, the only supporting evidence being the fact of Edward I's visit to Llanfaes in 1283. Even if this were true it remains unlikely that a Welsh chronicler writing before 1295 would have referred to the site as *Bew Mareis*. A. J. Taylor, *The Welsh Castles of Edward I* (Bristol, 1986), p. 103; *BT P20*, p. 228.

¹⁵⁸ Or the scribe of Peniarth MS 20, if these are separate figures.

¹⁵⁹ Latin declensional forms are found in the continuation for 1307, 1312 and 1330. *BT P20 Tr.*, p. lxii. A fourth possibility here is that P was translated before the loss of the section after March 1282 from a manuscript from which R was also translated, but the retrospective nature of the account for 1282 in contrast to the chronicle beforehand is a point against this.

Pennardd, *tywysauc gwyr Gwyned*.¹⁶⁰ There is no need therefore to postulate a Strata Florida source for this material. The main reason to distinguish this section from the account of 1291 on is the use of a different chronological system, which may suggest a change of source.¹⁶¹ The fact that the account of 1283 misdates the construction of Beaumaris may be taken to indicate that it was written some time after the 1294–1295 revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, itself recorded in the post-1290 Peniarth MS 20 continuation.

There is therefore no inherent reason to draw a distinction between 1282–1290 and 1291–1330 on the basis of their narrative content, nor to associate the first with Strata Florida, although the change of dating system could indicate that it was composed separately from the following section. If the account of 1282–1290 did come from Strata Florida it would either provide an argument for seeing R and P as translations of different versions of the original Latin chronicle, or it would force us to seriously reconsider the date of that chronicle's composition.

It is therefore clear that this section is of supreme importance in determining the date of the original composition of *Brut y Tywysogion*. A brief review of the dating evidence shared between P and R is necessary here: both contain references to the post-conquest fate of Gwenllian ferch Llywelyn in the annal for 1275, which must have been written after around 1284.¹⁶² They also refer to the 1286 fire at Strata Florida in the annal for 1280. This is the extent of the evidence in P up to 1282, but its later section contains evidence which is not easily datable before around 1300 because

¹⁶⁰ 'leader of the men of Gwynedd', *BT P20*, p. 229. The misdating of Rhys ap Maredudd's revolt to 1289 should also be noted. For this revolt see R. A. Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd, 1287–88', *Welsh History Review* 3 (1966), 121–43.

¹⁶¹ Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', p. 302.

¹⁶² The reference to Gwenllian being made a nun against her will would date it after that event, known to have occurred by 1289. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales*, p. 580; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edward I, A.D. 1281–1292* (London, 1893), ed. by J. G. Black, R. F. Isaacson, G. J. Morris, and H. C. Maxwell Lyte, pp. 321–22.

of its misdating of the building of Beaumaris. R also contains a reference to St Louis, who was canonised in 1297. Two scenarios should be considered.

The first sees the later material in Peniarth MS 20 as part of the original Latin chronicle. In this case, the compilation of Latin BT must be placed after 1300, and probably slightly later still. This would raise the interesting prospect of translation into the vernacular not long after the initial compilation of the Latin text. If the change in dating system reflects a change in source material, the chronicle may be seen as one covering the years 682–1290, but produced after 1295. If not, it is uncertain where we should draw the line and see the beginning of a Valle Crucis continuation. Perhaps after the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, where the account of the revolt in the annal for 1293 (*recte* 1294) seems to prioritise Deheubarth? But since it has been argued that it is inaccurate to describe the account for 1282–1290 as being written specifically from a Deheubarth perspective it is uncertain to what extent such evidence is reliable.¹⁶³

The second scenario would see Latin BT as ending where the shared account of P and R ends, in early 1282. This would throw up the problem of explaining why a chronicle written after 1286 would finish without an account of the Edwardian conquest. Even if the mention of the 1286 fire is explained away as a gloss, as Jones considered, the Gwennlian narrative would date it post-1284.¹⁶⁴ Any explanation which would attribute the end of the chronicle to the circumstances of the war of 1282–1283 must contend with the fact that the text as it exists shows signs of being compiled some years after this. A possible explanation might be that the compiler of the chronicle did not feel secure discussing the events of the conquest in the atmosphere of its immediate aftermath. We should remember the injunctions issued in June 1284 by Archbishop Peckham for the clergy of the diocese of St Asaph

¹⁶³ Though it would perhaps support Thomas Jones' argument that the continuation was 'a conflation of more than one set of annals derived from several places'. *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. lxii–lxiii.

¹⁶⁴ Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', 23.

reminding them of their responsibility to reconcile Welsh and English, and specifically warning against Welsh tales of their glorious descent from the Trojans.¹⁶⁵ Though probably working at Strata Florida in the diocese of St David's, given this warning, the compiler of Latin BT, engaged as he was in a continuation of Geoffrey's narrative which glorified the Trojan descent of the Britons, may have felt that it was best to draw it to a close without going over the events of 1282–1283. In doing this he left a gap which was filled by a continuator working some time after 1300, whose work was translated into Welsh and came to form part of the Peniarth 20 version.

Both scenarios present unique problems, and there are other explanations for the differences between P and R. The early termination of the narrative could, for example, be explained by the death of the compiler. The narrative could originally have extended to 1282 but the loss of the end of the manuscript could have deprived the translators of this section. Nevertheless Latin BT is left not as a narrative of Welsh history from the death of Cadwaladr to that of Llywelyn, but either as a chronicle of 682 to 25 March 1282 written after 1286 or a chronicle containing an account of the Edwardian conquest but not completed before a decade or so after 1295, with its narrative finishing and going into the Peniarth 20 continuation, possibly at 1290.

A third possibility would be to see the chronicle as a narrative of Welsh history which was substantially completed by the 1270s, and afterwards continued in an increasingly fitful manner. The 1270 end-date of Humphrey Lhuyd's version of the chronicle would lend support to such a suggestion. This scenario would affect the perception of *Brut y Tywysogion* as a unified, coherent work, since it would undermine the idea of there being a single moment of compilation. If Latin BT was substantially complete by 1270, and to a certain extent in the case of the two other

¹⁶⁵ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 41; *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. by C. T. Martin (3 vols., London, 1882–5), ii., 737–43.

dates of composition suggested above, it is debatable whether we should envisage a single compiler editing and working up various sources into a single continuous chronicle, rather than seeing the work as the end product of a long process of recording and compilation.

Whatever its status in relation to the main body of the text it is clear that the Peniarth 20 continuation is no contemporary narrative. It was either written as an account of the Edwardian conquest (possibly including the revolts of Rhys ap Maredudd and Madog ap Llywelyn) which drew the narrative of Welsh independence in Latin BT, written after 1300, to a close, or it was written at a later date to the compilation of Latin BT in order to bring that narrative to a satisfactory close. The fact that the relatively brief and slightly confused account of the events of 1282–1284 differ in these ways from the preceding annals leads me to favour the latter scenario. This would confirm that both the P and R versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* were based on a chronicle which came to a close on 25 March 1282 but not written before 1286, though as indicated above there is little to suggest that this was not the same version of Latin BT.

These conclusions change somewhat the way in which *Brut y Tywysogion* must be viewed as an historical work. They do not offer a comprehensive reassessment of the text and its composition, nor are many concrete answers given. But they do reduce the importance of the figure of the compiler, and indicate that we should not envisage one individual who masterminded the construction of a retrospective history of the Welsh in the wake of 1282. If the explanation favoured above is accepted, the Latin chronicle for whatever reason shied away from describing the Edwardian conquest, although a continuation was later written in Latin to rectify this. If the contemporary

chronicler acted in this way because of the delicate political situation, it makes sense for the continuator to have been working some years after the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn when the conquest and settlement of Llywelyn's principality could have been regarded as complete, with their most potent symbols, the Edwardian castles and boroughs, inserted into the narrative immediately after the death of Llywelyn.

Alternatively, the *Brut* could be thought of as substantially complete by 1270, when the copy used by Humphrey Lhuyd terminated, subsequent sections of the text being due to later updating. Given the arguments above concerning the minimal role of the compiler, with the corollary that BT should be read as a relatively faithful record of a long period of Cistercian and pre-Cistercian chronicle activity, there is not a huge deal of difference between these scenarios in terms of their implications. If the compiler had limited influence on the text, the moment when most of the material now contained in BT was assembled together for the first time should not be thought of as particularly significant. It is more plausible to see the chronicle as something which was gradually assembled over a long period, a process which certainly continued after the conquest in light of the continuation in Peniarth MS 20.

BRUT Y TYWYSOGION, 1100–1127

The lack of a definite significant termination point could be taken as something of a commentary on the historical vision of the compiler of Latin BT. For whatever reason, it seems that the chronicle used by the translators of P and R finished not with a bang but with a whimper, undermining the interpretation of the Latin compiler as a manipulator of his sources into a unified narrative. This picture has also been undermined by the comparison between the *Brutiau* and CW, and we shall now consider a section of BT referred to above but not discussed in detail, the years 1100–

1127. It is likely that the account of these years in BT are drawn from a narrative written as a coherent work soon after the events recorded and therefore gives a valuable insight into historical writing in Wales in the twelfth century.

There are several characteristics which mark out these years as distinct from the preceding years and those which follow. The first and most obvious is their considerable length and detail, which surpasses any other part of BT and results in these two decades occupying more than a quarter of the whole of BT. The text also shows a focus on the dynasty of Powys, events in Ceredigion and particularly around Llanbadarn Fawr, and some interest in the activities of King Henry I in Wales and abroad. These features and others, such as a focus on the mechanisms of diplomacy and a moralising turn of mind, led David Stephenson to ascribe the authorship of this section to Daniel ap Sulien, archdeacon of Powys, whose death is recorded in 1127.¹⁶⁶

Given the importance of this ascription to the following discussion a brief reassertion of the strength of Stephenson's case will be necessary. The last of the distinctive characteristics of this part of the text occurs in 1126, a terse reference to King Henry's activities. Many of the details of the account itself suggests that it was composed by someone fairly soon after the events described.¹⁶⁷ The focus on Llanbadarn makes it likely that it was composed by a member of the family of Sulien, the most renowned scholarly family in late eleventh/early twelfth-century Wales who were particularly associated with that church. Finally, given the way Daniel is described in his obituary, particularly his political position as arbitrator between Powys and Gwynedd, his authorship would explain many of the most distinctive features of the text in question.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Stephenson, "'Resurgence' of Powys", 184–89.

¹⁶⁷ Most notably the account of the attack on Aberystwyth in 1116. *BT P20*, pp. 70–71; Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ Stephenson, "'Resurgence' of Powys", 184–89.

Llanbadarn Fawr in the late eleventh century had emerged as the foremost centre of Latin learning in Wales. It was home to Sulien, twice bishop of St David's, and to his sons Rhygyfarch and Ieuan, both authors of Latin works. Ieuan's poem on the biography of Sulien is one of our main sources for his father's career, and also attributed to his authorship are, in Latin, a life of St Padarn, several short blessings and an invocation for aid whilst copying a manuscript, as well as a Welsh englyn on St Padarn's staff. His brother, Rhygyfarch, is the author of the Latin life of St David and three Latin poems, one of which will be discussed in more detail below.¹⁶⁹ Daniel's brothers, then, produced works of Cambro-Latin literature which still survive, though some are not explicitly attributed to them.

Though a flourishing centre of Latin learning in Wales, the Norman incursions of the eleventh century had a huge effect on Llanbadarn. It was a *clas*, a native Welsh monastic institution which was by this time characterised by a tendency for control of the institution to remain within one family.¹⁷⁰ Gerald of Wales notes its tendency to come under the control of lay abbots in the late twelfth century, and although this was not necessarily the case in the early twelfth century it was certainly an institution which would have come under pressure to reform.¹⁷¹ The impetus for reform had

¹⁶⁹ For the family generally, see J. E. Lloyd, 'Bishop Sulien and His Family', *Cylchgrawn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/ National Library of Wales Journal* 2 (1941–1942), 1–6. The standard edition of the poetry of Sulien and Rhygyfarch is by Michael Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin Poetry of Sulien's Family', *Studia Celtica* 8/9 (1973–1974), 68–106, but they have recently been re-edited though not published by Sarah Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest in Late-Eleventh-Century Wales' (PhD thesis, Harvard, MA, 2012), pp. 314–337, and see also the discussion of the family's compositions on p. 23. For Ieuan's authorship of the *Vita Sancti Paterni*, see Charles Thomas and David Howlett, '*Vita Sancti Paterni*: The Life of Saint Padarn and the Original "Miniu"', *Trivium* 33 (2003), 1–103. For the Old Welsh englyn, see Paul Russell, 'The Englyn to St Padarn Revisited', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 63 (2012), 1–14. For Rhygyfarch's authorship of the *Vita sancti David* see 'Rhygyfarch's Life of St David', ed. by R. Sharpe and J. R. Davies in *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. by J. Wyn Evans and J. M. Wooding (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 107–55.

¹⁷⁰ J. W. Evans, 'The Survival of the *Clas* as an Institution in Medieval Wales: Some Observations on Llanbadarn Fawr', in *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. by N. Edwards and A. Lane (Oxford, 1992), pp. 33–40 (33–34); H. Pryce, *Native Welsh Law and the Church in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 186–88.

¹⁷¹ *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI., 121–22; Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts and the

important native Welsh advocates, not least the family of Sulien, but in practice ecclesiastical reform and the spread of Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical and political authority could go hand-in-hand.¹⁷² With the conquest of Ceredigion by Gilbert fitz Richard de Clare in 1110, the monastery was, by 1115, granted to the abbey of St Peter in Gloucester, a common enough pattern in the Welsh church in these years.¹⁷³ This subjection to an English institution does not seem to have affected the literary output of Llanbadarn as it is clear that it was still a centre of manuscript production, albeit with an increasing Anglo-Norman influence on its script. Sarah Zeiser's investigation of the context of Latin composition and manuscript production at Llanbadarn has revealed a degree of institutional continuity which provides a fitting context for the composition of the 1100–1127 section of BT.¹⁷⁴

Despite its inclusion in a chronicle which for long sections consists of a mere series of annals, this part of BT can be characterised as a self-conscious historical composition rather than a simple chronicle. This is apparent from the frequent use of dialogue, revelation of the inner thoughts and intentions of particular figures, and frequent authorial comments concerning the morality of particular actions and peoples.¹⁷⁵ These features bring the text closer to what a later twelfth-century historian, Gervase of Canterbury, defined as *historici* rather than *cronici*.¹⁷⁶ As an

Rhetoric of Conquest', 15–16.

¹⁷² J. R. Davies, 'Aspects of Church Reform in Wales, c.1093–c.1223', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 30 (2007), 85–99.

¹⁷³ F. J. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349*, Studies in Welsh History 1 (Cardiff, 1977), pp. 12–17.

¹⁷⁴ Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts and the Rhetoric of Conquest', 217–21; see also A. Peden, 'Science and Philosophy in Wales at the Time of the Norman Conquest: a Macrobius Manuscript from Llanbadarn', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 2 (1981), 21–46.

¹⁷⁵ Referring to BT P20, some illustrative examples include - dialogue between King Henry and Cadwgan, pp. 52–53; revelation of Madog ap Rhiryd's inner thoughts, p. 54; commentary on Cadwgan's guilelessness and Bishop Richard's love for land, pp. 55–56; commentary on Madog and Ithel ap Rhiryd's failure to govern Powys effectively, pp. 46–47; comments on the evil ways and customs of the Irish, p. 54; comments on the tendency of the French towards deceit, p. 63.

¹⁷⁶ Gervase of Canterbury, *Chronica*, ed. by W. Stubbs in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury* (2 vols., London 1879–80), I, pp. 87–88; R. Ray, 'Historiography', in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington

historical work, it is concerned with very recent events, but particular features suggest that it was written not year by year but some time after the events as a continuous narrative.¹⁷⁷ The literary style of the work would suggest this conclusion, but it is confirmed by features such as the teleological comment at the end of 1110 which tells how *ymedylyawd Madawc wneuthur brad Ioruerth pa fford bynac y gallei*.¹⁷⁸ This betrayal is related in the subsequent year. It can be compared to the Latin life of Gruffudd ap Cynan as a twelfth-century literary Cambro-Latin historical work which relates to relatively recent events, and although this is somewhat later in date it was also, until fairly recently, only known through a Middle Welsh translation.¹⁷⁹

Given these indications of the work's nature and origin, it will be convenient to refer to it in this section as the Llanbadarn History. This title is merely a convenient shorthand referring to a supposed work which was the source for at least the years 1100–1127 in Latin BT, and was composed by an author with links to Llandabarn soon after the events described, very probably Daniel ap Sulien.¹⁸⁰ The family of Sulien are apparent in BT before this, and their connections with both St David's and Llanbadarn was probably essential to the transmission of annals from the former church to the latter. Sulien himself was twice bishop of St David's, and the praise of Sulien and his son Rhygyfarch in BT at their deaths in 1091 and 1099 indicate a

D. C., 1996), pp. 639–649 (p. 641).

¹⁷⁷ In terms of its differences from the rest of BT it is perhaps fruitful to compare it to the account of the reign of Æthelred II in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This was written as a single coherent narrative late in the reign of Æthelred, and as such presents a unified picture which reveals the author's opinion of recent events and which contrasts with the briefer annalistic style of other parts of the chronicle. S. D. Keynes, 'The Declining Reputation of King Æthelred the Unready', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. by D. Hill, B A R British Series 59 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 227–53.

¹⁷⁸ 'Madog thought to work the betrayal of Iorwerth in whatever way he could', *BT P20*, p. 54.

¹⁷⁹ *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, ed. Russell.

¹⁸⁰ Stephenson, "'Resurgence' of Powys", 184–89.

connection with Llanbadarn before the start of the distinctive features of the 1100–1127 section.¹⁸¹

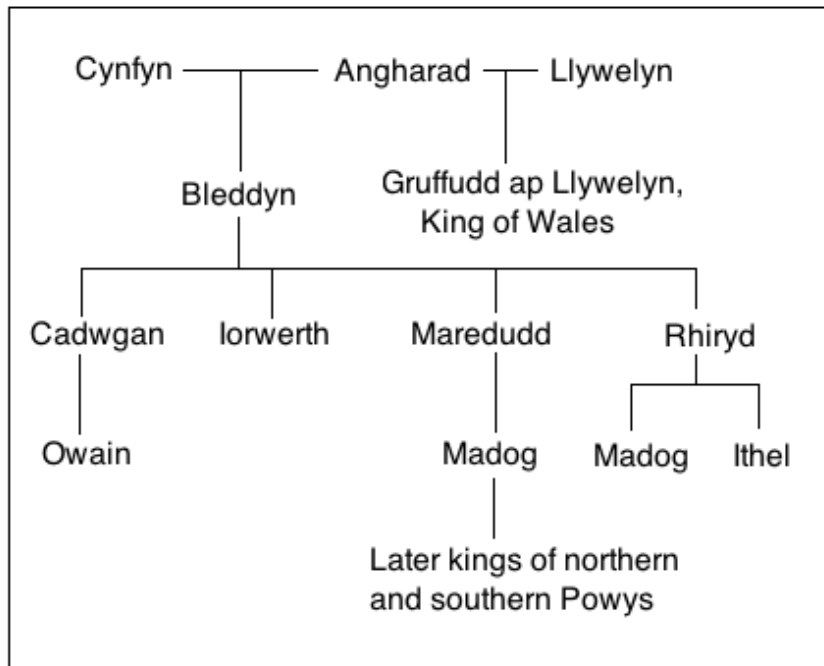


Table 4: simplified family tree of the dynasty of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, showing descendants of Bleddyn discussed in this chapter as well as his relationship to Gruffudd ap Llywelyn.

The focus of the narrative can be said to be the activities of the descendants of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, particularly their dealings with King Henry and with the Normans in South Wales. There is also some attention given to rival Welsh dynasties such as those of Llywarch ap Trahaearn, Gruffudd ap Cynan and especially Uchdryd ab Edwin, though prioritising their interactions with members of the Powys dynasty.¹⁸² There is a particular focus on Cadwgan, Maredudd and Iorwerth amongst the sons of Bleddyn, and on Owain ap Cadwgan and Madog and Ithel ap Rhiryd

¹⁸¹ *BTP20*, pp. 18, 29–30.

¹⁸² Or at least, the dynasty which came to be associated with Powys in these years. Stephenson, "Resurgence" of Powys!, 189–93.

among his grandsons. It is generally clear that the focus is on the political activities of these dynasts in the wider Welsh and English context, with particular interest shown in their activities in Ceredigion and Powys.

The author's way of describing the authority and status of these various dynasts indicates how he thought about the recent history of the Britons. The most powerful political force in the narrative is Henry I, and this of course reflects the situation in his reign.¹⁸³ Henry is characterised as an impressive ruler with wide-ranging authority, his power causing fear.¹⁸⁴ But he is also deceitful, tyrannical and genocidal.¹⁸⁵ His authority over Wales is clear, and there only he is accorded the title of king, although other kings are mentioned, such as those of the *Pictieid/Prydyn* (meaning Scotland) and of the Irish.¹⁸⁶

Despite this it is also clear that until recently there had been kings over the Britons in Wales, notably Maredudd ab Owain, Rhys ap Tewdwr and possibly Bleddyn ap Cynfyn.¹⁸⁷ But power among the Britons of the twelfth century is defined by their relative status with regard to their countrymen rather than by kingship: Iorwerth ap Bleddyn is described as *penaf ... o'r Brytanyeid a mwyaf y allu*,¹⁸⁸ and the promise made to Madog and Ithel ap Rhiryd by Richard, bishop of London, is that King Henry will *a'ch mawrhaa ac a'ch dyrcheif ynn vch ac ynn bennach no neb o'ch*

¹⁸³ R. R. Davies, 'Henry I and Wales', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. H. C. Davis*, ed. by H. Mayr-Harting and R. Moore (London, 1985), pp. 133–147.

¹⁸⁴ *BT P20*, pp. 42–43.

¹⁸⁵ *BT P20*, pp. 37, 58–59.

¹⁸⁶ *BT P20*, pp. 30, 46; *BT RB*, p. 40.

¹⁸⁷ P calls Maredudd, Rhys and Bleddyn kings, whereas R only calls the former two kings, describing Bleddyn as *y penhaf o'r Bryttannyeit wedy Gruffud ap Llywelyn*, 'the foremost of the Britons after Gruffudd ap Llywelyn', an important distinction. S misattributes the description of Rhys ap Tewdwr as king to his son, Gruffudd, and omits the first mention of King Maredudd present in P and R. S agrees with R in describing Bleddyn ap Cynfyn as *mwiaf*, 'greatest', rather than *brenhin*, 'king', but this is of questionable authority given the aforementioned mistake and omission. *BT P20*, pp. 41, 62, 65–66; *BT RB*, pp. 54, 82, 86; *BS*, pp. 104, 124, 127.

¹⁸⁸ 'the foremost of the Britons and greatest in ability', *BT P20*, p. 34.

kyttirogyon ac a gyghoruynna wrthywch ych kytteruynwyr o'ch holl genedyl.¹⁸⁹ Power is defined with reference to ownership of land, and by relative status with regard to fellow countrymen. The former is constantly under threat from the king, his lords, foreign settlers and other dynasts, and the latter is often defined by a relationship with the king.¹⁹⁰ The only sense of native authority is projected into the past with references to tenth- and eleventh-century figures, the political situation in the present seeming unstable and ill-defined, the only constant being the threatening power of King Henry.

When exactly did the author envisage the Welsh losing the institution of kingship? As he was the last named king to die, and as BT says that at his death *y dygwydawd teyrnas y Brytanyeid*, it is likely that it was at the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth.¹⁹¹ His death is also interpreted as such in John of Worcester's chronicle.¹⁹² Whilst this annal in BT lies outside the 1100–1127 range of the distinctive Llanbadarn History, the probable origin of this entry at Llanbadarn Fawr is a point in favour of this being an addition on the part of its author, or at least indicates his awareness of it.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ 'exalt and raise you to be the highest and chief above any of your fellow land-holders, and will make you the object of envy for all your kinsmen whose lands border on yours'. *BT RB*, pp. 56–58. R is here slightly fuller than P, and, as usual, much more detailed than S. *BT P20*, p. 43; *BS*, p. 106.

¹⁹⁰ For example, in the account of Owain ap Cadwgan's reconciliation with the king, where the language used is almost the same as in the promises made to Madog and Ithel. *BT P20*, p. 61.

¹⁹¹ 'the kingdom of the Britons fell', *BT P20*, p. 25.

¹⁹² It may be that this entry in John of Worcester is derived from Welsh chronicle sources. If so it would be interesting to know whether the material was acquired from Llanbadarn or from St David's. The chronicle's links with Gloucester would be an argument in favour of the former, given St Peter's abbey's ownership of Llanbadarn. *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: Volume III, the Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. by P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998), pp. xxx–xxxii.

¹⁹³ The late eleventh-century section of BT shows sufficient interest in the family of Sulien for there to be an argument for a Llanbadarn origin in these years, although the fact that Sulien himself had links with both St David's and Llanbadarn is a contributing factor to the uncertainty about when exactly BT begins to draw on a text with a Llanbadarn origin, rather than St David's. The text of BT for the later eleventh century agrees closely with the PRO and Cottonian chronicles (*Annales Cambriae* B and C), though it is somewhat more detailed, and both these Latin annals are likely to be abbreviated versions of a St David's chronicle in these years. It is possible that the compiler of Latin BT combined the Llanbadarn History with Menevian annals, or that annalistic material was shared between St David's and Llanbadarn, the author of the Llanbadarn history prefacing his

Whilst land is often a defining characteristic of power, it is also often under threat. Defined as *tir y Bryttannyeit*, it sometimes retains this ethnic designation even when given to a Norman lord, although a reference at one point to *gwlat y Ffreinc ar Saeson* could indicate otherwise.¹⁹⁴ The settlement of the Flemings in southern Dyfed in 1108 is a moment when the oppression of the Britons is evoked in general terms in R, which describes the expulsion of *y priodolyon giwdawdwyr, y rei a gollasant eu priawt wlat a'e priawt le yr hynny hyt hediw*.¹⁹⁵ The fact that neither of the other versions contains this passage makes it uncertain whether it should be regarded as part of the original account.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless other passages give a vivid indication of the turmoil and upheaval which affected much of Wales during these years.¹⁹⁷

The bleak depiction of native authority is underscored by a failure to re-establish kingship amongst the Britons. The depiction of Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr's 1115–1116 campaign to re-establish native political authority in Deheubarth has been discussed before, particularly the use in all three versions of the word *ynfydion*, translatable as 'fools' or 'hotheads', to describe some of Gruffudd's followers. It is Babcock's analysis which is the most persuasive, that the word refers to those young men who broke with traditional bonds of lordship in the chaos caused

account with material from St David's. If so, the lack of reference to the loss of the kingdom of the Britons in the Latin annals could be an indication that this was an addition on the part of the author of the Llanbadarn History, although the tendency for both PRO and Cotton to abridge their sources in these years must be borne in mind.

¹⁹⁴ R uses the designation *tir y Bryttannyeit*, but in P it appears as *kymry*. Although S agrees with P in this respect in one instance, given the tendency of S to change British terminology to 'Welsh', *Cymry*, throughout, R should probably be taken as best representing the reading of Latin BT. P would therefore show an updating of terminology which, while uncharacteristic of this version, can be explained in this instance as distinct from its usual retention of British in that this refers particularly to land rather than to people. *BT P20*, pp. 33, 53; *BT RB*, pp. 44, 72; *BS*, p. 116. It is uncertain whether the reference to *gwlat y Ffreinc ar Saeson* refers to land in England or Wales.

¹⁹⁵ 'the rightful inhabitants, those who have lost their rightful country and rightful place from then until today'. *BT RB*, p. 52.

¹⁹⁶ It is interesting to note the parallel between this passage and the commentary of the scribe Hywel Fychan at the end of the text of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in Philadelphia MS 8680. This dates from the late fourteenth century, but it is conceivable, though not necessary, to suppose that the passage in R is an addition of the early fourteenth century expressing similar sentiments. See below, p. 385.

¹⁹⁷ For example, the account of the aftermath of the attack on Aberystwyth in 1116. *BT P20*, p. 71.

by the Norman presence in Wales, and use of the word, or rather a Latin equivalent, fits into the author's depiction of the loss of native political authority in these years. The word shows disapproval of a certain category of follower who aided Gruffudd ap Rhys and Owain ap Cadwgan, rather than necessarily disapproval of these particular dynasts and their aims.¹⁹⁸

Descriptions of the aims of Gruffudd ap Rhys' campaign are interestingly ambiguous, though complicated by slight disagreement between the three Welsh versions. In a passage describing his accusation *in absentia* before King Henry, P has the king being told of widespread support for Gruffudd and of his intention to make himself a lord and leave the king's overlordship. R specifies that it was *pawb o'r Brytannyeit* who supported Gruffudd in his intention, with S as usual substituting *Kymry*, and while R states that Gruffudd sought to scorn the kingly authority of Henry, S is silent on this.¹⁹⁹ The rejection of King Henry's authority is Gruffudd's key intention here, but later R goes further than this, describing Gruffudd's intention to assert royal authority himself:

A gwedy clybot hynny ac ymgynnullaw attaw llawer o ynuydyon ieueinc o bop tu wedy y twyllaw o chwant anreitheu neu o geissaw atgyweiraw neu atnewydu Bryttannawl deyrnas - ac ny thal ewyllus dyn dim ony byd Duw yn borth idaw - gwneuthur a oruc yscoluethu mawr yn gylch ogylch.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles*, pp. 17–18; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, p. 43; R. S. Babcock, 'Imbeciles and Normans: The *Ynfydion* of Gruffudd ap Rhys Reconsidered', *Haskins Society Journal* 4 (1992), 1–9; Stephenson, 'The "Resurgence" of Powys', 186.

¹⁹⁹ 'all of the Britons', *BT P20*, pp. 62–63, *BT RB*, p. 82; *BS*, p. 124.

²⁰⁰ 'And after hearing that and collecting around him many young hotheads from all around, who were lured by their desire for spoil or from wanting to renew or restore the kingdom of the Britons- and the will of man is naught unless God supports him- they made great depredations round about him'. *BT RB*, p. 86. P is far briefer here, stating that the *ynfydion* gathered to Gruffudd and carried off many spoils. *BT P20*, p. 65.

Here Gruffudd's intention is to restore the kingdom of the Britons. It is appropriate to ask which kingdom: does this refer to the restoration of British dominance over Britain, as envisaged in *Armes Prydein Vawr*, and embodied in the unified British kingdom described in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi?²⁰¹ Or does it in a more limited sense refer to the restoration of the kingdom of Deheubarth and in a general sense the restoration of the institution of kingship to the Britons in Wales? In light of the depiction of the existence of kingly authority in the eleventh century and its loss by the twelfth, as well as the specific contextualisation of Gruffudd as [*m*]ab y *vrenhin y Deheu* who sought to leave the lordship of Henry, the second option is by far the most likely.²⁰²

What, then, explains the author's disapproval of this? The nature of some of Gruffudd's followers and the empty promises made to entice them to break the usual bonds of loyalty meets with his disapproval, and Gruffudd's subsequent failure to seize castles and establish himself convincingly is what made these promises empty. In seeking to restore lost authority, Gruffudd merely added to the turmoil which characterised Deheubarth in this period. He also threatened the power of Gilbert de Clare over Ceredigion, an important point given his authority over Llanbadarn Fawr at this time. This must explain some of the ambiguity in the Llanbadarn History's political sympathies. But it is the will of God which provides the determining factor, since Gruffudd's attempt to restore kingship to the Britons went against His plan. The implication is that the loss of this kingly authority was also due to divine will. Other references to the will of God in a similar vein in the other versions of BT are strong

²⁰¹ *Armes Prydein: the Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. by I. Williams and R. Bromwich, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 6 (Dublin, 1982); *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi Allan o Lyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*, ed. by I. Williams (Cardiff, 1964), p. 29, 45–46.

²⁰² 'the son of the king of the South', *BT P20*, p. 62. A similar idea of Gruffudd's status lies behind Gerald of Wales' story of Milo of Hereford's teasing of Gruffudd ap Rhys at Llangorse Lake. *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI., 34–35.

arguments for accepting this passage as part of the common source of the three Welsh versions rather than an addition in R.

Despite the arguments above that the idea of *atnewydu Bryttannawl deyrnas* refers to Wales rather than Britain as a whole, it is clear that the author is familiar with the idea of a kingship over Britain. This is unsurprising given the antiquity of this idea, present if not precisely articulated in *Historia Brittonum*, present in numerous prose tales and implicit in twelfth-century poetic references to the right of particular dynasts over Britain.²⁰³ But here this kingship of Britain is reserved for King Henry: in 1116 he is the man who had subdued to his authority *holl ynys Brydein a'y chedyrn*, with the approval of God who gave him this power, underlining the folly of the *ynfydion* who rebelled against him.²⁰⁴ Earlier, in his 1114 attack on Gwynedd and Powys, he is said to gather a host from all Britain, *o benryn Pengwaed y Ghernyw hyd y mhenryn Blathaon y Mhrydein*.²⁰⁵ Henry's power is here emphasised with reference to the traditional furthest limits of the island of Britain, but that this legendary claim now had a grounding in reality is demonstrated by Henry's use of troops from Cornwall and from Scotland, the latter under King Alexander I.²⁰⁶

The attribution of such authority to King Henry, framed by reference to some of the characteristic tropes of Welsh descriptions of authority over Britain, only highlights the contrasting powerlessness of British political leaders. It should be emphasised that the author's unwillingness to describe these men as kings was not echoed by many of his contemporaries. At his death, Owain ap Cadwgan was

²⁰³ *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. by J. Morris (Chichester, 1980), pp. 64, 67; *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, ed. by J. E. Caerwyn Williams with P. Lynch and R. Geraint Gruffydd, *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion 1* (Cardiff, 1994), p. 6, lines 20, 40; p. 71, line 22. See also M. Haycock, 'Early Welsh Poets Look North', in *Beyond the Gododdin: Dark Age Scotland in Medieval Wales*, ed. by A. Woolf (St Andrew's, 2013), pp. 7–39 (pp. 8, 12).

²⁰⁴ 'all the island of Britain and her mighty ones', *BT P20*, p. 68.

²⁰⁵ 'from the promontory of Pengwaedd in Cornwall to the promontory of Blathaon in Scotland', *BT P20*, p. 59. For a discussion of other uses of this formula, see Haycock, 'Early Welsh Poets Look North', pp. 8–9 and n.

²⁰⁶ *BT P20*, p. 59.

described as *rex Brittonum* by Symeon of Durham, and as *rex Walanorum* by John of Worcester.²⁰⁷ The limiting of kingship to powerful figures of the eleventh century and its limitation in twelfth-century Wales to King Henry can be seen as a conscious authorial decision.

These characteristics of the text are in many ways reminiscent of parts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*. Notably, the idea of the Britons losing their hold on the institution of monarchy through the judgement of God, and the subsequent impossibility of regaining this status without God's favour, bring to mind the central themes of the last book of Geoffrey's history. Despite these parallels, the Llanbadarn History is here describing the Norman incursions into Wales in the twelfth century, whereas Geoffrey is writing in the twelfth century about the events of the sixth and seventh and the loss of Britain to the Saxons. One part of the Llanbadarn History where these parallels are particularly striking is Iorwerth ap Bleddyn's message to his nephews Owain ap Cadwgan and Madog ap Rhiryd in 1110, where he asks them to stay away from his land in the light of King Henry's ban on giving support to Owain and Madog,

Duw a rodes ni ymlith ac yn llaw yn gelynyon ac an darystygawd yn gymeint ac na allom wneuthur dim herwyd yn ewyllys. Ac yn vyny ch y mae yn daruod y ny y Brytanyeid na chyffredino neb gyda ni, nac ar vwyd, nac ar diawd, nac ar gygor, nac ar ganhorthwy, namyn yn keissyaw an hely o le y le ac yn y diwed yn rodi yn llaw y brenhin, yn karcharu neu yn dienydu neu y wneuthur hyn a vyner a ni. Ac yn benaf y gorchymynwyd na chydsynym a neb rac

²⁰⁷ 'king of the Britons', 'king of the Welsh'. *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. by T. Arnold (2 vols., London, 1885), ii., 250; *John of Worcester*, vol. 3, ed. McGurk, p. 138. The later Margam Annals remembered him as *Powisorum regulum*, 'minor king of the men of Powys'. *Annales Monastici*, ed. by H. R. Luard, 5 vols. (London, 1864–1869), i, p. 9. These terms are also discussed in Maund, 'Owain ap Cadwgan', 71–72.

anymdiryeid yn kany allei neb gredu na rybucheï y tad ar ewythyr les a da yw y meibyon ay neieint. Ac wrth hyny, pei kydsynym ni a chwi ar ychydic o beth, torri gorchymyn y brenhin a dywedid arnam a dwyn yn kyfoeth a wneid y arnam an karcharu nineu neu yn dienydu. Wrth hyny mi a eiryolaf y chwi megys kyfeillt, ac a orchymynaf megys arglwyd, ac ach gwediaf megys kar hyd na deloch bellach ym kyfoeth i nac y gyfoeth kadwgawn mwy noc y dir arall or y syd yn ych kylch, kanys digassogach ys yni noc y ereill a haws yw kaffael anoc yn herbyn.²⁰⁸

This speech is reminiscent of some of the rhetorical speeches characteristic of Book Eleven of *De gestis Britonum*.²⁰⁹ What is striking is not any detailed echoing of content but rather the use of historical contextualisation with reference to the judgement of God in order to explain the sufferings of the Britons. The idea of the Britons losing control over Britain through the judgement of God was an old one, beginning with Gildas' sixth-century Jeremiad *De excidio Britanniae*. Gildas saw the sufferings of the Britons as evidence of divine judgement for their sins, but he was writing in a time of relative peace and security for the Britons.²¹⁰ It was Bede, using Gildas as a source for the first book of his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*,

²⁰⁸ 'God has placed us in the midst and in the hands of our enemies and has brought us so low that we can do nothing by our own will. And often it happens to us Britons that no one will associate with us in food, nor in drink, nor in counsel, nor to aid us, but rather they will seek us and hunt us from place to place and in the end put us into the hands of the king, to imprison us or to execute us or to do whatever is willed with us. And chiefly we are commanded not to enter into agreement with anyone because of this distrust in us, because no one could believe that the father or the uncle would not wish benefit and good on his sons and nephews. And because of that, if we were to enter into agreement with you on a small thing, we would be accused of breaking the king's command, our territory would be stolen and we would be imprisoned or executed. Therefore I beseech you as a friend, and command you as a lord, and pray you as a kinsman that you come no further into my territory nor Cadwgan's territory any more than to any other land that lies around it, since there is greater enmity towards us than towards others, and it is easier to find a charge against us.' *BT P20*, pp. 47–48.

²⁰⁹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 249–81, especially pp. 263–65, 267, 269, 275, 277–79.

²¹⁰ *Gildas: the Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. by M. Winterbottom (Chichester, 1978), pp. 98–99.

who related this to the later history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and so linked the establishment of Anglo-Saxon control over much of Britain with this divine judgement of the Britons.²¹¹

Geoffrey of Monmouth relied on both Bede and Gildas, and it is in his work that the idea of the Britons' loss of the kingdom of Britain at the judgement of God is most fully realised. It was nevertheless present in the work of other twelfth-century historians who drew on the same sources for their accounts of the early history of Britain. Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* explains Cerdic of Wessex's victories and conquest of land from the Britons through God's rejection of them, and soon afterwards explains that the kings of Wessex were destined in time to obtain *monarchia totius Britannie*.²¹² William of Malmesbury sees the death of Cadwallon as signifying the final fall of Britons. Although he does not explicitly link their loss of power to their loss of a king, the connection is implicit in the subsequent attribution of English strength to their *sacra religione cum regis magnanimitate consentiente*.²¹³ Indeed, in William's work the wellbeing of a people is consistently tied to the role of kings.²¹⁴

These ideas about the judgement of God are drawn both from the work of Gildas and Bede and ultimately from the Old Testament, particularly the Old Testament prophets, such as Jeremiah, who provided Gildas with inspiration.²¹⁵ The author of the Llanbadarn History himself knew Gildas, since he uses Gildas' words in his 1103 reference to the Scots rising from the very narrow holes of their caves like

²¹¹ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 66–68, 116, 134–42.

²¹² 'the monarchy of all Britain'. Henry, *Archdeacon of Huntingdon: Historia Anglorum, the History of the English People*, ed. by D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), p. 96.

²¹³ 'true religion and a generous-hearted king'. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum: the History of the English Kings*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Oxford, 1998–1999) I., 70–71.

²¹⁴ S. O. Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 148–49.

²¹⁵ *Gildas*, ed. Winterbottom, pp. 87–88.

ants after a warm rain, corresponding to the same description of the Picts and Scots in Gildas' *De excidio Britanniae*.²¹⁶ There may also be an echo of Gildas in the reference to King Henry's intention in 1114 to *dilyu wynt or byd neu eu bwrw yn y mor*, possibly echoing the letter to Aetius found in *De excidio*, where the barbarians are said to push the Britons to the sea.²¹⁷ In Gildas the author found a model for attributing political and military failure to the sins of the Britons and the judgement of God, just as Geoffrey did. Both Geoffrey and the author of the Llanbadarn History, probably Daniel ap Sulien, were writing very different histories under comparable influences.²¹⁸ Other twelfth-century authors wrote similarly about the Britons of the early middle ages, but Daniel ap Sulien (taken as the author of the Llanbadarn History in the following discussion) was relating these ideas to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this sense he can perhaps be compared to Wulfstan, archbishop of York, who used Gildas and his ideas of divine judgement as a model for his own castigation of his eleventh-century English contemporaries.²¹⁹

If this section of BT were dated after the composition and popularisation of Geoffrey's history it would be tempting to see evidence in these ideas of his impact on Latin Welsh historiography, comparable to the use of Galfridian material in the Latin chronicles discussed earlier in this chapter.²²⁰ The case for the ascription of this text to Daniel ap Sulien, which would mean it was composed before 1127, shows that these ideas go back to the sixth century and the writings of Gildas. The development

²¹⁶ *BT P20*, p. 36; *BT P20 Tr.*, p. 162 for discussion, and the suggestion that the original Latin of BT also referred to the Picts; *Gildas*, ed. Winterbottom, pp. 94–95.

²¹⁷ 'erase them from the world or cast them into the sea', *BT P20*, p. 60; *Gildas*, ed. Winterbottom, p. 95.

²¹⁸ There is also a possibility that the Llanbadarn History shows some influence from Bede, an author himself dependent on Gildas' work. The statement that Henry I's intention in 1114 was to *dilyhu yr holl Vritanyeid hyd na delei kof henw y Brytanyeid yn dragywyd* may, as Marged Haycock suggested, echo Bede's description of Cadwallon of Gwynedd's intention to wipe out the whole English nation from Britain. *BT P20*, pp. 58–59; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 202–204; Haycock, 'Early Welsh Poets Look North', p. 9.

²¹⁹ *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1939), pp. 51–52.

²²⁰ Brett, 'The Prefaces of Two Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles', 63–73.

of these ideas from Gildas to Geoffrey, via *Historia Brittonum*, is detailed by Robert Hanning in his *Vision of History in Early Britain*.²²¹

Thematic similarity and occasional stylistic similarity indicate that the author of the Llanbadarn History and Geoffrey wrote about the history of the Britons in comparable ways and with similar modes of thinking. In their influences and interpretations they are also comparable to other twelfth-century historians such as William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon. The Llanbadarn History can be seen as an example of twelfth-century Latinate historical writing in Wales which can be compared with these works, although Daniel ap Sulien saw the effects of God's judgement on the Britons of twelfth-century Wales rather than sixth- and seventh-century Britain. Geoffrey's history discusses the entire history of the Britons from the settlement of the island until their loss of dominion over it; Daniel's relates recent events involving the descendants of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, the loss of dominion being that experienced in Wales after the Norman incursions of the late eleventh century. But both blame a state of affairs whereby the Britons lose the institution of kingship on the judgement of God.

Although there is a possibility that the Llanbadarn History can be seen as a Welsh reflex of the flourishing of historical writing in the Anglo-Norman realm, its author was also writing in an established centre of literary production in Wales, and if he is to be identified with Daniel ap Sulien then the most significant parallel to this historical work among the corpus of texts produced at Llanbadarn was produced by his brother, Rhygyfarch. Rhygyfarch's *Planctus* or lament is a poem bewailing the conquered status of the Welsh after the Norman invasions of the late twelfth century. It has been dated to the period soon after the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr at the hands of

²²¹ R. W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York, NY, 1966).

the Normans in 1093, and was certainly composed at some point between that event and Rhygyfarch's death in 1099.²²² The lament begins by describing the current enslaved status of the Welsh and listing the unpleasant and aggressive characteristics of the French. It then goes on to describe the oppression endured by the Britons, before denouncing their servile and cowardly nature. Throughout it relates these sufferings to the judgement of God for the sins of the Britons, and asks *gens inimica deo tunc Britanna?*²²³

Rhygyfarch is clearly writing in the tradition of Gildas' sixth-century Jeremiad, where the sufferings of the Britons at the hands of barbarian invaders are caused by their sinful behaviour in the eyes of God. His work is far more in tune with the style of Gildas' sermon-history, though also indebted to vernacular models such as *Armes Prydein Vawr*.²²⁴ Its similarity to the historical work which can be attributed to his brother, Daniel, is also striking, not only in the parallel of the foreign oppressor as the instrument of God's judgement. Rhygyfarch bewails the misfortunes of the Britons that *non modo delectant pignora prolis! Heres non sperat rura paterna!*²²⁵ This line might be compared generally to the frequent changes and exchanges in the possession of lands in Powys, Ceredigion and Dyfed throughout the Llanbadarn History, and also more particularly to the situation described in Iorwerth's speech to his nephews quoted above, where he is forbidden to enter into agreement with members of his family.

Though differing in genre it can be seen that these two products of the same monastery, probably of the same family, share considerable similarities. Their

²²² Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', pp. 263–75; Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin Poetry', 68–106.

²²³ 'Are you, British people, hostile to God?', ed. and trans. Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', p. 335.

²²⁴ Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', p. 304.

²²⁵ 'Now they do not enjoy the pledges of offspring! The heir does not hope for paternal lands!', ed. and trans. Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', p. 335.

responses to the Norman incursions were formed in a historiographical tradition which looked back to Gildas and used his model of divine retribution to understand their contemporary situation. Although emanating from the same centre the context of the composition of these works differed somewhat. When Rhygyfarch died, Llanbadarn had the status of an independent monastery in the Welsh tradition, often described as a *clas*.²²⁶ By the time of the composition of the Llanbadarn History, however, the monastery was a cell of the abbey of St Peter, Gloucester. After Gilbert fitz Richard de Clare conquered Ceredigion in 1110, he made a grant of Llanbadarn to this English monastery, which would have had full control over the former *clas* and indeed sent a number of its own monks there to secure it.²²⁷

It is unknown whether some or all of the Welsh monks were expelled from the monastery in the wake of these events, just as the Gloucester monks were after the Welsh reconquest of Ceredigion in 1136.²²⁸ It has been suggested that St Peter's founded a new priory at Llanbadarn, allowing the Welsh *clas* to continue functioning under its authority.²²⁹ This is an attractive suggestion borne out by charter evidence, and if true it would provide a suitable context for the composition of the Llanbadarn History. Although we might expect Daniel ap Sulien, as archdeacon of Powys, to have lived in Powys rather than at Llanbadarn, it is possible that he continued to be based at the monastery. The text itself shows numerous signs of a Llanbadarn origin in terms of the greater geographical detail given for events occurring close to the monastery.²³⁰ Furthermore, the somewhat ambiguous tone of the history and the lack of much direct criticism of the Normans despite the clear Welsh interest and

²²⁶ Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', p. 15.

²²⁷ The grant was certainly made by 1117. *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ed. by W. H. Hart (3 vols., London, 1863–1867), II., 73–4; Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', pp. 199–204.

²²⁸ *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI., 121; *BT P20*, pp. 86–87.

²²⁹ Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest', pp. 203–5.

²³⁰ Particularly in 1109 and 1116. *BT P20*, pp. 45–46; 69–71.

sympathies of the author is commensurate with its production in such a centre.²³¹ The respect shown to Gilbert de Clare in 1110, when he is described as *gwr grymus, medyanus, a chyueilld yr brenhin, ac arderchawc yny holl weithredoed*, suggests that this text was indeed written in a centre under the patronage of this Norman conqueror of Ceredigion.²³² However, there was certainly a connection between the archdeacon of Powys and Meifod by the late twelfth century, when the archdeacon is mentioned in Cynddelw's praise for St Tysilio, and charter evidence shows that the archdeacon of Powys between 1180 and 1215, based at Meifod, was called Sulien, the choice of name possibly implying a continued respect for the family of Sulien there.²³³

To return briefly to the similarities with Geoffrey's history: there has recently been an increasing and welcome tendency to contextualise Geoffrey as a Welsh Latin author, and to understand him within both the Anglo-Norman and Welsh traditions of historical writing.²³⁴ Comparing the Llanbadarn History with the more famous work, with which it eventually became associated as part of the Welsh Historical Continuum, suggests a few broad points. The first is that the understanding of the history of the Britons in a framework of decline and a loss of monarchy as a result of the will of God was derived from earlier Welsh historical writing, traceable here and in Geoffrey

²³¹ Whilst there is some negative characterisation of the 'French', and of King Henry, for example in 1115, this is balanced by positive characterisation in 1116. *BT P20*, pp. 63, 70.

²³² 'A strong, powerful man, a friend to the king, and excellent in all his activities', *BT P20*, p. 53. Respect for Gilbert among the Welsh is implied by Cadwaladr ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd's marriage to his widow, Adeliza, especially if the marriage was undertaken to further the Venedotian claim to Ceredigion. Cadwaladr, along with his brother Owain Gwynedd and with the aid of Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr, led the Welsh reconquest of Ceredigion in 1136. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 197.

²³³ *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr I*, ed. by N. A. Jones and A. P. Owen, Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion 3 (Cardiff, 1991), 3. 229 (p. 27); *The Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell*, ed. by G. C. G. Thomas (Aberystwyth, 1997), pp. 38–39 and nos. 1, 14, 16, 23, 34, 36, 37, 50, 53, 62. Sulien was not of the family of Daniel ap Sulien, belonging instead to a local Powys family. His father, Caradog, seems to have been the archdeacon of Powys contemporaneously with Cynddelw's praise, and it may be that he named his son in honour of the family of his predecessor as archdeacon with the expectation that the son would succeed him in that office.

²³⁴ J. Gillingham, 'The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1990), 99–118, reprinted in his *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 19–39; K. Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Cardiff, 2010), especially pp. 22–28, 94.

to the work of Gildas. But we should not see Geoffrey as reviving this idea in a British/Welsh context, nor should we necessarily see the repetition of this trope as necessarily down to Geoffrey's influence: the Llanbadarn History, if the ascription of authorship and date are accurate, makes it quite clear that these ideas were part of Welsh historiography before and contemporaneously with Geoffrey.

It is often appreciated that Geoffrey's depiction of British monarchy owes something to the contemporary reality of the Anglo-Norman realm.²³⁵ What the Llanbadarn parallel suggests is that there is no need to see Geoffrey as primarily a Norman, rather than as a Welsh, writer because of this. The Llanbadarn author also saw the reign of King Henry as echoing the age of a unified British kingdom, but his idea of the judgement of God was visited upon his contemporaries and their structures of authority rather than upon his seventh-century ancestors. It has been suggested that Geoffrey's vision of a British golden age was somewhat influenced by the increasingly assertive native polities of his own age, but the historical writing at Llanbadarn shows that his depiction of their subsequent decline as a people may also have been informed by the reaction of the native learned elites to the earlier Norman incursions.²³⁶

There is no suggestion of direct influence between Geoffrey's history and the Llanbadarn History, merely a sometimes striking similarity in the authors' adaptation

²³⁵ G. H. Gerould, 'King Arthur and Politics', *Speculum* 2 (1927), 33–51 (45–50); J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley, CA, 1950), pp. 288, 309–11, 426, 435–36; C. N. L. Brooke, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian', in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on His 70th Birthday*, ed. by C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin and D. Owen (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 77–91 (pp. 80–82, 88), though Brooke emphasises Geoffrey's parodic intent; M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066–1166* (Oxford, 1986), p. 211, though her statement that Geoffrey sought to 'invest the kings of England with a genealogy older and more distinguished than that of the Frankish rulers descended from Charlemagne' cheerfully ignores the lack of such a genealogical connection in Geoffrey's history. Overall the most convincing assessment of the reflection of contemporary reality in Geoffrey's history is that of Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 23–39.

²³⁶ Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 23–39.

of earlier themes in British history, particularly their dependence on Gildas. Can we see these men as part of the same society or cultural tradition? Despite frequent descriptions of Geoffrey as essentially Anglo-Norman, and of the family of Sulien as purely Welsh, this period saw a blurring of distinctions between the two. The author of the Llanbadarn History worked in a monastery run from Gloucester, not far from Monmouth. This connection between Gloucester and Llanbadarn was itself a conduit for the transmission of Welsh saints' lives.²³⁷ The archdeaconry of Powys which Daniel ap Sulien held was to become part of the diocese of St Asaph of which Geoffrey later became bishop.²³⁸ More generally, the family of Sulien co-operated with, and participated in, the new Norman ecclesiastical organisation of Wales.²³⁹ Both histories, despite their differences of ambition, scope and purpose, were formed in comparable contexts by men who had connections both with the learned traditions of native Wales and with the dominant Anglo-Norman society.

THE MIDDLE WELSH CHRONICLES

The detailed studies above have attempted to reach some conclusions as to the composition, date and historical outlook of Latin BT and its sources. The discussion and conclusions are often complicated by the fact that the discussion is of a Latin text no longer extant, and therefore any understanding of aspects such as its original scope

²³⁷ K. Hughes, 'British Museum MS. Cotton Vespasian A. XIV ('Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium'): its Purpose and Provenance', in *Studies in the Early British Church*, ed. by N. K. Chadwick, K. Hughes, C. N. L. Brooke and K. H. Jackson (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 183–200. Hughes also argues for a Monmouth role in the compilation of the manuscript, though Zeiser is somewhat sceptical of this connection. Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts and the Rhetoric of Conquest', 237–39.

²³⁸ Although it is likely that he never visited the see. M. J. Pearson, 'The Creation and Development of the St Asaph Cathedral Chapter, 1141–1293', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 40 (2000), 35–56 (40 n.); *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (3 vols., Oxford, 1869–1871), I., 360–61. It should be noted that the extract from *Brut y Tywysogion* in Haddan and Stubbs is from the discredited 'Gwentian Brut' of Iolo Morganwg.

²³⁹ Davies, 'Aspects of Church Reform in Wales', 94. They also intermarried. BT has an obituary for Henri ab Arthen in 1163, whose name implies that Daniel ap Sulien's brother, Arthen, married a Norman or French woman. *BT P20*, p. 110.

and its terminology must be reached through the distorting prism of the three Welsh versions. Nevertheless some conclusions can be summarised from the investigation so far. The comparison of BT with CW has showed little evidence of literary expansion on the part of the compiler of Latin BT, and in fact one of the main differences apparent between closely similar passages in the Welsh chronicles and the Latin seem to be indicative of abridgement on the part of Latin BT's compiler, although other explanations are possible.

Discussion of another part of the Welsh *Brutiau* (1022) in comparison with Welsh Latin chronicles has also showed no positive indications of literary expansion in the late thirteenth century, and overall it is fair to conclude that in terms of faithful representation of the content and terminology of his source texts we should expect a high degree of reliability from the compiler of Latin BT. Further investigation of the closing sections of the Welsh chronicles has revealed some uncertainty as to the chronological extent of Latin BT, and has somewhat reduced the role of its compiler as the creator of a narrative consciously defined by a historically significant point of termination.

The conclusions reached up to this point provided a relatively sound footing to examine more closely one of the most distinctive parts of BT. Interpretation of its depiction of the Welsh past and of authority in early twelfth-century Wales has been made in recognition of the fact that its status as a near-contemporary narrative is bolstered by the unlikelihood of deliberate changes on the part of the compiler of Latin BT. This has revealed a conception of the recent history of the Britons which, while sometimes comparable to that of Geoffrey of Monmouth, was developed independently. It has therefore clarified the fact that the multiple layers of historiographical interpretation present in the Welsh Chronicles as composite texts

extend to the period before the impact of *De gestis Britonum* was felt on Welsh historical writing.

The composite nature of BT is apparent when looking at the delineation of authority and ethnicity in the text as a whole. Inconsistency exists not only between the three translations but also between different sections of BT itself. Taking kingship as a brief example, in the descriptions of the death of Cadwaladr in 682, P and R agree that the Britons lost *coron y deyrnas*, 'the crown of the kingdom', to the English at his death.²⁴⁰ After this statement, however, all three texts continue to refer to kings of the Britons, such as Rhodri Molwynog or Maredudd ab Owain, and there is of course a second loss of kingship at the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr.²⁴¹ There is even the occasional reference to Welsh kings after this date, in 1137 for example.²⁴² Coherence can only be found in particular sections, such as 1100–1127.

In light of the work done so far it is now possible to consider the three Welsh chronicles themselves, and turn from consideration of hypothetical texts and their survival in later translations to interpreting the chronicles which have survived. Attention will be given to the differences between these three chronicles, particularly the different ways in which they operate as narratives of Welsh history.

The Peniarth MS 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, P, has received little detailed discussion in the preceding chapter on the formation of the Welsh Historical Continuum, as the chronicle does not form part of a continuous historical narrative

²⁴⁰ S does not state this explicitly, rather it describes the process whereby this occurred. *BT P20*, p. 1; *BT RB*, p. 2; *BS*, pp. 2–4.

²⁴¹ *BT P20*, pp. 2, 13, 25; *BT RB*, pp. 4, 18, 32; *BS*, pp. 8, 48, 84. As is to be expected, S achieves greater consistency by describing 1093 as the fall of the kingdom of *Kymre*, the Welsh.

²⁴² While P and R call Gruffudd ap Cynan *brenhin* in this year, *BS* calls him *tywysawc Gwyned*, 'prince/leader of Gwynedd'. In 1150, however, all three use the term *brenhin* to describe Madog ap Maredudd. *BT P20*, pp. 88, 99; *BT RB*, pp. 116, 128; *BS*, pp. 146, 154. Humphrey Lhuyd, in his *Cronica Walliae*, seems to have used a version of BT distinct from the three surviving versions which ceased to use the term *brenhin* in 1137. *Humphrey Llwyd, Cronica Walliae*, ed. by Ieuan M. Williams (Cardiff, 2012), p. 151.

containing a Welsh translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history. It is, however, a translation of the Latin chronicle which deliberately began with the end-point of Geoffrey's narrative, although the above discussion has questioned whether the Latin text should be seen as one which was intended to finish with the Edwardian conquest. The question of the relationship between Latin BT and the continuation to the 1330s is an essential one here, and although the above discussion suggested two possible scenarios for this, the question can in no way be considered settled.

What is certain is that the translator or translators of P did not translate a narrative which terminated with the Edwardian conquest, nor did he or they create one with this translation.²⁴³ The translation of the continuation shows that the translator did not see the historical narrative as one which came to a close with the conquest of Wales, and the insertion of the annals for 1331 and 1332 show that it was seen as a narrative which was still ongoing.²⁴⁴ The purpose of the translation cannot therefore be seen as the production of a vernacular account of a completed history, one which had reached its close: rather it must be read as something which was still capable of change and development.

The notion that the translation of texts into the vernacular at Valle Crucis was undertaken on behalf of the surrounding *uchelwyr* of Powys Fadog has been discussed in a previous chapter.²⁴⁵ Whilst that chapter outlined the interplay between nobles, monks, scribes and poets which formed the background to the production of this vernacular narrative, it also highlighted the blurred lines between these categories: nobles were also monks, scribes also poets, and so on. With this in mind, can it be suggested that this appetite for a vernacular history, with the capacity for development

²⁴³ The following discussion will refer to a translator in the singular, but the possibility of there being more than one translator is accepted.

²⁴⁴ Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', pp. 296–304.

²⁴⁵ See above, chapter 2.

and change, in the area which first rose in revolt under Owain Glyndŵr, indicates a continuing belief in the ability of the Welsh to dictate their own political status on the part of the area's elite? The content of the contemporary annals cannot be described as anything other than pedestrian, and the lack of notice given to events such as the 1315–1316 revolt of Llywelyn Bren in Morgannwg show this material to be relatively unconcerned with Welsh revolts against English authority, but at least the narrative is continued. The recording of Welsh history was still considered relevant.

Controversies such as the Charlton lords of Powys' complaints against the monks of Strata Marcella show that Cistercian monasteries in this area could not expect their political sympathies to go unquestioned, and perhaps the relative dullness of the Peniarth 20 continuation may be indicative of the need to tread carefully. A belief in the continued political potency of the Welsh is indicated by the addition, around the mid-fourteenth century, of the poem *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd*, after the end of the continuation of BT in the three pages left at the end of the quire. This is a text intimately concerned with the passage of political authority from one Welsh ruler to another and with the ultimate restoration of native rule over Britain.²⁴⁶

The scribes of this particular manuscript merit special consideration. Termed X88 and X89 by Daniel Huws, they can be seen as active historical compilers rather than passive copyists. X88 wrote much of the manuscript, including *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec* and the bardic grammar as well as *Brut y Tywysogion* up to March 1282.²⁴⁷ He was also the scribe of *Ystoria Dared* in Cotton Cleopatra B.v, part iii. His characteristic use of *yw y* for the preposition *y* with the third person singular and plural infixed pronoun has been interpreted as evidence for a South Wales origin, a reminder of the diverse origins of Cistercian monks in Wales when considered

²⁴⁶ T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 337–39.

²⁴⁷ Charles-Edwards and Charles-Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', pp. 296–304.

alongside the strong evidence for the manuscript's Valle Crucis origin.²⁴⁸ He appears to have been the editor as well as the scribe of the poetic grammar at least, but his work was supplemented and corrected by the other scribe of this manuscript, X89.

Daniel Huws has noted that 'everything points to [X89] having been a decisive editor and historian as well as a scribe'.²⁴⁹ He was also the scribe of Cotton Cleopatra B.v, part i, containing a version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* as well as the earliest manuscript of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*.²⁵⁰ There is enough surviving evidence for scribal activity at Valle Crucis in the 1330s to argue for the existence of a scribal school, as long as this term is understood as being appropriately vague in meaning. Specialisation in history is apparent from the surviving manuscripts produced by these scribes as well as the books they had access to, and X89 emerges in Peniarth MS 20 as the controlling authority in this school.²⁵¹

The question of whether these influential scribes were also the translators of these texts is a difficult one to answer. Scribal errors in Peniarth MS 20 suggest that X88 was copying his text at least one remove from the original translation.²⁵² The fact that the distinctive *yw y* construction noted above only occurs in the texts he copies may indicate that he was himself the translator, although it must be noted that such idiosyncrasies can intrude into the work of a scribe without his being the translator of a text. It has been noted that the Cotton Cleopatra version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* and *Brenhinedd y Saesson* are likely to be the work of the same translator, and the fact that they are both in X89's hand could mean that he was this translator.²⁵³ Smith has noted how this scribe's use of a distinctive dating system, as noted in the discussion of

²⁴⁸ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. xlviiii–xlvi.

²⁴⁹ D. Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming), Scribes: X88, X89.

²⁵⁰ B. F. Roberts, 'Ystoriaeu Brenhinedd Ynys Brydein', pp. 217–27.

²⁵¹ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 241.

²⁵² *BT P20*, p. xvi.

²⁵³ *BS*, p. xvi.

the continuation of P above, indicates his active role in shaping the text.²⁵⁴ The case for seeing the translation of the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogion* as one undertaken at Valle Crucis is a relatively strong one, based as it is on the provenance of the earliest manuscript, the continuing development of that manuscript as an historical document, and on our appreciation of the abbey as a centre of historical activity, but the possibility that it came to Valle Crucis from Strata Florida as a work already translated should not be dismissed. The first and third of these reasons are also arguments for seeing Valle Crucis as the place where *Brenhinedd y Saesson* was translated, and in this case it may be that X89 at least could have been both scribe and a translator. There is, however, no strong reason to date the translation of S this late.

The notable aspects of P which set it apart from the other versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* generally relate to accuracy, extra or omitted detail, and terminology. The first of these has little bearing on our understanding of the work's purpose, as such mistakes will not be deliberate. The last two will give some indication of the way the translator's conception of the work differed from that of the original compiler. In general terms, P is fuller and more complete than R, but is in many places less correct and in others less precise. Although there are many places where P is more correct than R, overall there are more instances of R being more correct than P.²⁵⁵

P is often fuller than R in the case of rhetorical panegyrics of Welsh rulers. This is a feature of the eulogies of Maelgwn ap Rhys (1189), Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Owain (1200), Maredudd and Gruffudd ap Rhys (1201), Rhys Ieuanc (1222), Owain ap Gruffudd (1235), and Madog ap Gruffudd Maelor (1236).²⁵⁶ It is unlikely that these omissions should be seen as indicative of the local or dynastic concerns of the translator of R: rather they show that the compiler of this version was concerned with

²⁵⁴ Smith, 'Historical Writing', 83–84.

²⁵⁵ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. lx–lxi.

²⁵⁶ *BT P20 Tr.*, p. lx (n); *BT P20*, pp. 132, 145–6, 147, 185, 194–95.

cutting down the more florid parts of the chronicle to some extent, a tendency which is in keeping with the text's overall length compared to P. The most striking indicator of this tendency is the prose encomium and Latin verse *planctus* and eulogy at the death of the Lord Rhys in 1197. Here, whereas R has a condensed version of the Latin prose encomium present in CW, P is much fuller although somewhat inaccurate in his translation.²⁵⁷

The inclusion of these poems was probably work of the compiler of Latin BT rather than the translator of P, but if so there remains the question of why the translator left this poetry untranslated. It may be that the Latin verses were seen as different in genre to the prose chronicle, and therefore inappropriate for translation into the vernacular. A perceived difference of genre is certainly visible in the layout of Peniarth MS 20, where the two-column layout changes to a single-column layout for the duration of the Latin material.²⁵⁸ It may be that the translator believed that the lay audience for which it has been suggested these translations were undertaken would prefer to have these poems to the Lord Rhys presented in their original language of composition. If so it raises interesting questions with regard to Latin literacy, and possibly a willingness on behalf of the audience to listen to poetry that they only understood imperfectly.²⁵⁹

The tendency for R to leave out such material has the curious effect of removing some of the literary references which might be thought more appropriate to

²⁵⁷ *BT P20*, pp. 137–41; *BT RB*, p. 178; CW, 30–31; T. Jones, 'Molawd a Marwnad yr Arglwydd Rhys: Fersiynau Ychwanegol', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1970–1972), 276–81; H. Pryce, 'Y Canu Lladin er cof am yr Arglwydd Rhys', in *Yr Arglwydd Rhys*, ed. by N. A. Jones and H. Pryce (Cardiff, 1996), pp. 212–23; G. Henley, 'Rhetoric, Translation and Historiography: The Literary Qualities of *Brut y Tywysogyon*', *Quaestio Insularis* 13 (2013), forthcoming.

²⁵⁸ *BT P20*, pp. 140–41; Henley, 'Rhetoric, Translation and Historiography', where a parallel with Irish annals is suggested. G. Toner, 'Authority, Verse and the Transmission of Senchas', *Ériu* 55 (2005), 59–84.

²⁵⁹ That a medieval Welsh audience listening to *Gogynfeirdd* poetry might only imperfectly have understood the complex material is suggested by the case of the poet Kadyrieith in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, the only member of Arthur's court who understands the poets' praise of him. *Breudwyt Rhonabwy Allan o'r Llyfr Coch o Hergest*, ed. by M. Richards (Cardiff, 1948), p. 20.

R, as part of a continuum of historical texts which included Geoffrey and Dares, than to P which is not known to have had anything other than a conceptual, rather than a physical, link to such material. For example, the numerous Galfridian references present in the longer Latin *planctus* are unrepresented in R, and the same goes for a reference to Maelgwn ap Rhys as *eil Gwalchmei* at his death.²⁶⁰ The eulogy for Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Owain also contains a reference to *Ynys Prydain* not in R.²⁶¹ References such as these would provide a stronger conceptual link between the texts, and their absence from R is therefore difficult to explain in these terms. The likely reason is one of economy. It has already been seen that the translation of R is likely to have been undertaken as part of the creation of a Welsh historical continuum, a process which also saw the translation of *De excidio Troiae* and the creation of a new version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* through the combination of two earlier translations. These three together form a substantial work, and as such the trimming of some of the more rhetorical passages of *Brut y Tywysogion* would have been desirable in terms of manuscript space.²⁶²

Indeed, when we turn to consider the terminology of these two versions, it can be argued that R displays more of a conceptual link with these other histories, whereas P is more concerned with the chronicle's role as a narrative of recent Welsh history, rather than the fuller history of the Britons. Though a small difference, the tendency to refer to the people as *Bryttannyeit* rather than *Kymry*, a term roughly, though not exactly, equivalent to 'Welsh', is more pronounced in R than in P. These

²⁶⁰ 'a second Gwalchmai', the figure referred to as Walwanus/Gualgwanus by Geoffrey. *BT P20*, p. 132.

²⁶¹ *BT P20*, p. 145; *BT RB*, p. 182.

²⁶² The compiler of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, who combined two existing translations, occasionally expanded slightly on his sources and was generally concerned to improve them, but in the latter part of the history, when using the Llansteffan 1 version, he sometimes paraphrased. This may be an indication that concerns of space became more acute as the compilation of the continuous history went on, and would therefore affect *Brut y Tywysogion* more than *Brut y Brenhinedd*. Roberts, 'The Red Book of Hergest Version', 159–72.

terms represent a change in Latin terminology from *Britones* to *Walenses*, or sometimes *Cambrenses*, which occurred during the course of the twelfth century and which is reflected in the Welsh *Brutiau* by a shift in terminology from 1135 to 1197.²⁶³ But despite the fact that this shift was undoubtedly present in Latin BT, it is not consistently reflected in the Welsh versions. P uses *Kymry* earlier and its last use of *Bryttanyeit* is earlier, in 1081 and 1191 respectively.²⁶⁴ The equivalent dates for R are 1116 and 1197.²⁶⁵ In the intervening years R tends to use British terminology more often than P, despite the fact that it also uses *Kymry* with increasing frequency. A typical example is the annal for 1165, where R has Henry II [*yn*] *darparu alldudyaw a diuetha yr holl Vryttanyeit*, where P has him planning to *diuetha holl Gymry*.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless later on in the same annal both versions refer to a group of *Kymry*.²⁶⁷

What this may show is, on the one hand, a greater willingness to update the terminology of the text on the part of the translator of P, which is perhaps in keeping with the fact that this version of the chronicle was updated to 1332, demonstrating a greater propensity for change and development. It may also be indicative of the texts which informed R's reading of the narrative. Was this translator more willing to keep British terminology because his text formed part of a continuous history of the Britons, whereas P saw the work as a narrative that dealt only with the history of the *Kymry*? It should be noted that the change of terminology from *Brutanyeit* to *Kymry* is

²⁶³ Pryce, 'British or Welsh?', 782–83.

²⁶⁴ *BT P20*, pp. 23, 133.

²⁶⁵ *BT RB*, pp. 90, 178.

²⁶⁶ 'planning to exile and destroy all the Britons', *BT RB*, p. 144; 'destroy all the Welsh', *BT P20*, p. 111.

²⁶⁷ Another typical example is the annal for 1136, when, soon after both P and R have referred to Owain and Cadwaladr ap Gruffudd as the splendour of all Britain/the Britons, P describes them as holding to *penaduryaeth holl Gymry*, 'the supremacy of all Wales', whereas R has them upholding *holl deyrnas y Brytanyeit*, 'all the kingdom of the Britons'. This no doubt indicates different interpretations of the Latin *Britannia*, which in P seems to have sometimes been rendered as Britain and sometimes as Wales. S consistently translates it as *Kymre*, even when both P and R suggest that Britain is the correct meaning, for example in 1022 and 1148. *BT P20*, pp. 86, 98; *BT RB*, pp. 112–14, 128; *BS*, pp. 54, 152.

something acknowledged in the *Llyfr Coch* version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, and so in a sense R might be just as likely to see a change in terminology in the third text of the continuum, BT. That this is not the case indicates a greater degree of conservatism than in P, where a change of terminology occurs along with the updating of the narrative.

The case of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* (S) is different again. Either the compiler of the Latin version or its translator adopted a far more consistent approach to ethnic terminology. Given the active role of the compiler in the manipulation and combination of his source material, which enables us to describe him as an author as well as a compiler, it is likelier that the change was effected in the Latin text rather than during translation. J. Beverley Smith's study of the work has outlined the importance of axes of transmission of historical works between monasteries which were necessary for the production of the text, not only the availability of Geoffrey's History, essential to all three Welsh versions, but also of the Annals of Winchester, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and material drawn ultimately from Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*.²⁶⁸ It has long been noted that the compilation of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* represents an unique combination of Welsh and English history, although one which is consistent in its approach for only part of the text.²⁶⁹ It was developed from Latin BT, the backbone of the compilation, but as well as summarising and abridging that work and adding material relating to English kings, the author also gave the work greater historiographical consistency, particularly in its earliest portion. The opening lines of the work refer directly to the closing part of Geoffrey's history which it then explicitly continues.²⁷⁰ In referring to the inhabitants

²⁶⁸ Smith, 'Historical Writing', 80–81.

²⁶⁹ BS, xi–xiv; Smith, 'Historical Writing', 59–61. For the colophon as found in the Cotton Cleopatra B.v version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* as a direct influence on the form of the text, see *Ibid.*, 65–67.

²⁷⁰ BS, p. 2.

of Wales, the word *Bruttannyeit* is used occasionally in the earliest period, but from 999 reference is almost exclusively to the *Kymry*, a term also used in the earlier period.

The purpose of the remodelling of the text in S was to create a narrative which continued Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum* in both institutional and ethnic terms: he wished to outline the institutional history of the island's monarchy under the Saxons as well as the later history of the Britons, and his awareness of these two distinctive strands of his history informed his greater awareness of the distinction between *Britones* and *Walenses/Cambrenses*, in the sense that the latter had lost control of British kingship.²⁷¹

Whereas P shows more willingness to update terminology compared with the more conservative approach of R, the rejection of British terminology in S was based on an interpretation of the narrative of British/Welsh history which, though similar in scale to that of R, differed in emphasis. The historical continuum of which S formed a part was one where the dual strands of the continuing history of the Britons/Welsh and the continuing history of the British>English crown were both acknowledged. On the other hand, the historical continuum of R was primarily ethnic in its emphasis, with *Brut y Tywysogion* dealing with the history of the Welsh after their loss of the crown of Britain but without an explicit focus on the later history of that institution. As such, the continued relevance, after 682, of the term *Bryttannyeit* was more apparent to the translator of R than was the continued relevance of the term *Britones* to the author of the Latin *Brenhinedd y Saesson*.²⁷²

²⁷¹ This is well illustrated by his description of London in 1100 as *pennaf eistedva ... o'r ynys honno*, 'the chief seat ... of that island', whereas P has the less Galfridian *y dinas y syd ben ar holl deyrnas Loegy*, 'the city that is the head of all the realm of England', similar to R's *yr hon yssyd benaf a choron ar holl vrenhiniaeth Loeger*, 'that which is head and crown over all the kingdom of England'. *BS*, p. 92; *BT P20*, p. 30; *BT RB*, p. 40.

²⁷² The attribution of these terminological differences to the author of the Latin version of S rather than to his translator is based on his more active role in transforming the text, argued for in Smith, 'Historical Writing', 58–59, 83–84.

This is not to say that any version of *Brut y Tywysogion* deliberately ignores the actions of English kings. Indeed, R contains an unique reference to a text dealing with exactly that subject, a reference which nevertheless underlines the fact that the history of the kings of England was conceived of as a separate task from that being undertaken here. At the death of Henry III and the accession of his son, Edward, in 1272, it is said that the latter's actions are recorded in *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined*.²⁷³ The identity of this text, 'The History of the Kings', is unknown, although it has been tentatively suggested that it is to be identified with Walter de Hemingburgh's *De gestis regum Angliae*.²⁷⁴ The author of this work is now referred to as Walter of Guisborough, and the chronicle is largely a compilation, but with more authorial influence from about 1291.²⁷⁵ Covering the period between William the Conqueror and Edward II, it was probably written at some time between 1290 and 1305, with some work continued on the chronicle up to 1315.²⁷⁶ There is, however, no reason to connect it to the *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined* of R apart from its date of composition, the fact that it covers the reign of Edward and its title of *Cronica... de gestis regum Anglie*, attested from the late fourteenth century.²⁷⁷

An alternative text for consideration would be some form of the *Prose Brut*, the text discussed in a previous chapter which became the most popular narrative of English history by the fifteenth century. The work could certainly be described as a history of English kings.²⁷⁸ Although initially compiled around 1272 the text was subsequently continued to cover the reign of Edward I and beyond. The question of

²⁷³ *BT RB*, p. 261.

²⁷⁴ *BT P20 Tr.*, pp. liv–lv; *Chronicon domini Walteri de Hemingburgh*, ed. by H. C. Hamilton (2 vols., London, 1848–1849).

²⁷⁵ *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, Previously Edited as the Chronicle of Walter of Hemingford or Hemingburgh*, ed. by H. Rothwell (London, 1957), pp. xxiv–xxviii

²⁷⁶ *Walter of Guisborough*, ed. Rothwell, pp. xxx–xxxii.

²⁷⁷ *Walter of Guisborough*, ed. Rothwell, p. 1.

²⁷⁸ See above, pp. 142–51.

language is, however, a key one here. The *Prose Brut* was composed in Anglo-Norman French, and its translation into Middle English is likelier to have happened in the second half of the fourteenth century, but there is no indication that the translator of R knew any languages other than Welsh and Latin.²⁷⁹ There are indications that the Middle English *Prose Brut* was known in north-east Wales in the second half of fifteenth century, but this is unlikely to have a bearing on the composition of R since this is to be dated to the mid-fourteenth century.²⁸⁰

The title given to the work in R, *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined*, seems to indicate one of two things. The first option is that the text referred to was in Welsh, and the second is that the text was referred to as *Historia regum* or *Gesta regum* in the Latin original of R and translated as such by the author. It would otherwise be difficult to explain the fact that the title of the work appears in Welsh. The latter explanation is presumably that favoured by Thomas Jones, but it may well be that the reference is to a Welsh text. If so, the main candidate would seem to be *Brut y Saeson*, a little-studied text which covers the reign of Edward I in two of its three surviving medieval manuscripts. The association of this text with the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of BT is another point in its favour, but the fact that its title, attested in all three manuscripts, differs from that of the work referred to in R makes the identification difficult. The same goes for indications of the text's composition in the second half of the fourteenth century, as the earliest manuscript of R is likely to date from around 1350.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ L. M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: the Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 180 (Tempe, Ariz., 1998), pp. 47–48.

²⁸⁰ C. W. Marx, ed., *An English Chronicle 1377–1461: a New Edition* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. xii–xxii.

²⁸¹ For the text from *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, see *The Text of the Bruts from the Red Book of Hergest*, ed. by J. Rhys and J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Oxford, 1890), pp. 385–403. This narrative goes up to the sixth year of Richard II's reign, whereas that in Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 32 goes up to the fifth year of Richard's reign. The third manuscript, Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 19, breaks off abruptly in 979 in mid-sentence. *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and Peniarth 19 both contain BT, and all three manuscripts share a scribe, whom Daniel Huws terms X91.

The question of the identity of this source must remain unanswered, at least until more work is done on *Brut y Saeson*, but a reference to the prophecies of Myrddin in all three versions of the *Brut* is another probable instance of the influence of English chroniclers, since it is widely noted in English chronicles, including those of William Rishanger and Henry Knighton.²⁸² It is interesting to note that one of the few instances of reference to Galfridian material in BT therefore comes from the influence of English chronicles. An earlier instance of a similar reference to the prophecies of Merlin can be found in the PRO chronicle's entry for 1214, again with reference to English affairs.²⁸³

Although *Ystoryaeu y Brenhined* cannot be identified, it nevertheless indicates that the history of English kings was considered somewhat outside the scope of the text by the translator of R, although still a matter of interest. The most significant historiographical characteristic of R, its translation for inclusion into a Welsh historical continuum, has been discussed in more detail elsewhere. This can be seen to have affected the nature of the translation, partly in terms of terminology but also with regard to the need to shorten the text rather more than is the case with P, for reasons of space. This had been true at a pre-translation stage with S, which was combined with English material to form a different kind of history, a matter explicitly outside R's sphere of interest. P also shows evidence of combination with other texts, in this case a continuation of the chronicle itself.

S was created as a Welsh/English chronicle before the process of translation. With P, although some of the continuation used was in Latin, it is unknown whether it was combined with BT at the stage of translation or before. Whatever the case, the

²⁸² *BT P20* p. 226; *BT RB*, p. 268; *BS*, p. 256; Keller, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chronicles*, pp. 50, 102; *Willelmi Rishanger*, ed. Riley, p. 94; *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel Cnitthon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. by J. R. Lumby (2 vols., London, 1889), I., 275–77.

²⁸³ *PRO* 1236=1214.

last two years indicate contemporary continuation in the vernacular.²⁸⁴ In the case of R, its combination with other texts was achieved as part of the translation process, and a similar linking with the same associated texts was part of the same process with S. It is unknown whether Latin BT was ever included in manuscripts as a continuation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*, although its starting-point indicates a conceptual link. If not, then both R and S represent developments of the Latin chronicle in their explicit indication of its place in the history of the Welsh, as, in a different way, does P.

CONCLUSIONS

Development has been the most pervasive concept of this study of *Brut y Tywysogion*. The picture that has emerged of the text is an untidy one of different layers of meaning and purpose, formed by the different stages of re-definition at certain points in the process whereby Latin chronicles and other source materials, some with their own distinct historical outlooks, were combined to create Latin BT. Our recovery of the effect of that process on the source material is complicated by further stages of re-definition which resulted in the three different Welsh versions which survive.

It has emerged as a fascinating text, or rather a family of texts, but also as somewhat self-contradictory. This is particularly true in the case of ideas of authority and in terms of ethnic definition of the *Bryttannyeit* or *Kymry*. The inconsistency with regards to terminology of rule can partially be ascribed to idiosyncrasies between different source materials, as with the reluctance to give titles to contemporary Welsh rulers in the Llanbadarn History; partially to the level of reconfiguration of the text in Latin, as with many of the features of S; and also to the level of translation, for

²⁸⁴ Charles Edwards and Charles Edwards, 'The Continuation of *Brut y Tywysogion*', p. 300.

example the differences between R and P in their descriptions of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth.²⁸⁵

Many aspects of the above study represent an engagement with fundamental questions regarding the nature of the chronicle which have for too long gone unanswered. The appropriateness and medieval provenance of the title *Brut y Tywysogion* has been re-established in the light of recent criticisms. Detailed comparison of CW and BT has established the need to lessen the role of a supposed late thirteenth-century compiler in the development and definition of the text, and this conclusion has been reinforced by an examination of the closing sections of BT. Rather than a unified text bearing the marks of the historiographical ideology of an influential compiler, as argued for by Thomas Jones, the chronicle emerges as the end result of a long process of chronicle writing which reflects its sources relatively faithfully. The implications of this conclusion, enabling us to see particular sections of BT as the products of particular time-periods, were explored with regard to BT 1100–1127, the 'Llanbadarn History', which can be regarded as an example of twelfth-century Welsh historical writing.

The consistent, unifying features of BT are those which were appropriate to all stages of the work's redefinition. They are therefore likely to be characteristic of medieval Welsh historiography in general, for example the pervasive but not consistent influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. If the earlier part of this chapter emphasised the influence of Galfridian narratives on historical writing in medieval Wales, and the middle section argued against seeing BT as a conceptual whole, the last section provided something of a caveat. Although we often see the influence of Geoffrey's narrative on the Welsh conception of history, it must be

²⁸⁵ See above, pp. 217–18.

remembered that he was writing within that tradition, drawing on the models of *Historia Britonnum* and Gildas, the last also being used by the sons of Sulien. David Dumville has called for study on Welsh reactions to the ideas of decline inherent in Geoffrey's narrative, and in most of its forms BT can be seen as one of these reactions.²⁸⁶ But these ideas of decline did not originate with Geoffrey, nor would it be true to say that they re-entered Welsh historical discourse through his work. The themes and narratives he used were already part of the Welsh historical consciousness, and BT has emerged both as a text which was formed in response to *De gestis Britonum* and as containing conceptions of Welsh history which were fully formed before Geoffrey ever put pen to paper.

²⁸⁶ *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, p. vi, n. 12.

CHAPTER 5

O OES GWRTHEYRN GWRTHENAU

The first and second chapters discussed the manuscripts and context of the Welsh Historical Continuum, and the third put this discussion in a comparative international context, whereas the fourth moved on to consider in detail the third element of the Historical Continuum, *Brut y Tywysogion*. The discussion went beyond the Galfridian ideas that formed the backdrop to the previous chapters to consider the earlier stages of the work and the extent to which such chronicle writing can be thought of as a development partially independent of the Galfridian-influenced Historical Continuum. This short chapter will continue that focus on chronicles, discussing a previously-unedited short chronicle, *O Oes Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenau*, which it will be argued was produced in a Cistercian monastic context similar to *Brut y Tywysogion* and its sources, to which it is related. Despite the fact that much of its material remained independent of *Brut y Tywysogion*, the end of the discussion of the work will indicate how this short chronicle also fits into the context of Geoffrey of Monmouth's influence on Welsh historiography.

The discussion in this chapter should be seen as complementary to the edition which appears as an appendix to the thesis. The edition provides a critical text and translation based on comparison of the existing manuscripts. The chronicle will emerge as a valuable source for the history of medieval Wales as well as for the study of the production of historical texts in Wales in this period. Though it cannot be compared with *Brut y Tywysogion* and the Welsh Latin annals in terms of length, there are parallels in terms of its production and content. This discussions of the chronicle's date, provenance and purpose will provide some of this contextualisation, while the

endnotes to the text itself in the appendix include further discussion of specific historical points.

It is clear from the antiquarian manuscripts mentioned below that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* was fairly well-known in the eighteenth century, and Robert Vaughan's translation of the work into English also seems to have had a relatively wide distribution. A version of the work with a translation into Latin and notes were included in Moses Williams' 1731 edition of Humphrey Llwyd's *Britannicæ descriptionis commentariolum*. This version contained the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* (A) text until its end, and continued with the text of Llansteffan MS 28 (C).¹ The *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of the work was published in Gwenogvryn Evans' edition of the *Bruts* from that manuscript, but as discussed below this version is incomplete.² Gwenogvryn Evans gave an extremely unkind characterisation of the work when he said that 'it is a waste of time to inquire into worthless compilations of this kind with the Eisteddfodic stamp on them'.³ It is hoped that this discussion will give the lie to that statement.

The work was used fairly extensively by J. E. Lloyd in his *History of Wales*, and he refers to it frequently for corroboration of the events of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.⁴ It appears that Lloyd relied on Gwenogvryn Evans' edition of A, and on consultation of F, as well as on the Moses Williams edition of Humphrey Llwyd's work.⁵ Since then the work has undergone little or no discussion. The reasons for this are unclear, but must have something to do with the fact that the only

¹ *Humfredi Llwyd, armigeri, Britannicæ descriptionis commentariolum: necnon de Mona insula et Britannica arce, sive armamentario Romano disceptatio epistolaris. Accedunt æræ Cambrobritannicæ*, ed. by M. Williams (London, 1731), pp. 141–64.

² *The Text of the Bruts from the Red Book of Hergest*, ed. by J. Rhŷs and J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Oxford, 1890), pp. 404–6.

³ *Text of the Bruts*, ed. Rhŷs and Gwenogvryn Evans (Oxford, 1890), p. xxiv.

⁴ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (third edition, 2 vols., London, 1939), II., 499, 587–90, 592, 616, 632, etc. His longest assessment of the work that I am aware of is in his 'Wales and the Coming of the Normans (1039–1093)', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 1899–1900 (1901), 122–79 (135 n.).

⁵ Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 499, 632.

accessible published version of the work was incomplete, and that there has been no recent English translation. The present study will demonstrate the work's usefulness as an historical source, but attention will now be given to the different surviving manuscript versions.

Manuscripts containing *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*

- A Oxford, Jesus College MS 111 (*Llyfr Coch Hergest*), c.1382×c.1410
- B Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 32 (*Y Llyfr Teg*), c.1404.
- C Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llansteffan 28, 1455×1466
- D Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 182, 1509×1513
- E Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 135, 1556–1564
- F Cardiff, Central Library MS 3.11, c.1561–1575
- G Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 212, 1565×1587
- H Aberystwyth, NLW MS Cwrtmawr 453, 1600×1625
- I Aberystwyth, NLW MS 4973B, 1617×1634
- J Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llansteffan 80 1710×1720
- K Aberystwyth, NLW MS 1984B, 1757
- L Aberystwyth, NLW MS 2024B, c.1762
- M Aberystwyth, NLW MS 1992B, >1768

DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPTS

The following descriptions are based on my own inspection of the manuscripts as well as the descriptions in Daniel Huws' *Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming).

A Oxford, Jesus College MS 111, *Llyfr Coch Hergest* (c.1382×c.1410)

This well-known parchment manuscript of around 1400 was created for Hopcyn ap Tomos of Ynysforan, Cwm Tawe as a huge compilation of poetry, prose tales and history. Written by three main contemporary scribes, the third, Huws' *X91*, also worked on Peniarth 32. It is *X91* who is the scribe of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*.⁶ *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* occurs on fol. 254r–v, preceded by *Brut y Saeson* and followed by *Hengerdd*. The text, though the earliest of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, is incomplete, breaking off mid-way through what is given as line 71 in the following edition. The fact that the text finishes part-way down the first column on the page makes it clear that its incomplete character is original to the period of the production of the manuscript. The text tends to use verbal numbering.

B Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 32, *Y Llyfr Teg* (c.1404)

A parchment MS roughly contemporary with A as it shares a scribe, Huws' *X91*, who wrote the *Llyfr Coch* text of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* but not the text in Peniarth 32. Called *Y Llyfr Teg* on account of this main scribe's fine script, it was written, probably collaboratively, by five hands and contains texts of Welsh law followed by various annals, including *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, as well as some religious material. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is on fols. 114v–116v, written by a scribe writing in 1404 termed hand *B* by Huws. It is preceded by some Latin annals in the same hand,⁷ and followed by *Breuddwyd Pawl* in a different hand. The end of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* coincides with the end of the quire, possibly explaining the scribe's ignoring of the margins towards the text's end and the incomplete nature of the text, ending at what is given as line 101 in

⁶ D. Huws, 'Llyfr Coch Hergest', in *Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol*, ed. by I. Daniel, M. Haycock, D. Johnston and J. Rowland (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 1–30 (pp. 6, 12, 20).

⁷ For which see D. Luft, 'The NLW Peniarth 32 Latin Chronicle', *Studia Celtica* 44 (2010), 47–70.

this edition. The text itself here is full and unabbreviated, with roman numerals generally given for years although the word *blyned* is also usually given.

C Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llansteffan 28 (1455–1456)

This paper manuscript is in the hand of the poet and herald Gutun Owain and contains a miscellany of religious prose, grammar and historical texts. It was written for Phylip ap Madog ab Ieuaf in 1455×1456. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, on pp. 86–92, is preceded by a number of genealogical tracts and immediately followed by *Oed yr Arghwydd*, a related chronological work which also follows it in D and G. The text is complete though rather abbreviated, especially in comparison to D, its closest relative. The dates are generally given in roman numerals.

D Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 182 (1509×1513)

A paper commonplace-book of Huw Pennant, who was curate of Dolwyddelan in 1504. Its contents are a miscellany, ranging through *hengerdd*, *cywyddau*, religious and secular genealogies, annals, Biblical history, hagiography and other religious texts and astrology. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is on pp. 24–34, preceded by pedigrees and followed by *Oed yr Arghwydd*. There is some disorder in the text, which the scribe attempts to correct, and the pages should be read in the order 24, 25, 28, 26, 27, 29, 30–34. The correct order is indicated by marginal notes. Verbal numbering is used throughout the text in preference to roman numerals.

E Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 135 (1556–1564)

Most of the manuscript, including this text, is in the hand of the poet and herald Gruffudd Hiraethog of Llangollen, though the foliation and compilation of the

manuscript from Gruffudd's papers was probably the work of Wiliam Llŷn. The paper manuscript contains mainly pedigrees and armorials. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, on pp. 66–71, is preceded by annals and finishes incomplete, missing the date at the end of the chronicle for the arrival of the Normans. The chronicle is followed by a blank page. The dating in this version shows a preference for roman numerals.

F Cardiff, Central Library MS 3.11 (c.1561–1575)

A composite paper manuscript put together probably before 1600. The section containing *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* was written by the theologian and scholar Siôn Dafydd Rhys, along with four other hands. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* occurs on pp. 149–54 in Siôn Dafydd Rhys' hand, preceded by a tract on coinage and followed by *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, a version of the Latin biography of Gruffudd ap Cynan.⁸ A heading describes the text as taken *Ex lib D~ni Jo Prise militis*, indicating that it was taken from a now lost manuscript dating to around the second quarter of the sixteenth century in the hand of Sir John Prise (c.1500–1555). Though substantially complete, the text is abbreviated throughout, particularly at the beginning, generally shortening statements such as 'O 6ar6 Hy6el hyd 6eith Karno, vii. blyned' (line 21) to 'Gwaith Carno 7'. It furthermore omits the chronological calculations towards the end of the text, finishing at line 95.

Arabic numerals are used throughout. The margins have various notes, but those pertaining to the text appear to be in the same hand as the main scribe. The half-page after the text's end contains disjointed statements, sometimes repeated two or three times, pertaining to the Glyndŵr revolt, and some of these also appear at the end

⁸ For more on the manuscript, see H. Pryce, 'The Church of Trefeglwys and the End of the Celtic Charter Tradition in Twelfth-Century Wales', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 25 (1993), 15–54 (19–24, 52–54); *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: the Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. by P. Russell (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 4, 11–15.

of G, suggesting a common exemplar.

G Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 212 (1565×1587)

A paper manuscript in the hand of Wiliam Cynwal, a pupil of Gruffudd Hiraethog's (see above, E). The manuscript consists of historical texts, including a version of the Peniarth 21 version of *Brut y Brenhinedd* where the narrative is taken up to the year 1565. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, on pp. 514–523, is preceded by a list of names used by *brudwyr* and followed by a chronicle of the fifteenth century and other chronological calculations. The text itself is idiosyncratic in its combination of roman and arabic numerals, the arabic numeral generally occurring in the right-hand margin and sometimes giving a different number (noted in the apparatus to the edition, for example at n. 4). Several of the pages are torn towards either the upper-right or upper-left corners, with consequent lacunae in the text. The text is somewhat disordered: the text of page 517 is repeated on page 519, followed by a page left blank, after which the text is continued from page 518.

H Aberystwyth, NLW MS Cwrtmawr 453 (1600×1625)

This paper manuscript of the first quarter of the seventeenth century is in the early hand of Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt. The short manuscript consists of brief annals, opening with *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* on pp. 9–24, followed by blank pages before *Oed yr Arglwydd*. The text is preceded by the rubric *Allan o hen llyvrae memrron y wedi eu scrivennu ers gwell no 300 mlynedh y cawd y cofion hynn*,⁹ and this suggestion of multiple sources is borne out in the text itself, which gives some alternate readings in square brackets and dates the final chronological section with reference to both

⁹ 'These notices were taken from old parchment books written more than three hundred years ago'.

Gruffudd's imprisonment (as in BG) and the battle of Derwin (as in CDE). The text here uses verbal dates exclusively.

I Aberystwyth, NLW MS 4973B (1617×1634)

A collection of Gogynfeirdd poetry and *hengerdd* in the hand of John Davies of Mallwyd. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, on fols. 405–6, was copied from A (*Llyfr Coch Hergest*), and is preceded by a list of the contents of that manuscript. It reflects its source in being incomplete.

J1 and J2 Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llansteffan 80 (1710×1720)

A paper manuscript containing chronological tracts in the hand of Moses Williams. It contains two versions of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* as well as extracts from *Brut y Tywysogion*, which precede the first version, J1, which appears on fols. 14–16. This version is taken from *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, A, though it finishes at line 50. It is immediately followed by the second version, J2, on fols. 17–21, which is given the heading, 'out of Sir Tho. S. Sebright's MS. N^o 13'.¹⁰ This version appears to be derived directly from F.

K1 and K2 Aberystwyth, NLW MS 1984B (1757)

In the hand of Evan Evans, this paper manuscript contains mainly *hengerdd* but opens with prose, including an incomplete *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* on fols. 10–13, derived from A, *Llyfr Coch Hergest*. When A ends at line 71 it is continued with ten lines from the relevant section of H (Cwrtmawr 453).

¹⁰ The Sebrights secured possession of Edward Lhuyd's manuscripts after his death, and Moses Williams was allowed access to the collection at Beechwood in Hertfordshire. Huws, *Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes* (forthcoming).

L Aberystwyth, NLW MS 2024B (c.1762)

A manuscript compiled from miscellaneous papers of Evan Evans, with a complete text of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* on fols. 213–218, taken from a copy of H made by Lewis Morris.

M Aberystwyth, NLW MS 1992B (>1768)

Another paper manuscript in Evan Evans' hand, with *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, complete, on pp. 155–168, again derived from Lewis Morris' copy of H.

Lost manuscripts

It is known that the lost manuscript *Hanesyn Hên*, whose contents list is given by Edward Lhuyd, contained a version of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*.¹¹ The genealogical sections were copied into Cardiff MS 3.77, but it is unknown whether the part containing *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* was copied into any other manuscript.¹² Given that it was kept at Hengwrt, where the manuscript was numbered 33, it may be that it was one of the sources for Robert Vaughan's copy in H.

There also exists a seventeenth-century translation of the work into English by Robert Vaughan, which is not discussed here. The following manuscripts contain this English version, though the list is not exhaustive:

NLW, Aberystwyth, Wynnstay MS 12 (1653–1672)

NLW, Aberystwyth, Boderwyd MS 103 (c.1700)

NLW, Aberystwyth, Llansteffan MS 74 (38C) (1728)

¹¹ Edward Lhuyd, *Achæologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707), p. 256; for an independent list of contents, see *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin (o Lyfr Du Caerfyrddin)*, ed. by A. O. H. Jarman (Cardiff, 1951), p. 20, where it is listed as *Chronologieth yn dechreu Oes Gwrtheürn Gwrtheneu*.

¹² P. C. Bartrum, 'Bonedd yr Arwyr', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 18 (1959), 229–52 (230–31).

RELATIONSHIP OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

A comparative study of the manuscripts, based on common variants, additions, and omissions, leads to the following conclusions:

ABFG form a distinct group, as do **CDE**. This can be demonstrated, for example, with reference to the apparatus at lines 15, 27, 44, and 67. The following assertions regarding the interrelationship of the manuscripts are justified with reference to the apparatus to particular lines in the text.

B is not derived from **A**: 66, 71.

G is not derived from **A**: 43, 66, 71.

G is not derived from **B**: 32, 47, 96.

F is not derived from **A**: 66, 71.

F is not derived from **B**: 32, 47.

F is not derived from **G**: 31, 58, 65.

G is not derived from **F**: 95, 61.

F and **G** may be derived from a common exemplar: 29, 62, 67, and the notes on the Glyndŵr revolt which follow both.

Whether **FG**'s exemplar was closer to **A** or **B** could be indicated at lines 32, 41, 47, 65 and 66. It might be argued that it was closer to **A**, but overall it is impossible to determine with any certainty.

D is not derived from **C**: 8, 9, 22, 32, 34 etc. The shortenings and omissions of **C** make **DE** better representatives of the common source of **CDE**. In addition, the fact that both **C** and **D** are followed by the same work make it likely that *Oed yr Arglwydd*

followed *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* in their common source.

E is not derived from **C**, and is closer to **D**: 8, 22, 34, 43, 84 etc.

E is not derived from **D**: 61, 84.

Determining **H**'s relationship to the earlier manuscripts is highly problematic, given its derivation from more than one source. It is apparent that one of its sources came from the ABG group and another came from the CDE group. This is evident from a combination of the evidence from lines 15 and 27 as well as from the chronological summary at the end.

The differences in the chronological summary make it clear that **H** did not depend on **C**. No textual features preclude **H** from being dependent on **D**. It is possible that **D** was one of **H**'s sources if it is accepted that Robert Vaughan was mistaken in characterising the manuscripts from which he drew his text as *wedi eu scrivennu ers gwell no 300 mlynedh*.¹³ Alternatively, it is possible that **H** derives in part from the lost common source of CDE, a possibility strengthened by the fact that the text is followed by *Oed yr Arglwydd* in **H**, as in **CD**. Closer study of *Oed yr Arglwydd* would no doubt help determine whether its presence reflects **H**'s dependence on **D** or a lost common source.

H is unlikely to have been dependent on **AB**, given the fact that they lack most of the chronological calculations present in **H**'s conclusion, and a dependence on **FG** is precluded by the fact that Vaughan would hardly have described these as three centuries old. The nature of **H**'s source from the **ABFG** side of the tradition cannot, therefore, be determined.

¹³ 'Written more than three hundred years ago'.

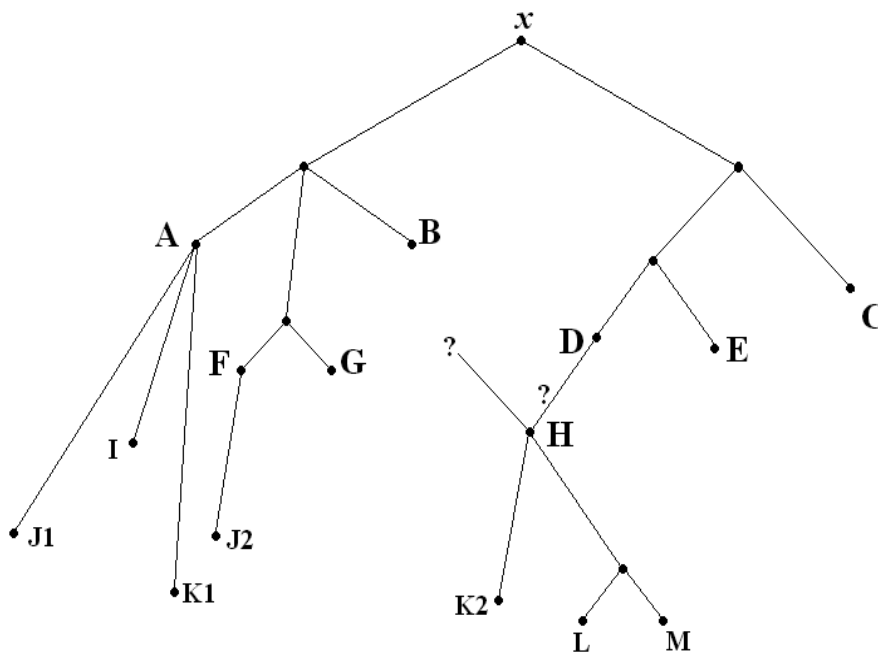


Table 5: stemma illustrating the relationship of the different manuscripts of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*

DATE AND PROVENANCE

The form that the chronicle takes is one which prioritises the transmission of chronological data. It begins with a series of notices apparently derived originally from the St David's chronicle which now survives in three versions of *Annales Cambriae* as well as in *Brut y Tywysogion*.¹⁴ It opens with the time between the reign of Vortigern and Arthur's battles, and this pattern of counting the years between one event and the other continues, with the occasional extra detail and chronological anchor, until about line 64. Here the nature of the chronological calculation changes, and the formula *or pan... yny...*, 'from when... until...' is abandoned in favour of introducing events with *yn y bloythyn rac byneb*, 'in the next year'.¹⁵ In this section, then, it moves from being a mere series of chronological calculations to more of a chronicle proper, with particular attention given to interactions between Llywelyn

¹⁴ The versions of *Annales Cambriae* generally known as A, B and C, though I refer to C as the Cottonian chronicle and B as the PRO chronicle. See above, pp. 192–93.

¹⁵ I am indebted to David Stephenson for bringing this difference of terminology to my attention.

Fawr and King John. This relatively detailed section continues to line 84, where there is a return to the brevity of the opening section along with some errors in dating indicative of later addition.

Structurally, then, there are several indications that the chronicle was originally compiled in the early thirteenth century and was updated in the mid thirteenth century. The first of these is the level of detail for the years 1208–1216, this detailed section being followed simply by notices of the deaths of prominent members of the Gwynedd dynasty until some details concerning the early campaigns of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Secondly, in the group of broad chronological calculations with which the work ends, one branch of the tradition (CDE) calculates from the battle of Bryn Derwin (1255) whilst the other (BG) calculates from the captivity of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1211. Although the latter group also contains the annals from 1211 to c.1265, it can be suggested that the original work was extended to c.1265, keeping the chronological calculations referring to the captivity of Gruffudd. This version would now be represented by BG. This version was then updated, with the chronological calculations changed to centre on the battle of Bryn Derwin, as in CDE.

This interpretation of the work's date gains support from what can be surmised about the chronicle's origins. It is immediately apparent that the work is centred on Gwynedd. Of the thirty or so places mentioned in the chronicle, over a third are in Gwynedd, including more than half of those places named after the mid-twelfth century. There is also a tendency towards the northern coast of Gwynedd, on both sides of the Conwy. Three places on Anglesey are mentioned, along with Bangor, Abergwyngregyn, the river Conwy, Degannwy (three times), Creuddyn, Diserth, Rhuddlan and Mold.

The prominent role of the Cistercian order in the keeping of chronicles in Wales would therefore lead one to suspect Aberconwy Abbey, at the centre of these locations, as a place of composition. This suspicion is fortified when considering those Venedotian dynasts the chronicler chooses to mention, albeit briefly. The prominence of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his family is quite clear, but mention of the members of the generation before Llywelyn, and of his contemporaries, may be significant. These include obituaries of Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd and his brother, Dafydd, as well as their nephews Gruffudd and Maredudd ap Cynan. All these figures were involved in the struggle for control of Gwynedd after Owain Gwynedd's death, a struggle from which Llywelyn ab Iorwerth emerged the victor, and although the chronicler's interest in them could simply reflect his interest in Llywelyn himself, it is likely that their connections with the abbey of Aberconwy was also a factor. Rhodri and Dafydd probably acted as joint founders of the abbey, and Gruffudd ap Cynan granted the abbey lands on Anglesey.¹⁶ Gruffudd was buried at the abbey after assuming the habit of the order, and his son, Hywel, is mentioned twice in *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, once accompanying Llywelyn ab Iorwerth to Scotland and again at his death, and he was also buried at Aberconwy.¹⁷ Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his sons, Dafydd and Gruffudd, were also buried there.¹⁸

The impression of an Aberconwy origin is further confirmed when comparing the places mentioned in the work to the granges held by the abbey, an approach which has recently been used to great success with reference to Cwm-Hir.¹⁹ Though *O Oes*

¹⁶ Foundation: C. A. Gresham, 'The Aberconwy Charter; Further Consideration', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30 (1982–1983), 311–47 (314–16); C. Insley, 'Fact and Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Gwynedd: The Aberconwy Charters', *Studia Celtica* 33 (1999), 235–50 (236–38). Gruffudd ap Cynan's grant: *Acts of Welsh Rulers*, ed. H. Pryce (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 338–39.

¹⁷ *BTP20*, pp. 145–46, 173; *BT RB*, pp. 182, 210; *BS*, pp. 196, 216.

¹⁸ *BTP20*, pp. 198, 201, 204; *BT RB*, pp. 236, 238–40; 242; *BS*, pp. 232, 236, 238.

¹⁹ D. Stephenson, 'The Chronicler at Cwm-Hir Abbey, 1257–63: The Construction of a Welsh Chronicle', in *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to J. Beverley Smith*, ed. by R. A. Griffiths and P. R. Schofield (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 29–45.

Gwrtheyrn provides us with less data, this approach produces some results. There seems to be little correlation between the places mentioned on Anglesey and the abbey's lands there.²⁰ The chronicle's mention of Bryn Derwin could in terms of its location be thought of an outlier from the general rule that places named in Gwynedd are on or near its northern coast, as it lies far inland on the border of Arfon and Eifionydd. Aberconwy's lands at Cwm and Nant Call, however, lie on either side of Bwlch Derwin, where the battle of 1255 was fought.²¹ While the battle's significance in the chronicle, probably a result of updating in the mid-thirteenth century, could be explained simply through interest in Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's descendants, it is also likely to be due to its occurrence almost within the abbey's lands.

In Gwynedd Is Conwy the abbey held no lands close to places mentioned in the chronicle with the exception of Degannwy and the Creuddyn. The mention of Earl Ranulf of Chester's use of the timber of the barn of Creuddyn in his fortification of Degannwy in 1210 must refer to the barn of the Creuddyn grange near the castle, the Aberconwy lands lying closest to the abbey itself.²² This level of detail, combined with the abbey's links of patronage with the men mentioned in the work, indicate that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is a product of the Cistercian abbey of Aberconwy.

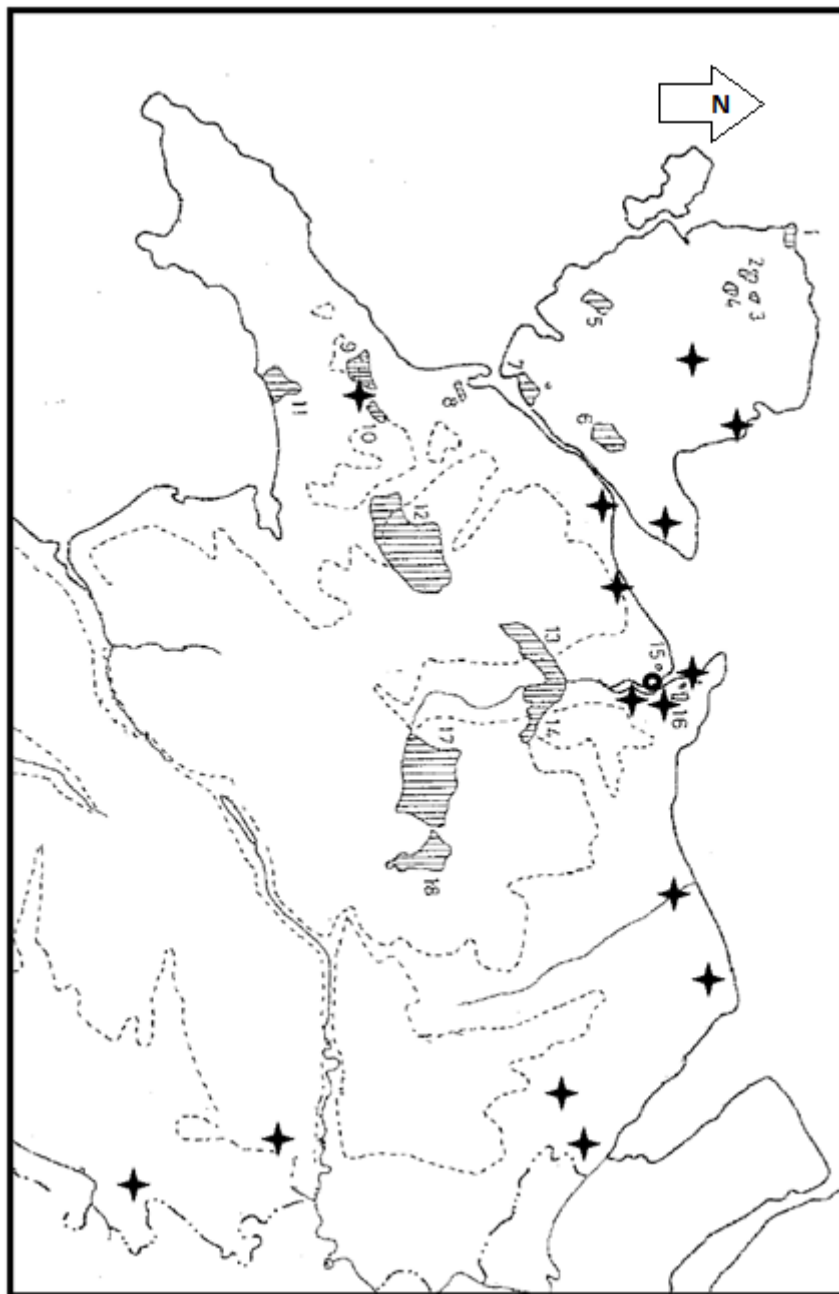
PURPOSE

An Aberconwy origin would make *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* the only thing approximating a native chronicle to have survived from Gwynedd, since David Stephenson has demonstrated that the so-called 'Aberconwy Chronicle' is a later compilation undertaken at Hailes Abbey. Stephenson has suggested that although historical writing was probably undertaken in thirteenth-century Gwynedd, none has survived

²⁰ D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 178.

²¹ Gresham, 'Further Consideration', map between 312–13.

²² *Ibid.*, 315–18.



Map 2: the distribution of the lands of Aberconwy in Gwynedd (shaded) together with locations mentioned in *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* (stars). The hollow circle represents the monastery. No. 16 is the Creuddyn grange, and the stars to either side represent the barn of the grange and the castle of Degannwy. The location of the battle of Bryn Derwin is shown between the abbey's lands at Cwm (No. 9) and Nant Call (No. 10). Map adapted from D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), map 1.

the conquest.²³ Whilst *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* cannot be categorised as a chronicle on the same level of detail as *Brut y Tywysogion* and most versions of *Annales Cambriae*, it certainly represents a form of historical writing.

One of the chief concerns of the work would appear to be chronology, and it is possible that it represents something of a middle stage in the work of historical writing at Aberconwy. To clarify, if we consider the events noted in recent history, from the point of view of the original compiler, the years 1187–1216, it is striking that the majority of notices concern either patrons of the abbey (Dafydd and Rhodri ab Owain; Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Owain; Llywelyn ab Iorwerth; Hywel ap Gruffudd) or events closely involving the abbey (Ranulf of Chester's activities in Degannwy; John's invasion of 1211). It may be that the reason for including events such as the obituaries of prominent patrons in a chronological work of this nature was to establish their place in relation to the corpus of annalistic material we know Cistercian houses to have shared. Put another way, it may be that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* represents an intermediate step when notes relating to the affairs of the abbey's patrons were fitted into a chronological framework derived from a chronicle brought to Aberconwy from another abbey, a chronicle related to the group of texts now known as *Annales Cambriae* and *Brut y Tywysogion*.²⁴

Determining which of these chronicles is closest to that used as a source for *Oes Gwrtheyrn* is difficult, since the notices in *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* are generally too short to merit any detailed comparison.²⁵ However, there are considerable

²³ D. Stephenson, *The Aberconwy Chronicle*, Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lecture 2 (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 17–18.

²⁴ For detailed studies of the exchange of this chronicle material between Welsh (especially Cistercian) monasteries, see J. B. Smith, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Wales: the Composition of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*', *Studia Celtica* 42 (2008), 55–86; Stephenson, 'The Chronicler at Cwm-Hir Abbey'; *idem*, 'Gerald of Wales and *Annales Cambriae*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 60 (2010), 23–37; K. Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 67–85.

²⁵ There are a couple of instances where *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is closer to C than to B. These are the fact

Event	OGG	OGG Date	AC (A)	AC (A) date
Gwrtheyrn		400		
Badon	128	528		516
Camlan	22	550	21	537
Maelgwn	10	560	10	547
Arfderydd	25	585	26	573
Gwrgi & Per.	7	592	7	580
Caerleon	9	601	33	613
Meigen	14	615	17	630
Cadwaladr	48	663	52	682
Offa	128	791	114	796
Degannwy	20	811	15	811
Merfyn	33	844	33	844
Rhodri	27	871	33	877
Conwy	3	874	3	880
Merfyn	17	891	-	-
Cadell	10	901	-	909
Anarawd	6	907	6	915
Rome	18	925	13	928
Hywel	19	944	22	950
Carno	7	951	1	951

Table 6: the relative chronologies of the A-text of *Annales Cambriae* and *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*. The second and fourth columns show the amount of years since the previous event, whilst the third and fifth columns show the dates according to the chronology of each text.

discrepancies between the chronology of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* and that of the Welsh Latin annals and the Welsh *Bruts*, illustrated in part by the chart above (Table 6) comparing it to *Annales Cambriae A*, the Harleian chronicle, the oldest of the Welsh Latin annals. Often, differences in terms of absolute dating go alongside broad agreement in terms of the gap between events, such as for much of the sixth century, whereas for certain periods there is considerable difference. This is true for the dating of Cadwaladr's death to 663 rather than 682, which may be a particularly significant difference. Whereas all versions of the Welsh Latin annals as well as the three

that B fails to mention the burning of Degannwy in 811, and the fact that both *OGG* and C note events at Aberteifi in 1138. However, the significance of the first case is doubtful and the argument that the compiler may have been deliberately noting many events not in his source text by the twelfth century is an argument against attributing much significance to the second case. For the 811/812 entries, see *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. xi–xii.

versions of *Brut y Tywysogion* place Cadwaladr's death during the plague of 682, *Historia Brittonum* dates it to the reign of Oswiu, which would signify the plague of 664.²⁶ It has been suggested that differences here and elsewhere between *Annales Cambriae* and *Historia Brittonum* indicate that both were drawing on a common source but that the dating of this source was unclear.²⁷

It is arguable that the chronological uncertainty of this source is also the cause for the disagreement between *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* and other Welsh chronicles. The dating of Cadwaladr's death to 664 may have depended on interpreting this source's claim that Cadwaladr died in a plague in a similar way to *Historia Brittonum*, though it may of course show the influence of *Historia Brittonum*. It is also striking that entries in *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* for the period which Kathleen Hughes argued the common source covered, the sixth and seventh centuries, are always from among the entries in *Annales Cambriae* which Hughes thought derived from the source it shared with *Historia Brittonum*.²⁸ Was the chronological framework of the earliest part of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* taken from a chronicle which was compiled from the same source material as *Historia Brittonum* and the earliest version of *Annales Cambriae*? It must be remembered that *Historia Brittonum* was written in Gwynedd, and the chronicle kept at St David's from around 800 was also dependent on Venedotian material. Might the Aberconwy compiler of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* have taken his annalistic base for the earlier period from a chronicle which was acquired from an older monastic centre within Gwynedd? Some details support this, for example the naming of Anarawd as present at the battle of the Conwy, a fact which has been assumed but is not explicitly

²⁶ *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. 2–3; *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, pp. 2–5; *The Chronicle of Ireland*, ed. by T. Charles-Edwards, Translated Texts for Historians 44 (2 vols., Liverpool, 2006), pp. 154–55; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 310–12.

²⁷ This was also the source for British entries in the Irish annals. Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 92–95.

²⁸ Compare, for example, the entries listed in the chart above with Hughes' list of eleven British entries in *Annales Cambriae*, Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 91.

stated in any of the Welsh chronicles.²⁹

There must be a caveat to all this. The nature of the Welsh entries present in the earlier part of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* could simply reflect the compiler's interest in Welsh history. The exact workings of the work's chronology have yet to be understood, and it is relevant to note that the dating of Cadwaladr's death to 664 is dependent on the work's misdating of the battle of Meigen to 615. If the correct date of Meigen (itself misdated in *Annales Cambriae* A), 633, is used, the date for Cadwaladr's death is 681, one year out from the usual date. Further study of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn's* chronology may reveal solutions which will remove the need for postulating dependence on a Venedotian chronicle, but until then it remains a possibility.

Another issue relating to the chronicle's relationship with others is that few of the longer entries have any parallel in the other surviving chronicles, particularly from the mid-twelfth century onwards.³⁰ It may be that, having established a chronological framework from the fifth century onwards, the compiler of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* was particularly concerned to note events which did not appear in other chronicles. He may have had access to a Welsh Cistercian chronicle by this point, probably from the abbey's mother-house of Strata Florida, and it may be that he is noting events which did not already appear in this. David Stephenson's recent discussion of the Cwm Hir section of the PRO chronicle (*Annales Cambriae* B-text) has demonstrated that there may have been an expectation for Welsh Cistercian chroniclers to record particular

²⁹ T. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 490–491; *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. 12–13; *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, pp. 30–31.

³⁰ These are discussed in detail in the notes to the text, but include: Anarawd at the battle of the Conwy; Gruffudd killing the bishop of the English and the naming of the battle as Machafwy; Caradog Fynach; the taking of Aberteifi; the location of the battle at Tal Moelfre; the birth of Llywelyn; the naming of Gwern y Virogl; the naming of Haf y Gwyddy; the battle of Coedanau; Llywelyn's capture of Mold; the viking attack on Llanfaes; Ranulf of Chester and the barn of Creuddyn; the attack on Penarlâg.

events with regard to the region around their monastery or their granges, leaving the recording of events in other areas to the corresponding monasteries, with the expectation that all these would come to form part of a larger chronicle through the sharing of annalistic material with other houses.³¹ The events which the compiler of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* fitted into a chronological framework dependent on a fuller Latin chronicle were perhaps noted down with the expectation that they would be entered into a chronicle which combined material from its mother house of Strata Florida as well as other Welsh Cistercian houses. It is may be that the chronicle which he used came to Aberconwy from its mother house of Strata Florida, since there was an expectation that a mother house would provide its daughters with such materials.³²

For some reason, *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* was never combined with the larger chronicle. It may be that it was interleaved with it, that is physically inserted between pages of the manuscript, as a reminder to include these notices in the body of the text in any later copies of the chronicle. That this was common practice is clear from two bifolia and a single leaf containing extracts from John of Worcester inserted into the manuscript of the Cottonian chronicle at St David's.³³ The fact that it was a preliminary text of this nature may explain its distinctive chronological formula, different from those used in *Brut y Tywysogion*, but this issue also relates to the language of composition, discussed below.

This explanation of the work's origins and purpose removes a significant objection to placing its composition at Aberconwy, namely the fact that it fails to mention either the abbey or any of its abbots. Not only was there probably some information regarding this already present in the chronicle the compiler of *O Oes*

³¹ Stephenson, 'Chronicler at Cwm-Hir Abbey', pp. 34–35.

³² J. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069–1215* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 281–82; see below, p. 362.

³³ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 76.

Gwrtheyrn had before him, but it is also the case that a distinction can be drawn between a chronicle relating to the abbey itself and the keeping of the primarily secular chronicles which survive from Welsh Cistercian houses. This issue is discussed in greater depth in the next chapter, but for now it suffices to say that there is some evidence that chronicles of this nature were thought of as distinct from chronicles which related to the history of the abbey in particular.³⁴

O Oes Gwrtheyrn forms part of the network of chronicle writing which is concerned primarily with secular affairs and which is an aspect of the involvement of the Cistercian order in contemporary Welsh politics, particularly with the princes of Gwynedd. The purpose of the work was to combine notices of local affairs with this material, at a time when the abbey was beginning to take an active role in the writing of such history. The updating of the work in the 1260s suggests, however, that it had not been developed into a fuller history by that period, and that the unique notices derived from Aberconwy, fitted into their chronological framework, had not been combined with the chronicle from which that framework was derived, which must have been the initial intention. They may have been interleaved with the chronicle with which they should have been combined. The relative brevity of the updates to the 1260s means they cannot be characterised as changing the fairly preliminary feel of the work, and it may be that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* had become separated from the fuller chronicle, with someone deciding to update the work with some additional notes.

With regard to this 1260s updating, it could be argued that the work was compiled initially in the mid thirteenth century or later, with the relative fullness of the account of the years 1187–1216 simply a product of the survival of an account of those years which was included in the text. This can be discounted as unlikely for a

³⁴ See below, p. 359.

number of reasons. Firstly, the use of 1211 as a fixed point for chronological calculation in some versions of the work suggests that this was the last date initially, before the chronicle was updated to the 1260s. Secondly, if the above arguments about the nature of the work are accepted, such initial stages of historical writing could be expected in the early years of the abbey's foundation, especially considering the likely date of its movement to Aberconwy, but in the 1260s one would expect the keeping of historical records to be a reasonably established practice at the abbey.³⁵

If *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is accepted as representing an intermediate stage of historical writing, then, the early thirteenth century provides an appropriate context. Given the arguments advanced in other chapters regarding the threat or reality of conquest as a spur for historical writing, it may be fitting that the 1211 campaign of King John and the consequent exchange of hostages was used as the initial chronological anchor at the end of the chronicle. It may be that the threat of conquest which must have been so apparent to the monks of Aberconwy, where John's army encamped, spurred the monks to historical record-keeping.³⁶ On the other hand, this date might simply mark the stage at which the monastery was sufficiently well-established to begin making its own contribution to the chronicle writing undertaken at Welsh Cistercian houses.³⁷

With regard to the language of the work, whether it was initially composed in Welsh or, as with *Brut y Tywysogion*, Latin, is uncertain. There are few indications in the text that it is a translated work. The possibility that it was transmitted along the same axes as the Historical Continuum may be a sign that it formed part of the same

³⁵ The exact date of the monks' move from Rhedynog Felen, in south-western Arfon, is uncertain, but they were certainly established at Aberconwy by 1192. R. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway, 1186–1537* (Cardiff, 1963), pp. 5–6.

³⁶ For the significance of the 1211 campaign, see R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 295–96.

³⁷ See below, pp. 379–80.

program of translation around the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century, and some of its source material, related to the Welsh Latin chronicles, was certainly in Latin. If the work, as suggested above, was initially compiled for insertion into a Latin chronicle then it would probably have been composed in Latin itself. If it was composed in Welsh the translation of the Latin chronicle used as a source may also have been intended. This may have been the case, since a number of Latin texts seem to have been translated into Welsh around the beginning of the thirteenth century in Gwynedd.³⁸ The existence of a geographical split in the distribution of the two versions supports the idea of an original composition in Welsh or of translation at Aberconwy.

To summarise, this is a proposed sequence of development of the *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* chronicle: a chronicle related to *Annales Cambriae* and *Brut y Tywysogion* became available at Aberconwy abbey, coming probably from its mother-house of Strata Florida (S). It may be that the earlier part of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is derived from a distantly-related Gwynedd chronicle (G). These were used to provide a chronological framework, consisting of brief notices of significant events, combined with notices of events in Gwynedd and concerning the abbey's patrons (G1). This prioritised details not found in the existing chronicle (S). This occurred after August 1211, and it may be that S had reached the abbey fairly recently. For whatever reason, G1 was not combined with S, although perhaps it was interleaved with it. If G1 was initially composed in Welsh, perhaps an intended translation of S was never undertaken. G1 was updated during the late 1260s in a fairly superficial way to form G2. G2 is essentially the text of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* as it survives in ABFG. At some later date,

³⁸ P. Russell, 'Translating Latin in Early Thirteenth-Century Wales: Some Thoughts on the Context of Translating Geoffrey', paper delivered at *From the Historia Regum Britanniae to the European Bruts, Part I: Towards a Typology of the Vernacular Adaptations of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, symposium held at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 15–16 June, 2011.

the series of general chronological calculations with which the work closes was updated to relate to the battle of Bryn Derwin rather than to 1211 to form G3, and this is *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* as it survives in CDE.

An alternative theory would see the work abstracted from an Aberconwy chronicle at a relatively late date, perhaps the early fourteenth century. The details picked out would in this case prioritise material not present in, say, BT. This must be accepted as a possibility, but it would fail to explain the serious chronological differences between it and the other surviving chronicles. It would also fail to explain the presence of the two alternative chronological anchors at the end of the work.

Some tentative suggestions can be offered as to how this work came to be included in the manuscripts in which it now survives. Given the apparent link between the abbey of Aberconwy and the scribes associated with Hopcyn ap Tomos in the spread of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of the Historical Continuum, it may be that the occurrence of an Aberconwy chronicle text in both the *Llyfr Coch* (A) and another manuscript with a shared scribe (B) is indicative of the same process.³⁹ That is, *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* may have found its way to south Wales as part of the diffusion of texts of the Historical Continuum amongst Cistercian houses. The other version of the work, CDE, seems to have been restricted to north Wales in terms of diffusion.

HISTORICAL AWARENESS

The events chosen at the beginning and end of the chronicle tell us much about the compiler's conception of history. That it opens with Gwrtheyrn or Vortigern at a date signifying A.D. 400 is potentially significant, since it is a chronological starting-point which is otherwise unknown in Welsh chronicles. The Welsh Latin chronicles are

³⁹ See above, pp. 51–57.

generally derived from a chronicle whose starting-point was A.D. 445, and the Welsh chronicles start at the death of Cadwaladr.⁴⁰ This difference might support the theory that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* used a distantly-related Venedotian chronicle as a source.

Remembering the prominence of Vortigern's reign in texts such as *Historia Brittonum*, it could be argued that opening with Vortigern rather than Cadwaladr implies some independence from the Galfridian tradition, as does the different date given for Cadwaladr's death.

However the closing section of the chronicle indicates considerable influence from Geoffrey's history. It has been argued that the succession of historical milestones which are dated in relation either to 1211 (ABFG) or 1255 (CDE) formed part of the original text of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, with CDE reflecting a later updating. The creation of the world and the birth of Christ are noted, though in both versions these are dated in relation to 1255 and therefore may belong to the post-1211 expansion of the text. The events dated in relation to 1211 in ABFG, and therefore arguably part of the original chronicle, are the settlement of Britain by the Welsh, their conversion under Lles ap Coel, the arrival of the English and the arrival of the Normans. The first two, and to a lesser extent the third, show the influence of Galfridian historiography. If these are part of the original composition of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* not long after 1211, then the work is a relatively early example of the combination of Galfridian history and Welsh annalistic writing, a subject discussed at greater length in the next chapter.⁴¹ One potentially significant detail is the fact that the term *Cymry* is used from the settlement of Britain down to the present day, implying a rejection of

⁴⁰ *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. xiii, xv. The PRO and Cottonian chronicle eventually extended this through the independent addition of Isidorean and Galfridian material. C. Brett, 'The Prefaces of Two Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 35 (1988), 63–73; see below, p. 363.

⁴¹ See below, pp. 363–70.

Geoffrey's distinction between *Britones* and *Gualenses*.⁴² Uncertainty over the original language of composition makes further discussion of this issue difficult.

Moving to more recent events, a notable feature of the chronicle from 1211 is a focus on Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. Initially, it may have been that the focus of the chronicle on 1211 as a termination point was simply due to its composition immediately after that date. The later expansion of the work during the time of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd may have been influenced by the prominence of his father in its closing sections. The updater added information concerning the death of Llywelyn, his wife Joan, his sons, Gruffudd and Dafydd, and some events from the early career of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. This was in keeping with previous interest of the work in the dynasty of Gwynedd if not with the detail of the latest parts of the original work.

CHRONOLOGY

As discussed above, the exact workings of the work's chronology have yet to be worked out in detail. One of the main issues is a lack of absolute dates, which are given only three times in the text, at 1055, 1133 and 1255. Even these present some difficulties, as in the disagreement between the date given as AD 1133 and the date of this annal in terms of the relative chronology of the work (for which see the notes to line 27). There are, however, some broad areas of agreement, which mean that we can be fairly certain that the chronicle's starting point was A.D. 400, the *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* from which the other dates are reckoned. The 1255 and 1055 chronological anchors both indicate this date. Some issues, particularly around the second chronological anchor at 1133, are discussed more fully in the notes.

Given the considerable discrepancies within the text, it has been decided only

⁴² *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 281.

to give dates for those events attested independently of the Welsh Chronicle tradition, namely *Annales Cambriae* and *Brut y Tywysogion*. These are given in the margin of the text. Dates have not been emended on historical grounds, although some have been emended from the reading of the base text (B) on textual critical grounds. It is hoped that the following chart (Table 7) will clarify the dating of the text, both in relative and in absolute terms. The first column gives shortened references to the entries, whilst the second gives the relative dating of the events to each other, with each number indicating the gap between its event and the event before. The third column gives the A.D. dates if the starting-point is taken to be A.D. 400, whilst the fourth gives the three absolute dates given in the body of the text. The fifth column gives dates when they are ascertainable from sources apart from Welsh chronicles, for example the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Irish annals or Anglo-Norman histories, and these are the dates that appear alongside the translation of the text. The reason for giving only these dates rather than those from Welsh chronicles is to avoid the assumption that differences in dating between *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* and the dating consensus arrived at with regard to Welsh chronicles must indicate error on the part of this work. Other Welsh chronicles are, however, consulted in the notes to the text itself.

EDITORIAL METHOD

The edition follows the thesis as an appendix. Peniarth 32 or B is the basis for this edition, on the grounds that it has fewer errors than A on the whole, and A's incomplete nature makes B the oldest near-complete copy. The text is a critical one insofar as B has been emended wherever errors are traceable with the help of variant readings from ACDEFGH. Whenever such errors occur the corrected reading is given

in square brackets, the correct reading often taken from A, with the original reading of B (denoted as MS) as well as the variant readings of ACDEFGH given in the apparatus. The absence of a reference to a particular manuscript where others are given is indicative of the lack of an alternative reading from that manuscript. Some additions are made to the text when there is sufficient support to do so from ACDEFGH, and these cases appear in square brackets with no reading from B/MS given in the apparatus.

Differences of orthography and small differences of phrasing in the other MSS are generally ignored, apart from in the case of some proper nouns. Obvious errors are emended (e.g. ymla6d=ymlada6d) and abbreviations extended (arth=arthur) silently. Any significant divergences, such as additional events, words, and sentences, different chronological information, or sentences missing from any of the other manuscripts are noted in the apparatus. Some dates are given with the translation, discussed above. Historical aspects of the chronicle are discussed in the endnotes. Punctuation and capitalisation has been changed to conform with modern conventions.

Event (summary)	Years since previous entry	AD date within text's relative chronology	AD date given in text	Date of event (if known independently)
Gwrtheyrn		400		
Badon	128	528		
Camlan	22	550		
† Maelgwn	10	560		
Arfderydd	25	585		
† Gwrgi & Per	7	592		
Caerleon	9	601		
Meigen	14	615		633
† Cadwaladr	48	663		
Offa	128	791		
Degannwy	20	811		
† Merfyn	33	844		
† Rhodri	27	871		878
Conwy	3	874		
† Merfyn	17	891		
† Cadell	10	901		909
† Anarawd	6	907		
Rhufain	18	925		
† Hywel	19	944		950
Carno	7	951		
Meibion Idwal	1	952		
† Owain	24	976		
Cnut	27	1003		
Machafwy	42	1045		1056
† Gruffudd	9	1054	1055	
Hastings	5	1059		1066
† Bledd ap C	8	1067		
Mynydd Carn	6	1073		1081
† Rhys ap T	13	1086		1093
† Wm Rufus	7	1093		1100
† Caradog	25	1118		
† Cadwallon	8	1126	1133	1132
Aberteifi	6	1132		
Tal Moelfre	20	1152		
Coed Ceiriog	8	1160		1165
Rhuddlan	2	1162		1167
† Owain	5	1167		1170
Llywelyn's birth	2.5	1169.5		
Gwern Firogl	14	1183.5		
Hâf y Gwyddyl	7	1190.5		
Castell Paen	5	1195.5		1198
† Gr ap Cy	2	1197.5		
† Daf ab O	1	1198.5		1203
Interdict	5	1203.5		1208
Scotland	1	1204.5		1209
Degannwy	1	1205.5		1210
Aber	1	1206.5		1211
Gr released	5	1211.5		
† John	3	1214.5		1216
† Siwan	20	1234.5		1237
† Llywelyn	3	1237.5		1240
† Gruffudd	4	1241.5		1244
† Dafydd	2	1243.5		1246
Derwin	11	1254.5	1255	1255
Diserth	10	1264.5		
Penarlâg	1	1265.5		

Table 7: the relative and absolute chronology of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*.

CHAPTER 6

THE CISTERCIAN ORDER AND HISTORICAL WRITING IN WALES

This chapter will investigate the role of the Cistercian order in historical writing in Wales. Specifically, it will ask to what extent the political and cultural place of the order in medieval Welsh society explains its role in the production and promulgation of the texts which make up the Welsh Historical Continuum, discussed in detail in the first chapter. Part of its purpose is to bring together the different strands of this study so far, and so unite the discussion of the manuscripts of the Historical Continuum, the broader Galfridian context, later medieval Valle Crucis and Welsh chronicle writing with a thread of historical narrative. As a result of this, subjects discussed more fully elsewhere in this study are dealt with relatively briefly, with new areas of discussion being explored in greater detail. A comparison of the Welsh situation with elsewhere in Britain will set the discussion in a broader context.

The spread of the Cistercian order into Wales has been discussed in the introduction, and this chapter will move on to consider its role in native politics in the thirteenth century, when the attempts of the rulers of Gwynedd to define a native Welsh polity had considerable Cistercian involvement. This will then provide the context for a discussion of two historical traditions. The first of these is the spread of awareness and acceptance of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* within Wales, and it will be asked what role was played by Cistercian monasteries in this process. The second is chronicle writing, a tradition which predates the Cistercians but which they adopted with enthusiasm. The question of when and why these two traditions, the Galfridian and the annalistic, became combined will be asked. Their combination into single unified narratives will be demonstrated as a process which

spanned the Edwardian conquest and which had obvious implications for the appearance of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the fourteenth century. After this, the role of the Cistercians in historical writing in England and Scotland will be discussed as a comparison, and although recent studies have often focussed on categories of evidence which are sparse in Wales some illuminating parallels can be drawn. The discussion will come to a close by concentrating on developments after the Edwardian conquest.

Some issues of terminology should be discussed before proceeding further. The term 'Welsh Cistercians' in this chapter is generally used to designate those houses of the family of Whitland, all of which had associations with native Welsh dynasties. The Cistercian houses of Margam, Neath, Tintern and Basingwerk are generally designated as Marcher houses, although the term is admittedly problematic for the last of these which was patronised by the princes of Gwynedd, and Margam which was patronised by the Welsh of Morgannwg.¹ Moreover, the Cistercian nunneries of Llanllugan and Llanllŷr are not discussed due to lack of evidence concerning their role in Welsh politics and historical writing.² When the terms 'Welsh independence' or 'the cause of Welsh political independence' are used, it is not with any anachronistic assumptions of modern nationalism in the medieval period but as a shorthand in some circumstances for the attempts of native rulers to keep their power and influence against the threat of Marcher lords and the English crown, and the eventual definition of this struggle in Gwynedd's attempts to form a native Welsh principality under nominal English royal overlordship.³

¹ See above, pp. 23–24, 26–27.

² For these, see M. Gray and J. Morgan-Guy, "'A Better and Frugal Life': Llanllugan and the Cistercian Women's Houses in Wales", *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 154 (2005), 97–114.

³ For an exploration of these issues see R. R. Davies, 'The Identity of "Wales" in the Thirteenth Century', in *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths*, ed. by R. R. Davies and G. H. Jenkins (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 45–63.

THE CISTERCIANS AND WELSH NATION-BUILDING

The close connection between Cistercian monasteries of *Pura Wallia* and the native Welsh rulers made inevitable their close involvement in the political struggles of the thirteenth century. From the initial foundation of these houses, the links between them and their patrons were strong. Both Owain Cyfeiliog and Madog ap Gruffudd Maelor were buried in the monasteries they had founded, Ystrad Marchell and Valle Crucis respectively.⁴ Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, though not the founder of Aberconwy, soon became its patron and was buried in the monastery after becoming, like Owain Cyfeiliog, a member of the order just before his death.⁵ The links between dynasties and abbeys are generally clear from their choice as a place of burial, particularly in the case of Strata Florida, which quickly became the favoured mausoleum for the princes of Deheubarth. This seemingly had a negative impact on the choice of Whitland as a place of burial, although Maredudd Goeg ap Rhys, Cadwaladr ap Rhys, and Maredudd ap Rhys Grug were buried there.⁶ The first of these was at Whitland as a Cistercian monk after his blinding at the hands of Henry II.⁷ Overall, the pattern of burial of members of princely dynasties at Cistercian abbeys served to strengthen the links between specific monasteries and the lords of the founding polity, such as Powys Wenwynwyn or Deheubarth, rather than indicating a tendency for native rulers to opt for burial at any Welsh Cistercian house.

As well as places of burial and repositories of donations, these abbeys served a more active role in the political activities of their dynasties, and often acted as meeting places as well as supplying intermediaries or representatives for diplomatic negotiations, and occasionally outright political support, usually from the ranks of the

⁴ *BTP20*, pp. 142, 195.

⁵ *BTP20*, pp. 197–98.

⁶ *BTP20*, pp. 130, 197, 219.

⁷ *BTP20*, p. 112.

abbots of particular houses. There is also some evidence to suggest a role as administrators, and overall it is fair to characterise the relationship between the Welsh abbeys and native polities in the thirteenth century, particularly between certain monasteries and Gwynedd, as one where the abbeys and their members came to assume some of the functions of government. The discussion will now turn to the investigation of each of these roles in more detail.

One of the conspicuous uses of the monasteries themselves was as meeting places. The most striking example of this is Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's use of Strata Florida as the location for his 1238 assembly where he compelled all the princes of Wales to swear fealty to Dafydd as his heir.⁸ However, this seems to be the only time a Cistercian abbey was used for such a significant peacetime assembly. Llywelyn's earlier, comparable meeting of 1216, which decided the partition of Deheubarth among rival dynasts, was held at Aberdyfi, a location seemingly chosen for its position on the border between Gwynedd and Deheubarth.⁹ The choice of Strata Florida for the 1238 meeting may therefore have been thanks to its relatively central location rather than a tendency to hold such meetings at Cistercian abbeys.

The use of Cistercian abbeys during wartime can be explained by similar geographical factors. The use of Aberconwy as the location for the signing of the treaty between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and Edward I in 1277 owed much to its location at the edge of Gwynedd Uwch Conwy, at the furthest point of Edward's advance in that war.¹⁰ Similar reasons must account for the use of the abbey of Whitland by Payn de Chaworth as the location of a council of war, earlier in that same conflict.¹¹ In this case it may be that the place of the abbey in the sympathies of the lords of Dryslwyn

⁸ *BTP20*, p. 197.

⁹ *BTP20*, pp. 169–70.

¹⁰ J. B. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 434–38.

¹¹ Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 420.

against whom this southern campaign was initially directed informed the decision to use the abbey as a meeting-place.¹²

There is evidence from Gwynedd of the use of monastic granges as bases for the itinerant princely court which suggests a more established role for Cistercian centres as meeting-places. The preference of the princes of Gwynedd for the granges of Aberconwy and Cymer is consistent with the tendency for the itinerant court to remain within Gwynedd itself, rather than the lands over which the princes exercised their broader authority.¹³ The existence of 'Llywelyn's hall' within the precincts of Aberconwy, attested in the post-conquest period, may indicate the maintenance of a permanent guest house for the use of the prince and his court, but it may be that the hall was moved to Conwy after 1283 from Gronant.¹⁴ If the latter is the case, it is striking that there is considerable evidence for princely use of the abbey granges but not for the abbeys themselves. It may be that frequent use of the monastery by the court would be considered an inappropriate degree of secularisation. On the granges, with their population of lay brothers, this would not have been as much of an issue.

That the Welsh Cistercian houses were seen as lending political support to the princes is apparent as early as 1212, when King John ordered Faulkes de Bréauté to destroy or lay waste the abbey of Strata Florida.¹⁵ Attempting to establish his power in northern Ceredigion, John saw the abbey as aiding his enemies, Maelgwn and Rhys Gryg, who were cooperating with Llywelyn in their campaigns against the king.¹⁶ The

¹² Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg of Dryslwyn had chosen it as his place of burial. His son, Rhys, came into the king's peace within two weeks of the council at Whitland. *BT RB*, p. 258; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 420.

¹³ D. Stephenson, *The Governance of Gwynedd*, Studies in Welsh History, 5 (Cardiff, 1984), pp. 233–34; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 220–21.

¹⁴ R. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway, 1186–1537* (Cardiff, 1963), pp. 67–68; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 235.

¹⁵ *Rotuli litterarum clausurarum in turri Londinensi*, ed. by T. D. Hardy (2 vols., London, 1833–1844), I. 122 (August, 1212).

¹⁶ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (third edition, 2 vols., London, 1939), II., 636–38.

exact nature of the aid which Strata Florida was thought to have given is unclear, but it may have been comparable with the help given to Welsh forces by the community of Cwm Hir in 1228 and 1230.¹⁷ After John's death, there is further evidence in 1217 which suggests that the English crown was attempting to use its influence in the general chapter to discredit some Welsh Cistercian abbots.¹⁸

In fact, the main evidence for monastic involvement in the politics of native Wales relates to individuals rather than locations. The use of Cistercians, mainly abbots, by the Welsh princes as intermediaries, representatives or supporters becomes increasingly common in the course of the thirteenth century. In most recorded cases they acted on behalf of the princes of Gwynedd, understandably since for much of the thirteenth century the only Welsh rulers with sufficient power to engage in significant diplomatic negotiations were these princes. Ystrad Marchell's support for the princes of Powys went against this trend on occasion, but overall the picture is one of support for the rulers of Gwynedd as the leaders of native Wales.¹⁹

Despite his clear connections with certain Cistercian houses, particularly Strata Florida, Aberconwy, Cymer, and Ystrad Marchell, there is no record of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's use of Cistercian abbots as representatives.²⁰ It is in the reign of his son Dafydd that this practice first becomes apparent, when Dafydd's appeals to Pope Innocent IV raised the prospect of summoning King Henry to Caerwys, where he was to be examined by the abbots of Aberconwy and Cymer on Dafydd's behalf.

¹⁷ In 1230, a trick played upon the English by a monk of Cwm Hir led to a Welsh victory near Hay on Wye. Men of the Cwm Hir grange of Gwern y Gof had acted similarly in 1228, and the result of both these events was the burning of a Cwm Hir grange by English forces. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 668, 675–76.

¹⁸ F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066–1349*, Studies in Welsh History, 1 (Cardiff, 1977), pp. 211–12.

¹⁹ The adherence of the monastery to Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn led to the confiscation of lands in Penllyn by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. D. H. Williams, 'The White Monks in Powys II: Strata Marcella', *Cistercian Studies* 11 (1976), 155–91 (163).

²⁰ His connection with Strata Florida can be surmised from its use in 1238 and from his appearance as the foremost arbitrator in a dispute between that monastery and Abbey Dore. *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, ed. by H. Pryce (Cardiff, 2005), nos. 218, 219, 229, 230, 231, 232.

The appeal came to nothing, but apart from its audacity it is striking that, despite the involvement of the bishop of St Asaph, it was the two Cistercian abbots of Gwynedd Uwch Conwy who were selected as princely representatives. This occurred in the context of Dafydd's 1244 attempt to hold his principality as a vassal of the pope which, though it came to nothing, nevertheless illustrates the audacity of the political and ecclesiastical policy adopted by this Welsh Prince.²¹

In the reign of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, evidence for the use of Cistercian abbots as representatives becomes more commonplace. The abbot of Aberconwy acted as Llywelyn's representative in 1258, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1267 and 1275, and the abbot of Cymer acted on Llywelyn's behalf against Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn in 1274.²² In these missions, the abbots worked alongside other men drawn from the prince's court and from the clerical hierarchy of the dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor. In this sense they formed an integral and important part of the reliance of the prince of Gwynedd on the ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy of his principality, and the dependence of the prince of Gwynedd on the abbots of Aberconwy and Cymer is only partially apparent for houses outside his patrimony. The use of the abbot of Strata Florida as a representative alongside the abbot of Aberconwy in 1275 is a notable and significant exception to this.²³

It seems as though the monastery which stood on the other side of the most conspicuous fracture in native Welsh politics, Ystrad Marchell, sometimes supported the princes of Powys Wenwynwyn over those of Gwynedd. This is the impression given by the prominence of its abbot along with that of Aberconwy in the agreement between Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1263, the

²¹ M. Richter, 'David ap Llywelyn, the First Prince of Wales', *Welsh History Review* 5 (1971), 205–19 (208–18); Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 51–53; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 306.

²² Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 33, 182, 222, 226; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 119, 129–30, 136.

²³ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 391; Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, p. 33.

implication being that, as arbiters, they represent their respective territories of Gwynedd and Powys Wenwynwyn. Ystrad Marchell's support for Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn over Llywelyn is emphasised in a petition from that house to Edward II, although its post-conquest nature opens up the possibility that the monks were overstating their case.²⁴ Given the association between the native Cistercians and Llywelyn's cause, the fact that Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn's only recorded donation to Ystrad Marchell, a reasonably well-documented house, is a confirmation of pre-existing holdings may indicate a lukewarm attitude towards that house.²⁵ Thirty-four years of Venedotian rule in Powys Wenwynwyn may have had some effect on the abbey's relationship with its rulers.

It was the dispute between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and the bishop of St Asaph that the ability of the daughter-houses of Whitland to present an united front in support of the prince of Gwynedd became apparent. Anian of St Asaph's dispute with Llywelyn seems to have centred on the prince's usurpation of financial rights, particularly over ecclesiastical tenants, and in this dispute Anian had, by 1275, secured the support of Pope Gregory X.²⁶ It was this appeal to the pope which spurred seven of the Cistercian houses of Wales to send their own letter to Gregory in defence of Llywelyn. In a meeting at Strata Florida, the abbots of Whitland, Strata Florida, Ystrad Marchell, Cwm Hir, Aberconwy, Cymer and Valle Crucis underlined their support for Llywelyn, asserting the falsehood of Anian's accusations and depicting

²⁴ J. O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1140–1540* (New York, 1947), p. 19 and n. 121.

²⁵ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 592. This relative parsimony in comparison to his ancestors may simply indicate that there was less land left to donate by the second half of the thirteenth century. It is worth noting that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd granted less land in general in comparison to his grandfather, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. Nevertheless Gruffudd's involvement with the abbey compares very unfavourably with the 34 grants, confirmations or sales to the abbey from his father, Gwenwynwyn. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, nos. 541–45, 548–75, 578.

²⁶ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 174–180; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 377–382.

Llywelyn as a vigorous defender of the Cistercian order and other monasteries.²⁷ The composition of this letter at Strata Florida may indicate that its central location gave it a prominence in the order in these matters as with the meeting of 1238.

The letter of 1275 provides an example of co-operation between all but one of the Welsh houses of the family of Whitland which suggests a striking degree of agreement between them in political outlook.²⁸ Not all parties were disinterested in their support of Llywelyn, the abbot of Valle Crucis in particular being involved in his own dispute with the bishop of St Asaph.²⁹ But the mutual interest of the prince and the abbots was something which arose from the nature of Cistercian involvement with native dynasties. This episode also demonstrates the difficulties which the princes of Gwynedd could face in dealing with the bishops of St Asaph and Bangor, and it was the uncertainty of episcopal support which made the support of the Cistercians so valuable on this occasion, when they were able to influence the pope directly.³⁰ The involvement of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in particular with Cistercian abbots has much to do with the fact that he faced difficulties with the bishops of Bangor and St Asaph throughout the latter part of his reign.

The unity of the Cistercian houses in this instance brings to light broader questions about their changing symbolic and political role. Questions concerning the political implications of the foundation of certain Cistercian houses have recently been raised by David Stephenson. He suggests that records of the granting of lands to and foundation of daughter houses from Ystrad Marchell in the years around 1200 are

²⁷ *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (3 vols., Oxford, 1869–1878), I., 498–99.

²⁸ The absence of Llantarnam can be explained by its firm inclusion, by this time, into the de Clare lordship of Glamorgan. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, p. 36; M. Altschul, 'The Lordship of Glamorgan and Morgannwg, 1217–1317', in *Glamorgan County History: Volume 3, the Middle Ages*, ed. by T. B. Pugh (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 45–86 (45–60).

²⁹ Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 379–80.

³⁰ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, p. 181; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 312.

indicative of developing alliances between the ruler of Powys Wenwynwyn and surrounding areas. Elise ap Madog of Penllyn's series of grants to Ystrad Marchell at the close of the twelfth century, for example, would be indicative of the alliance between him and Gwenwynwyn which led to Elise's expulsion in 1202 by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth.³¹ Gwenwynwyn's grant land in Cyfeiliog to Cymer, patronised by Maredudd ap Cynan who was expelled from Meirionnydd by Llywelyn's allies in the same year, is seen as indicative of another aspect of an anti-Gwynedd alliance, as is the foundation of Valle Crucis in 1201.³² In the latter instance, the presence of lay magnates of Powys Wenwynwyn at the foundation ceremony may have been interpreted by Llywelyn as indicating a move towards the reunification of Powys.

If all this does indicate a role for the endowment and establishment of Cistercian houses in the formation of political alliances, it provides a striking example of a Cistercian role in a fledgling system of alliances which could have provided an alternative power structure to the domination of native Wales by the princes of Gwynedd.³³ The picture of Cistercian support for a Gwynedd-dominated Wales which emerges from the 1275 letter was not, then, the only possible outcome, and this in turn instills a certain caution when aligning the interests of monastic establishments such as these with secular political aims. J. Beverley Smith notes that 'churchmen were moved to facilitate ... not an imposition of princely will untempered by discretion, but a political process in which the prince had need to secure the consent of the lords of native Wales in the pursuit of an agreed objective'.³⁴ The abbots who signed the 1275 letter were not merely the agents of Llywelyn's principality, but rather the

³¹ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, nos. 482–85, 487–88.

³² D. Stephenson, 'The Rulers of Gwynedd and Powys', in *Monastic Wales: New Approaches*, ed. by J. Burton and K. Stöber (Cardiff, 2013), pp. 89–102 (96–98).

³³ For an assessment of Gwenwynwyn ab Owain Cyfeiliog's attempts to secure for himself the leadership over native Wales, albeit one which sees this opportunity as having passed by 1198, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 582–87.

³⁴ Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 115.

representatives of native Wales who recognised the importance of Venedotian ambitions to the protection of the Welsh nation.

Aberconwy's prominent role in Cistercian interactions with Gwynedd has already become apparent, but it was dependent on its geographical location and link with the dynasty rather than on its position within the network of Welsh Cistercian houses. Strata Florida's prominence, on the other hand, can be seen as indicating an importance which was partially independent of that of the Gwynedd dynasty. Although its central role in 1238 and 1275 may have been partially dependent on geographical factors, those same geographical factors would have cemented the abbey's prominent role amongst the Welsh Cistercians. There are indications that, in 1217, the abbot of Strata Florida had taken the initiative to protest against the unfair use of ecclesiastical sanctions against the Welsh by the English crown. It is likely that his deposition by the General Chapter in that year was for complaining against the political use of an interdict against the Welsh in 1216.³⁵ Both its abbot and that of Whitland were deposed, the latter for refusing to punish the former, indicating some solidarity among Welsh Cistercian houses in such matters, but the fact that Strata Florida rather than Whitland took the initiative may be telling.

In some ways, the role assumed by Strata Florida was one which, had its location been more favourable, Whitland might have been expected to fulfil as the mother house of the Welsh Cistercians. Geographically, Whitland lay at the southern edge of Welsh Deheubarth, in an area which only came under Welsh control in certain periods of political turbulence or success, such as the latter part of the reign of Rhys ap Gruffudd.³⁶ It was founded here in a period of turmoil when the sons of Gruffudd

³⁵ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 211–12.

³⁶ Despite Rhys holding the neighbouring territories of Ystlwyf and Efelffre from 1172, he did not rule the territory of Whitland until after the death of Henry II in 1189. J. E. Lloyd, 'The Age of the Native Princes', in *A History of Carmarthenshire*, ed. by J. E. Lloyd (2 vols., Cardiff, 1935), I.,

ap Rhys were re-establishing the kingdom of Deheubarth, but in the years following the death of the Lord Rhys Anglo-Norman rule over the lands in which it lay would come to be increasingly secure as Deheubarth fragmented under his descendants.³⁷ The rulers of Deheubarth were nevertheless generous benefactors of the house, with the Lord Rhys himself one of the most generous donors, with the consequence that much of the abbey's land lay in areas of native rule.³⁸

Although technically under Anglo-Norman patronage for much of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Whitland's close ties with the dynasty of Deheubarth as well as its place at the head of a family of daughter-houses with strong connections to native dynasties across Wales meant that the question of control of the lordship of St Clear's in which it stood was not of primary importance to the political sympathies or ethnic identity of the house. Nevertheless, its relative unimportance in political terms, compared to Aberconwy and Strata Florida, must have partially depended on its ambiguous position on the edge of *Pura Wallia*, outside the zone of Venedotian overlordship.

Despite the ties between the native Cistercian houses and their occasional appearance as a coherent unit, changes in political control over an abbey and its lands could cause divided loyalties in any monastery. That this may have been the case at Aberconwy after the war of 1277 only serves to emphasise the importance of local factors, no matter how involved in the development of the principality of Wales the institution might have been. A request to the General Chapter from the abbot of Aberconwy in 1280 asked that Llywelyn's estranged brother, Dafydd, who had recently become lord over some of the abbey's territories, could be included in their

113–200 (pp. 154, 156).

³⁷ Lloyd, 'Age of the Native Princes', pp. 143–44, 156–65.

³⁸ Lloyd, 'Age of the Native Princes', p. 154; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 182–83.

prayers.³⁹ This request has been interpreted as the reason for the abbot's payment of £40 to appease Llywelyn, and if so it is striking how quickly the loyalties of even the most closely-associated house could become divided.⁴⁰

That this situation would seldom arise is due in part to the pattern of landholding for Welsh Cistercian monasteries. The close tie between the monastery's lands and the territories of its founder/patron meant that in general, the loyalty of abbeyes tended to stay with whoever controlled that territory. Outsiders such as Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his sons in Powys could attempt to secure the sympathy of Ystrad Marchell with grants or confirmations of land, having overrun Powys and exiled Gwenwynwyn in 1208.⁴¹ But these lands lay within Powys, and there were no attempts to give the monastery land in Gwynedd in order to ensure loyalty to its princes. Just as the itinerary of the princes' court indicates a concentration on Gwynedd, grants to Cistercian monasteries convey a similar impression of an overlordship composed of distinct units, *gwledydd*, with few indications of moves towards a greater institutional coherence.⁴² The Welsh Cistercian monasteries can be seen as providing an institution, or set of institutions, which were a feature of the entirety of *Pura Wallia* and could sometimes, as in 1217 and 1275, act in unison. But although they were involved with and supportive of the princes of Gwynedd, their ties of loyalty remained local to a considerable degree, and despite attempts to secure the loyalty of houses such as Ystrad Marchell, there are no indications that the princes of Gwynedd sought to develop the system of Cistercian houses into an integral part of the nascent principality in a more concrete sense.

³⁹ *Littere Wallie Preserved in 'Liber A' in the Public Record Office*, ed. by J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1940), p. 153.

⁴⁰ *Littere Wallie*, ed. Edwards, p. 42; Stephenson, 'Rulers of Gwynedd and Powys', pp. 95–96.

⁴¹ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, nos. 231, 282, 283, 287.

⁴² Stephenson, 'The Rulers of Gwynedd and Powys', pp. 94–95; *idem*, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 233–34.

The dependence of the princes of Gwynedd on Aberconwy and Cymer in particular strengthens this impression. When considering the role of Cistercians as administrators, the evidence is concerned entirely with these houses, and mainly with Aberconwy. The abbots of Aberconwy appear several times in contexts which suggest a formal role in the prince's administration. This includes some activity as envoys or representatives, but also a role in the keeping of the prince's records. Not only were transcripts sealed and composed at Aberconwy's granges, but the official documents of the principality were kept within the abbey church.⁴³ Both abbot Anian and abbot Maredudd were involved in the prince's diplomatic activities and had access to his documents.⁴⁴ Though some of the evidence for Aberconwy's use as a depository of records comes from the later years of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, there is some from the time of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, which probably indicates that it was used as such throughout the thirteenth century.⁴⁵ Cymer's abbot acted on the prince's behalf against Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn in 1274, and the abbey also seems to have been used as a depository of records.⁴⁶ It also seems that, given a lack of evidence for an official chancery serving the princes, it may be that Aberconwy and Cymer, along with other ecclesiastical establishments within the kingdom such as the cathedral and chapter at Bangor, fulfilled this role when necessary.⁴⁷ It has been suggested that the abbot of Aberconwy may have had an official role, perhaps as chancellor, although overall it seems more likely that the role of chancellor was vested in a member of the secular clergy.⁴⁸

⁴³ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 33–34; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 322; *Littere Wallie*, ed. Edwards, pp. 108–110.

⁴⁴ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 222, 226.

⁴⁵ *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward I, A.D. 1272–1279*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (London, 1900), p. 506; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 235.

⁴⁶ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, p. 34.

⁴⁷ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, pp. 26–28.

⁴⁸ Stephenson, *Governance of Gwynedd*, p. 37; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 319–29. Huw Pryce's discussion of the possible existence of a chancery in Gwynedd establishes that there was not a

The level of involvement of Cistercian houses in the attempts of the rulers of Gwynedd to create a Welsh principality differed from house to house, and it was geographical factors as well as existing ties between monasteries and the Gwynedd dynasty which determined their involvement. Nevertheless there is evidence for all houses that their ties of patronage to native Wales were reflected in political activities, even if the main evidence for this is the hostility of English and Marcher forces to those abbeys.⁴⁹ This level of involvement meant that the Edwardian conquest and the destruction of most of the Welsh princely dynasties by the end of the thirteenth century was bound to have profound effects on these monasteries.

The greatest effect on any Welsh monastery was probably on Aberconwy, which was moved from its location at the mouth of the Conwy to Maenan, several miles upriver, in order to make way for the Edwardian castle and planted borough.⁵⁰ Immediately after the conquest, the abbey witnessed what has been called its 'concluding formality', when *y Groes Naid*, the relic of the True Cross revered by the Gwynedd dynasty, was handed over to Edward.⁵¹ Edward's treatment of Aberconwy, though forceful, was on the whole fair and above-board.⁵² This attitude seems to have been characteristic of his dealings with Welsh Cistercian houses, which received substantial reparations.⁵³ Edward appreciated that the integral role of the Cistercians

chancery in the sense of an organisation responsible for the issue of documents following a clear set of rules to prevent fraud. A chancery, defined more loosely as an organisation primarily responsible for the validation of acts rather than their issue, can be said to have existed. Despite this important role in the keeping of the prince's archives on behalf of Cistercian abbots, the role of chancellor was likelier held by a member of the secular clergy. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, pp. 132–142.

⁴⁹ Although such evidence is lacking for Llantarnam in the pre-conquest period, the house's strong support for Glyndŵr indicates that its political sympathies were by this time in line with those of other Welsh Cistercian houses. *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. by C. Given-Wilson (Oxford, 1997), p. 212.

⁵⁰ Hays, *History of the Abbey of Aberconway*, pp. 61–77.

⁵¹ Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 580–81; *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, Supplementary Close Rolls, Welsh Rolls, Scutage Rolls, 1277–1326*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (London, 1912), pp. 273–74.

⁵² O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 69–70.

⁵³ R. Hays, 'Welsh Monasteries and the Edwardian Conquest', in *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History Presented to Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan*, ed. by J. O'Callaghan and J. Donnelly, Cistercian Studies Series 13 (Dublin, 1971), pp. 110–37 (p. 120).

in native society made them useful as intermediaries between the native Welsh and the crown post-conquest, and he used the abbots of Aberconwy, Valle Crucis and Whitland extensively in government.⁵⁴ Particularly telling is Edward's use of the abbot of Cwm Hir as an intermediary to receive Ystrad Tywi rebels into the king's peace during the revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd in Deheubarth.⁵⁵

The benefits of co-operation with the new regime were no doubt clear given the lack of any credible alternative. However, Cistercian co-operation has been interpreted as half-hearted at best.⁵⁶ It is debatable as to whether these houses materially benefitted or suffered from the Edwardian conquest in the long run, although declining fortunes in the fourteenth century can be explained by broader economic factors.⁵⁷ But there is no doubt that the political importance of their abbots was greatly reduced by the destruction of their princely patrons. Despite the positions given them by Edward I and his immediate successors and their useful position as intermediaries between the crown and the Welsh, they were now undoubtedly small fish in a big pond. Whereas they had occupied positions of some political influence under the princes of Gwynedd, now they were far from centres of authority. Although the abbots of Whitland, Strata Florida, Tintern and Basingwerk were occasionally summoned to Parliament during Edward I's reign, by the time of his son only Basingwerk attended, and no Cistercian abbots from Wales were summoned during the time of Edward III.⁵⁸ The Welsh sympathies of some monasteries rendered them objects of suspicion to many in authority, and their continued attachment to Welsh political causes would become clear with the outbreak of the Glyndŵr revolt.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Welsh Church*, pp. 39–40; Hays, 'Welsh Monasteries', p. 124; O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 71–72.

⁵⁵ *Calendar of Chancery Rolls ... Welsh Rolls*, p. 307; Hays, 'Welsh Monasteries', p. 119.

⁵⁶ O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, p. 69.

⁵⁷ O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 72–75; Hays, 'Welsh Monasteries', p. 134, 137; Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 232–36.

⁵⁸ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 222–23;

THE RECEPTION OF GEOFFREY'S HISTORY IN WALES:

1. MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

Before discussing Glyndŵr, it will be necessary to relate the narrative given above to the role of the order in Welsh historical writing, aspects of which have been examined in previous chapters. The discussion will be twofold: it will first concentrate on the role of these monasteries in the spread of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* and its translation and adoption into the Welsh historical consciousness; secondly, the chronicle writing which came to be yoked to the Galfridian history will be further contextualised. The first case is a development roughly contemporary with the spread of the Cistercian order into Wales, but whereas the tradition of chronicle writing in the second case was older than the order, its adoption and combination with Galfridian material must be seen in the context of Cistercian activity. Discussion of the first point will begin with the Latin manuscript evidence.

The survival of several manuscripts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* which can be linked to Cistercian houses indicates that the text was of some interest to the order. Considering the known medieval provenance of manuscripts containing Geoffrey's work, the number which can be linked to British Cistercian houses (10) is exceeded only by the Benedictines (22), and followed by the Augustinians (6). On the continent the number linked to Cistercian houses (11) more closely approaches those linked to the Benedictines (15), with the Augustinians again the next most prominent (3).⁵⁹ Though medieval Cistercian libraries in Britain appear to have been predictably well-supplied with biblical texts, commentaries and patristic works, there was also a strong interest in history, particularly insular history.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ J. Crick, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 206–9.

⁶⁰ C. R. Cheney, 'English Cistercian Libraries: the First Century', in his *Medieval Texts and Studies* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 332–341.

Geoffrey's history is well represented among manuscripts surviving from Cistercian libraries, and nowhere is this truer than in Wales. Manuscripts of the First Variant version of the history are particularly associated with Wales, and the association with Cistercian houses appears to be far stronger than in Britain in general, although the small size of the sample and the overall difficulty of establishing a Welsh provenance for medieval Latin manuscripts must be borne in mind.

Of the 215 manuscripts of Geoffrey's history described in Crick's catalogue, only 6 have some indications of a Welsh provenance.⁶¹ It is of course possible that other manuscripts of uncertain provenance were also produced in Wales, but the low rate of survival of Latin manuscripts in Wales compared with Welsh vernacular manuscripts is reason enough for the apparent discrepancy between the relative paucity of Welsh manuscripts of Geoffrey's history and the abundance of manuscripts of the vernacular translations.⁶² The manuscripts which have survived, however, indicate to some extent the nature of the reception and propagation of Geoffrey's work in Wales as well as the role of the Cistercian order in this process.

Two manuscripts can be linked with some confidence to Welsh Cistercian houses. The first of these, Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514, has received some discussion in a previous chapter as a manuscript of the late thirteenth century containing a constructed composite history consisting of Dares Phrygius, the First Variant version of Geoffrey's history and Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*.⁶³ The other material contained in it, most notably the *Cronica de Wallia* discussed in the previous chapter, mark it as a product of Whitland. The provenance of the second

⁶¹ J. Crick, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth III: a Summary Catalogue of Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1989), nos. 48, 49, 55, 67, 70 and 112.

⁶² Daniel Huws surmises that fewer than one in a hundred Latin manuscripts survive from medieval Wales, whereas the rate of survival for vernacular manuscripts is more like one in five. *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 3.

⁶³ See above, pp. 64–65, 195–96; Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 70.

manuscript is more straightforward, as two *ex libris* inscriptions mark London, British Library MS Royal 13.D.ii as the property of Margam abbey. It contains only a copy of the Vulgate version of *De gestis Britonum* with the dedication to Robert of Gloucester, and can be dated to the late twelfth century.⁶⁴

The Margam provenance and dedication to Robert, the abbey's founder, suggest a possible route for the dissemination of Geoffrey's history in Wales. Robert's status as one of the men to whom Geoffrey dedicated his work may have been the reason behind the acquisition of his history by the monks of Margam. They may of course have acquired a copy from Robert himself: Walter Espec is known to have acquired a copy of the history from him before lending it to Ralf fitz Gilbert, husband of Gaimar's patroness, Lady Constance.⁶⁵ The monks' interest in the work is hardly surprising given that Margam itself is one of the few specific places in Wales named in Geoffrey's narrative.⁶⁶ There are therefore strong reasons to suspect that this house may have played a role in the initial popularisation of Geoffrey's work within Wales. This is interesting given that Margam can be seen as the Marcher Cistercian house with the strongest connection with native Wales, and the only one where an attempt was made to found a daughter-house under native patronage.

It is worth noting briefly that the Meilyr who was involved in the failed foundation of Pendâr from Margam, and possibly Llantarnam, is linked by Gerald of Wales to Geoffrey of Monmouth's work.⁶⁷ Meilyr was known as *awenydd*, an 'inspired person' or 'soothsayer', and it is in this capacity that he is described by Gerald. Gerald describes how the demons who tormented Meilyr, though put to flight when St John's gospel was placed on his lap, would return in full force and with greater

⁶⁴ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 112.

⁶⁵ *Geffrey Gaimar: Estoire des Engleis/History of the English*, ed. by Ian Short (Oxford, 2009), p. 348.

⁶⁶ *Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of De gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, ed. by M. D. Reeve and N. Wright, p. 45.

⁶⁷ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 616.

severity when a copy of *Historia Britonum a Galfrido Arthuro tractata* was put in its place.⁶⁸ Although Gerald states that Meilyr was completely illiterate, this passage is evidence for the spread of Geoffrey's influence in Wales by the later twelfth century. Meilyr's eremitic life as well as his links to Margam, St David's, and later Llantarnam, Ystrad Marchell and Whitland indicates his position as an intermediary between earlier Welsh religious traditions and the expanding, reforming monastic orders of the twelfth century.⁶⁹ As such it is appropriate that he should have played an early role in the expansion of the Cistercian order into native Wales.

Another manuscript which has been tentatively linked to Margam is Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.1.14 (1706).⁷⁰ This mid- to late-twelfth century manuscript was in Wales in the early modern period, as shown by a note in Welsh on its flyleaves. A similar note occurs in Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.4.4 (1801), a late twelfth-century manuscript of Geoffrey's History.⁷¹ These early modern notes are the only reason for associating these manuscripts with Wales, and the only reason for associating them further with Margam abbey is the fact that both manuscripts feature the double dedication to its founder, Robert of Gloucester, and to Walter of Meulan.⁷² Their association with Margam is therefore more tenuous still than their association with Wales, and although there are no indications that the manuscripts were produced outside Wales there is little reason to tie them to Margam specifically rather than any other Welsh monastery.

Another manuscript of Welsh provenance containing, like Exeter 3514, a version of the First Variant text is Dublin, Trinity College MS 515 (E.5.12), and it is

⁶⁸ *Gerald of Wales, The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales*, ed. by Lewis Thorpe (London, 1978), pp. 116–120; *Giraldi Cambrensis, Opera*, ed. by J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warner (8 vols, London, 1861–1891), VI., 57–58 (*Itinerarium Cambriae*, I. 5).

⁶⁹ B. Golding, 'Gerald of Wales and the Cistercians', *Reading Medieval Studies* 21 (1995), 5–30 (12).

⁷⁰ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 48.

⁷¹ Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 49.

⁷² Crick, *Summary Catalogue*, p. 80.

also comparable to the Exeter manuscript in terms of date. Marginalia and notes on name forms suggest an active interest in the text during its time in Wales, two Middle Welsh marginal notes indicating knowledge of Welsh material incorporated into *Brut y Brenhinedd* translations.⁷³ The original part of the manuscript consisted of a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century copy of Dares Phrygius, followed by Geoffrey's History and then a list of English kings extending from Alfred to Edward I, with the fact that Edward lacks a regnal length suggesting it was compiled during his reign. The similarity of this part of the manuscript to the Welsh historical continuum has been noted in chapter one.⁷⁴

The manuscript's further contents show its links to the Exeter manuscript. The texts added to it in the fourteenth century included a genealogy from Adam to Cadwaladr and a collection of Trojan genealogies also found in the Exeter manuscript. The manuscript's overall appearance suggests a Cistercian provenance, and its contents would specify this further to a Welsh Cistercian house, but no further work has been done to connect it closer to a particular monastery.⁷⁵ Given that its demonstrable links are to Whitland, one of the native Welsh houses seems more likely than Margam, Neath or Tintern.

The sixth manuscript presents some complex issues, as although its contents prove a Welsh provenance for much of its material, it appears to be the product of a long process of textual transmission and revision. Though difficult to establish with confidence, the process indicates some interesting things about Welsh influence on the Galfridian tradition once *De gestis Britonum* had become known in Wales. Cardiff, Central Library MS 2.611 is again a manuscript of around 1300, but its text of

⁷³ *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth II: The First Variant Version: a Critical Edition*, ed. by N. Wright (Cambridge, 1988), p. lxxxii.

⁷⁴ See above, p. 66.

⁷⁵ *First Variant*, ed. Wright, p. lxxx.

Geoffrey's history is a distinct combination of the Vulgate and First Variant versions.⁷⁶ David Dumville has established the dependence of the central section of the manuscript's text of Geoffrey's history on a copy of the Vulgate version in Durham, Ushaw College MS 6, a northern English Cistercian manuscript of the mid to late twelfth century, possibly from Kirkstall.⁷⁷ In order to complete this partial copy of *De gestis Britonum*, the compiler of Cardiff 2.611 drew on a distinctive version of the history which was itself a conflation of the First Variant and the Vulgate. This version was produced by one brother Madog of Edeirnion, his authorship stated in 26 lines of Latin verse which precede the text.⁷⁸

The northern English origin of part of the text is not the only feature that extends the manuscript's range of influences beyond Wales. Glosses on part of the manuscript seem to be in some form of Norse.⁷⁹ Dumville argues that the compilation of the manuscript itself in northern England would fit in well with knowledge of Celtic Latin texts there at this time, but the Franco-German border has been suggested as its place of production on palaeographical grounds.⁸⁰ If it was composed outside Wales it is indicative of a process of transmission where Geoffrey's work was received in Wales, then adapted by Madog of Edeirnion before being combined with a text of northern English provenance in an environment receptive to such Welsh historiographical influences. It is extremely probable that this network would have depended on connections between Cistercian monasteries.

⁷⁶ It was until recently at the South Glamorgan Central Library until that library was moved and renamed Cardiff Central Library. The main discussions of the manuscript and its text are *Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Britanniae: a Variant Version Edited from Manuscripts*, ed. by J. Hammer (Cambridge, MA, 1951), pp. 8, 12–19; D. N. Dumville, 'The Origin of the C-Text of the Variant Version of the *Historia regum Britannie*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26 (1974–76), 315–22; and *First Variant*, ed. Wright, pp. lxxix–lxxx.

⁷⁷ Dumville, 'Origin of the C-Text', 319; see above, p. 64.

⁷⁸ *First Variant*, ed. Wright, p. lxxx.

⁷⁹ Dumville, 'Origin of the C-Text', 320.

⁸⁰ *A Variant Version*, ed. Hammer, p. 8, n. 10, giving the opinion of Dr Eric Millar.

On the other hand, Neil Wright argues that there is 'sufficient evidence of a Welsh dimension in its history to allow that the extant text was created in Wales and the manuscript copied there'.⁸¹ This argument gains from the fact that the manuscript opens with an acephalous version of Dares Phrygius, followed by Trojan genealogies found also in Dublin 515 and Exeter 3514.⁸² Whilst this Welsh-associated material could have been derived from the same source as Madog of Edeirnion's conflated history, its inclusion here can also be an argument in favour of seeing the manuscript as produced in a similar setting to these two Welsh manuscripts.⁸³ In this case we should envisage a centre of production in Wales receptive to influences from northern England, itself probably a Cistercian house. The date range of this process is vague in either case. The combination of the Northern-derived text with that of Madog of Edeirnion must predate c.1300 and post-date 1200, the date of the Cardiff and Ushaw College manuscripts respectively.⁸⁴

The issue of the identity of this *Frater Madocus Edeirnianensis* is a complex one.⁸⁵ It has been suggested that he is to be identified with Madog ap Gwallter, the author of three Middle Welsh religious poems preserved in *Llyfr Coch Hergest*.⁸⁶ The only direct indication of date is a later note by John Davies of Mallwyd, which gives him a *floruit* of c.1250. The main reason for connecting the two are a perceived similarity in date, since Madog of Edeirnion had probably composed his version of Geoffrey's history by about 1250, and the possibility of Madog ap Gwallter's

⁸¹ *First Variant*, ed. Wright, p. lxxx.

⁸² Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 197.

⁸³ It will be apparent that determining the relationship of these manuscripts to each other will become a great deal simpler once the interrelationship of the texts of the Latin Dares Phrygius is established.

⁸⁴ Dumville, 'Origin of the C-Text', 319–21.

⁸⁵ *A Variant Version*, ed. Hammer, p. 18.

⁸⁶ I. Williams, 'Cyfeiriad at y Brawd Fadawg ap Gwallter?', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 4 (1928), 133–34; 'Gwaith Madog ap Gwallter', ed. by R. M. Andrews, in *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, ed. by R. M. Andrews, N. G. Costigan (Bosco), C. James, P. Lynch, C. McKenna, M. Owen and B. F. Roberts, pp. 345–392.

originating from a Llanfihangel.⁸⁷ This is argued to have been Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr, which, though actually in Dinmael, was often misrepresented as being in neighbouring Edeirnion.⁸⁸

Madog ap Gwallter's religious poetry has been interpreted as indicative of a freshness of thinking characteristic of the mendicant orders, and his affiliation to both the Franciscan and Dominican orders has been suggested.⁸⁹ It must be emphasised that the link between Madog ap Gwallter and Madog of Edeirnion is a weak one: there are numerous Llanfihangels in Wales, not one of them actually within Edeirnion. The question of brother Madog of Edeirnion's identity is best dealt with as a separate issue to that of the identity of Madog ap Gwallter. This being so, given the brother's active and lively engagement with Galfridian material it is not unlikely that he belonged to the Cistercian order.

A poem which can be connected with Madog of Edeirnion is the Latin composition of twenty-six leonine lines dealing with the achievements of the Welsh which occurs at the start of Cardiff MS 2.611 and which attributes the compilation of the work to him.⁹⁰ Given that his active interest in Galfridian history might indicate his membership of the Cistercian order, it is appropriate to consider whether there are any known Cistercians of that name. There are seven Madogs in David Williams' list of Welsh Cistercians. Two are too late, belonging to the late fourteenth century. Of the remaining five, one is attested as a master of *conversi* at Cymer in 1284, and

⁸⁷ Dumville, 'Origin of the C-Text', 322.

⁸⁸ D. M. Lloyd, 'Madog ap Gwallter', in *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig Hyd 1940*, ed. by J. E. Lloyd, R. T. Jenkins and W. L. Davies (London, 1953), pp. 571–72.

⁸⁹ N. G. Costigan, *Defining the Divinity: Medieval Perceptions in Welsh Court Poetry* (Aberystwyth, 2002), pp. 15–16, 101–2; Lloyd, 'Madog ap Gwallter', pp. 571–72.

⁹⁰ Though Hammer saw this as signifying Madog's responsibility for the work as found in the Cardiff MS, Dumville has convincingly argued that Madog was instead responsible for an earlier conflation of the Vulgate and First Variant which was then combined with a text derived from Ushaw College MS 6. *A Variant Version*, ed. Hammer, pp. 16–20; Dumville, 'Origin of the C-Text', 315–22. It should be noted that Rhian Andrews has raised some uncertainty concerning Madog's authorship of the poem. 'Gwaith Madog ap Gwallter', ed. Andrews, pp. 348–49.

another at Aberconwy in the same year. A third was abbot of Valle Crucis between 1276–84, and another Madog is associated with Valle Crucis a generation earlier, described as the abbot in 1254 and earlier, in 1234, as a prior. The earliest Madog is attested at Ystrad Marchell in 1231.⁹¹

It is clear then that the name Madog, among Cistercian monks at least, was a northern one. Although any of the five thirteenth-century Madogs would be a possible candidate, Dumville's argument that his version of Geoffrey's history was probably compiled by around 1250 would favour one of the earlier two. Geographically, the closest Cistercian house to Edeirnion is Valle Crucis, in neighbouring Iâl, and this is also the house whose patrons were the rulers of Powys Fadog, in which Edeirnion lay. Madog was a common name in the ruling dynasty. The Madog attested as prior of that abbey in 1234 and abbot in 1254 is therefore the strongest candidate. This is of course highly speculative, but the elevation of a monk with such interests to the abbacy could have spurred the historical activity undertaken at Valle Crucis still further. Regardless of whether Madog of Edeirnion is any of the Madogs attested in other sources, the case for linking him with Valle Crucis is a strong one due to the vernacular translations of Geoffrey probably undertaken there as well as Edeirnion's proximity to the abbey.

To return to the surviving Welsh manuscripts of Geoffrey's History. Although they are few, it will be apparent that they suggest some interesting conclusions regarding the dissemination and reception of his work in Wales. The possibility of the marcher Cistercian house of Margam playing an important role in the initial popularisation of the work must be appreciated, as well as the particular associations of the First Variant version with Wales. The fact that the only other religious house

⁹¹ D. H. Williams, 'Fasti Cistercienses Cambrenses', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 181–229 (206).

with which a manuscript of the First Variant is directly associated is the Cistercian house of Robertsbridge in Sussex, coupled with the relative importance of the Cistercian houses among Welsh monasteries, strongly suggests that the other Welsh First Variant manuscripts are to be linked specifically with the Welsh Cistercians, as implied by the ascription of the Exeter manuscript to Whitland.⁹² It has been suggested that the perceived moralising tendency of the First Variant version explains part of its appeal to the Cistercian order, whose libraries have been seen as narrower and more moralistic in terms of content.⁹³

The relative prominence of First Variant manuscripts among those manuscripts of Geoffrey's history with Welsh associations need not indicate that the work was composed in Wales. As discussed above, the First Variant was composed before 1155 and served as a source for Wace, who wrote in Caen. The First Variant version was therefore available in Normandy by this time, and this as well as the character of its revisions to the Vulgate text make it unlikely to have been composed in Wales. The medieval manuscripts of the First Variant are generally fairly late in date, all dating from the thirteenth to early-fourteenth centuries apart from one twelfth-century manuscript.⁹⁴ The survival of these manuscripts with Welsh connections, then, indicates its continuing appeal in Wales in this period. They indicate the interest shown in Wales in the study of Geoffrey's work as history, and a consequent interest in alternative versions. This is demonstrated by the tendency to adapt and harmonise inconsistencies between Geoffrey's account and native Welsh

⁹² Aberystwyth, NLW MS 13210 (Robertsbridge, *saec.* xiii²): Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, no. 4.

⁹³ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 197; R. Morris, 'Uther and Igerne: a Study in Uncourtly Love', *Arthurian Literature* 4 (1985), 70–92 (76).

⁹⁴ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 197.

traditions in the *Brut y Brenhinedd* translations, as well as the fact that these Welsh versions were based both on the Vulgate and First Variant versions.⁹⁵

Both the Exeter and Dublin manuscripts demonstrate the interplay between this Latin historical tradition and the vernacular, in that their content manuscripts is paralleled, though not exactly, by the creation of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the vernacular. The Welsh marginalia in the Dublin manuscript also indicate the active interplay between the Latin and vernacular texts, in that they refer to matters such as the name of the mother of Gwalchmai/Walwanus as Gwyar, derived either from an addition made in *Brut y Brenhinedd* or from the same source or impulse.⁹⁶ There is a further marginal note concerning the wall of Severus which also indicates some interaction with *Brut y Brenhinedd*, and interestingly a corresponding addition in Peniarth MS 44 seems to indicate oral transmission and amplification on this matter of material present in *Historia Brittonum*.⁹⁷ Overall there is considerable crossover between the marginal additions in the Dublin manuscript and additions made to the Welsh translations of Geoffrey. Undoubtedly this interplay between the vernacular and Latin traditions of Geoffrey's history in Wales would be clearer still if the rate of survival of Welsh Latin manuscripts was not so poor.

⁹⁵ B. F. Roberts, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* and *Brut y Brenhinedd*', in *The Arthur of the Welsh: the Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature*, ed. by R. Bromwich, A. O. H. Jarman and B. F. Roberts (Cardiff, 1991), pp. 97–116 (p. 111).

⁹⁶ *Brut Dingestow*, ed. by H. Lewis (Llandysul, 1942), pp. 171, 175, 179, 183; B. F. Roberts, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Cyfieithiad Cymraeg Cynharaf o *Historia regum Britanniae* Sieffre o Fynwy, Yngyd ag "Argraffiad" Beirniadol o Destun Peniarth 44' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1969), p. lxxxviii. Though the designation of Gwalchmai as son of Gwyar is traditional, and need not necessarily have been directly inspired by the translated versions of Geoffrey's history, in this context it seems likely that the annotator would have been aware of the vernacular translations. *First Variant*, ed. Wright, p. lxxxii.

⁹⁷ B. F. Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', in *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol (Darlithau Dewi Sant)*, ed. by G. Bowen (Llandysul, 1974), pp. 274–301 (pp. 291–92).

THE RECEPTION OF GEOFFREY'S HISTORY IN WALES:

2. OTHER EVIDENCE

Evidence for the initial dissemination and reception of Geoffrey's history in Wales cannot therefore rely solely on the manuscript evidence, unsurprising given the poor rate of survival of Latin manuscripts from Wales in comparison to vernacular manuscripts. Turning to another manifestation of the Latin literary tradition in Wales, the influence of Geoffrey is apparent in the late twelfth-century writings of Giraldus Cambrensis, Gerald of Wales. Gerald's knowledge of Geoffrey may have more to do with his Norman background than his Welsh, the prophecies of Merlin in particular being popular at court of Henry II, although the Welsh background of this material was apparent to Gerald from his own experiences, particularly his discovery of a book of prophecies attributed to Myrddin in Nefyn.⁹⁸ Gerald's interest in the work may have contributed to the popularisation of Geoffrey in Wales, and Gerald's acquaintance with churchmen across Wales, and particularly with the chapter of St David's and the monks of Strata Florida, may well be significant. It has been suggested that Gerald's use of 'Cambrian' terminology may derive from Geoffrey, since *Cambria* as a Latinisation of Welsh *Cymry/Cymru* seems to originate with Geoffrey. The popularity of this terminology in texts associated with St David's would seem to indicate the popularity of Geoffrey's history at St David's by the later twelfth century. Gerald's use of this Cambrian terminology may be partially dependent on his links with St David's, and the popularity of Galfridian history in Deheubarth would therefore predate Gerald.⁹⁹ It is clear that Geoffrey's popularity in Wales grew during Gerald's lifetime.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ J. Crick, 'Geoffrey and the Prophetic Tradition', in *The Arthur of Medieval Latin Literature: the Development and Dissemination of the Arthurian Legend in Medieval Latin*, ed. by S. Echard (Cardiff, 2011); *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI., 124 (*Itinerarium Kambriæ*, II. 6).

⁹⁹ H. Pryce, 'British or Welsh? National Identity in Twelfth Century Wales', *English Historical Review*

Turning to vernacular evidence, court poetry might be thought to offer instructive evidence on the spread of awareness of the work, but, as discussed in chapter two, Geoffrey himself drew on Welsh traditions in writing his history. This makes it difficult to tell whether a reference to a character mentioned in *De gestis Britonum* is due to knowledge of this work or is indebted to native poetic tradition uninfluenced by Geoffrey.¹⁰¹ This difficulty is compounded by the fact that our record of the poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd* begins at around the same time as Geoffrey completed his work, meaning that, for the purposes of comparison, very little of the material can be considered as predating Geoffrey in the strict sense.¹⁰²

In the case of Cynddelw, active in the later twelfth century and the most productive of the *Gogynfeirdd*, his mentions of Cai and Gwalchmai could be seen as referring to the characters in their Welsh guise, and it might be thought unlikely that Cynddelw would embrace the new, Galfridian history given his conservative, nativist bent. He is however a poet of wide reading, using classical references to Echdor/Hector, Ercwlff/Hercules, Echel/Achilles, Alecsander and Wl Cesar/Julius Caesar.¹⁰³ It is difficult to determine in these cases the extent to which the Trojan references are dependent on the popularisation of the myth of the Trojan descent of

116 (2001), pp. 797–98.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of Gerald's use of Galfridian material, see J. Crick, 'The British Past and the Welsh Future: Gerald of Wales, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Arthur of Britain', *Celtica* 23 (1999), 60–75.

¹⁰¹ See above, pp. 98–99.

¹⁰² Though unattributed poems to Hywel ap Goronwy and Cuhelyn Fardd survive from the first decades of the twelfth century, the first of the poets of the princes was Meilyr Brydydd, at least in the eyes of the compiler of the Hendregadredd manuscript which shapes our understanding of the genre. His earliest composition is the elegy to Gruffudd ap Cynan, who died in 1137. Though Geoffrey's history is unlikely to have had such an immediate effect as to make itself felt in the early twelfth-century poetry to any great degree, the fact that Meilyr's poetry contains references to characters also mentioned in Geoffrey's work, such as Medrawd and Urien, indicates the difficulty of determining where references to such figures demonstrate Geoffrey's influence. However the reference to Medrawd in a positive light in Meilyr's poetry indicates that Geoffrey's Modredus had yet to destroy his reputation. *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, ed. by J. E. Caerwyn Williams with P. Lynch and R. G. Gruffydd, *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion* 1 (Cardiff, 1994), pp. 71, 86.

¹⁰³ R. Bromwich, 'Cyfeiriadau Traddodiadol a Chwedlonol y Gogynfeirdd', in *Beirdd a Thywysogion: Barddoniaeth Llys yng Nghymru, yr Iwerddon a'r Alban*, ed. by M. E. Owen and B. F. Roberts, pp. 202–218 (p. 203).

the Welsh by Geoffrey or whether they are more traditional. The *Llyfr Taliesin* poem to Ercwl/Hercules might support an argument for the latter, as does the fact that neither Cynddelw nor any twelfth century poet names Brutus as the forefather of the Welsh, although Aeneas is mentioned as such. In fact most references in the twelfth century poetry could equally be derived from *Historia Brittonum* as from Geoffrey's history.¹⁰⁴

Despite the fact that the evidence for knowledge of Latin texts among twelfth-century poets is by no means negligible, in general the influence of Galfridian material only becomes unambiguously apparent after 1200, that is after the probable date of the work's initial translation into Welsh.¹⁰⁵ This need not imply that the poets were solely dependent on these translations, and both the translation and the references may both indicate a growing acceptance of the history. Nevertheless it is undeniable that translating *De gestis Britonum* into Welsh made it more accessible to the native learned classes.

It is with these translations of Geoffrey that we again encounter firmer evidence for the role of the Cistercian order in the dissemination and popularisation of Galfridian material in Wales. Three translations of *De gestis Britonum* into Welsh were undertaken in the course of the thirteenth century. These are the Peniarth 44 version, the Llansteffan 1 version, and *Brut Dingestow*.¹⁰⁶ As discussed in the first chapter, the first two of these are likely to be the earliest, and are connected insofar as both of the earliest manuscripts of these versions are in the same hand. Both these

¹⁰⁴ Bromwich, 'Cyfeiriadau Traddodiadol', pp. 203–4. For the idea that many of the *Llyfr Taliesin* poems are of twelfth or early thirteenth-century date, see *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. by M. Haycock (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 21–36, 452–58.

¹⁰⁵ Bromwich, 'Cyfeiriadau Traddodiadol', pp. 204, 207.

¹⁰⁶ Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', pp. 288–93; *idem*, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Cyfieithiad', p. clxvii–clxix.

manuscripts may derive from Valle Crucis.¹⁰⁷ It may therefore be that the translations themselves were also undertaken at Valle Crucis, although by different translators.

Peniarth 44 abbreviates the text increasingly as he goes along, whereas Llansteffan 1 is more of a verbatim translation.¹⁰⁸

They are also based on different versions of the Latin text, with Llansteffan 1 showing clear signs of being based on a conflation of the Vulgate and First Variant versions of *De gestis Britonum*. His version also contained an interpolation concerning queen Seaxburh which occurs in a number of manuscripts of *De gestis Britonum*, but in none of those with Welsh connections.¹⁰⁹ His version was therefore a conflation comparable to that of Cardiff MS 2.611 but was not the same text, although I am unaware of any studies comparing the two.¹¹⁰ Their dependence on different versions of Geoffrey's history might go some way towards explaining why two translations were undertaken at the same monastery, although it must be emphasised that the possible origin of the earliest manuscripts there is the only reason for supposing this to have been the case.

Turning to the third thirteenth-century translation, *Brut Dingestow*, this is thought to be slightly later than the other two since it borrows in part from the Llansteffan 1 version.¹¹¹ It has been seen as a Gwynedd production, and annotations in a fifteenth-century hand in the earliest manuscript (Aberystwyth, NLW MS 5266B) indicate that it was collated with a version of the prophecies of Merlin very close to that in Cotton Cleopatra B.v, a Valle Crucis manuscript. This, combined with its

¹⁰⁷ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 189–92.

¹⁰⁸ Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', pp. 292–93.

¹⁰⁹ *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS. 1 Version*, ed. by B. F. Roberts (Dublin, 1971), pp. xxxiv–xxxvi.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, 'Astudiaeth Destunol o'r Tri Cyfieithiad', p. clxxxiv.

¹¹¹ B. F. Roberts, 'Brut y Brenhinedd', in *Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. Koch (5 vols., Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), I., 298–99; *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS 1*, ed. Roberts, p. xxxvi.

partial dependence on Llansteffan 1, might be taken as an indication that this translation was also undertaken at Valle Crucis. Caution should be exercised here, however, since the ascription of the Llansteffan 1 translation to Valle Crucis is by no means certain. Undertaking three translations of Geoffrey's history at the same monastery between around 1200 and 1250 might be thought of as an unnecessary reduplication of labour, but the signs that the Dingestow translator had access to the Llansteffan 1 version shows that he knew there was another translation available. We should be careful not to overstate the Valle Crucis connections of these translations, as the interconnected nature of Cistercian monasteries makes it likely that what we might see as concentration on a single monastery is a partial survival of a network of translation and transmission. It was argued in the second chapter that, although care should be taken in allowing the ascription of manuscripts to Valle Crucis to gain a momentum of its own and other centres in north-east Wales could have formed part of the same network, there are reasons to see Valle Crucis as a monastery uniquely involved in Welsh historical writing.

Regardless of this, these translations, in their differences in attitude and their dependence on different versions, attest to the lively interest in Geoffrey at their centres of production. Their links to Cistercian houses indicate the role of the order's monasteries in this process of understanding, interpreting and adopting Geoffrey as part of the national narrative. This active interest is particularly well illustrated by annotation in the Dublin manuscript where care is taken to harmonise the history with existing tradition. In the vernacular accounts, this critical engagement is also generally indicated by a concern to reconcile Geoffrey with native tradition when he seems to be at odds. This is apparent from numerous epithets given to Geoffrey's characters, but is clearest in the addition of the originally independent story of Lludd

and Llefelys to the point in the narrative where Geoffrey's introduces his King Lud.¹¹² Of the three thirteenth-century translations, this appears only in Llansteffan 1, but its inclusion in every subsequent translation further indicates the interconnected nature of the vernacular translations.¹¹³ A more critical addition occurs in the Dingestow version where, after Geoffrey's inconclusive report of Arthur's end, the comment follows *ny dyweit y llyuyr amdanav a uo diheuach na hyspyssach na hynny*.¹¹⁴

The Welsh versions of Geoffrey's history were not the only historical texts translated during this period. Another twelfth-century historical work, the biography of Gruffudd ap Cynan, exists both in a Latin version and in a Middle Welsh translation.¹¹⁵ Its editor has argued that the original Latin text is likely to have been composed around 1137×1148, and although there has been little discussion of the date of the Middle Welsh translation since the appearance of this edition, Gwynedd in the early thirteenth century is a likely place of translation.¹¹⁶ Other historical texts translated into Welsh in the thirteenth century include *Cronicl Turpin* and *Ystoria Bown o Hamtwn*. The first of these, a translation from the Latin Pseudo-Turpin chronicle which was a central text of the Charlemagne cycle of tales, is known to have been translated around 1265×1282 by a certain Madog ap Selyf for Gruffudd ap Maredudd ab Owain, a descendant of the Lord Rhys of Deheubarth who was involved

¹¹² *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, ed. by B. F. Roberts, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 7 (Dublin, 1975).

¹¹³ *Brut y Brenhinedd Llanstephan MS I*, ed. Roberts, p. xxxiv; 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', pp. 290–92.

¹¹⁴ 'the book says nothing further or clearer about him than that', *Brut Dingestow*, ed. Lewis, p. 185; Roberts, 'Testunau Hanes Cymraeg Canol', p. 290.

¹¹⁵ The Middle Welsh version has been edited as *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, ed. by D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1977). Paul Russel's justification for seeing a late sixteenth-century manuscript as a late copy of the medieval Latin life of Gruffudd ap Cynan which predated the Middle Welsh translation is given in his edition, *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: the Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff, 2005).

¹¹⁶ The Latin biography was probably written at St David's, and the greater focus of the Welsh version on Gwynedd is a strong argument for composition there. In terms of date, Gwynedd under Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in the early thirteenth century can be considered an appropriate context for such a translation, supported by the fact that Geoffrey's history was being translated at the same time. The earliest (fragmentary) manuscript of the Middle Welsh version dates to the second half of the thirteenth century. *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, ed. Russell, pp. 3, 33–34, 43–49

in the uprising of March 1282. The interest taken by the native elite in translated historical texts is unambiguous in this case.¹¹⁷ The second of these was a translation from the Anglo-Norman French *Geste de Boeve de Haumtone* rather than from Latin, and was probably translated in the mid-thirteenth century.¹¹⁸ These works indicate that there was an appetite for translated historical material in thirteenth-century Wales beyond *Brut y Brenhinedd*, though the Galfridian translations were certainly the most popular works.

These thirteenth-century translations of Geoffrey's history were undertaken at a time when, as discussed above, Cistercian houses were actively involved in the political undertakings of their native patrons. Translation into the vernacular implies an intended audience beyond the choir monks who would have undertaken them, and an audience among the secular nobility is likely, as with *Cronicl Turpin*.¹¹⁹ Other possibilities can be countenanced, and a willingness among the Welsh monks themselves to see the history of the Britons, thought to have been translated from *Britannici sermonis*, translated back into their native language would be natural enough. Interest from the monastery's patrons can however be assumed, and it is probable that, alongside the work of their court poets, the historical awareness of the leaders of the struggle to maintain Welsh political independence was partially formed by the translation undertaken at the monasteries they patronised.

This only once becomes apparent in the historical record, and in the last days of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. The reply of the Welsh to Archbishop Pecham's peace proposals in 1282 justifies Llywelyn's position, and that of Wales in relation to the

¹¹⁷ A translation of *Credo Athanasius Sant* was also undertaken for Gruffudd's sister, Efa, by a certain brother Gruffudd Bola. S. J. Williams, 'Rhai Cyfieithiadau', in *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol (Darlithau Dewi Sant)*, ed. by Geraint Bowen (Llandysul, 1974), pp. 303–11 (pp. 303–5).

¹¹⁸ *Selections from Ystoria Bown o Hamtwn*, ed. by E. Poppe and R. Reck (Cardiff, 2009), p. xiii.

¹¹⁹ Literacy in Latin was a requirement for choir monks, though forbidden for the lay brothers. J. Burton and J. Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 151–52.

English king, with reference to the division of Britain between Locrinus, Camber and Albanactus after the death of Brutus in Geoffrey's history, and maintains that Snowdonia had belonged to the prince of Wales since the time of Brutus.¹²⁰ Though this is the only time Galfridian material is used to justify the prince's political activities, his appeal to this historical background in a time of crisis is indicative of how firm a part of the Welsh historical consciousness this narrative had become. Similarly, Archbishop Pecham's acceptance of the historicity of these claims is an indication of its broader acceptance.¹²¹ It was framed as the reply of the Welsh community, including the prince and his council, the prince having provided his own personal response separately which contained no reference to Brutus or Camber. It may be that the nature of the two letters made the historical references more appropriate to the reply of the Welsh in general, but it is arguable that this is evidence that the royal counsellors better represented the audience for the vernacular translations than did the prince himself.¹²² It may have been this, or perhaps a general awareness of an interest in the Galfridian past among Llywelyn's counsellors, that is behind claims made in English chronicles that Llywelyn's fellow countrymen spurred him on with Merlin's prophecies and predictions that he would wear the diadem of Brutus.¹²³

¹²⁰ *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 431; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 542–45; *idem*, *Yr Ymwybod â Hanes yng Nghymru yn yr Oesoedd Canol: Darlith Agoriadol* (Aberystwyth, 1989), pp. 14–15.

¹²¹ Smith, *Yr Ymwybod â Hanes*, p. 1.

¹²² Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 326, where the influence of the men in attendance on the prince is emphasised.

¹²³ *Flores Historiarum*, ed. by H. R. Luard (3 vols., London, 1890), III., 57; 'Annales Londonienses', in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by W. Stubbs (2 vols., London, 1882–1883), I., 90.

CHRONICLE WRITING

Although not written in Wales, Geoffrey of Monmouth's work was based on Welsh sources, and can be seen as a development of a tradition of insular pseudo-history of which the closest Welsh example is *Historia Brittonum*. The question of the nature of Geoffrey's sources is a vexed one, though he undoubtedly made use of Gildas, Bede, and some version of *Historia Brittonum*, and may have based the structure of much of his narrative on a legendary king-list.¹²⁴ He was undoubtedly writing in an established Welsh tradition, and in his influence on Welsh historical writing he should not be seen as an entirely external force.¹²⁵ Whether this tradition of Welsh pseudo-history was an active one at the time of Geoffrey's writing is an open question, but if it was nothing now survives of it. It has been suggested that Geoffrey's work, impressive in both scale and authority and pan-European in its popularity, was altogether too influential and dominant in this field, preventing any further development of the tradition of Cambro-Latin pseudo-history exemplified by the *Historia Brittonum*.¹²⁶ Following this line of thought, the copying, editing and translation of his work discussed above could be seen as indicative not of intellectual ferment but of an almost obsessive response to a narrative which derived its authority from its acceptance by the intrusive Anglo-Norman elite as much as its development of earlier Welsh historical trends.

Regardless of this, it has been seen in previous chapters how the creation of a Welsh Historical Continuum did indeed see a development of Geoffrey's narrative, not by recasting the work itself but by expanding it, joining it to a narrative of the

¹²⁴ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. lvii–lviii; N. Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas', *Arthurian Literature* 2 (1982), 1–40; N. Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Bede', *Arthurian Literature* 6 (1986), 27–59; for the king-list see M. Miller, 'Geoffrey's Early Royal Synchronisms', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 28 (1979), 373–89. The evidence for the existence of a pre-Geoffrey text comparable to *De gestis Britonum* in Gaimar's epilogue has been discussed above, pp. 129–31; I. Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 323–43.

¹²⁵ Most recently, Karen Jankulak has emphasised this aspect of Geoffrey's writing. *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Cardiff, 2010).

¹²⁶ Smith, *Yr Ymwybod â Hanes*, p. 4.

Trojan war but also to chronicle material of Welsh origin. The role of the Cistercian order in the transmission and composition of these chronicles is comparable to their Galfridian activity, but the chronicles illustrate a direct link between the Cistercian houses and earlier ecclesiastical centres of Cambro-Latin historical writing. The chronicles discussed below have been described in some detail in chapter four, and so the discussion here will open with the pre-Cistercian origins of chronicle writing in Wales.

The Welsh Latin chronicles sometimes known collectively as *Annales Cambriae*, as well as the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*, are all based in their early sections on a chronicle which was kept, probably from around the late eighth century, at St David's. This chronicle came to contain material derived from Gwynedd, North Britain and Ireland, and so the St David's chronicle, though brief, is evidence of relatively wide-ranging connections.¹²⁷ The chronicle generally referred to as the A-text of *Annales Cambriae* was derived from this St David's chronicle, and was contained in a collection of historical and genealogical texts put together in Deheubarth during the reign of Owain ap Hywel Dda in the second half of the tenth century.¹²⁸ It survives in a manuscript of southern English or continental origin which represents a foreign petrification of the work, and so the relevance of this particular chronicle to the present study is limited.¹²⁹

Of more interest are the PRO and Cottonian chronicles, the B and C texts respectively. The latter of these, as already discussed, remained at St David's throughout its life. The textual history of the former, the PRO chronicle, is an

¹²⁷ K. Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, *Studies in Celtic History* 2 (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 86–88, 99–100; *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel*, ed. by D. N. Dumville, *Basic Texts for Brittonic History* 1 (Cambridge, 2002), pp. ix–x.

¹²⁸ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 67–73, 86–87.

¹²⁹ *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. vii–viii.

illuminating illustration of the way chronicle material was transmitted from existing ecclesiastical institutions to the new Cistercian houses. Kathleen Hughes suggested that the section of the chronicle from 1189 to 1230 contained material originating at Whitland, but with material deriving from St David's up to 1202.¹³⁰ Although David Stephenson has argued that there is little reason to connect the entries in this period with any Welsh Cistercian house, he sees the chronicle as containing material from Whitland by the mid-thirteenth century.¹³¹

It seems that the PRO chronicle is the product of editing and assembling material from Strata Florida, Cwm Hir and Whitland which was then added to material deriving from St David's. The means by which material was transmitted between Strata Florida, Cwm Hir, and Whitland is clear from their connections as mother and daughter houses.¹³² Is it more likely that the St David's material reached these Cistercian houses through Whitland or Strata Florida? The suggestion that the latter received the St David's chronicle through the monks' seizure of Gerald of Wales' books in 1202 is interesting but unlikely.¹³³ In favour of Whitland, the association between that monastery and St David's has been noted above, with Bishop Bernard being instrumental in the founding of the house, and this connection could have been important in the transmission of St David's chronicle material to Whitland. In the later twelfth century, Whitland, Strata Florida and St David's were connected by their ties with the Lord Rhys.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 79–80.

¹³¹ D. Stephenson, 'The Chronicler of Cwm-Hir Abbey, 1257–63: the Construction of a Welsh Chronicle', in *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages*, ed. by R. A. Griffiths and P. R. Schofield (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 29–45 (p. 32).

¹³² Stephenson, 'The chronicler of Cwm-hir abbey', p. 34.

¹³³ J. Harrison, 'A Note on Gerald of Wales and *Annales Cambriae*', *Welsh History Review* 17 (1994), 252–55. Discussed by D. Stephenson, 'Gerald of Wales and *Annales Cambriae*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 60 (2010), 23–37.

¹³⁴ H. Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', in *Yr Arglwydd Rhys*, ed. by N. A. Jones and H. Pryce (Cardiff, 1996), pp. 145–77 (pp. 163–69).

Material eventually derived from St David's came to be included in a separate chronicle known to have been kept at Strata Florida, now surviving as the three versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*. Whereas the PRO chronicle may indicate the transmission of material to Cistercian houses of the family of Whitland directly from St David's, it has been seen that *Brut y Tywysogion* is evidence that Strata Florida received material from Llanbadarn Fawr. It has previously been assumed that the inclusion of Llanbadarn material, together with the close connection between Llanbadarn and St David's in the second half of the eleventh century, indicates that the earlier, St David's-derived parts of the chronicle were also acquired through Llanbadarn.¹³⁵ This question has not received detailed attention in this study, although it has been argued that a substantial portion of the *Brut* for the early twelfth century faithfully represents a historical text composed at Llanbadarn in the 1120s. David Stephenson's study of the *Brut* account for the mid-twelfth century has revealed that the distinctive characteristics of this section which seem to suggest a Llanbadarn origin come to an end around 1170.¹³⁶ If this date also indicates the beginning of material of Strata Florida origin in the *Brut* it suggests the assumption of the responsibility of historical record-keeping by Strata Florida remarkably soon after its foundation in 1164.

Indeed, *Brut y Tywysogion* does seem to suggest that Strata Florida began keeping annalistic records early in its history, and the c.1170 termination point of the features of the *Brut* which suggest a Llanbadarn origin would also suggest that it was soon after this date that Strata Florida acquired the Llanbadarn chronicle material which found its way into *Brut y Tywysogion*. The first mention of Strata Florida is at

¹³⁵ J. E. Lloyd, *The Welsh Chronicles: the Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture* (London, 1928), pp. 17–18; *BT P20 Tr.*, p. xli.

¹³⁶ D. Stephenson, 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts of the Mid-Twelfth Century', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 56 (2008), 45–57 (51–57).

its foundation, and there are numerous mentions in subsequent years, including the completion of the new church, the death of its abbot, and the burial of several members of the Deheubarth dynasty there.¹³⁷ Such evidence does not necessarily show that a chronicle was taken from Llanbadarn around 1170 and immediately continued at Strata Florida. The previous chapter has shown that considerable caution must be exercised in generalising about *Brut y Tywysogion*'s process of composition. The evidence does, however, indicate two things: that the Llanbadarn chronicle acquired by Strata Florida came to a close around 1170; and that the keeping of a chronicle at Strata Florida began soon after its foundation. It does not necessarily indicate that chronicle-keeping at Llanbadarn came to a close around 1170, since this date could simply indicate the point at which Strata Florida monks were searching for historical material to bolster the incipient chronicle-keeping at their house. It might be thought, however, that the ability of Strata Florida monks to acquire chronicle material from Llanbadarn meant that they would continue to do so, and therefore the end of chronicle-keeping at Llanbadarn would coincide with its beginning at Strata Florida. It has been noted that the surviving *clas* churches of Wales such as Llanbadarn may have been centres at which postulants at Welsh Cistercian houses received the education necessary for their reception as choir monks.¹³⁸ A continued link between Llanbadarn and Strata Florida is implied in 1210, when Matilda de Breos received communion and confession at the former before she took the Cistercian habit and was eventually buried at the latter.¹³⁹

This would be a striking indication of the assumption by the new Cistercian houses of the cultural duties of the older, native monasteries. The practicalities of this

¹³⁷ Up to 1201, the monastery is mentioned in 1165, 1175, 1185, 1186, 1191, and 1201. *BT P20*, pp. 112, 127, 130, 133, 146–147.

¹³⁸ Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 140–41.

¹³⁹ *BT P20*, p. 154.

process are obscure, and as just seen can usually only be teased out from the probable origin of the content of chronicles. With regard to Gwynedd, the possibility that *Oes Gwrtheyrn* was derived from a chronicle independently derived from the early medieval source of some of the entries in *Annales Cambriae* and *Historia Brittonum* has been discussed in the previous chapter, and if so this was no doubt acquired through an older monastic centre such as Clynnog Fawr or Bangor. In the case of Valle Crucis, the pictures in the margins of London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.iii, the earliest version of the Iorwerth redaction of the Welsh laws, which probably originates at that monastery, may indicate the inheritance of earlier scribal practices since they seem to be derived from evangelist symbols characteristic of early Insular gospel books.¹⁴⁰ With regard to relationships with older monasteries, there are examples where the older monastery was swallowed entirely by the newer. Such is the case with Talylychau, the Lord Rhys' own Premonstratentian foundation, which was given the ancient church of Llandeilo with its lands and chapels.¹⁴¹ The significance of Llandeilo is evinced as early as the ninth century, although its relative status by the twelfth can only be guessed at.¹⁴² In the transmission of annalistic activity from an older monastery to a newer, Cistercian, house, the relationship between Llanbadarn and Strata Florida is unique in the Welsh evidence. The process is certainly somewhat different to that which saw St David's annals incorporated with Cistercian annals to produce the PRO chronicle, since St David's was the episcopal seat for the diocese of all the monasteries involved in this chronicle apart from Neath, and chronicle-keeping continued at St David's itself.

¹⁴⁰ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 184.

¹⁴¹ Pryce, 'Yr Eglwys yn Oes yr Arglwydd Rhys', p. 161; W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of the Abbies and Other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales* (6 vols., London, 1817–1830), iv., 162.

¹⁴² T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 246–47, 590–91.

There is evidence for the transmission of non-chronicle material from older to newer monastic establishments. Such would seem to be the case with the *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Aberystwyth, NLW MS Peniarth 1), probably produced by a member of the Augustinian priory of St John the Evangelist and St Teulyddog in Carmarthen around 1250, which contains material that may be derived from other monasteries in Deheubarth.¹⁴³ The numerous poems and prose tales which are first attested in manuscripts probably produced in a Cistercian milieu, such as *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (Peniarth MSS 4 and 5), may also have been transmitted from earlier monastic institutions.¹⁴⁴ The suggestion that Clynnog Fawr was instrumental in the shaping of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, for example, would mean that material from Clynnog was available to scribes involved with Strata Florida by the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless the case of Llanbadarn/Strata Florida is unique in Wales as an example of the transmission of chronicle material from an older monastery of declining importance to a new foundation where the chronicle was kept up to date.

Despite the transmission of its source materials from one religious house to another, the narrative of *Brut y Tywysogion* is strikingly secular in much of its content. Although details such as the death of abbots of Strata Florida are relatively frequent, they are not consistently related nor do they form a central part of the chronicle's narrative. The chronicle was a record of political events in native Wales, not the chronicle of the monastic house itself. Indeed, a reference in the *Brut* itself to *anales y vanachloc* indicates that a separate chronicle, a record of the history of the monastic

¹⁴³ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 70–72.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Huws is, however, careful to emphasise that the White Book was not necessarily produced at the Strata Florida scriptorium, despite the monastery's 'vital role'. *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 252–54.

¹⁴⁵ P. Sims-Williams, 'Clas Beuno and the Four Branches of the Mabinogi', in *150 Jahre Mabinogion! Deutsch-Walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, ed. by B. Maier, S. Zimmer and C. Batke (Tübingen, 2001), pp. 111–27.

community, existed and was available to the compiler of Latin BT.¹⁴⁶ The keeping of chronicles at monasteries in general seems to have been particularly associated with the position of cantor, whose official role included displaying the year of the Incarnation at Easter, with a consequent interest in chronology. At Cîteaux, the cantor was responsible for keeping an official list of Cistercian houses with dates of foundation.¹⁴⁷ Whether responsibility for the chronicle behind *Brut y Tywysogion*, on the one hand, and the *Annales* of Strata Florida, on the other, would have lain with different men is of course unknown.

In fact, the secular focus of the chronicle contrasts with the way Cistercian historical writing has been characterised, particularly by John Taylor. He sees Cistercian chronicles as lacking a degree of engagement with contemporary affairs which reflected the monasteries' physical and social isolation.¹⁴⁸ Julian Harrison argues that some of these chronicles so characterised by Taylor belong to a different genre, 'intended strictly for internal consumption and having no pretension to literary merit'.¹⁴⁹ While the *anales* of Strata Florida may have belonged to this genre, *Brut y Tywysogion* does not. It has been argued in a previous chapter that the literary elaborations of some of its twelfth-century sections were inherited from earlier chronicles, but comparable features are also a characteristic of the thirteenth century. Whilst the sparseness of some Cistercian chronicles indicate the social isolation of their houses, *Brut y Tywysogion* is testament to the active engagement of the order in the political life of Wales. The primarily secular political focus of the chronicles surviving from Cistercian houses makes it possible to connect the production of this

¹⁴⁶ It is clear that these annals included material relating to the community's financial dealings, giving the details of the settlement of a debt owed to King Henry III. *BT P20*, p. 203.

¹⁴⁷ J. Harrison, 'Cistercian Chronicling in the British Isles', in *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey: a Stratigraphic Edition, I: Introduction and Facsimile*, ed. by D. Broun and J. Harrison (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 13–28 (pp. 19–20).

¹⁴⁸ *The Kirkstall Abbey Chronicle*, ed. by J. Taylor, Thoresby Society 42 (Leeds, 1952), p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Harrison, 'Cistercian Chronicling in the British Isles', p. 18.

historical writing with the role they played in the political activities of the native princes.

Indeed, the chronicle narratives are the most persuasive demonstration of the link between the native Welsh political struggle and the Cistercian abbeys. Many passages of *Brut y Tywysogion* and the PRO chronicle provide evidence for the enthusiasm of monastic chroniclers for the political activities of their patrons, for instance the *Brut y Tywysogion* entry for 1217, or the PRO chronicle's narration of the years 1256–1263.¹⁵⁰ It is pertinent to ask whether the primary focus of the annalistic writing is on the patron of the monastery itself or more generally on the struggle between the Welsh and the English, but this is a difficult issue. On the one hand it seems that the Strata Florida chronicler's enthusiasm for the activities of Llywelyn Fawr owes a great deal to Llywelyn's support for Rhys Ieuanc and Owain, sons of Gruffudd ap Rhys who were supported by Strata Florida in the years after the death of their father, the Lord Rhys' designated heir.¹⁵¹ The preference shown for Llywelyn over, say, Gwenwynwyn could be attributed to his links with the monastery's favoured patrons, rather than any wider political concern. On the other hand, the sharing of chronicle material between houses, a process which is imperfectly understood but which has been somewhat illuminated by the work of Kathleen Hughes, David Stephenson and by the study of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* in a previous chapter, would be conducive to the articulation of support for the cause of the Welsh in general, given the monasteries' links across native Wales, rather than a narrower support for one particular dynasty or kingdom. Support for Gwynedd in many cases

¹⁵⁰ *BT P20*, pp. 173–79; *Annales Cambriæ*, ed. by J. Williams ab Ithel (London, 1860), pp. 90–102; *PRO*, 1277 = 1256–1284 = 1263.

¹⁵¹ J. B. Smith, 'Dynastic Succession in Medieval Wales', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 33 (1986), 199–232 (212–13). Strata Florida was in the territory ruled by Rhys Ieuanc and Owain after the partition of 1216. R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), p. 228.

indicates the ties of the order in general rather than merely one abbey's support for the branch of a dynasty supported by its princes.

In this sense the entry for 1198, Gwenwynwyn's failure at Painscastle which has been interpreted as a defining moment which lost him supremacy over native Wales, is instructive.¹⁵² The report of the slaughter of the Welsh which followed shows no particular sympathy to either side, although the description of the English returning home joyfully, *wedy eu kywaethogi o yspeil y Kymry*, 'enriched with the spoils of the Welsh', has a bitter feel to it. Gwenwynwyn's intentions are, however, sympathetically depicted, indicating the chronicler's appreciation of Gwenwynwyn's cause despite his eventual failure.¹⁵³ Similarly, the re-establishment of Mortimer control over Maelienydd did not see a change in the political sympathies of the PRO chronicle, merely its cessation.¹⁵⁴ It was not simply Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's authority over the area which spurred the chronicler to write but also his representation of causes supported by the abbey's monks.

This process of the sharing of chronicles often makes it difficult to determine whether a lacuna in a chronicle is the result of deliberate abridgement or lack of access to source material. This has already been seen in the discussion of *Cronica de Wallia* and *Brut y Tywysogion*, where the presence of unique material in the *Brut* could either be down to the compiler's access to different sources or to rejection of material on the part of the compiler of *Cronica de Wallia*. *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* seems to be a survivor of a process whereby unique annals available at Aberconwy were intended to be included in another chronicle, and as such is important evidence for the process of sharing annals. As with the acquisition of liturgical books, in the case of

¹⁵² Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 585–87; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, pp. 227–30.

¹⁵³ *BT P20*, pp. 143–44. The same can be said for the account of the battle in *Cronica de Wallia*. CW, 27–44 (31)

¹⁵⁴ Stephenson, 'Chronicler of Cwm-Hir', p. 38.

chronicle writing the daughter-house would be initially dependent on material acquired from the mother.¹⁵⁵ It may be that the dependence of a new foundation on annalistic material provided by mother- and sister-houses would have the effect of creating a hierarchy of chronicles: Aberconwy's dependence on a version of the St David's chronicle, probably derived from Strata Florida or possibly Whitland, would be due to its dependence on those senior houses rather than the lack of earlier annalistic material in Gwynedd. Practically, it would have made sense for Aberconwy to acquire such materials from its mother house rather than any earlier institutions in Gwynedd with which it had no links, many of which were in any case being re-founded as Augustinian houses.¹⁵⁶ If *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is dependent St David's-derived annals, this could either be through the transmission of St David's annals to Whitland after around 1202 or from Strata Florida's earlier acquisition of Llanbadarn material, but it may be that it is dependent on related Venedotian material.¹⁵⁷ The prominence of St David's annals in Welsh historiography does not necessarily mean that such material was not available elsewhere, merely that the network of Welsh Cistercian houses continued to depend on the annals acquired by the senior abbeys.

THE COMBINATION OF THE GALFRIDIAN AND ANNALISTIC TRADITIONS

It was in the thirteenth century, when the sharing and updating of monastic chronicles was still ongoing, that the first steps were taken to combine this contemporary

¹⁵⁵ J. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069–1215* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 281–82.

¹⁵⁶ K. Stöber and D. Austin, 'Culdees to Canons: the Augustinian Houses of North Wales', in *Monastic Wales: New Approaches*, ed. by J. Burton and K. Stöber (Cardiff, 2013), pp. 39–54.

¹⁵⁷ See above, pp. 303–6.

historical record with the Galfridian history which was being accepted as a defining and authoritative account of the Welsh past. The attachment of Galfridian material to Welsh Latin annals is apparent in both the Cottonian and PRO chronicles. Caroline Brett's discussion of the prologues to these chronicles, which both contain Isidorean and Galfridian material, has established that both were derived from a world-history kept at St David's but joined to the chronicles themselves independently, probably at different centres.¹⁵⁸ The shared source contained a framework of the six ages of the world taken from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* which had already been combined with notes of events taken from Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum*. This work was attached to the Cottonian chronicle (C), kept at St David's, probably after 1202 and before the chronicle's last annal in 1288.¹⁵⁹ In the case of the PRO chronicle, the two elements were probably also joined after 1202, and may therefore have been undertaken at one of the Welsh Cistercian houses. The PRO chronicle has far less Galfridian material than the Cottonian chronicle and uses Bede's *De Temporibus* as the main source between the first and the fifth centuries. The Cottonian chronicle, on the other hand, added more material from Geoffrey to their shared source and also added further Galfridian detail to events of the sixth and seventh centuries such as the battle of Badon, the death of Maelgwn Gwynedd and the wars of Cadwallon of Gwynedd.¹⁶⁰

The presence of Galfridian material in their common source means that Geoffrey was being used as a source for world-history at St David's by 1202. The joining of this material to the chronicles was undertaken at different centres, and is indicative of a broader impulse rather than the occurrence of one example which

¹⁵⁸ C. Brett, 'The Prefaces of Two Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 35 (1988), 63–73.

¹⁵⁹ Brett, 'The Prefaces', 72–73.

¹⁶⁰ Brett, 'The Prefaces', 70, 72.

inspired others. A grander example of such an impulse is the Exeter manuscript, containing work which postdates the Edwardian conquest but with much of it probably completed before, which has been called 'a composite account of universal history whose cumulative effect is to locate the British present in human history and ultimately to place that history within the cosmos'.¹⁶¹

It is a composite work where a wide range of genealogical texts and chronicles, as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, were combined with an older manuscript containing Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. Julia Crick's recent analysis has emphasised the manuscript's status as the product of competing historiographical ideologies around the time of the conquest. She believes that the earliest part of the manuscript underwent a major expansion, with the addition of most of the historical and genealogical material in or after 1266. The final texts were copied after Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's death in 1282, and the work therefore spanned the conquest.¹⁶² She argues that the book articulates the ideology of a native historiography, emphasising the descent of Llywelyn from Brutus and from Adam and the entirely different lineage of the English kings. This native historiography is however tied throughout to texts of an English and a broader European tradition, with the competition for space in the manuscript between these traditions suggestive of the political conflict between Llywelyn and Edward. The historiographical conflict over the British/Welsh past is therefore seen as an inevitable corollary of the conflict over the Welsh political present and future.¹⁶³

Her analysis is engaging and fits with what has been outlined above concerning Galfridian and annalistic traditions, although care should be exercised in

¹⁶¹ J. Crick, 'The Power and the Glory: Conquest and Cosmology in Edwardian Wales (Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3514)', in *Textual Cultures: Cultural Texts*, ed. by O. Da Rold and E. Treharne (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 21–42 (p. 25).

¹⁶² Crick, 'Conquest and Cosmology', p. 33.

¹⁶³ Crick, 'Conquest and Cosmology', pp. 21–25, 30–36.

emphasising the novelty or rebelliousness of these historiographical claims. The establishment of ties between native historiography and diverse texts of European significance is a phenomenon apparent in the previous century, for example in the twelfth-century Latin life of Gruffudd ap Cynan.¹⁶⁴ It is clear from the analysis given above that a combination of historical materials represented in the Exeter manuscript was forming part of the historiographical background of Wales by the second half of the thirteenth century, capable of realisation in Whitland or Anglo-Norman St David's. The vernacular annotations in Dublin, Trinity College MS 515, a similar manuscript in terms of content and origin, indicate the acceptance of the Galfridian tradition into the main stream of Welsh history by this time. The fusion of Welsh and European/English traditions was inherent in Geoffrey's work, and its further realisation in Latin and the vernacular, while the product of a society divided by imperfect conquest, was also indebted to the pattern of ecclesiastical and monastic institutions that this situation had brought about.¹⁶⁵

Was this pattern of combining Galfridian material with the Welsh Cistercian chronicle tradition to some extent a native innovation, or was it something more influenced by Anglo-Norman historiographical traditions? We have seen that it was achieved with essentially the same texts but independently at St David's and Whitland, an episcopal seat which became increasingly Anglicised in the thirteenth century and a Welsh Cistercian house which stood on the border between the March and native Wales. Later, possibly after 1300, the final formulation of the Latin version of *Brut y*

¹⁶⁴ Most strikingly at chapter 14.13–18, where reference is made in turn to Judas Maccabaeus, Julius Caesar and Arthur. *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: the Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. by P. Russell (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 38, 64–66.

¹⁶⁵ Crick brings attention to the fact that the last annotations betraying a Welsh interest date from the fourteenth century, and implies a connection between this and the appropriation of the Trojan/Galfridian past by the English monarchy. This appropriation did not, however, disturb the continued vibrancy of the Galfridian tradition in the vernacular. Crick, 'Conquest and Cosmology', pp. 35–36.

Tywysogion as a conscious continuation of Geoffrey's history indicates a further degree of development. This process was perpetuated by the further adaptation of the Latin Brut along Galfridian lines in *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, as well as by the production of the vernacular Welsh Historical Continuum by about 1350. If we embrace Crick's interpretation of the Exeter manuscript as the product of a divided intellectual culture, we can have our cake and eat it with regard to the question of innovation or Anglo-Norman influence, although a previous chapter has shown that the adoption of Geoffrey as an integral part of national history was far more problematic for the English than the Welsh.¹⁶⁶

The combination of Galfridian with annalistic material indicates the acceptance of Geoffrey's account as an essential element of Welsh history, and this can be interpreted in post-colonial terms as a form of mimicry, as defined by Homi Bhabha.¹⁶⁷ Mimicry entails the adoption of elements of the culture of the colonisers by the colonised in order to elevate their status in terms of the dominant, colonial discourse. There can be a subversive element to this mimicry, since the mimicry of the coloniser by the colonised changes and undermines those same elements of culture. The transformed image of the coloniser produced can be a threat to his authority.¹⁶⁸ In this case the Cistercians who, along with the court poets, can be seen as one of the dominant intellectual elites of native society, appropriated a narrative accepted by the Anglo-Norman colonisers, imitating their norms and changing their interpretation of their own history to accommodate it. But in this process they themselves changed the

¹⁶⁶ See above, pp. 144–51, 165.

¹⁶⁷ H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), pp. 85–92. For a general discussion of the use of post-colonial theory in relation to Medieval Welsh literature, see Dylan Foster Evans, "'Bardd Arallwlad": Dafydd ap Gwilym a Theori Ôl-Drefedigaethol', in *Llenyddiaeth Mewn Theori*, ed. by O. Thomas, *Y Meddwl a'r Dychymyg Cymreig* 17 (Cardiff, 2006), pp. 39–72 (esp. pp. 41–52).

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion of this transformative mimicry in relation to *Peredur*, see Stephen Knight, 'Resemblance and Menace: a Post-Colonial Reading of *Peredur*' in *Canhwyll Marchogyon: Cyd-Destunoli Peredur*, ed. by S. Davies and P. W. Thomas (Cardiff, 2000), 128–47.

nature of the text, whether by extension with chronicle accounts, translation, or reformulation of the text by men like Madog of Edeirnion. The extension of the text with contemporary chronicle accounts challenged its authority as the history of a nation which closed with the death of Cadwaladr and returned agency to the Welsh, empowering their history with the potential for development and change.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, the adoption of a text popular among the English elite as a central part of the history of the Welsh elided the difference between them, making the colonised 'at once an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible'.¹⁷⁰

The idea of mimicry as expressed by Bhabha is in many ways valid when considering Geoffrey of Monmouth and Welsh history, but it may be of more relevance to the actual process of the composition of *De gestis Britonum* itself than to its reception and acceptance in Wales subsequently. Geoffrey's text is not inherently an Anglo-Norman rather than a Cambro-Latin history although a process of mimicry and plenty of subversion is apparent in the work itself. Indeed, Geoffrey's work could be characterised as a hybrid narrative, but such analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. The important point is that the way in which the work would have been received by the Welsh, given its dependence on earlier tradition, is not easily characterised as the acceptance of a coloniser's narrative.

Geoffrey wrote in a tradition of Welsh pseudo-history.¹⁷¹ Another interpretation of this widespread adoption of Geoffrey, of which the combination of the history with annalistic material is a product, would therefore be that it exemplifies the achievement of a consensus on the history of the Welsh. The translation and annotation of the work, in which we glimpse the reconciliation of other strands of

¹⁶⁹ E. Poppe, 'The Matter of Troy and Insular Versions of Dares's *De Excidio Troiae Historia*: an Exercise in Textual Typology', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 19.2 (2009), 253–98 (261).

¹⁷⁰ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, pp. 70–71.

¹⁷¹ Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, pp. 22–28, 94.

Welsh learned tradition with this authoritative account, formed part of the process by which the narrative of *De gestis Britonum* achieved its status as the defining account of the Welsh past. In this sense the role of the Welsh Cistercian order as a unifying intellectual force across native Wales would have proved invaluable. It was the machinery of this order, with its transmission of material from house to house and its frequent interaction between different members of the family of Whitland, which enabled the achievement of this consensus. Moreover, the involvement of the order in the political affairs of the nascent Welsh principality provided the impetus for this consensus. The establishment of the Welsh past provided a firm grounding for the developments of the present, and the link between one process and the other was confirmed by the combination of contemporary Cistercian narratives with the authoritative account of that past.

It must be emphasised that there was no inevitability to this process, nor did the acceptance of Geoffrey's history as a definitive account diminish the importance of other influences on historical writing. Indeed, influential in the conception of history in these monastic houses but without such an impact on the surviving manuscript record are the books of the Maccabees. The first book, in particular, is frequently referred to in the Latin life of Gruffudd ap Cynan, where the characterisation of Gruffudd as equivalent to Judas Maccabaeus and Hugh of Chester as Antiochus is sustained throughout much of the text.¹⁷² *Vita Griffini filii Conani* was probably composed at St David's around 1137×1148.¹⁷³ References to Maccabees are also found in the chronicles, with two direct references in the PRO chronicle.¹⁷⁴ It is possible that these references were also present in the Latin chronicle used by the

¹⁷² *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, ed. Russell, pp. 48, 219.

¹⁷³ *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, ed. Russell, pp. 43–47.

¹⁷⁴ *Annales Cambriae*, ed. ab Ithel, pp. 86, 90; *PRO*, 1267=1246, 1277=1256.

compiler of Latin BT, and therefore available at Strata Florida.¹⁷⁵ The high adventure and warlike character of the account of the revolt of the Maccabees made it popular in general in the middle ages as a model for martial prowess, but in a Welsh context there were more specific parallels.¹⁷⁶ The revolt was one against a powerful kingdom to free a nation from foreign domination, the resurgent rebels having to cope with internal betrayal as well as overwhelming odds on the side of the aggressors.¹⁷⁷

These references indicate that, despite the obvious importance of Geoffrey's work, other texts also had a considerable influence on the way the Cistercian chroniclers conceived of history. It is no surprise to find Biblical literary models here. Galfridian references within the chronicles themselves are in fact extremely limited, with there being only one direct reference to Geoffrey's history after the opening portion of *Brut y Tywysogion*, with even that derived from an English tradition.¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey's influence on the chronicles themselves is therefore limited, in keeping with the factual nature of these accounts. The steps taken towards the combination of these works into a single narrative from the mid thirteenth century was therefore indicative of the establishment of an authoritative account of the Welsh past, rather than the subsumption of one genre of history writing by the other.

THE CISTERCIANS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

This discussion of the role of the Cistercian order in Welsh historical writing will conclude with a discussion of developments after the Edwardian conquest, the period

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Ymwybod â Hanes*, p. 8. The fact that these references are missing from all three Welsh chronicles may be indicative of the tendency of the compiler of Latin BT to abridge his material.

¹⁷⁶ M. Keen, *Chivalry* (Bath, 1984), pp. 119–122.

¹⁷⁷ *Vita Griffini Filii Conani*, ed. Russell, p. 48. For a comparable case of Maccabees being seen as a parallel for contemporary military conflict on the tenth-century German frontier, see J. Dunbabin, 'The Maccabees as Exemplars in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. by K. Walsh and D. Greenway, Studies in Church History Subsidia 4 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 31–41.

¹⁷⁸ Smith, *Ymwybod â Hanes*, pp. 8–9.

which sees the first appearance of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the vernacular. But before turning to this, the situation in Wales will be compared with that elsewhere in Britain. It is in the north of England that the situation of the Cistercian order is most comparable to that in Wales, in terms of the importance of the order in relation to others. The two pre-eminent houses of Fountains and Rievaulx facilitated the spread of the order throughout England and, through Rievaulx's daughter, Melrose, throughout Scotland.¹⁷⁹ The written material surviving from these English abbeys enables a much firmer engagement with spiritual and corporate life of the order, whereas the written material for Wales tends to emphasise the more secular side of the Cistercian contribution to Welsh life. Whereas more than four fifths of English Cistercian manuscripts surviving from before 1230 are theological, there is also a marked interest in history, particularly chronicles.¹⁸⁰

Narratives of foundation, for example, survive from a number of Northern English houses such as Kirkstall, Byland and Fountains.¹⁸¹ These histories of the early years of the monastic communities created a sense of identity among the English Cistercian houses which was also helped by the literary work of Aelred of Rievaulx, the dominant figure among the English Cistercians in the twelfth century.¹⁸² No such foundational narratives survive from Wales, and indeed the only indication of anything comparable is BT's reference to the annals of Strata Florida. These annals may have contained a narrative of the abbey's foundation which could be compared with surviving English works. Detailed studies of the Cistercian order in England have generally focussed on the period up to the early thirteenth century when these foundational narratives were being written, and the non-survival of such material from

¹⁷⁹ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, pp. 37–41.

¹⁸⁰ E. Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order: Cistercian Historical Writing in England, 1150–1220*, *Medieval Church Studies* 2 (Turnhout, 2002), p. 103.

¹⁸¹ Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 287–92; Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, V., 349.

¹⁸² Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, especially pp. 19–91; Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 290–92.

Wales limits the comparisons which can be made. The chronological range of Elizabeth Freeman's study of Cistercian historical writing is 1150–1220, and similarly Janet Burton's study of monastic orders in Yorkshire takes 1215 as its end-point.¹⁸³

A potentially fruitful point of comparison, given the discussion above concerning the relationship between Cistercian houses and St David's and Llanbadarn, is the relationship between the Cistercians and Durham. The cathedral priory of Durham played an important role in the foundation of the new order in northern England, particularly by providing books and exemplars for copying to new monastic foundations. As well as essential devotional and liturgical material, this included historical works.¹⁸⁴ This may have been an element in a deliberate process of dissemination of the historical traditions of Durham, the creation of a cultural empire in the North.¹⁸⁵ Whether this was the intention or not, the effect of this process and the close relationship between monastic houses of all orders in northern England was to create a distinct cultural province with regard to Latin literature.¹⁸⁶ An interest in the English past, specifically the Northumbrian monastic tradition and the works of Bede, gave these monasteries a shared cultural heritage which was derived from the influence of Durham on their early development.¹⁸⁷

To what extent was this Durham influence similar to the relationship between, for example, St David's and Whitland/Strata Florida? The first difference to emphasise is one of scale. Not only the surviving manuscripts but also the known scale of the library at Durham make it difficult to compare to the situation in Wales, and it is unlikely that St David's would have occupied a similarly dominant

¹⁸³ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*; Burton, *Monastic Order*.

¹⁸⁴ B. Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts in Cistercian Houses', in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093–1193*, ed. by D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 439–49.

¹⁸⁵ Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 281–87.

¹⁸⁶ A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422* (Irthlingborough, 1992), pp. 51–52.

¹⁸⁷ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 104–5, 114–16.

position.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless it seems that St David's, under Bishop Bernard, played an important role in the establishment of the Cistercian order in Deheubarth at least, and it can be argued that both episcopal seats would have had comparable roles in the provision of liturgical material. The acquisition of historical material from St David's, however, seems not to have occurred earlier than around 1202, too late to have been a direct cause of its role in the order's establishment. In this respect, Llanbadarn provides an earlier example of the transmission of material, and despite its lesser ecclesiastical importance it may be that it provided devotional as well as historical material in the early years of the Strata Florida community's existence.

It can be postulated that some individuals who joined the Strata Florida community in its early years also had links with the *clas* at Llanbadarn, and in this sense the life of Aelred of Rievaulx, son of the hereditary priest of Hexham, may be an illuminating comparison.¹⁸⁹ With his father a married priest, Aelred achieved prominence at the court of King David I of Scotland before joining the Cistercian order. That such personal connections aided the transmission of historical material is illustrated by the probability that the supplementary material to Ailred's *De sanctis ecclesie Hagulstedensis*, a work on the saints of Hexham composed during his abbacy of Rievaulx to celebrate the translation of their relics from the older to the newer monastery, was based on a Hexham chronicle.¹⁹⁰ Although no direct link is evident between Strata Florida and the descendants of Sulien, or the family of Ednywain ap Gwaithfoed, for example, it may be that a comparable process led to the Cistercian acquisition of Llanbadarn annals.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 115.

¹⁸⁹ *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel*, ed. by F. M. Powicke (Edinburgh and London, 1950), pp. xxxiv–xxxv.

¹⁹⁰ Burton, *Monastic Order*, p. 285.

¹⁹¹ Ednywain was abbot of Llanbadarn at the time of Gerald of Wales' visit in 1188. *Giraldi Cambrensis, Opera*, ed. Dimock, VI., 121 (*Itinerarium Kambriæ*, II. 4). It has been suggested that

There is some overlap in the historical texts which were of interest to Cistercian houses in Wales and northern England. The general Cistercian interest in Geoffrey of Monmouth has already been remarked upon above, and on occasion he is the only historical author in collections otherwise devoted to patristic or liturgical works, such as at the Cistercian house of Roche in Yorkshire.¹⁹² The swift popularity of this material in northern English Cistercian houses is evident from Aelred of Rievaulx's complaint about tales of Arthur being popular among Rievaulx novices as early as the 1140s.¹⁹³ Knowledge of Geoffrey's history may have been obtained through Walter Espec, the founder of Rievaulx, said by Gaimar to have owned a copy of the book, in a similar manner to what has been suggested for Margam above. The Yorkshire Cistercian abbeys of Kirkstall and Jervaulx were also in possession of the work by the early thirteenth century.¹⁹⁴ The Kirkstall manuscript has already been noted in connection with the work of Madog of Edeirnion, whose unique version of *De gestis Britonum* was combined with a version copied from Durham, Ushaw College MS 6 (the Kirkstall manuscript) to form Cardiff MS 2.611. If the Cardiff manuscript was created in Wales, a possibility discussed above, we can see the connections of the Cistercian order enabling the interest shown in Geoffrey's work in northern England to feed into that shown in Wales.¹⁹⁵

The interest shown in British historical material also extended to Geoffrey's precursors. *Historia Brittonum*, attributed to Nennius, is found in related copies in manuscripts that can be associated with Durham (Cambridge, University Library MS

the descendants of Sulien remained attached to the chapter of St David's, although their disappearance from the record may simply reflect their actual disappearance, in a situation where married ecclesiastics were increasingly frowned upon. *Episcopal Acts and Cognate Documents Relating to Welsh Dioceses, 1066–1272*, ed. by J. C. Davies (2 vols., Cardiff, 1946–1948), II., 504–6.

¹⁹² Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 107.

¹⁹³ *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia*, ed. by A. Hoste and C. Talbot, *Corpus Christianorum continuatio mediaevalis* 1 (Turnhout, 1971), p. 90 (*Liber de speculo caritatis*, II, 51).

¹⁹⁴ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 108–9.

¹⁹⁵ See above, pp. 338–39.

Ff.1.27 and Durham, Cathedral Library MS B II 35), Kirkstall (Liège, University Library MS 369C), and Sawley (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 139).¹⁹⁶ The exact relationship of these manuscripts to each other has been a matter of considerable debate and is outside the scope of this chapter.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, it seems as though the text of *Historia Brittonum* reached these northern Cistercian houses through Durham as part of the process of dissemination of historical material discussed above. At Sawley, however, the monks showed an active interest in the text in Corpus Christi MS 139, particularly the sections relating to Welsh history which were continually updated.¹⁹⁸ More striking still is the fact that some of this updating was undertaken by men familiar with the Welsh language, and it has been suggested that these men were recruited from areas of Welsh settlement within southern Lancashire.¹⁹⁹ This Welsh settlement occurred in the late twelfth century, mainly from among the followers of Robert Banastre who had held land in Tegeingl until 1167, but also under the aegis of the constable of Chester.²⁰⁰ The cross-cultural connections exemplified here further emphasise possible connections between these northern English historical traditions and Wales.

There is a clear interest in Welsh history in Corpus Christi 139, but its contents also indicate the interest of the monks in English history, particularly in its

¹⁹⁶ Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 282–83.

¹⁹⁷ See in general the references in Fiona Edmonds, 'A Twelfth-Century Migration from Tegeingl to Lancashire', in *Wales and the Wider World: Welsh History in an International Context*, ed. by T. M. Charles-Edwards and R. J. W. Evans (Bodmin and King's Lynn, 2010), pp. 28–56, at pp. 49–50; Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 282–83; and Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 110–112. Some of the key discussions are: D. N. Dumville, 'The Sixteenth-Century History of Two Cambridge Books from Sawley', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 7 (1977–1980), 427–44; Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', pp. 439–49; and C. Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', in *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. by D. Rollason (Stamford, 1998), pp. 61–105.

¹⁹⁸ D. N. Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts in Northern England, c.1150–c.1250', *Celtica* 12 (1977), 19–49 (29–30, 43).

¹⁹⁹ Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts', 42–43.

²⁰⁰ Edmonds, 'A Twelfth-Century Migration', pp. 28–56.

northern, Durham-focussed form.²⁰¹ The historical interests of the monks can be seen as expressive both of wider connections and of their particular location and background. The particularity of this interest even in relation to more widespread, standard works of history is well illustrated by the popularity of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, which is notably more marked in northern Cistercian houses, where it was of greater relevance to the history of monasticism in the area, than in southern ones.²⁰²

The interest shown in Geoffrey among English Cistercians can be linked to the work's general popularity as well as to the fact that Geoffrey's account challenged and redefined the insular history in which the Cistercians were keen to stake a claim. The general patterns of historical interests among the early Cistercians suggest that they were concerned to consolidate their position in England as a new monastic order by staking their claim to an English historical identity. Their relationship with older Benedictine communities, such as Durham, enabling manuscript exchange, was essential in this process.²⁰³ The question is whether this explanation of the popularity of Geoffrey specifically has any significance for the Welsh Cistercians. Despite the evidence for a network of manuscript transmission between Welsh and English houses with relation to Geoffrey, the relatively early evidence for awareness of his work in Wales would preclude the conclusion that his initial popularity among Welsh Cistercians was simply a reflex of the situation in England. There is much to be said, however, for the idea that concentrating on such texts was a means of justifying the position of this new order in Welsh society.

Freeman notes a tendency among English Cistercians to combine different histories of England in a single manuscript to build up personalised collections of

²⁰¹ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 111–12.

²⁰² Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 104.

²⁰³ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 114.

local and national history, particularly with regard to manuscripts of Bede.²⁰⁴ This is an aspect of the general concern with English history she attributes to the establishment of the new order in England, but this tendency to group various historical texts may have influenced similar activities in Wales, such as the creation of Exeter 3514 and Dublin 515, the former at Whitland and the latter at a Cistercian monastery in Wales. The creation of these Latin manuscripts which have elements of a continuous history, albeit with a more disparate range of texts, are a step towards the creation of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the vernacular, and their creation may owe something to the tendency to create composite historical manuscripts which Freeman notes among the Cistercians of northern England. By providing a text which could serve as a focus for others, whether chronicles, genealogies or Dares Phrygius, *De gestis Britonum* facilitated a Welsh manifestation of these compiled historical manuscripts. It would then be possible to see the first steps towards the vernacular continuum as a Welsh development of a historiographical tendency common to the Cistercian order in general.

It has already been noted in the third chapter that Cistercians interest in and influence on the *Prose Brut* provides a parallel with the situation in Wales with regard to the Welsh Historical Continuum. The later portions of the *Prose Brut* are based on Cistercian chronicle writing, specifically the annals of Waverley, in a way comparable to the use of *Brut y Tywysogion* in Wales to create the Welsh Historical Continuum, a work with which the *Prose Brut* can be compared and contrasted. Cistercian houses are also prominent as owners of manuscript of the Anglo-Norman French *Prose Brut*, but although the use of the Waverley annals would argue for it, Cistercian production of the work itself has not to my knowledge been advocated.

²⁰⁴ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 104.

The attachment of monks in northern England to the Northumbrian past is evidently something which parallels the engagement of the Cistercian in Wales with the Welsh and British past. The use of the Bedan past can be characterised as an attachment to a religious and cultural identity, and this formed a part of the Cistercian engagement with articulating and defining the English nation, particularly in the writings of Aelred of Rievaulx.²⁰⁵ But the differences between the English and Welsh situations must also be stressed. The work of Bede, particularly the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, defined the English nation primarily in religious terms, articulating national identity in terms of conversion to Christianity. This emphasis is very different from the articulation of British identity in *De gestis Britonum*, where the religious dimension is far less fundamental to the work. Bede's historical work, in addition, betrays his strong anti-British prejudices.²⁰⁶

A wealth of twelfth-century material is used as a basis for discussions of the English Cistercians, but the equivalent in Wales is not much more than a few manuscripts of Geoffrey. Going into the thirteenth century, there is no northern equivalent to the Welsh Cistercians' close involvement in the struggle for Welsh independence, and it has been shown above that the chronicles surviving from these houses must be understood in the context of this struggle. Although the magnates of the north of England had a leading role in the barons' revolt against King John in the early twelfth century, and were identified as Northerners, *Aquilonares* or *Norenses*, by contemporaries, such short-lived political factions cannot be compared with the situation in native Wales.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 31–87.

²⁰⁶ C. Stancliffe, *Bede and the Britons: Fourteenth Whithorn Lecture, 17th September 2005* (Whithorn, 2007).

²⁰⁷ J. C. Holt, *The Northerners* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 8–9.

To some extent, though, the prominence of national chronicles in the thirteenth-century historical material from Wales is paralleled among the English Cistercians. From around 1200, there was a move away from the writing of foundation histories and towards the writing of chronicles with the focus on local and, increasingly, national and international affairs. The latter became more prominent after financial uncertainty in the reign of John gave way to a period of prosperity and security for the Cistercian order in England.²⁰⁸ Ralph of Coggeshall's *Chronicon Anglicanum* is an example of Cistercian chronicle writing in this period, although the rise in chronicling is also apparent in non-Cistercian monasteries such as Dunstable and Worcester.²⁰⁹ The annals of the Cistercian house of Waverley bear comparison with *Brut y Tywysogion* with regard to their eventual inclusion in a national history.²¹⁰

Melrose was mentioned above as one of the daughter houses of Rievaulx, and while at its initial foundation its monks may well have considered themselves English and Northumbrian rather Scottish, it came to identify closely with Scotland and its kings, one of whom, David I, was the abbey's founder.²¹¹ As a monastery which initially found itself with an ambiguous cultural identity it can be compared to houses such as Whitland and Strata Florida, but whereas the process by which these initially marcher foundations came to identify as primarily Welsh was a relatively swift one, the equivalent process at Melrose took more than a hundred years. Melrose was founded in 1136, but it is not until 1266 that the monks begin to identify themselves

²⁰⁸ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 171–75

²⁰⁹ *Radulphi de Coggeshall chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. by J. Stevenson (London, 1875); 'Annals of Dunstable', in *Annales Monastici*, ed. by H. R. Luard (5 vols., London, 1864–1869), III., 1–408; 'Annals of Worcester', in *Annales Monastici*, IV., 355–564. For a discussion of Ralph of Coggeshall see Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, pp. 179–213.

²¹⁰ 'Annals of Waverley', in *Annales Monastici*, ed. by H. R. Luard (5 vols., London, 1864–1869), II., 127–411.

²¹¹ D. Broun, 'Melrose Abbey and its World', in *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey: a Stratigraphic Edition, I: Introduction and Facsimile*, ed. by D. Broun and J. Harrison (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 1–12 (pp. 1–4).

as Scots, and this shift in identity is traceable through the chronicle of Melrose.²¹² It is with regard to this chronicle that the Scottish situation provides some illuminating parallels to the Welsh.

The Melrose chronicle was begun in 1173×1174, at around the same time as the Llanbadarn section of *Brut y Tywysogion* shifts into material deriving from Strata Florida, a shift which was argued above to be roughly contemporary with the beginning of chronicle writing at Strata Florida. The Melrose chronicle was prefaced with a copy of Hugh of Saint-Victor's *Chronicle*, and it has been argued that the inclusion of material from Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* and Bedan material is indicative of the self-conscious Englishness of the original chronicle.²¹³ In this sense, the initial dependence of a Strata Florida chronicle on Llanbadarn material, if that is indeed what the shift in *Brut y Tywysogion* indicates, argues for a close identification with Welsh learned tradition early on at that monastery. However, the piecemeal makeup of the Melrose chronicle, surviving in its original manuscript (London, British Library MS Cotton Faustina B.ix) with most of the levels of updating traceable on palaeographical and codicological levels, reminds us of the potential complexity of the process of a chronicle's composition, as well as reaffirming how far we are from such evidence with *Brut y Tywysogion*, which only survives in three later Welsh translations.²¹⁴

Despite the closeness in date between the likely beginning of annalistic activity at Strata Florida and the initial creation of the Melrose chronicle, the gap between the foundation of Melrose in 1136 and the chronicle's creation in 1173×1174

²¹² The annal which provides this evidence was not entered into the chronicle until 1286. D. Broun, 'Becoming Scottish in the Thirteenth Century: the Evidence of the Chronicle of Melrose', in *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, ed. by B. B. Smith, S. Taylor, and G. Williams, *The Northern World* 31 (Leiden, 2007), pp. 19–32 (pp. 25–26).

²¹³ Broun, 'Melrose Abbey and its World', p. 10.

²¹⁴ Broun, 'Melrose Abbey and its World', p. 9.

is relatively large, though not as large as the three to four generations Elisabeth van Houts saw as the usual gap between a religious house's foundation and the production of an institutional chronicle.²¹⁵ The gap between the foundation of Strata Florida in 1164 and the start of chronicling there in the 1170s or 1180s is remarkably small, and perhaps owes something to the monks' conscious assumption of a role previously fulfilled by the *clas* at Llanbadarn. The Cistercians of Strata Florida must have viewed Llanbadarn as an unacceptably laicised institution, but that there were ties between the two into the thirteenth century is indicated by *Brut y Tywysogion's* account of Matilda de Braose's death.²¹⁶

The chronicle-keeping so characteristic of Cistercian historical writing in Wales is therefore a manifestation of a broader trend, as is clear from the interaction between the Welsh and English traditions exemplified by the use of English chronicles in Welsh Latin chronicles. Examples include the conflation of St David's annals and the Bury St Edmunds chronicle in *Cronica de Wallia* and use of the Waverley annals at Neath to form the final version of the PRO chronicle.²¹⁷ The wider-than-local interest of these chronicles is also apparent in *Brut y Tywysogion*, particularly in the first quarter of the thirteenth century when describing the invasion of Louis of France, an event which had a significant impact on English historiography.²¹⁸ Gerald of Wales himself composed a poem welcoming Louis to England.²¹⁹

Though reflecting and bolstered by the wider growth in chronicle writing, it cannot be said that the annalistic activities of the Welsh Cistercians were a product of

²¹⁵ E. Van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 74 (Turnhout, 1995), p. 19; Harrison, 'Cistercian Chronicling in the British Isles', pp. 21–22.

²¹⁶ See above, p. 357.

²¹⁷ Hughes, *Celtic Britain*, p. 85.

²¹⁸ Freeman, *Narratives of a New Order*, p. 174.

²¹⁹ R. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales: 1146–1223* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 96–99, 222–25.

trends in England. It has already been discussed how *Brut y Tywysogion* seems to indicate continuity in annal keeping, without a gap between the end of the time when the chronicle on which it was based was kept at Llanbadarn and when it began to be kept at Strata Florida. This occurs sometime around 1170, before the growth in chronicle writing which characterised the thirteenth century in England but at around the same time as a chronicle started to be kept at Melrose.²²⁰ As with the popularity of Geoffrey, then, although the historiographical activities of the Welsh Cistercians were in keeping with and influenced by developments across Offa's Dyke, they also indicate a considerable degree of continuity and independent Welsh development.

AFTER THE CONQUEST

The Exeter manuscript has already been seen as an historical manuscript whose production spans the period of conquest. There are signs that the political tensions during Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's reign led to ever closer definition of the Welsh as an historical nation, a point perhaps best exemplified by the use of Camber and Brutus in the negotiations of late 1282, in the last months of Gwynedd's independence. After the conquest, the English representative in these negotiations, Archbishop Pecham, advised the clergy of the diocese of St Asaph of their responsibility to reconcile the Welsh and the English and specifically warned them of tales of Trojan descent.²²¹ As noted above, at the same time as this discouragement there were deliberate attempts

²²⁰ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550–c.1307* (London, 1974), pp. 318–438. For the growth in Anglo-Norman French historical writing which marked the mid to late twelfth century in England, see above, pp. 129–35, and P. Damian-Grint, *New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge, 1999).

²²¹ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 41; *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. by C. T. Martin (3 vols., London, 1882–1885), ii., 737–43.

by Edward I to appropriate the British inheritance of the Welsh, both attempts to sever the ties between this historical narrative and hopes for political independence.²²²

As well as recognising the political importance of the histories which the Cistercian houses had propagated, the English also appreciated the political importance of the order itself. King Edward's use of Cistercian abbots in administration has been noted above, as has their declining political importance in the post-conquest period. It is in this context that we must understand continuing historiographical activities at Welsh Cistercian houses. These activities have already been discussed in detail in the first chapter, including the writing of the Latin original of *Brut y Tywysogion*, its translation, and the creation of the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version of the Welsh Historical Continuum.

The discussion in the fourth chapter concerning the exact nature of *Brut y Tywysogion*, particularly the doubts raised concerning the chronological span of the text and attendant questions of its date of composition, complicate its use as evidence for the historiographical reaction to the Edwardian conquest. Nevertheless in the post-conquest period a chronicle was available at Strata Florida which made extensive use of a chronicle kept at that house and also included material from other Cistercian houses, and by this point the conception of the text as one which was designed to be read as a continuation of Geoffrey's history was established, whether or not it actually followed *De gestis Britonum* in manuscripts. It may be however that a chronicle essentially the same as *Brut y Tywysogion* in its content, start-date and purpose already existed before the conquest, and that the idea of the text as a history of the native Welsh rulers after 682 was a product of the Cistercian chronicle activity

²²² See above, pp. 86–88.

undertaken in the heyday of Venedotian power. This view would further reduce the impact of a postulated compiler on the final form of the text.

Nevertheless it is clear that this chronicle had spread beyond Strata Florida by the 1330s, when a translation was available at Valle Crucis, a monastery which seems to have acquired a role as an important centre of historical production. It was also in the first half of the fourteenth century that a translation of this same chronicle was combined with a translation of Dares Phrygius and a combination of two already extant translations of Geoffrey to form the vernacular historical continuum in the form known as the *Llyfr Coch Hergest* version, for ease of reference rather than to indicate that manuscript's textual importance. Both Strata Florida and Valle Crucis have connections with texts used for this continuum, and consequently they are the front-runners when considering where this compilation was likely to have been undertaken. The emerging picture of the sharing of material between Cistercian abbeys, however, means that the known availability of texts at a certain house should in no way rule out other monasteries as potential centres of production. The exchange and borrowing of books between one abbey and another was a widespread phenomenon.

Historical activity in the immediate aftermath of the conquest goes beyond the texts associated with the Welsh Historical Continuum. Notable in this respect is the creation of the Hendregadredd manuscript at Strata Florida, an attempt to codify and preserve the work of the court poets of the princes. The creation of Latin BT has been seen in the same light as a reaction to the fall of the native princes, and in this respect its termination at the point of conquest is often seen as an indication of an awareness that the story it related had recently come to a close. But the question mark over the text's point of termination and the reasons for this necessitate the questioning of such assumptions.

Is the work a reaction to the trauma of conquest, and more to the point did the conquest cause the end of the chronicling tradition of which *Brut y Tywysogion* was the most lasting monument? If so, the parallel with the Hendregadredd manuscript is striking: the conquest at once spurs the collection and codification of a tradition while at the same time bringing that tradition to an end. The parallels with England drawn above should serve as a reminder that the growth of chronicling activity seen in the thirteenth century also declined at the century's end. The Welsh situation may reflect wider trends, the declining popularity of such chronicles in Cistercian houses in general. Nevertheless, again there are particular circumstances within Wales. The secular focus of the surviving chronicles has been discussed above, and this reflects the role of the Cistercians in Welsh political life. With the passing of the princes, the political figures who were the primary focus of the chronicles, this aspect of Cistercian life in Wales came to an end, and no doubt this goes some way towards explaining the decline in chronicle keeping.²²³ Even at Valle Crucis, where *Brut y Tywysogion* was still being updated in the mid-fourteenth century, there is nothing of the spirit and rhetorical flourish of the thirteenth century.

It was in the furnace of the late thirteenth century that the Galfridian-annalistic formulation of the Welsh past was forged, but after the conquest it gave the conquered Welsh a means of understanding their own history, and the position in which they found themselves. The most striking illustration of this is Hywel Fychan's late fourteenth-century colophon to Philadelphia MS 8680, where both the scribe and his patron, Hopcyn ap Tomos, relate the text to their contemporary situation,

²²³ Hays, 'Welsh Monasteries and the Edwardian Conquest', p. 137.

Y llyuyr h6n a yscriuenn6ys howel vychan uab howel goch o uuellt yn ll6yr onys g6naeth agkof a da6 geir neu lythyren, o arch a gorchymun y vaester, nyt amgen hopkyn uab thomas uab eina6n yr rei a odolygant y pa6b g6edia6 du6 drostunt a darllenho y llyvyr h6nn...

Ac o'e barn 6ynt, anuolyannussaf o'r ty6yssogyon uhot y llywyassant, g6rtheyrn a medra6t. Kanys oc eu brat 6ynt a'e t6yll ac eu kyghor uynt y distry6yt y tywyssogyon arbennickaf, yr hynn a g6yna6d eu hetiuedyon g6edy 6ynt yr hynny hyd hedi6. Y rei yssyd yn godef poen ac achenoetit ac alltuded yn eu ganedic dayar.²²⁴

This example of a scribe and patron seeing these historical texts as a means of understanding the present can be set alongside Gruffudd Llwyd's poem to Owain Glyndŵr, discussed in the second chapter.²²⁵ Both are roughly contemporary with each other, which may indicate that this attitude towards the history is particular to the period of tensions immediately before Glyndŵr's revolt, but these tensions are themselves indicative of the general situation in post-conquest Wales.²²⁶

The colophon, with its depiction of a close relationship between secular scribe and secular patron, also indicates that these texts and the manuscripts which contained them were now increasingly the preserve of the laity, although previous chapters have shown that the link between these men and Cistercian monasteries could still be a

²²⁴ 'Hywel Fychan ap Hywel Goch of Buellt wrote this entire manuscript lest word or letter be forgotten, on the request and command of his master, none other than Hopcyn son of Tomos son of Einion, and they beseech anyone who reads this book pray to God on their part... And in their (i.e. Hywel and Hopcyn's) opinion, the least praiseworthy of those princes who ruled above are Gwrtheyrn and Medrawd. Since because of their treachery and deceit and counsel the most excellent princes were ruined, men whose descendants have lamented after them since that day until this. Those who suffer pain and subjection and exile in their native land'. Philadelphia, PA, Library Company of Philadelphia MS 8680, at 68v.

²²⁵ See above, pp. 101–4.

²²⁶ B. F. Roberts, 'Un o Lawysgrifau Hopcyn ap Tomas o Ynys Dawy', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 22 (1967), 223–28 (228).

strong one, as in the case of the association of *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* both with a lay patron and the abbey of Strata Florida, or in the close links between the fifteenth-century scribe and poet Gutun Owain and both Valle Crucis and Basingwerk.²²⁷ It has been seen that the lay elite are likely to have formed an important audience for historical translations compiled at Cistercian houses from the thirteenth century, and their increased prominence in the patronage of manuscripts during the fourteenth century can be seen as a natural development of this.

The increasing prevalence of non-monastic scribes and secular patrons does not entail a loss of faith in the political outlook of Welsh Cistercian houses. Despite their role in post-conquest administration, it is clear that their sympathies had not changed with the conquest and remained Welsh in outlook, to the extent that it was possible to justify action against them on these political grounds. This becomes clear in the dispute between the abbey of Ystrad Marchell and John Charlton, an Englishman of obscure origins who had risen to become lord of Powys during a time of confusion over the succession.²²⁸ The context of this dispute is very likely to have been Ystrad Marchell's support for Gruffudd de la Pole, the son of Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn who therefore represented the dynasty of Powys Wenwynwyn and who had challenged Charlton's position several times in the 1310s and 1320s.²²⁹

The essence of the conflict was that Charlton, with the support of King Edward III, wished to see the Welsh community of Ystrad Marchell removed and replaced with English monks and the affiliation of the monastery changed so that it answered not to Whitland but to Buildwas in Shropshire.²³⁰ It appears that their

²²⁷ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 252–54; see above, pp. 113–18.

²²⁸ R. Morgan, 'The Barony of Powys, 1275–1360', *Welsh History Review* 10 (1980), 1–42 (12–14).

²²⁹ Morgan, 'Barony of Powys', 16–30.

²³⁰ *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward III, A.D. 1327–1330*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (London, 1896), p. 410. Thanks to David Stephenson for help with this matter, particularly discussion as to the result of the dispute.

appeals to the abbots of Cîteaux and Clairvaux to transfer the affiliation were initially successful, but although there is considerable scholarly confusion on this matter it is probable that the Welsh community remained present and that the status quo was preserved.²³¹ This is the impression created by the continuing attempts of the English government to press its case even after initial references to the actual displacement of the monks, which suggests that any such displacement was temporary, as well as the fact that the case seems to have been dropped after 1333, presumably since the death of Gruffudd de la Pole in 1332 had reduced the seriousness of the monks' political sympathies.²³² The important point, as far as this discussion is concerned, is that the main reason for the conflict was the house's support for the native dynasty, characterised by King Edward's government as being 'ruled by the levity of the Welsh' and conducting 'unlawful assemblies to excite contentions and hatred between the English and Welsh'.²³³ Clearly, the monastery's feelings with regard to its patron, John Charlton, was less important than its ethnic and political identity.

Ystrad Marchell's links with Gruffudd de la Pole were a political reflection of the links which abbeys maintained with the Welsh society that surrounded them. Such

²³¹ D. Stephenson, personal correspondence. The *Monastic Wales* website describes Charlton's attempt as successful, <http://www.monasticwales.org/event/159>, last accessed 5/7/2013. Both David M. Robinson, *The Cistercians in Wales: Architecture and Archaeology 1130–1540* (London, 2006), p. 274, and Williams, 'The White Monks in Powys II: Strata Marcella', 166–68, are more circumspect, while O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 89–91, is of the opinion that Ystrad Marchell carried the day.

²³² The order seems to be this. There were initial and partially successful appeals from Charlton and Edward III to Cîteaux and Clairvaux in August 1328, *CCR 1327–1330*, pp. 410, 566–67. This was followed by the abbot of Whitland pleading his case in 1329, seemingly resulting in its reinstatement as mother house by August 1330, *CCR 1327–1330*, p. 567; *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward III, A.D. 1330–1333*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (London, 1898), p. 150. The pilgrimage of the abbot of Ystrad Marchell in the following year may be associated with this solution, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Edward III, A.D. 1330–1334*, ed. by R. F. Isaacson (London, 1893), p. 43. In February 1333, on the election of the new abbot, Charlton was still at odds with Ystrad Marchell and the community was still clearly a Welsh one, and in August of the same year the English government for the last time made a case for the transfer of the abbey's filiation, the idea of replacing the monks having already been dropped, *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward III, A.D. 1333–1337*, ed. by A. B. Hinds (London, 1898), pp. 93–94, 130. Gruffudd de la Pole had died without a son soon after 18 March 1332, Morgan, 'Barony of Powys', p. 30.

²³³ *CCR 1330–1333*, p. 150.

is clear from Strata Florida's connection with the family of Parcrhydderch and, as a previous chapter has made clear, the close connection between Valle Crucis and the *uchelwyr* of Powys Fadog, particularly the family of Glyndyfrdwy and Sycharth.²³⁴ As stated above, the role of such men in the demand for and production of historical writings associated with Cistercian monasteries becomes more apparent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but this can be seen as the continuation and definition of earlier trends. The debate as to the supposed decline of orders such as the Cistercians in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it suffices to say that there is some justification for seeing an increase in secular involvement, with the caveat that the Welsh Cistercians were involved in secular affairs before the conquest.²³⁵ Cistercian recruitment never reached the heights of the twelfth century, but, as the study of Valle Crucis has shown, strong links with the laity of the surrounding area, although not in keeping with the founding principles of the order, was conducive to the production of historical texts at the abbey and made the place an integral part of the culture of the locality.²³⁶ They wielded an influence far beyond what their low levels of recruitment would suggest.²³⁷

The Welsh political sympathies evinced by the Ystrad Marchell case would find expression at the turn of the fifteenth century in Cistercian support for the revolt of Owain Glyndŵr. The links between Glyndŵr's family and the abbey of Valle Crucis has been discussed in the second chapter, as has the overlap between his

²³⁴ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 216–222, 249–55; see above, pp. 89–91, 122.

²³⁵ G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1923–1950); R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, Pelican History of the Church 2 (London, 1970), pp. 300–60; L. J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (Kent, OH, 1977), pp. 91–108; O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 108–24; Cowley, *Monastic Order*, pp. 229–67. For a collection of recent work on monasteries in the later middle ages, see *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by J. Burton and K. Stöber (Woodbridge, 2008).

²³⁶ R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 60–61. A good example of the differences in recruitment can be found in *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Henry VI, 1436–1441*, ed. by A. E. Bland and R. F. Isaacson (London, 1907), p. 381.

²³⁷ Karen Stöber, 'The Social Networks of Late Medieval Welsh Monasteries', in *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles*, ed. Burton and Stöber, pp. 11–24; Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 61–62.

supporters and those of the abbey. The historical texts produced there, including elements of the vernacular Historical Continuum have also been emphasised as encapsulating a vision of history which was fundamental to the rebels' understanding of their cause. The poetry of Gruffudd Llwyd, Glyndŵr's consultation with Hopcyn ap Tomos and his letter to the king of Scotland are ample indicators of this.²³⁸ The historical ideology which had been defined and promulgated by Cistercian houses was now the basis for political action, for an attempt to reverse the Edwardian conquest.

In this sense it is hardly surprising to see Cistercians as noted supporters of Glyndŵr. The nature of this war made a cycle of support followed by submission to royal forces inevitable for many abbeys, which with the rest of Wales suffered considerable destruction during these years. Aberconwy, Cwm Hir, Llantarnam, Strata Florida and Whitland are all known to have been centres of support for Glyndŵr, and it would be extremely surprising if Valle Crucis, with its links to his family, and Cymer, in the heartland of his support, did not also play a role.²³⁹ The abbot of Llantarnam actually fought for Glyndŵr, with Adam Usk reporting his death at the battle of Pwll Melyn.²⁴⁰ The attitude of royal forces to the Welsh Cistercian monasteries is well illustrated by the occupation of Strata Florida on the king's expedition into Deheubarth, when the monks were expelled and the abbey's lands suffered raids and counter-raids.²⁴¹

The Cistercian abbeys, in particular their abbots, formed an important component in the ecclesiastical support for Glyndŵr, but they were only a component. Alongside them were, as in the days of the princes of Gwynedd, the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor, or at least its Welsh elements, as

²³⁸ See above, pp. 101–4; *Adam Usk*, ed. Given-Wilson, pp. 148–50.

²³⁹ O'Sullivan, *Cistercian Settlements*, pp. 109–110.

²⁴⁰ *Adam Usk*, ed. Given-Wilson, p. 212.

²⁴¹ *Adam Usk*, ed. Given-Wilson, p. 144; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Henry IV, A.D. 1401–1405*, ed. by R. C. Fowler and R. F. Isaacson (London, 1905), p. 61.

well as the mendicant friars, particularly the Franciscans who were fierce opponents of Henry IV. The Cistercians provided fairly safe grass-roots support, but it was those such as the gifted cleric Gruffudd Yonge, who became Owain's chancellor, and John Trefor, bishop of St Asaph, who were the more influential of Glyndŵr's ecclesiastical supporters.²⁴² These differences in emphasis indicate the changes in the relative importance of the Cistercian order since the thirteenth centuries.

The traumatic failure of the revolt put an end to thoughts of Welsh independence, and as such must have come as a blow to the Welsh Cistercians themselves. This did not, however, entail the questioning or dismissal of the Galfridian historical construct which was by now integral to ideas of the Welsh past. If anything, the failure of the cause of Welsh independence gave even greater emphasis to the British past of the Welsh and their hopes for redemption and renewal over the whole island of Britain, the canvas of Geoffrey's history. The previous chapter on Valle Crucis and the poets has indicated how firm a part of the historical backdrop this material had become, particularly in the poetry of Gutun Owain who extols many of his patrons as Trojans.²⁴³ Indeed, Gutun Owain's career in many ways encapsulates the role of this historical material and its continuing relevance both to the Cistercian order and to the lay elite. He was intimately linked with both throughout his life, and his role as well as that of the abbot of Valle Crucis in the commission to establish a correct pedigree for Henry VII illustrates well how the historical and prophetic background of Tudor support in Wales drew on these Cistercian historiographical traditions.²⁴⁴ Some of Geoffrey of Monmouth's sources belonged to a Welsh prophetic tradition of great antiquity, and his work in turn

²⁴² Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 211–14.

²⁴³ See above, pp. 115–16.

²⁴⁴ *The Historie of Cambria now called Wales: A Part of the Most Famous Yland of Brytaine, Written in the Brytish Language Aboue Two Hundreth Yeares Past: Translated Into English by H. Lloyd Gentleman*, D. Powel (London, 1584), p. 391.

became part of this. By around 1400, the influence of Geoffrey's work on Welsh prophetic poetry is clear, and the creation and spread of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the previous century must have been a decisive influence.²⁴⁵ Welsh prophetic poetry was used as propaganda in the fifteenth century for both sides during the Wars of the Roses, and the tendency for Welsh political aspirations to be tied in with English affairs is reflected in the acquaintance with English political prophecy which these Welsh poets show.²⁴⁶

The themes of this historical construct as well as the history itself were adapted to changed circumstances after the Glyndŵr revolt, and assumed a role in the political outlook of the Welsh elite which no longer articulated dissatisfaction with their place in the English state. This change was partially facilitated by the rise to power of the Tudor dynasty. But a detailed discussion of these issues, as well as the use of the Welsh Historical Continuum after the medieval period and the dissolution of those Cistercian monasteries which had played such an important role in its formulation and acceptance, falls beyond the scope of this study.²⁴⁷

The Cistercian order's spread into Wales had, by the late twelfth century, seen the establishment of a network of monasteries throughout native Wales with a great deal of influence on the culture of that society. The dissemination of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* owed something to this network, although it is likely that the marcher Cistercian houses also played a significant role here. These

²⁴⁵ R. W. Evans, 'Prophetic Poetry', in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282–c.1550: Volume II*, ed. by A. O. H. Jarman, G. R. Hughes and D. Johnston (second edition, Cardiff, 1997), pp. 256–74 (p. 262).

²⁴⁶ For a general account for this later period, see Glanmor Williams, 'Prophecy, Poetry and Politics in Medieval and Tudor Wales', in *British Government and Administration: Essays Presented to S. B. Chrimes*, ed. by H. Hearder and H. R. Loyn (Cardiff, 1974), pp. 104–116.

²⁴⁷ For studies of *Brut y Brenhinedd* in this context, see B. F. Roberts, 'Ymagweddu at Brut y Brenhinedd hyd 1890', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 122–38; *idem*, 'Siefre o Fynwy a Myth Hanes Cenedl y Cymry', *Côf Cenedl* 6 (1991), 1–32.

monasteries were not simply centres of production, and took an active interest in the production and adaptation of versions of Geoffrey's work. This was an aspect of the Cistercian's involvement with Welsh written culture in general, an involvement which explains the fact that the majority of Welsh vernacular manuscripts between 1250 and 1350 are Cistercian productions.²⁴⁸ This activity mirrored their close involvement in princely politics, and this interaction with the lay elite of native Wales was an important factor in the translation of Galfridian material into the vernacular.

This involvement in politics is also reflected in the second category of historical material on which this study has concentrated. The chronicle material surviving from these abbeys cannot be described as foundation histories or ecclesiastical chronicles, and their focus on the affairs of the native princes who were often their patrons indicates that the historiographical activities of the monks went hand-in-hand with the political affiliations of the monastery. Comparison with the situation in England has shown that, although the twelfth-century foundational writings so characteristic of the northern Cistercians is without comparison in the surviving Welsh material, there is considerable agreement on many matters. Aspects such as chronicle writing adhere to a common pattern to some extent, although the particularity of the Welsh Cistercians' political involvement is a point of difference. Particularly illuminating is the parallel between the two areas in terms of dependence upon older institutions for historical material.

It was in the thirteenth century, under the stress of conflict, that these two traditions of Galfridian history and annalistic writing began to be combined to take early steps towards creating an authoritative history of the Welsh. The process which led to the production of the Welsh Historical Continuum spanned both sides of the

²⁴⁸ Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 52–53.

conquest, and it is clear that even with the failure of the political aspirations to which they ascribed, the Welsh Cistercians continued their support of native Welsh causes, just as the lay elite who had recently lost the princes who ruled them continued their support of the monasteries and the histories produced there. The implications of both these processes became apparent in the Glyndŵr revolt, when Galfridian history provided the ideological backdrop and Cistercian monks provided a dependable source of support. By this point, the combined effect of the political and historical interests of the order had been to bolster the ideological basis for Welsh independence. With the failure of that cause, the history they produced would continue to occupy a central place in the Welsh consciousness despite the defeat of first the house of Gwynedd and then Glyndŵr's revolt. Its dependence both on Welsh tradition and the innovations of Geoffrey of Monmouth, with his pan-European popularity, gave the history a plasticity which meant that its authority could survive unchallenged when the political cause to which its proponents had subscribed was spent.

CONCLUSION

With the ascension of Henry Tudor to the English throne in 1485, it was a widely held belief that prophecies concerning the restoration of British rule over the island had been realised.¹ As discussed in the second chapter, the historical narrative embodied in the Welsh Historical Continuum formed an essential component of the ideological backdrop to the interpretation of these events in Wales. Regardless of the significance of these histories to Henry Tudor and his dynasty, the sixteenth century would see numerous Welshmen attain positions of influence in England, and the legal incorporation of Wales into England in 1536 and 1543 swept aside the remaining barriers to the personal advancement of Welshmen within the English state. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw increasing Anglicisation of the Welsh nobility and saw Wales become an integral part of the kingdom of England, with the developments which led to this being enthusiastically endorsed by articulate Welshmen at the time.²

The copying, editing, translation and discussion of Galfridian historical material and of associated chronicles has been seen as one of the few continuities in Welsh intellectual life between the middle ages and the enlightenment. Changing social and cultural preoccupations among the Welsh elite led to the decline and demise of the bardic order in the seventeenth century, and the Acts of Union made the native legal tradition of *Cyfraith Hywel* largely irrelevant. Interest in the historical texts which have been the focus of this study, however, continued, and became the focus of a debate of central importance to understanding their significance as articulations of the foundations of a Welsh identity in a British past.

¹ G. Williams, *Recovery, Reorientation and Reformation: Wales c.1415–1642* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 235–43.

² C. Davies, *Welsh Literature and the Classical Tradition* (Cardiff, 1995), pp. 53–84.

This debate centred on the reliability of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* as an historical source. Although doubt had been cast on the veracity of particular aspects of Geoffrey's history as early as the twelfth century, most notably by William of Newburgh, in general Geoffrey's account of the British past was accepted throughout the middle ages and, as this study has outlined, became a part of the standard canon of national history in both Wales and England.³ The question was reopened in the sixteenth century by Polydore Vergil, an Italian historian whose *Anglica Historia*, published in 1534, was originally commissioned by King Henry VII.⁴ Vergil's criticism of the veracity of Geoffrey's account of early Britain, based on the silence of classical sources regarding most of the events he described, touched a raw nerve with many in England, such as John Leland.⁵ But it caused a particularly strong reaction in Wales, where Geoffrey was defended by humanists such as John Prise, Humphrey Lhuyd and David Powel, among others.⁶ The vociferousness of some of these defences of Geoffrey indicate the central role this history had come to play in Welsh identity, and despite the careful rational humanism of, for example, Sir John Prise's *Historiae Brytannicae Defensio*, the basis of the argument for many Welshmen was the defence of national pride against outside attack.⁷

The process whereby the texts of the Welsh Historical Continuum came to be the authoritative account of the history of the Welsh has been outlined in this study. Its continuing importance is clear from the debate on Geoffrey's authenticity. This

³ A. Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32 (1981), 397–425 (416–419); J. Crick, 'The British Past and the Welsh Future: Gerald of Wales, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Arthur of Britain', *Celtica* 23 (1999), 60–75.

⁴ D. Hay, *Polydore Vergil: Renaissance Historian and Man of Letters* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 1–21.

⁵ J. Leland, *Assertio inelytissimi Arturii* (London, 1544).

⁶ A. O. H. Jarman, 'Y Ddadl Ynghylch Sieffre o Fynwy', *Llên Cymru* 2 (1952), 1–18.

⁷ John Pryse, *Historiae Brytannicae defensio* (London, 1573). For a discussion of John Prise's defence, see C. Davies, 'Syr John Prise ac Amddiffyn Hanes Prydain', *Y Traethodydd* 158 (2003), 164–85. The emotional nature of much of the argument is emphasised in B. F. Roberts, 'Ymagweddu at Brut y Brenhinedd hyd 1890', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1971), 122–38.

debate is partially responsible for the fact that the sixteenth century sees the greatest share of manuscripts of the vernacular texts discussed above.⁸ Although Vergil was primarily concerned with the Latin texts of Geoffrey's history, the vernacular translations discussed in this study were also central to the debate. John Prise was well aware of *Brut y Tywysogion* as a continuation of the Welsh texts of Geoffrey's history, and indeed he used his knowledge of this fact to add an extra dimension to his defence of this history, a dimension which the attacks of Polydore Vergil lacked.⁹ Debates about the nature of Geoffrey's source material also focussed on the Welsh versions of his history as candidates for the *liber uetustissimus* which Geoffrey claims to have used as his main source.¹⁰ Although Geoffrey was no longer considered a reliable historical source in England by 1600, in Wales the debate went on, so tied was the work to ideas of national pride.¹¹

Some of the manuscripts discussed in the first and second chapter were referred to in this debate. The title *Brut Tysilio*, which came to be used in general for Geoffrey's supposed Welsh source, was taken from a now-lost manuscript which belonged to the north-eastern Historical Continuum, related to Cotton Cleopatra MS B v and Jesus College, Oxford MS 141.¹² Both of these surviving manuscripts were also referred to as representative of Geoffrey's source, Jesus 141 by Moses Williams in the eighteenth century and Cotton Cleopatra by Archbishop Ussher in the previous century.¹³ The debate over the veracity of Geoffrey's account, which continued up to the nineteenth century, therefore involved not just the Latin text but also texts of the

⁸ See appendix 2.

⁹ Pryse, *Defensio*, pp. 14–15; C. Davies, 'Syr John Prise', 183.

¹⁰ 'very ancient book'. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *the History of the Kings of Britain: an Edition and Translation of De gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, ed. by M. D. Reeve and N. Wright, Arthurian Studies 69 (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 5.

¹¹ Roberts, 'Ymagweddau', 123.

¹² B. F. Roberts, *Brut Tysilio* (Llandysul, 1980); *idem*, 'Ymagweddau', 124–25, 131–33.

¹³ Roberts, 'Ymagweddau', 129, 131; James Ussher, *Britannicarum ecclesiarum antiquitates, quibus inserta est pestiferæ adversus Dei gratiam a Pelagio Britanno in ecclesiam inductæ hereseos historia* (Dublin, 1639), p. 57.

Welsh translations of the work, including those of the Welsh Historical Continuum which had been so important in cementing the central place of this narrative as a pillar of national identity since the middle ages. The focus was rarely on comparison of the actual texts and their relationships, but was conducted on an emotional level that often devolved into *ad hominem* attacks.¹⁴ It was only with the appearance of reliable printed editions of the texts from the nineteenth century onwards that the debate about the relationship of the Welsh texts to the Latin was finally settled, the Welsh versions recognised as translations of Geoffrey's Latin.

The engagement of Welsh humanist scholars in this debate in the sixteenth century in part reflects its importance within England. Polydore Vergil was, after all, writing a history which was explicitly that of England, and which to some extent indicates a rejection of *British* history in favour of English history.¹⁵ The process whereby the Galfridian historical narrative was adopted as English history was discussed in the third chapter, which also demonstrated the difficulties that this caused. As of the fifteenth century, however, this British history and its adoption into the English national narrative provided a way for the Welsh to assert an honourable and ancient identity within the political and ideological framework of the English state. Discussing the later stage of the Welsh Historical Continuum in the introduction to the *Historie of Cambria*, his edition of Humphrey Lhuyd's *Cronica Walliae* which was based on a version of *Brut y Tywysogion*, David Powel used the text to justify the activities and resistance of the independent Welsh princes of the past, but carefully distinguished between the injustices of the past and the contented situation of Wales in the present under the Tudor monarchs.¹⁶ If British monarchy, lost at the end of

¹⁴ Roberts, 'Ymagwedddau', 126, 135–38

¹⁵ Hay, *Polydore Vergil*, p. 153.

¹⁶ This work was for two centuries regarded as the standard account of medieval Welsh history. Jarman, 'Y Ddadl', 11, 13–14; H. Lhuyd, *Cronica Walliae*, ed. by I. M. Williams (Cardiff, 2012);

Geoffrey's history, had been restored at the ascension of Henry Tudor, then the Welsh could happily take their place as faithful subjects of that restored British monarchy, regardless of the creeping Anglicisation which this brought.¹⁷ To threaten the credibility of this history was therefore to threaten the means by which the Welsh could justify their place in the state. The Welsh defence of Geoffrey's credibility was a defence of national pride. As late as the eighteenth century, Lewis Morris saw anyone who disputed the veracity of the British history as a traitor to their country.¹⁸

It was the ambiguity of Geoffrey's account, discussed in the introduction as the cause for a plethora of differing interpretations of his work, which enabled his adoption into both the Welsh and the English national narratives. In England, however, the Galfridian narrative was, as discussed in the third chapter, imperfectly assimilated into a tradition which was also under considerable influence from other historical narratives, such as Bede and the Anglo-Saxon chronicle. In Wales the importance of Geoffrey was more fundamental: within the framework of the Welsh Historical Continuum, it is *Brut y Brenhinedd* which occupies the central place and which relates the period of British control over the island, with the subsequent narrative of *Brut y Tywysogion* detailing the later history of the Welsh after their decline. In both the sense of their decline and the now-fragmented political unity of the British kingdom which they had ruled, the Welsh after the end of the Galfridian narrative were in an imperfect state.

The Historie of Cambria now Called Wales, D. Powel (London, 1584). The shift of opinion against Geoffrey is clear from William Wynne's preface to the 1697 edition of Humphrey Lhuyd and David Powel's *Historie of Cambria*, where he reluctantly rejects Geoffrey as a credible source. *The History of Wales, Comprehending the Lives and Succession of the Princes of Wales, from Cadwalader the Last King, to Lhewelyn the Last Prince, of British Blood*, ed. by W. Wynne (London, 1697), preface; Roberts, 'Ymagweddau', 128.

¹⁷ For a general discussion of the importance of the ideal of British monarchy in Welsh historiography, see D. G. Jones, *Gwlad y Brutiau: Darlith Goffa Henry Lewis* (Swansea, 1991), reprinted in his *Agoriad yr Oes* (Talybont, 2001), pp. 67–92.

¹⁸ Roberts, 'Ymagweddau', 127–28.

The Welsh therefore had more to lose by the rejection of Geoffrey's history. It was a work flexible and ambiguous enough to be adopted by both the Welsh and the English, and within Wales to change from a work which gave Glyndŵr ammunition for his program of independence to a work which provided justification for Welsh acquiescence in an English state. But it was insufficiently flexible to survive these challenges to its veracity and retain its privileged place as a plank of national identity. The intellectual battle against these challenges in Wales was hard-fought and lengthy, indicating the importance the historical narrative to which the work was central had assumed in Welsh identity.

The other most important text in this study came to be a part of this Galfridian narrative but was originally developed separately. The study of *Brut y Tywysogion* which forms the fourth chapter engaged with fundamental questions regarding the nature of the chronicle, its most useful conclusion perhaps being that it is necessary to think of its composition as taking place over a long period of development rather than being the work of a single, late thirteenth-century compiler as envisioned by Thomas Jones and J. Beverley Smith. The chapter confirmed and advanced recent work undertaken on the chronicle by David Stephenson, indicating that it tells us much about the development of historical writing in medieval Wales since it frequently evinces historiographical developments within the body of the text itself. An example of this is the shift from British to Welsh terminology, although such developments are often overlain and partially obscured by equally telling changes made to the text subsequently, for example *Brenhinedd y Saesson's* preference for Welsh terminology.

Considerable work remains to be done on these issues, but the chapter has advanced the subject and revealed the inadequacy of some earlier approaches in fully

appreciating the complexity of the chronicle. Within the confines of the study it was possible to reach new conclusions about the text through the judicious use of case studies of particular sections, but in order to fully understand the chronicle's development it would be necessary to establish the relationship of each annal to the entries in the Welsh Latin chronicles. This would require careful study of these Latin chronicles, which suffer from the lack of critical editions. Only then can a relatively detailed understanding of Cistercian chronicle keeping in Wales be reached. At this stage, the political activities of the Welsh princes and their interactions with Cistercian monasteries, detailed in the last chapter, can be related to a sound understanding of the process of chronicle keeping in Wales. At several points in the study, particularly in discussing the *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* chronicle, a network of chronicle sharing between Cistercian houses has been envisioned, but only when our potential for understanding the exact nature of this process has been realised through careful study of the entire surviving corpus of Welsh chronicles can the interplay between this collaborative annalistic activity and the contemporary political situation be fully understood. The intellectual connections revealed by this pattern of sharing of annals will no doubt prove illuminating. The discussion of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* in the fifth chapter, and the appended edition, adds considerably to this picture and ensures that any future study cannot neglect this short chronicle. The shared participation of Cistercian houses in native Welsh political affairs clearly went hand-in-hand with their collaborative historical writing, and chapters four, five and six have gone some way towards demonstrating that, but further work is needed in order to fully assess the nature and significance of this historical activity.

Certain shared features of *Brut y Tywysogion* show not the influence of one author but the tenor and conventions of medieval Welsh historical thought, and the

text is all the more valuable because of it. But discussion of the Llanbadarn History has demonstrated that there are long sections of the text which show the considerable influence of a single author, whose interpretation of contemporary history is expressive of his own concerns and situation. If the author is Daniel ap Sulien, his description of recent political events shows his belief that the Welsh were a nation in decline, having lost control over the institution of kingship. These ideas are reflected not only in the work of his brother, Rhygyfarch, but also in the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth with which Daniel's history, as part of *Brut y Tywysogion*, would come to be associated.

The first indications of the linking of these two historical traditions, that of Welsh chronicle writing and the Galfridian British history, come in the thirteenth century. It has been observed that, of Cistercian houses in Wales, there seems to be a particular association between Valle Crucis and *Brut y Brenhinedd* on the one hand, and Strata Florida and *Brut y Tywysogion* on the other.¹⁹ We can speculate as to the reasons for this. The second chapter was cautious in endorsing the attribution of manuscripts of *Brut y Brenhinedd* to Valle Crucis but there is an undeniably strong link between this monastery and the translated historical texts. If suggestions concerning the possibility that Madog of Edeirnion was also associated with this house in the previous chapter are accepted, it may be that the monastery's interest in Galfridian history was not confined to the production of vernacular texts, and that activity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries drew on a tradition that stretched back into the thirteenth century and involved the production of both Latin and vernacular texts.

¹⁹ D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 53; B. F. Roberts, *Brut Tysilio* (Llandysul, 1980), p. 18–20.

With regard to Strata Florida, it may be that the abbey's relatively senior position within the order in native Wales as well as its central geographical location are significant factors in explaining its role in the production of *Brut y Tywysogion*. Too much emphasis should not be placed on the relationship between mother and daughter houses as a decisive factor in the transmission of these chronicles, since it is clear that *Brut y Tywysogion* reached Valle Crucis by 1330 despite the fact that the monastery was not closely linked with Strata Florida in terms of the filiation of Welsh Cistercian monasteries. Again, more work is necessary in order to fully appreciate the role of Strata Florida and other Cistercian houses in the process of chronicle keeping.

Whitland has also emerged as a significant institution, particularly with regard to the combination of Galfridian and annalistic traditions of historical writing. The combination of the Cistercian and St David's-derived sections of the PRO chronicle with a world-history showing considerable Galfridian influence may have been undertaken there. The Cottonian chronicle was also independently combined with the same Geoffrey-influenced text at St David's at some point before 1288. Work remains to be done on the composition of the PRO chronicle, but Whitland's significance also comes from its role as the monastery that produced Exeter MS 3514, a manuscript which indicates the acceptance of Geoffrey into a Welsh Cistercian historiography which also embraced texts such as *Cronica de Wallia* and which reveals an impulse to expand Geoffrey's narrative to run from the Trojan war to later English and Welsh history.

All signs indicate that the process whereby Geoffrey's history came to be more closely associated with chronicle writing in Wales was underway before the conquest, and that the seeds of the continuous history which emerges by the mid-fourteenth century were sown before 1282. It is perhaps surprising that there were clear moves

towards associating these texts before the Edwardian conquest, since reading the contemporary history of the princes in the light of *De gestis Britonum* created a narrative of decline and increasing powerlessness which could be seen as being at odds with moves towards the creation of a Welsh principality in the thirteenth century. Despite the fact that his work gave the British past popularity and prestige, Geoffrey's history paints the later history of Wales in an unflattering light. But the ambiguity present in his work, which was discussed in the introduction, meant that this notion of decline could also promise renewal and delivery. Even as the confinement of the Britons to Wales and their increasing barbarity is related in Geoffrey's history, it is made clear that this is a temporary arrangement until Merlin's prophecy to Arthur is fulfilled.²⁰ Although a specific prophecy of this nature is cheerfully absent from the history, we are nevertheless reminded that the real conclusion of *De gestis Britonum* is not at the end of the work but in the middle, the prophecies of Merlin which promise, among other things, a renewal of British power over Britain.²¹ A text as ambiguous in meaning as Geoffrey's history will bear many different interpretations. Gerald of Wales' use of Gildas and Geoffrey, for example, gave comfort to the Anglo-Normans by depicting the Welsh as a people doomed to fail by patterns of behaviour stretching back to their Trojan ancestors.²² But combined with the prophetic tradition, the decline inherent in the Galfridian structure of British/Welsh history could also be alleviated.

The thirteenth century in Wales was also a period of fluctuating political fortunes. Although the earlier part of the century saw the domination of much of native Wales by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, and the decades between 1255 and 1277 were

²⁰ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 279–81

²¹ *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, p. 149.

²² H. Pryce, 'Gerald of Wales, Gildas and the *Descriptio Kambriae*', in *TOME: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards*, ed. by F. Edmonds and P. Russell (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 115–24, especially p. 122.

the period of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's ascendancy, the years in between and the years immediately before the conquest saw dramatic increases in English royal power and in Welsh discontent with the political order.²³ Throughout this period, Welsh ideas about their own history were formed under fluctuating English political domination, as the cultural ambiguity of figures such as Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gerald of Wales indicates. Julia Crick's study of the Exeter manuscript saw it as an ambiguous product of competing historiographical ideologies, but the ambiguities of this combination of Welsh, British and English history go back to the genesis of one of its most important components, *De gestis Britonum*. There is something subversive in Geoffrey's account no matter how it is used, and it is this ambiguity which made possible its incorporation into Welsh and English national narratives, and enabled it to be used as political propaganda by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd or Glyndŵr as well as to justify Welsh participation in an English political sphere after these political aspirations were extinguished.

The thesis began by asking several questions of a series of Middle Welsh texts which were collectively termed the Welsh Historical Continuum. The question of when these works were combined was answered in the first chapter, mainly through study of the manuscripts themselves. The analysis built considerably on the work of B. G. Owens, Brynley F. Roberts and Daniel Huws but presented new conclusions as to the development of these texts. The two versions of the vernacular continuum emerged as products of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whose spread across Wales was aided by the network of Cistercian houses at which they were translated and copied. Subsequent chapters have, however, shown that the vernacular continuum built on

²³ R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 300–7, 333–54.

developments of the thirteenth century, when the long tradition of native chronicle-keeping which had been adopted by the Cistercian order began to be combined with Galfridian material. These twin strands went back to the twelfth century, when Geoffrey wrote his history, and, in the case of the Welsh Latin chronicles, back to the ninth.

The linked question as to why this continuum of texts was translated and assembled, becoming the standard account of Welsh history, was similarly answered both in terms of the life of the vernacular texts in the fourteenth and fifteenth century and also with reference to their thirteenth-century antecedents. The discussion of the chronicle tradition and the Cistercian order in the second part of the thesis has indicated how much the development of the historical material underlying *Brut y Tywysogion* owed to the involvement of these monasteries in native Welsh politics, and the cultural activities of the family of Whitland must be seen as closely linked to this political engagement. The role of these monasteries in the translation of Geoffrey is another aspect of this engagement, and this process of translation into the vernacular in the thirteenth century is indicative of close ties with the native elites which foreshadow the situation after the conquest. The second chapter explored these links with regard to Valle Crucis and its locality, and this case study resulted in a more detailed depiction of the production and reception of these historical works than has previously been undertaken. It has become clear that the initial translation of *De gestis Britonum* was undertaken because of the interest of Cistercian monasteries and the Welsh laity in this material, whereas the place of this work in a continuous history of the Welsh can partially be explained as a product of the political tensions of the thirteenth century, the culmination of which was the Edwardian conquest. The

continued, indeed increasing, political relevance of this historical material through the fourteenth century became clear in the second chapter.

But while the political circumstances of Wales in the thirteenth and fourteenth century undeniably form the background to the compilation, translation and spread of these texts, the popularity of Geoffrey was a European phenomenon. Consequently, it was also asked to what degree *De gestis Britonum* was similarly received and expanded elsewhere. The results of this demonstrated the extent to which the Welsh texts, particularly the combination of Dares and Geoffrey, fit into a pattern of translating and expanding Geoffrey's account repeated with some differences elsewhere in Europe. It was these differences, however, which demonstrated the uniqueness of the conception and purpose of Galfridian history in Wales. Its adoption into a national narrative was also a feature of its reception in England, and in northern England in particular it has been seen that such history formed an important element in the engagement of the Cistercians with the past. But particular details of Geoffrey's account, notably the 'passage of dominion', caused considerable difficulty in England as a whole, revealing the more institutional conception of the work in England as compared to a more ethnic interpretation in Wales.

The contention of the first and second chapters of this study that the popularity of these texts in the fourteenth century was partially a result of the Edwardian conquest contrasts somewhat with the emphasis of the fourth and sixth chapters on the importance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the dissemination of these works. The development and popularisation of the vernacular Historical Continuum can on the one hand be seen as a historiographical reaction to the conquest and on the other as showing considerable continuity with pre-conquest developments.

It is undeniable that reference was made to these works in the fourteenth century in order to explain the conquered status of the Welsh, and this study has demonstrated the political and social context of these interpretations.²⁴ The significance to its audience of the Cistercian chronicle which became *Brut y Tywysogion* and of the Welsh translations of Geoffrey to which it was conceptually a continuation would have differed before and after the Edwardian conquest, though the ethnic and political tensions of the thirteenth century were not finally resolved at that point and came to the fore again with the Glyndŵr revolt. The increasing interest shown in these texts by Cistercian houses and the lay elites of the surrounding area was a way of establishing and explaining their place in a world where the princes, the focus of the latter part of these histories, had vanished. Although the translations of Geoffrey and the creation of *Brut y Tywysogion* were partially a product of the Wales of the princes, it was the political conflict of which the Edwardian conquest was a part which acted as a catalyst for the full articulation of this history as a basis for national identity.²⁵

The ambiguity of Geoffrey's history lent itself well to this task. Gwyn Alf Williams argued that the Welsh were and are a people constantly forced to redefine themselves in reaction to existential threats, and given the relevance of this concept to the changing, but always central, significance of Galfridian history after the thirteenth century it is worth considering his words more closely:

²⁴ The second chapter demonstrated the necessity of reading the poetry produced at this time in light of the popularity of these historical texts, something not always appreciated by modern editors of these texts. See above, pp. 102–3, 108.

²⁵ Brynley Roberts describes these histories as *ymgais, reddfol bron, i osod seiliau i deimlad cenedlaethol, i borthi balchder ac i gynnal ffydd*, 'an almost instinctual attempt to lay the foundations for national feeling, to fuel pride and to sustain faith'. Roberts, 'Ymagweddu', 124.

In that Welsh making and remaking of themselves, a sense of history has been central. The Welsh or their effective movers and shapers have repeatedly employed history to make a usable past, to turn a past into an instrument with which the present can build a future. It was once done in terms of myth, it has been recently and can be again done in terms of history.²⁶

Geoffrey's history, and the Welsh Historical Continuum which was developed under its influence, were ambiguous enough in meaning to be supremely adaptable to changed circumstances. Any history which was equally fundamental to the Wales of the princes and the Wales of the Tudors would have to be. The national history this created was influential and flexible enough to survive many challenges, even to its credibility, until its final demise in the nineteenth century. The Welsh historical texts discussed in this study became the historiographical definition of the nation. But Geoffrey's history was also adopted into the main stream of European literature, texts comparable to the Welsh Historical Continuum were created and adapted in England and Iceland, and the Welsh continuum was itself in some ways a development of earlier associations such as that between *De gestis Britonum* and Dares Phrygius. These historical texts are therefore also indicative of the participation of Medieval Welsh historical writing in broader European trends.

²⁶ G. A. Williams, *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London, 1985), p. 304.

APPENDIX 1

AN EDITION OF *O OES GWRTHEYRN*

TEXT

- 1 O¹ oes G6rtheyrn G6rtheneu hyt weith 6adon ydd ymlada6d Arthur² ar Sayson,
ac y gor6u Arthur³. C. xx. viij. blyned.
O 6eith 6adon hyd Gamlan, [xxij].⁴ blyned.
O Gamlan hyd 6ar6 Maelgon, x. blyned.
- 5 O 6ar6 Maelgon hyd y gweith Arderyd, [xxv].⁵ blyned.⁶
Or g6eith Arderyd hyd pan las G6rgi a Phared6r, vij. blyned⁷
Or pan las G6rgi⁸ hyd 6eith Kaer Leon, ix. blyned.
O 6eith Kaer Leon hyd 6eith 6eigen, xiiij.⁹
O 6eith 6eigen hyd ual yd aeth Kad6aladr 6endigeid R6ein, [xlvij].¹⁰ blyned.
- 10 O Kad6aladr 6endigeid hyd ar Opha 6renhin, C. xxviiij. blyned.
O Opha 6renhin hyd pan losges tan o nef Dygan6y yn oes Y6ein ab Mered6d,
xx. blened.
Or pan losges¹¹ Dygan6y hyd 6ar6 Mer6yn 6rych, xxxiiij. blyned.
O 6ar6 Mer6yn hyd pan las Rodri y 6ab, xxvij.
- 15 Or Rodri hyd pan dial6ys Anar6dr y 6ab, iij. blyned.¹²

¹ Initial in MS wrongly written in as H.

² *ae hyneif* A.

³ *ae hyneif* A

⁴ *lxij* MS; *d6y vlyned ar hugeint* A; *ij* C; *xxii* D; *xxij* E; 22 F; *xx-22* G; *dwy flyned arugeint* H.

⁵ *l. xv* MS; *xxv* C; *pum mlynedd ar hugain* D; *pum mlynedd ar ugain* E; *xxv-25* G; *pym mlyned arugeint* H.

⁶ *Gwaith Arderyd de quo in Confess Merdhin a Gwendhyd* 25 F.

⁷ *O var6 maelg6n hyt weith arderyd pan las g6rgi a pharedur; seith mlyned* A.

⁸ *a pharedur* ADEFH.

⁹ *iiij* C.

¹⁰ *xxviiij* MS; *wyth mlyned a deugeint* A; *iid* C, with *d* probably a mistake for *l*; *wyth mlynedd a deugaint* D; *xlviij* E; 48 F; *xlviij-48* G; *wyth mlyned a deugeint* H.

¹¹ *pan losges y dywededic dan degann6y* A.

¹² *O rodri nny diala6d anara6t y vab ef; teir blyned* A; *o hynny hyd pann ddialwyd rrodri y mab iij* C; *O rodri hyd pan ddialodd Rodri i vab ef. iii. blynedd* D; *O Rodri oni ddialws rrodri i vab ef iij blynedd* E; *Ony dhialawdh Anarawt* 13 F; *O rodri oni ddialodd anarawd i vab xiiij-13* G; *O Rodri,*

- O 6eith Konoy nny las Mer6yn 6ab Rodri,¹³ xvij blyned.
- O 6ar6 Mer6yn hyd 6ar6 Kadell ap Rodri, x blyned.
- O 6ar6 Kadell hyd 6ar6 Anara6d, vj. blyned.
- O Anara6d hyd pan aeth Hy6el ab Kadell R6ein, xviiij. blyned.
- 20 Or pan. aeth H6el R6ein nny 6u 6ar6, xix. blyned.
- O 6ar6 Hy6el hyd 6eith Karno, vii. blyned.
- O 6eith Karno hyd 6eith 6eibon Id6al, i. bl6ydyn.¹⁴
- O 6eith meibon Id6al hyd 6ar6 Y6ein ab Hy6el Dda, xxiiiij. blyned.
- O 6ar6 Y6ein nny 6ledych6ys C6nt 6ab Y6ein,¹⁵ xxvij. blyned.
- 25 O G6n6t urenhin hyd 6acha6y nny or6u Grufut ab Llywelyn a y llas esgob y Sayson, xxxxij. blynet.
- O 6eith Macha6y hyd pan las Grufut ab Llywelyn,¹⁶ ix blynet.¹⁷
- Or pan deuth Crist yg cana6t hyt y 6loythin honno, xv. a [deugeint] a mil mlynet.¹⁸
- 30 Or pan las Grufut nny doeth Gwilym 6astard yr ynys hon, v. mlynet. Ac. xxi. mlynet y g6ladych6ys.¹⁹
- O Wilym 6astard nny las Bledyn uab Kynuyn, viij.²⁰ mlynet.
- O uledyn hyd weith Mynyth Carn, vj. mlynet. Odyna Grufut ab Kynan a Rys ab Tewd6r a or6uant yna ar Tryhaearnn ab Karada6c.²¹

yny dialws Rodri y vap ef teir blyned H.

¹³ *mer6yn y 6ab rodri* MS; *meruyn vab Rodri* ADEFGH; *o hynny hyd waith konwy pan las mervryn ap rrodri* C.

¹⁴ *iiij* C, presumably a misreading of *un*.

¹⁵ *cnut vab owein* A; *kwnt ap ywain* C; *kwnt ap Iaen* D; *cwnt mab owain* E; *Canutus vrenin* F; *Cunt frenin* G; *Cwnt map ywein* H.

¹⁶ Only B and F provide a patronymic for Gruffudd: in F Gruffudd's name is glossed with *ap Hæn ap Sitsyllht*.

¹⁷ CDE do not give the amount of years here.

¹⁸ *deucant* MS; *pymtheng mlynedd a deugeint a mil* A; *lv a mil* C; *pymthengmlynedd a deugain a mil* D; *M. lv* E; *pymthec mlyned a deugeint a mil* H. FG have no corresponding entry.

¹⁹ G does not give the length of William's reign

²⁰ *vij* MS; *seith* A; *vj* C; *saith* D; *7* F; *vij-7* G; *seith* H. Missing in E, which gives *O wilym vastart hyd waith mynydd karn. vj*. For reasons for accepting B's reading of eight, rather than ADFGH's seven, see the endnote to line 26.

- 35 O 6eith Mynyt Carn nny las Rys ab Tewd6r, xiiij. mlynet.
 Or pan las Rys nny las Gwilym 6renhin coch, vij. mlynet. Xiiij. y gwledych6ys.
 Or brenhin coch hyd 6ar6 Karada6c²² uynach, [xxv].²³ mlynet.
 O Garada6c uynach hyd uar6 Kadwalla6n uab Grufut, ac y bu uar6 Maredut
 ab Bledyn, viij. mlenet.
- 40 Or pan doeth Crist yg cana6t hyt y 6loythyn [honno, teir blyned ar dec ar
 hugeint a chant. a mil.]²⁴
 O dechreu byd hyd pan las Kadwalla6n, vj. mil. CCC. xxxij. mlynet. Ar rif
 h6nn6 diameu y6.²⁵
 Or pan las Kadwalla6n nny dorres Y6ein a Chadwaladyr²⁶ Aber Tei6i, vj.
 45 mlynet.
 Or pan dorred Aber Tei6i nny las y Frennig yn Tal Moel6re, xx. mlyned.
 Or ymalat y Nhal Moel6re nny dall6yd²⁷ y g6ystlon yg Choed [Keirya6c],²⁸
 viij. mlynet.
 O Ghoed [Keirya6c] nny dorres y6ein a chadwaladyr Rudlan, ii. 6lynet.
- 50 Or pan dorred Ru[d]lan. nny 6u 6ar6 Y6ein, v. mlenet. Ac o 6yl Clemens hyd
 nos nnyht a bl6ythyn y bu [6yu]²⁹ Kadwaladyr gwydy Y6ein.
 Or pan 6u 6ar6 Y6ein nny anet Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, d6y ulynet a hanner.

²¹ C does not describe Mynydd Carn.

²² *kriadoc* C.

²³ *xxij* MS; *pum mlyned ar hugeint* A; *xxv* C; *pumlynedd ar hugain* D; *xxv* E; 25 F; *xxv* G; *pum mlyned ar ugeint* H.

²⁴ *hon. M. CCCC. xvj. mlynet* MS, written in a later hand of 1416. Text given here from A. *xxxiiij a C a mil* C; *tair blynedd ar ddeg ar hugain a chant a mil* D; *M. C xxxiiij* E; *teyr blyned ar dec ar ugeynt a chant a mil* H. In F, the number 1133 is simply written in the margin next to the notice of Cadwallon's death. Not present in G.

²⁵ *xij a CCC a vi mil* C; *deuddengmlynedd ar ugaint a thrychant a chwemil* D; *deuddec blwyddyn ar ugaint a thry chant a chwemil* E; 6332 G; *deuddec mlyned ar ugein a thrychant a chwe mil* H. Not present in AF.

²⁶ *ywain ap kydwaladr* C; *Owain ap kadwaladr* D; *ywain ap kadwaladr* E; *Owain a Chadwaladr* AFGH.

²⁷ *dalywyt* A; *ddaliwyd* C; *ddallwyd* D; *ddaliwyd* E; *dhaliwyd* F; *ddallwyd* G; *dallwyt* H.

²⁸ *clefyta6c* MS; *keirya6c* A; *keirioc* C; *keiriawg* D; *keiriawc* E; *Ceirioc* F; *keirioc* G; *Ceyriawc* H.

²⁹ *6uy* MS; *var6* A; *vyw* C; *vyw* D; *vyw* E; *vyw* G; *vuw* H.

- Or pan anet Llywelyn ab Iorwerth yny las Y6ein ab Mada6c yn ymlat Gwern
6irogyl, xiiiij mlyned.
- 55 Or pan las Y6ein hyd haf y G6ydyl, vij. mlyned, ar 6l6ydyn rac 6yneb y bu
6r6ydyr y Choedaneu.³⁰ Y trydet 6l6ydyn y bu 6ar6 Rodri ab Y6ein.
O haf y G6ydyl hyd Castell Paen. v. mlynet.³¹ Y gayaf rac 6yneb y torres
Llywelyn yr 6ydgruc.³² D6y ulyned g6edy Castell Paen y bu uar6 Grufut ab
Kynan. Y 6loythyn g6edy mar6 Grufut y bu uar6 Dauyd ab Y6ein.
- 60 Or pan 6u uar6 Daudi uab Ywein yny wahard6yt effereneu [dros Loegyr a
Chymry]³³ o [annundeb]³⁴ Ieuan urenhin ac Ysteuyn archesgob Keint, v.
mlyned. Ar [g6ahard h6nn6 a vu]³⁵ seith mlyned dros Loygyr a phum mlened
dros Gymry.
Yn y 6loythyn nessaf yr 6n y gwahard6yt yr yffereneu yt aeth [Llywelyn vab
65 Iorwerth a Hywel uab Gruffud]³⁶ y gyd a Ieuan urenhin Lloegyr hyd ym
Brydyn³⁷ y darest6c brenhin Prydyn y Ieuan urenhin Lloygyr. Nos 6yl Sim6nd
a Iuda³⁸ yn y 6loythyn honno y doeth ystiward llys brenhin Llychlyn, Herlaut
Pic³⁹ y en6, a chweych her6log ganta6 hyd yn Llanuaes y yspeila6 y tref ae

³⁰ *coettaneu* A; *koectanau* C; *koet taneu* D; *koetane* E; *Coetaveu* F; *koed aneu* G; *Coetauen* H.

³¹ C does not give the amount of years.

³² The information about Llywelyn and the Wyddgrug are missing in G.

³³ *y lloegyr* MS; *dros loegyr a chymry* ACDEFGH.

³⁴ *anuunideb* MS; *annuundeb* A; *anghytundeb* C; *Anundeb* D; *anundeb* E; *anuudeb* G; *anuhundeb* H. Missing in F.

³⁵ *gwaharda6n* MS; *g6ahard h6nn6 a vu* A; *gwahardd hwnnw a vu* C; *gwardd hwnnw a vu* D; *gwahardd hwnw afu* E; *gwahard hwnnw a fu* H. Missing in FG.

³⁶ *llywelyn ab iorwerht a hywel y uab* MS; *llywelyn vab Iorwerth a howel vab gruffud* A; *lln ap jer3 ap ho ap gruff* C; *llywelyn ap Ior3 a hywel ap gruff* D; *Hn ap Ior4 a hol ap Gruff* E; *Lhywelyn ap Jorwerth a Howel ap Gruffyth* F; *Hv ap Io4 ap ho ap g3* G; *llywelyn map Iorwerth, a Hywel map Gruffut* H.

³⁷ *hyt yn ruuein y darost6ng y brenhin* A; *i brydain i ddarostwng brenin prydain* C; *i ddarystwng brenin prydyn* D; *hyd ymprydyn i ddarostwng brenin prydyn* E; *hyd ym Prydyn y dharestwng brenhin Prydyn* F; *hyd ymhrydyn i ddarostwng brenin prydyn* G; *hyt ym Prydyn y darystng brenhyn Prydyn* H.

³⁸ ABG date the raid to the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, missing in CDEH. F does so in a marginal note.

³⁹ *heralt pic* A; *herlang pic* C; *herlaut pic* D; *herlant pic* E; *Herlanc Pik neu Herald Pie* F; *herlan pik* G; *Herlaut Pic* H.

llosgi, a e llas Herlaut Pic⁴⁰ ae oreugw[y]r.⁴¹

70 Ac yn y 6loythin rac 6yneb y aeth Ieuan urenhin y Ywerthon, ac y doeth R6nd6lf iaryll Caer [i] Dycañ6y yn erbyn Ieuan urenhin,⁴² ac a [gynatlassei]⁴³ ac ef yno ac a gauas Dycañ6y gwedy y thorri o Lywelyn rac Ieuan urenhin, ac y cadarnha6ys R6nd6lf Dycañ6y o wyt yscuba6r y Creudyn.⁴⁴

Y 6loythyn rac 6yneb y doeth Ieuan urenhin a dygyuor Freinc a Lloygyr a
75 Prydyn hyd yn Aber, ac y dellyg6ys y Brabanseid⁴⁵ y losgi Bangor. Ac yna [y daliassant]⁴⁶ Robert esgob ac y dugant y gharchar, hyd pan y rydha6ys y brenhin yr esgob. Ac yna y kymodes Llywelyn ar brenhin, ac e rodes Gruffut y uab y gwystyl, a phe[d]war gwystyl arr igeint o ueibyon gwyrda y am hyny,⁴⁷ ac yd ymhoeles⁴⁸ y brenhin dracheuyn y Loygyr.

80 Y 6loythyn rac 6yneb, nos Sad6rn Sulgwyn,⁴⁹ y bu 6ar6 Maredut ab Kynan. Pum mlynet y bu Grufut ab Llewelyn y gharchar Ieuan urenhin, ac yna o nerth Du6 a chygor Ysteuyn, archescob Keint, y ryda6yt. Ym pen y teir blynet gwedy rythau Grufut uab Llewelyn y bu 6ar6 Ieuan urenhin. Ac y bu 6ar6 Hywel ap Grufut.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ *heralt pic A; ef C; herlund pic D; herlant pic E; herlan pik G; Herlaut Pic H.*

⁴¹ *oreugwr MS; oreugwyr ACDEFH.*

⁴² A ends here.

⁴³ *ymlatyssei MS; gynatlassodd FH, missing in others (see below).*

⁴⁴ *doeth Randwlff iarll kaer digannwy yni erbyn ac i kavas ddygannwy ai lu ac ai kydarnhaodd o waith ysgubor y kreuddun C; doeth randwlf iarll kaer dygannwy yn i erbyn ag y kavas Degannwy Gwedy i thorri o lywelyn yna y kadarnhaodd Randwlf dygannwy o wyth ysgubawr y kreuddyn DE; doeth Randulph Jarlh Caer y dhygannwy yn erbyn Jevan vrenin a gynatlassodh ac ef ac y Cavas Dygannwy gwedi ey thorri o Lewelyn rac Jevan vrenin. Ac y Cadarnhaodh Randulph Dhygannwy o wydh yscubor y Creudhyn F; doeth ranndwlff Ia...yn erbyn Ien frenin ac...ac y kafas dygannwy wedi...ean ac y kadarnhaodd ranndwlff...yskuborue y kreuddyn G; doeth Randulf iarll Caer Dyganwy yn erbyn Ieuan frenhyn a gynatlassodh ag ef eno, ac y kafas Dyganwy gwedy y thorry o Lywelyn [rac Ieuan frenhyn] ac y cadarnhaus Randwlf Dyganwy o wyth [neu wyd] ysgubaur y Creudyn H.*

⁴⁵ *ire beuseith C; vrebansieid D; vrebansiaid E; Brabansieid F; frebanssiaut G; vrebansieith H.*

⁴⁶ *yd adalasant MS; y daliwyd saint C; y daliassant DEFGH.*

⁴⁷ *am hynny C; am ben hynny D; y am hynny E; am hynny H.*

⁴⁸ *ymchwelws CEH; yd dymchwelodd DF; y dychwelodd G.*

⁴⁹ The dating to the Saturday of Whitsun is unique to B.

⁵⁰ *¶n ap Gruff E; Hywel ap Gruffudd's obituary is missing from D.*

- 85 Or pan 6u 6ar6 Ieuan brenhin yn[y] 6u uar6 yr argl6ytes, g6reic Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, xx. mlynet.
Or pan 6u 6ar6 yr argl6ytes nny 6u 6ar6 Llywelyn uab Iorwerth, teir blynet.⁵¹
Or pan 6u 6ar6 Llywelyn ab Iorwerth nny 6u 6ar6 Grufut y uab, iiij mlynet.
Or pan 6u 6ar6 Grufut nny 6u 6ar6 Dauyd ab Llewelyn, ij. 6lynet.
- 90 Or pan 6u 6ar6 Daid ab Llywelyn hyd y 6r6ydyr yn Erwin yrr6g Ywein a Llewelyn ab Grufut, xj. mlynet.
Or 6r6ydyr yn Erwin nny las y Freinc yn y Kymereu, ij. 6lynet.
Or 6r6ydyr yn [Erwin]⁵² nny tored castell y Diserth, x. mlynet. Yn yr 6n kynhayaf y caffad Dycan6y.
- 95 O gael Dycan6y hyd gael Penard Dyla6c,⁵³ bl6ythyn.⁵⁴
O dechreu byt nny 6u y 6r6ydyr [yn Erwin],⁵⁵ [chwe mil. CCCC. liiii].⁵⁶
Or pan death Crist yg cana6t hyd y 6r6ydyr yn Erwin, mil. cc. l. v.⁵⁷
Or pan doeth Kymry gyntaf y ynys Prydyn nny doeth Ieuan urenhin Aber, ac nny aeth Grufut ab Llewelin y gwystyl, ij. m. ccccc. xvj.
- 100 Or pan doeth cred gyntaf y Gymry y gan Eletirius pap yn oes Lles ab Coel brenhin Kymry, hyd y 6loytyn...

The text of B breaks off at this point. This final section is also damaged in G (Peniarth 212), B's closest relative to continue to this point. The remaining part of G is now given, with additional readings from H:

⁵¹ ...4 G.

⁵² y kymereu MS; derwyn CDEFGH.

⁵³ pennarddylak C; Pennardd y lawg D; peneilardalauc E; Penardhllac F; penardlyawc G; Penardaluauc H.

⁵⁴ From Derwin until this point, G reads: *Or frwydr nny derwyn oni ddistrowiwyd kastell y ddisserth x. O bann gad tygannwy oni gad penardlyawc- l. F finishes here.*

⁵⁵ yn herwyn C; yn y derwyn D; yn derwyn E; y derwin G; yn Derwyn H.

⁵⁶ chwe. mil CCCC lxxiiii MS; liij a CCCC a vi mil C; pedair blynedd ar ddeg a deugaint a phedwarkant a chwemil D; pedair blynedd ar ddec a deuaint a CCCC a chwemil E; vj mil cccliiij G; pedair blynedd ar dec a deugeint a phedwarcant a chwe myl H.

⁵⁷ pymthec mlynedd a ddeugaint a ddeukant a mil E.

...pan aeth Gruffudd yngwystl, 1040- mil xl.

O bann ddoeth y Saesson gyntaf i ynys Brydain oni aeth Gruffudd yngwystl,
552- ccccclij.

105 O bann ddoeth Normynn [gyntaf y ynys] Brydain oni aeth Gruffudd yn
[gwystel, dwy flyned ar bymthec a deugein a chant].

The CDE branch date this closing section with reference to the battle of Derwin rather than to Gruffudd's taking as a hostage. The text of D is given here from line 98, as it is fuller than C, which omits and shortens.

Or pan ddoeth Kymry gyntaf ir ynys hon hyd y vrwydr yn y Derwyn, saith
mlynedd a thrigaint CCCC a dwyvil.⁵⁸

Or pan ddoeth kred Gymry y gan Eleutherius bab yn amser Lles ap Koel hyd y
110 vrwydr yn y Derwyn, naw mlynedd a phedwarugain a mil.⁵⁹

Or pan ddoeth Saeson i ynys Prydain hyd vrwydr yn y Derwyn, un blwyddyn
a chwe chant.

Or pan ddoeth Norddmyn gyntaf yr ynys hon hyd brwydr y Derwyn,
chweblynedd a chwechant.⁶⁰

H dates to both the battle of Derwin and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's captivity, making it clear that the exemplars used by the scribe of H belonged to both branches of the textual tradition. It agrees in all instances with either G or D, though it includes the portions now damaged or missing if G, given in square brackets.

⁵⁸ *lxvj a CCC a ii mil C; lxj CCCC a dwy vil E;*

⁵⁹ *xj a C C; M lxxxix E.* The *xj* of MS C here is almost certainly a misreading of *mil*. Lles/Lucius was thought to have died in 156, so 1100 years would give 1256.

⁶⁰ *un flwyddyn a chwechant a...E.*

TRANSLATION

The dates alongside the text are those ascertainable from other sources, not those given in the chronicle itself.

From the time of Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenau until the battle of Badon where Arthur fought with the English and Arthur prevailed, one hundred and twenty-eight years.

From the battle of Badon until Camlan, twenty-two years.

From Camlan until the death of Maelgwn, ten years.

From the death of Maelgwn until the battle of Arfderydd, twenty-five years.

From the battle of Arfderydd until when Gwrgi and Peredur were killed, seven years.

From when Gwrgi was killed until the battle of Caer Leon, nine years.

633 From the battle of Caer Leon until the battle of Meigen, fourteen years.

From the battle of Meigen until when Cadwaladr Fendigaid went to Rome, forty-eight years.

From Cadwaladr Fendigaid until King Offa, one hundred and twenty-eight years.

From King Offa until when fire from heaven burned Degannwy in the time of Owain ap Maredudd, twenty years.

From when Degannwy was burned until the death of Merfyn Frych, thirty-three years.

878 From the death of Merfyn until when his son Rhodri was killed, twenty-seven years.

From Rhodri until when Anarawd his son avenged him, three years.

From the battle of Conwy until Merfyn ap Rhodri was killed, seventeen years.

- 909 From the death of Merfyn until the death of Cadell ap Rhodri, ten years.
From the death of Cadell until the death of Anarawd, six years.
From Anarawd until when Hywel ap Cadell went to Rome, eighteen years.
- 950 From when Hywel went to Rome until his death, nineteen years.
From the death of Hywel until the battle of Carno, seven years.
From the battle of Carno until the battle of the sons of Idwal, one year.
From the battle of the sons of Idwal until the death of Owain ap Hywel Dda, twenty-four years.
From the death of Owain until Cnut son of Swein reigned, twenty-seven years.
From King Cnut until Machafwy when Gruffudd ap Llywelyn prevailed and the bishop of the English was killed, forty-two years.
From the battle of Machafwy until when Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was killed, nine years.
From when Christ was made flesh until that year, one thousand and fifty-five years.
- 1066 From when Gruffudd was killed until William the Bastard came to this island, five years. And he reigned twenty-one years.
From William the Bastard until Bleddyn ap Cynfyn was killed, eight years.
- 1081 From Bleddyn until the battle of Mynydd Carn, six years. There Gruffudd ap Cynan and Rhys ap Tewdwr prevailed over Trahaearn ap Caradog.
- 1093 From the battle of Mynydd Carn until Rhys ap Tewdwr was killed, thirteen years.
- 1100 From when Rhys was killed until William the red king was killed, seven years.
He reigned thirteen years.
From the red king until the death of Caradog the monk, twenty-five years.

1132 From Caradog the monk until the death of Cadwallon son of Gruffudd, and Maredudd ap Bleddyn died, eight years.

From when Christ was made flesh until that year, one thousand one hundred and thirty-three years.

From the beginning of the world until when Cadwallon was killed, six thousand three hundred and thirty-two years. And that number is without doubt.

From when Cadwallon was killed until Owain and Cadwaladr destroyed Aberteifi, six years.

From when Aberteifi was destroyed until the French were killed in Tal Moelfre, twenty years.

1165 From the fighting in Tal Moelfre until the hostages were blinded in Coed Ceiriog, eight years.

1167 From Coed Ceiriog until Owain and Cadwaladr destroyed Rhuddlan, two years.

1170 From when Rhuddlan was destroyed until the death of Owain, five years, and Cadwaladr lived after Owain from the feast of St Clement to Shrove Tuesday and a year.

From the death of Owain until the birth of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, two and a half years.

From the birth of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth until Owain ap Madog was killed in the fight at Gwern Virogl, fourteen years.

From when Owain was killed until the summer of the Irish, seven years, and the next year was the battle of the Coedanau. In the third year Rhodri ab Owain died.

- 1198 From the summer of the Irish to Castell Paen (Painscastle), five years. The next winter Llywelyn destroyed yr Wyddgrug (Mold). Two years after Castell
- 1203 Paen died Gruffudd ap Cynan. The year after Gruffudd's death died Dafydd ab Owain.
- 1208 From when Dafydd ab Owain died until masses were suspended in England and Wales because of the disunity of King John and Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, five years. And that interdict was seven years over England and five years over Wales.
- 1209 In the year after the one when the masses were suspended, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and Hywel ap Gruffudd went with King John of England to Scotland to subject the king of Scotland to King John of England. On the eve of St Simon and St Jude in that year, the steward of the court of the king of Norway, named Herlaut Pic, came with six raiding ships to Llan-faes to despoil the town and burn it, and Herlaut Pic was killed along with his best men.
- 1210 And in the next year King John went to Ireland and Ranulf, earl of Chester, came to Degannwy to meet King John, and he conferred with him there and got Degannwy after its breaking by Llywelyn against King John, and Ranulf fortified Degannwy with the timber of the barn of Creuddyn.
- 1211 In the next year, King John came and mustered France and England and Scotland as far as Aber, and released the Brabançons to burn Bangor. And there they captured Bishop Robert and imprisoned him until when the king released the bishop. And then Llywelyn and the king reconciled and he gave his son Gruffudd as a hostage for that reconciliation along with twenty-four hostages, the sons of noblemen, and then the king returned to England. The next year on the Saturday of Whitsun died Maredudd ap Cynan.

Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was five years in King John's prison and then through the strength of God and the counsel of Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, he was released.

1216 Within three years of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's release, King John died. And Hywel ap Gruffudd died.

1237 From the death of King John until the death of the lady, the wife of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, twenty years.

1240 From the death of the lady until the death of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, three years.

1244 From the death of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth until the death of his son Gruffudd, four years.

1246 From the death of Gruffudd until the death of Dafydd ap Llywelyn, two years.

1255 From the death of Dafydd ap Llywelyn until the battle in Derwin between Owain and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, eleven years.

From the battle in Derwin until the French were killed in the Cymerau, two years.

From the battle in Derwin until Diserth castle was destroyed, ten years.

Degannwy was captured in the same harvest.

From the taking of Degannwy until the taking of Penarlâg (Hawarden), a year.

From the beginning of the world until the battle in Derwin, six thousand four hundred and fifty four years.

From when Christ was made flesh until the battle in Derwin, one thousand two hundred and fifty five years.

From when the Welsh first came to the island of Britain until King John came to Aber and until Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was taken hostage, two thousand five hundred and sixteen years.

From when belief in Christ came first to the Welsh from Pope Eleutherius in the time of Lles ap Coel, king of the Welsh, until the year...

G when Gruffudd was taken hostage, one thousand and forty years.

From when the English first came to the island of Britain until Gruffudd was taken hostage, five hundred and fifty two years.

From when Normans [first came to the island of] Britain until Gruffudd was taken [hostage one hundred and fifty seven years].

D From when the Welsh first came to this island until the battle in Derwin, two thousand four hundred and sixty seven years.

From when belief in Christ came to Wales from Pope Eleutherius in the time of Lles ap Coel until the battle in Derwin, one thousand and eighty nine years.

From when the English came to the island of Britain until the battle in Derwin, six hundred and one years.

From when Normans first came to this island until the battle in Derwin, six hundred and six years.

NOTES

15–16. **dial6ys Anar6dr...6eith Konoy** *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*'s statement that Anarawd was present at the battle of the Conwy is unique among Welsh chronicles.

21. **6eith Karno** The battle of Carno is usually dated to the year of Hywel Dda's death (*Brut y Tywysogion*) or the year after (Welsh Latin annals). *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Dumville, pp. 16–17; *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, ed. Dumville, pp. 40–41.

21. **vii** My reading here differs from that of P. W. Thomas, D. M. Smith and D. Luft, 2007: Rhyddiaith Gymraeg 1350-1425, <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/cy/ms-page.php?ms=Pen32&page=230> (last consulted 31 July 2013), where this is read as *un*.

24. **C6nt 6ab Y6ein** The representation of Cnut as son of an Owain may have arisen from misreading the S of Swein as I or Y, as well as contamination from the mention of Owain ap Hywel Dda above, at some point after the text's composition. However, given the focus of the text generally on Venedotian history, the misinterpretation of Cnut as son of Owain ap Hywel Dda was probably the work of the original compiler, hence its anomalous inclusion against the general tendency of the chronicle to focus on Welsh events.

25–26. **6acha6y yny or6u Grufut ab Llywelyn ac y llas esgob y Sayson** The event referred to here may be Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's defeat of Bishop Leofgar of Hereford in 1056, noted in the C-version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. A. O. H. Jarman discusses the relationship of this mention of Machafwy to references in the Myrddin poetry in 'Perchen Machreu', *Llên Cymru* 2 (1954), 115–18. For the battle, see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS C*, ed. by K. O'Brien O'Keefe, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 5* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 116–17; J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (third edition, 2 vols., London, 1939), II., 367–68; 'Wales and the Coming of the Normans (1039–1093)', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 1899–1900 (1901), 122–79 (135–36).

27. **Grufut ab Llywelyn** Only B gives a patronymic for Gruffudd, and taking him to be Gruffudd ap Llywelyn his death is misdated to 1055 in the text. 1055 saw the death of Gruffudd ap Rhydderch of Morgannwg at Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's hands, and this is perhaps what led to the chronological confusion here. It is likely that the original text included obituaries of both Gruffudd ap Rhydderch and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, given the discrepancy between the two chronological anchors at 1055 and 1133.

Working forward from 1055, William the Bastard's arrival (1066) is dated to 1060, Rhys ap Tewdwr's death (1093) to 1087 and the year the chronicle notes as 1133 would be 1126. If we work backwards from 1133, Rhys ap Tewdwr's death is given as 1093 and William the Bastard's arrival as 1066 (according to B; 1067 according to ADGH). This makes it seem likely that this chronological confusion is due to the conflation of the two obituaries of Gruffudd ap Rhydderch (†1055 or 1056) and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (†1063). Given that the previous entry, the battle of Machafwy, should be dated to 1056 according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it may be that the 1055 date was originally attached to a notice of the death of Gruffudd ap Rhydderch and the battle of Machafwy in the same year. It would have then been accidentally interpreted as relating to the death of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, although this fails to explain the misdating of the battle of Machafwy to 1045.

Although the above is a solution to the difficulties of this particular section, particularly the inaccurate AD dating for 1133 (which should, within the relative dating of the text, be 1126), inserting the six years needed to balance the chronology of this section adversely affects the later parts of the chronicle. Six years is the additional amount needed to make the chronological anchor at 1055 correspond to that year when counting backwards from the chronological anchor at 1133, rather than the actual number of years between the deaths of the two Gruffudds. With regard to the section around 1208–1211, that is the section which it has been argued was contemporary with the text's composition, the dating works best with the insertion of four or five years (the uncertainty with regard to the exact amount being due to the two and a half years given between Owain Gwynedd's death and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's birth). The later part of the chronicle works better with the insertion of three years with regard to the obituaries of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his immediate family, and with the addition of no years with regard to the dating of the battle of Bryn Derwin.

37. Karada6c Uynach This Caradog is known from a life originally written by Gerald of Wales and now only known from a summary. He was a favourite courtier and harpist of Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of South Wales, who, after losing two of the king's favourite hunting dogs, chose an ascetic life perhaps in order to escape the king's anger as much as for religious reasons. He eventually settled in Rhos in Dyfed and was buried in St David's. That *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is the only Welsh chronicle to provide us with a record of his death is interesting as it suggests that the annals that the Aberconwy compiler was drawing on material not contained in any surviving versions of *Annales Cambriae*, the death of Caradog unlikely to be one of the things an Aberconwy annalist would add. One would think

that the C version of *Annales Cambriae*, with a St David's provenance, would be more likely to contain such an obituary. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 591–93; *Nova Legenda Angliae: as Collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave, and Others, and First Printed, with New Lives, by Wynkyn de Worde A.D. MDXVI*, ed. by C. Horstman (Oxford, 1901), pp. 174–76.

38. **Kadwalla6n uab Grufut** Cadwallon was killed in 1132, his death being noted in the PRO chronicle, *Brut y Tywysogion* and the Annals of Chester. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 467.

44. **dorres Y6ein a Chadwaladyr Aber Tei6i** The reference is probably to Owain and Cadwaladr's attack on Cardigan with the aid of a Hiberno-Norse fleet, recorded only in the 'C version' of *Annales Cambriae* under 1138, though this records a truce rather than the capture of the fortress. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 476; *Annales Cambriae*, ed. by J. Williams ab Ithel (London, 1860), p. 41.

46. **Tal Moel6re** For this battle, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 498–99. Its exact location is given uniquely in *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*.

47. **dall6yd y g6ystlon yg Choed Keirya6c** The hostages were blinded rather than, as in ACE, captured. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 517.

49. **dorres Y6ein a Chadwaladyr Rudlan** The taking of Rhuddlan in 1167 was achieved with the help of Rhys ap Gruffudd after a three-month siege, and gave Owain Gwynedd control of Tegeingl. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, pp. 519–20.

52. **anet Llywelyn ab Iorwerth** *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is here the main source for the date of Llywelyn Fawr's birth, which, given its dating in relation to the death of Owain Gwynedd on 23 November 1170, is placed in the first half of 1173. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 522, n. 136, 587, n. 61.

53–54. **ymlat Gwern 6irogyl** Lloyd identifies this place with Gwern y Figyn near Carreg Hofa. *Gwern y Virogl* should be read here rather than Lloyd's *Gwern y Vinogl*, which he derived from A. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 565, n. 153.

55. **haf y G6ydyl** This refers to Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd's use of the troops of his ally, Reginald Godredson, king of Man, to seize Anglesey from his nephews, Gruffudd and Maredudd ap Cynan. The author of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* shows some interest in these events, recording the deaths of Rhodri and the sons of Cynan. R. A. McDonald, *Manx Kingship in its Irish Sea Setting 1187–1229: King Rognvaldr and the Crovan Dynasty* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 101–7; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 588; BS, p. 188.

56. **6r6ydyr y Choedaneu** *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* here provides support for Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's account of the battle of Coedanau, *contra* Charles Insley, 'The Wilderness Years of Llywelyn the Great', *Thirteenth Century England* 9 (2001), 163–73 (170). *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr II*, ed. by N. A. Jones and A. P. Owen, *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion* 4 (Cardiff, 1995), 13.25 (pp. 241, 247).
57. **Castell Paen** Gwenwynwyn ab Owain Cyfeiliog's failed attack on Painscastle in July and August 1198 was a decisive blow to his attempts to secure dominance in the Middle March. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 586.
- 57–58. **torres Llywelyn yr 6ydgruc** This battle has been identified both with the battle of *Bro Alun* described in Prydydd y Moch's *Canu Mawr* (*Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Prydydd y Moch'*, 23.79, ed. by E. M. Jones and N. A. Jones (Cardiff, 1991), p. 215) and a siege of Mold described in the Chronicle of St Werburg's Abbey, Chester, for 1198 (*Annales Cestrienses*, ed. by R.C. Christie, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, 14 (Chester, 1886), p. 44). The Chester chronicle records the capture of Mold by Llywelyn following, or as a result of, a defeat of his men. It is not necessary to emend the text in order for it to agree with *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* here, *contra* Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 590. See further R. M. Andrews, 'The Nomenclature of Kingship in Welsh Court Poetry 1100–1300, Part II: the Rulers', *Studia Celtica* 45 (2011), 53–82, at 66, n. 77, and Insley, 'Wilderness Years of Llywelyn the Great', 167–69.
- 58–59. **Grufut ab Kynan** The son of Cynan ab Owain Gwynedd who had been involved in the struggle for Anglesey in 1193 died at Aberconwy, having assumed the habit of the Cistercian order. *BT P20*, p. 145; *BT RB*, p. 182; *BS*, p. 196.
59. **Dauyd ab Y6ein** *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* dates Dafydd ab Owain's death to five years before the interdict, that is 1203, in agreement with *Brut y Tywysogion* (*BT P20*, p. 149; *BT RB*, p. 184–86; *BS*, p. 198). However, that would mean that he died three years after Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Owain, who died in 1200 according to *Brut y Tywysogion*. Dafydd was certainly dead by 27 March 1203. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, p. 25.
60. **wahard6yt effereneu** The Papal Interdict of England began in March, 1208 and ended in May, 1213, but the dispute over the appointment of the archbishop of Canterbury which was its primary cause began in 1205 and subsequently worsened. The Pope raised interdict over Wales in 1212 in

recognition of the opposition of the Welsh princes to John. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, p. 638; *BT P20*, pp. 158–59.

65. Hywel uab Gruffud The son of Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Owain Gwynedd, his obituary is given below. He was buried, like his father, at Aberconwy.

65–66. hyd ym Brydyn For the Misae Roll evidence for Llywelyn's participation in John's 1209 Scottish expedition, see Lloyd, 'Wales and the Coming of the Normans', pp. 135–36, n.

64–69. nos 6yl Sim6nd a Iuda...Herlaut pic ae oreugwyr This particular event, for which *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is our only source, is dated to the eve of the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, that is 27 October, 1209. The specific date, the number of ships and the naming of Herlaut Pic betrays a detailed knowledge of the event. Herlaut here must be a misreading of Herlant, given the variant readings of the other manuscripts, Herlant being a Cambricisation of the Old Norse personal name Erlendr.

Erlendr Píkr is mentioned in a near-contemporary saga detailing the events of the Norwegian civil wars, *Boglunga Sögur*, as one of the leaders of a joint expedition of Baglar and Birkibeinar, the two rival factions in those wars, westwards to Britain. The implications of this piece of Welsh evidence for these events has not previously been discussed. The expedition's purpose was to secure the allegiance of the rulers of Orkney and Shetland and of Man and the Isles to the Norwegian crown after the insecurity of the civil wars, though it also involved raiding for the benefit of the leaders of the rival factions who co-operated in the undertaking. A raid on Iona is recorded in Icelandic annals for 1210, though taken together the Norwegian and Welsh accounts suggest that this should rather be seen as occurring in 1209.

Interpreting the Norse evidence together with that of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, the various sources support the following summary of events: the joint expedition set off in 1209 with twelve ships. Iona was raided and then there was disagreement. Half the number of ships recorded at the start of the expedition then raided Anglesey, suggesting that this disagreement was a factional one between the Birkibeinar and the Baglar. The Baglar faction of Erlendr Píkr were less associated with the then king of Norway, Ingi Bárðarson, and had least to gain from King Reginald of Man's submission to Ingi, which deprived them of an expected source of plunder in raiding Man. This probably led to their attack on the trading centre of Llanfaes on Anglesey. The fact that the shorter version of *Boglunga Sögur* describes this expedition as *viking* means that the attack on Llanfaes in 1209 can confidently be termed

the last known viking raid on Wales, its surprisingly late date explicable in terms of the Manx/Norwegian political context briefly outlined above. It is also worth noting that this is the first mention of a trading centre at Llanfaes, which grew in importance in the course of the thirteenth century. *Soga om Birkebeinar og Baglar: Bøglunga søgur*, ed. H. Magerøy (Oslo, 1988), pp. 119–21; *Early Sources of Scottish History, A. D. 500 to 1286*, ed. by A. O. Anderson (2 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1922), II., 378–388; I. Beuermann, 'Masters of the Narrow Sea: Forgotten Challenges to Norwegian Rule in Man and the Isles 1079–1266' (PhD thesis, University of Oslo, 2006), pp. 274–96. For Llanfaes, see A. D. Carr, *Medieval Anglesey* (Llangefni, 1982), pp. 231–37.

70–73. Ac yn y 6loythin...yscuba6r y Creudyn This would seem to be a reference to Earl Ranulf of Chester's invasion of Gwynedd in 1210, accompanied the bishop of Winchester and Geoffrey fitz Peter, justiciar of England, recorded in the Annals of Dunstable. It is impossible to reconcile the account of B with what else is known of these events, since it states that Ranulf fought with John. Ranulf remained loyal to John throughout these years and so FH's *cynatlassodd* is preferred to B's *ymlatyssei*, though it should be emended to *cynatlassei* (3 sg pret), with *cynatlassodd* an attempted modernisation. It is likely that B's *ymlatyssei* arose from a misreading or a mistaken correction of *acynatyssei* to *acymlatyssei*. *Yn erbyn* is also translated as 'to meet', rather than the more aggressive 'against', though it may be a misreading of *yn ervyn*, 'to expect'. The text may therefore depict Ranulf's campaign as a preliminary step to John's Welsh campaigns, as indeed it was. It is, however, worth noting that some of the extra details which complicate this entry are restricted to the ABFGH branch of the tradition, and so the simpler reading of DE (given C's known tendency to abbreviate) may best reflect the original chronicle entry, for which see the apparatus. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 631–35; Annals of Dunstable in *Annales Monastici*, ed. by H. R. Luard (5 vols., London, 1864–1869), III., 32. Thanks to Paul Russell for advice on this section.

75. Brabanseid Mercenaries from Brabant became famous in the twelfth century under William of Cambrai and Lobar 'the Wolf'. By this point the word could be used as a generic term for foreign mercenaries. F. L. Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Ithaca, NY, 2001), pp. 279–85 and n. 21.

77–78. Gruffut y uab y gwystyl Gruffudd's first appearance in the historical record is this hostageship, also referred to in the agreement of 12 August, 1211 between Llywelyn and John. *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 233.

80. Mareduf ab Kynan One of Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd's opponents in 1193. Expelled from Meirionydd in 1202, nothing is heard of him until *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* provides a unique record of his death, underlining the chronicle's particular interest in the participants in the struggle for Gwynedd at the close of the twelfth century. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 648, n. 181.

81. Pum mlynet This is another instance of difficult chronology in the text. We know John's expedition, and consequently the start of Gruffudd's hostageship, was in 1211, and so this would imply a date of 1216 for his release. However the text also states that John died within three years of this release, which implies a date considerably earlier than October 1216, when John died. The release of Llywelyn's son, who must be Gruffudd, is one of the conditions of Magna Carta, so a date after June 1215 is necessary, probably very soon after. It is interesting to note the text's appreciation of the key role played by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, in the creation of Magna Carta. The chronological confusion in this annal is another indication of a later updating of the text after 1211, when the prominence of Gruffudd may have encouraged its expansion during the reign of his son, Llywelyn. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 646; J. B. Smith, 'Magna Carta and the Charters of the Welsh Princes', *English Historical Review* 99 (1984), 344–62 (349–51).

85. yr arglwytes Siwan or Joan, mother of Dafydd ap Llywelyn. It is difficult to decide whether this use of her title rather than her name is a mark of respect or hostility, but given the text's interest in Gruffudd over his half-brother, Dafydd, it is possibly the latter.

87–89. Llywelyn uab Iorwerth...Grufut y uab...Dauyd ab Llewelyn Llywelyn died at Aberconwy on 11 April, 1240, and was buried there; Gruffudd fell to his death from the tower of London on 1 March, 1244; Dafydd died at Aber on 25 February, 1246. *Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora*, ed. by H. R. Luard (7 vols., London, 1872–1883), IV., 8, 295–96; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 693, 700–1, 705.

90. y 6r6ydyr yn Erwin For the significance of the proximity of Bryn Derwin to lands owned by Aberconwy Abbey, see introduction. The battle of Bryn Derwin was the key event in the establishment of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's supremacy in Gwynedd Uwch Conwy, when he defeated his brothers, Owain and Dafydd. The mention of Owain only can perhaps be explained by his status as the eldest brother, and as such *Cronica de Wallia* specifies him as Llywelyn's primary enemy. CW, 40; Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 68–77.

93. **Or 6r6ydyr yn y Derwin yny tored castell y Diserth x mlynet** This must refer to the fall of Diserth on 4th August and Degannwy on 28th September 1263, especially since the destruction of Diserth seems to have ended its career as a fortress, though there is no obvious reason for the misdating of the events in the chronicle by two years. *Annales Cambriae*, ed. ab Ithel, p. 101 (MS. B); *PRO*, 1284=1263; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 732–33.

95. **Penard Dyla6c** This taking of the castle of Penarlâg or Hawarden may refer to its capture by Llywelyn in September 1265, though if so the relative chronology of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* is again rather confused in this period. In relation to the actual date of the previous recorded events (September 1263) it should have occurred in 1264, but it is dated eleven years after the battle of Derwin (1255), so 1266. In January 1265 Henry de Montfort, son of Earl Simon, met with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and Gruffudd ap Madog at Hawarden to confirm them in their possession of all lands and castles on the Cheshire border which had fallen to the Welsh, leaving the possibility that *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* refers to an earlier capture of the castle. Possession of Hawarden an issue discussed in the treaty of Montgomery, 1267. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II., 735–8; *Acts*, ed. Pryce, no. 363. Thanks to Guto Rhys for help with the place-name.

96–114. **Or pan deuth Crist...chweblynedd a chwechant** The dating of these various events is complicated, particularly when dated from Gruffudd's hostageship which has both a relative date within the text and an actual date of 1211. Dating from Derwin is comparatively easier, since an absolute date is given within the text which corresponds to the actual date of the battle.

100–1. **doeth cred gyntaf...brenhin Kymry** The idea that the Britons were converted under Lucius is found in Bede and *Historia Brittonum*, though here it may be evidence of the influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), p. 24; *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. by J. Morris (Chichester, 1980), p. 64; *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Reeve and Wright, pp. 87–91.

103. **ddoeth y Saesson** The date given in both cases seems to correspond to the mid-seventh century (653×659), showing a late date for the Saxon arrival which seems to contradict the A.D. 400 date given for Gwrtheyrn, in whose time the Saxons were supposed to have arrived. Perhaps conquest rather than arrival is meant here, and if so this would indicate an idea of a mid-seventh century conquest indebted to Geoffrey's history.

105. **doeth Normynn** Disagreement between the two versions as to the date of this event, whether in the eleventh or seventh century, make its significance doubtful. The 1049×1054 date of H should perhaps be preferred, and may show awareness of the existence of Normans in England before the conquest, for which see C. P. Lewis, 'The French in England Before the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 17 (1994), 123–44. It may on the other hand be a case of misdating.

APPENDIX 2

Chart showing all manuscripts containing any of the constituent texts which became part of the Welsh Historical Continuum. The work should not be thought of as complete or totally exhaustive, and served primarily as a database for the writing of chapter 1. The presence or absence of a text in a manuscript is noted, and usually the particular version of the work is also noted.

Name	Date	Bibyl	Dares	Brut Bren	BT
Peniarth 44	c.1250	N	N	P44	N
Llansteffan 1	c.1250	N	N	Ll1	N
NLW 5266B (Dingestow 6)	1250×1300	N	N	Ding	N
Peniarth 21	c.1300	N	N	P21	N
Mostyn 117 (NLW 3036B)	1300×1350	N	N	Ding	N
Peniarth 45	1300×1350	N	N	Ding	N
Peniarth 20	c.1330	Y	N	N	P20
BL Cotton Cleopatra B v, pt I	1300×1350	N	N	CC	BS
BL Cotton Cleopatra B v, pt III	1300×1350	N	IIA	N	N
Cardiff 1.363	1300×1350	N	N	Ll1	N
Peniarth 47.i	1300×1350	N	N	Ding/RB	N
Cardiff 1. 362	c.1350	N	IIA	Ding	N
Peniarth 18	c.1350	N	N	N	RB
Peniarth 46	c.1350	N	N	Ding	N
Peniarth 47.ii	c.1350	N	III	N	N
Mostyn 116 (NLW 3035B)	1350×1400	N	IA	RB	RB
BL Add. 19709	1350×1400	N	IA	RB	N
Peniarth 16	c.1400	N	N	Ding	N
Philadelphia 8680	c.1400	N	Y	RB	N
Jesus (Oxford) 111	>1382	N	IA	RB	RB
Peniarth 32	c.1400	N	N	N	N
Peniarth 19	c.1400	N	IA	RB	RB
Peniarth 263	1400×1450	N	IA	RB	N
Peniarth 22	1444	N	N	Ding	BS
Peniarth 23	1450×1500	N	N	P21	N
Peniarth 24	1477	N	N	Ll1	N
NLW MS 7006B	1461×1500	N	IIB	CC	BS
Jesus (Oxford) 141	>1471	Y	IIB	CC	BS
Peniarth 227	1491	N	IIA	N	N
Peniarth 25	c.1500	N	IIB	CC	N
Llansteffan 5	c.1500	N	N	Ding	N
Peniarth 27	c.1500	N	N	N	N
Llyfr Gwyn Hergest (lost)	>1470	Y	N	N	N
BL Add. 14967	1526<	N	N	Y	N

Mostyn 143 (NLW 3046D)	1500×1600	N	N	N	P20
Jesus (Oxford) 61	c.1550	N	IB	Tysilio	N
Peniarth 403	1500×1600	N	N	CC	N
Mostyn 109 (NLW 3028B)	c.1550	N	IA	Tysilio	N
Llansteffan 61	c.1550	N	N	N	RB
Llansteffan 62	c.1550	N	N	N	RB
BL Add. 15566	c.1550	N	Y	Tysilio	N
Peniarth 261	c.1550	N	N	P21	N
Llansteffan 188	c.1550	N	N	Ll1	N
Llansteffan 12	>1553	N	N	N	Annals ?from BT
NLW 4996B	1560	N	N	N	RB
NLW 5281B	1575	N	IA	Ll1	N
Cardiff 2.39	1550×1575	N	N	N	RB
Peniarth 253	1550×1575	Y	N	N	RB
Llansteffan 164	1560×1615	Y	N	N	N
Llansteffan 195	1575×1580	N	N	P21	RB
NLW 13211	1577	N	Y	Tysilio	P20
Llansteffan 55	1579	Y	N	N	N
Llansteffan 172	c.1580	N	N	N	RB
Llansteffan 172	c.1580	N	N	N	RB
Peniarth 212	1565×1587	N	N	P21	RB
Mostyn 159 (NLW 3055D)	1587	N	IB	Tysilio	P20
Llansteffan 59	1575×1600	N	IB	Tysilio	N
Peniarth 118	1580×1620	N	N	RB	N
Peniarth 270	1580×1660	N	N	P21	N
Bodley, Welsh e.5	1594	N	IIB/IA	CC/M116	N
BM Add. 31055	1594	Y	N	N	N
NLW 1256D	c.1600	Y	IIB/IA	CC/M116	N
Mostyn 115 (NLW 3034B)	c.1600	N	IB	Ll1/P21	N
Peniarth 213	1604×1610	N	N	N	P20&RB
NLW 5277B	1604×1608	Y	IIB	CC	BS
Peniarth 215	1604×1612	Y	N	N	N
NLW 5263B (Dingestow 3)	1600×1625	N	IB	Tysilio	N
BM Addl. 14903	1613	N	N	Y	N
NLW 13074 (Llanover 16)	1629	N	N	N	BS
Peniarth 266	1634	N	IA	RB	RB
Peniarth 314	1634×1641	N	IIB	Ll1/P44	N
Peniarth 264	1636	N	IIB	CC	BS
Peniarth 162	c.1600	N	IB	Tysilio	N
Llansteffan 8	1600×1650	N	N	N	P20(&RB)
Llansteffan 129	1600×1650	N	N	N	N
Llansteffan 137	1697	N	IA	RB	RB
Peniarth 265	1641	N	N	Ll1	
Cardiff 2.631	1641	N	IB	Tysilio	N
BL Add. 14872	c.1640	N	N	Y	N
NLW Cwrtmawr 29B	c.1650	N	N	N	RB

Peniarth 271	1654	Y	N	N	N
NLW Wynnstay 10	1662×1671	N	IIB	N	N
Llansteffan 58	1600×1700	N	N	N	P20
Llansteffan 100	1600×1700	N	N	N	Y
Mostyn 115 (NLW 3034B)	c. 1600	N	N	Tysilio	N
Llansteffan 60	1600×1750	N	N	Y	N
Mostyn 211 (NLW 3065E)	c.1685	N	N	CC	BS
NLW 1599E	1688	N	N	N	P20
NLW 11D	1694	Y	N	Y	Y
Jesus (Oxford) 28	1695	N	IB	Y	N
Llansteffan 128	c.1700	N	N	N	BS
NLW 2034B	c.1700	N	Y	RB	N
Llansteffan 149	c.1720	N	N	CC	N
Cardiff 2.139	1734	N	IB	Tysilio	N
Llansteffan 63	1700×1742	N	N	N	RB
NLW 5284C	1744	Y	N	N	N
Cardiff 1.1	c.1750	N	N	N	P20
BL Add. 14935	1733×1764	Y	N	N	N
BL Add. 14936	1750×1774	Y	Y	Y	N
NLW 5546B	1754	N	Y	CC	N
Cardiff 2.140	1754	N	Y	Y	N
NLW 2277A	1757	N	IIB	CC	N
Cardiff 2.388	1761	?falle	IB	Tysilio	P20
Cardiff 2.135	1766	N	N	N	P20
NLW 2043	1774	N	N	N	P20
NLW 1990B	1770s	Y	N	N	N
NLW 23B	1775	N	Y	Y	N
NLW 1985B	c.1775	N	IIB	N	N
NLW 2044B	1776	N	N	P21	N
Peniarth 248	1750×1800	N	N	N	RB
NLW 1978B	1785	N	N	LI1	N

APPENDIX 3

CHRONICLE ACCOUNTS OF 1022

Both Latin accounts printed below are taken from T. Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', *Scottish Studies* 12 (1968), 15–27 (26). These Latin annals are also given in D. E. Thornton, 'Who was Rhain the Irishman?', *Studia Celtica* 34 (2000), 131–48 (131–32).

PRO Chronicle (London, National Archives, MS E.164/1)

Reyn Scotus mentitus est se esse filium Mareduc qui obtinuit dextrales Britones; quem Seisil rex Venedocie in hostio Guili expugnavit, et occisus est Reyn. Eilaf uastavit Demetiam. Meneuia fracta est.

Rhain the Irishman falsely claimed that he was the son of Maredudd and obtained the southern Britons; Seisyll king of Gwynedd attacked him at Abergwili, and Rhain was killed. Eilaf laid Dyfed waste. Menevia was broken.

Cottonian Chronicle (London, BL MS Cotton Domitian A.i)

Lewelin filius Seissil, rex Uenedotie, pugnavit contra Reyn, qui dicebat se esse filium Maredut; et deuictus est Reyn in ostio Guili. Eliaph uenit in Britanniam et uastavit Dyuet et Meneuiam.

Llywelyn ap Seisyll, king of Gwynedd, fought against Rhain, who said that he was the son of Maredudd: and Rhain was totally defeated at Abergwili. Eliaf came into Britain and laid Dyfed and Menevia waste.

Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS 20 (BT P20, pp. 14–16)

Vgein mlyned a mil oed oed Krist pan gelwydawd nebun Yscott o dywedud y uod yn

vab y Varedud vrenhin a Rein y mynawd y alw a chymeredic vu gan wyr y Deheu ac a gynhelis gyuoeth. Ac yn y erbyn y kyuodes Llywelyn vab Seissyll, brenhin Gwyned a goruchaf a chloduorussaf vrenhin yr holl Vrutanied. Ac yn y amser ef, megis y gnotaei yr henwyr dywedud, frwythlawn oed yr holl dayar or mor bwy gilyd o dynyon ac o bob ryw da hyd nad oed neb essaywedic na neb yn reidus yn y gyuoeth, ac nyd oed vn dref wac na diffeith.

A Rein yn wan ac yn llesc a gynnullawd lu ac, y megys y mae moes gan Ysgotyeid, ef a anoges yn vocfachus y wyr ac ef a edewis vdunt oruod ohonaw ef ac ef a erbynyawd y elynyon yn ymdiredus. Ac wynteu yn wastad diergrynedigyawn a aroassant y trahaus anogwr hwnw, ac ynteu a gyrchawd y vrwydyr yn lew diargysswr. A gwedy bod o bobtu diruawr ladua yn gyttuhun, ar Gwyndyd yn gwastad ymlad, ef a orchvygwyd, Rein Ysgott ay lu. Kanys megys y dywedir yn y diareb Gymraec – anho dy gi ac na cherda ganthaw – velly ynteu yn lew yn kyrchu ac o lwynogawl defawd yn ymchwelud ar ffo. Ar Gwyndyd, gan eu hymlid yn greulawn lidyawc, ay lladassant ac a diffeithassant yr holl wlad, ac a gribdeliassant yr holl da. Ac nys gweled ynteu etwa. Y vrwydyr hono a vu yn nrws auon Wyli yn Aber Gwyli. Ac odynd y doeth Eilaf ynys Brydein ac y diffeithyawd ef Dyued ac y tored Mynyw.

One thousand and twenty was the age of Christ when a certain Irishman lied by saying that he was the son of King Maredudd, and he insisted on the name Rhain, and he was accepted by the men of the South and held territory. And against him rose Llywelyn ap Seisyll, king of Gwynedd and supreme and most praiseworthy king of all the Britons. And in his time, as the old men were wont to say, the whole land was fruitful from sea to sea with men and all manner of wealth so that no-one was in want or in need in his territory, and not one town was empty or desolate.

And Rhain weakly and feebly gathered a host and, as it is customary with Irishmen, he incited his men boastfully and promised to them he would prevail, and he went against his enemies confidently. And they, constantly steadfast, awaited that arrogant inciter, and he approached the battle bravely fearless. And after there had been great slaughter on both sides equally, with the men of Gwynedd constantly fighting, he was defeated, Rhain the Irishman and his host. Since, as it is said in the Welsh proverb – urge your dog but do not walk with him – so was he brave in attack but of a foxlike manner when turning to flee. And the men of Gwynedd, cruelly wrathful in pursuing them, slaughtered them and laid waste the whole land, and carried away all the chattels. And he was never seen again. That battle was at the mouth of the river Gwili in Abergwili. And thereupon Eliaf came to the island of Britain and he ravaged Dyfed and Menevia was broken.

***Brut y Tywysogion, Llyfr Coch Hergest Version* (BT RB, pp. 20–22)**

Ac yna y dechymygawd nebun Yscot yn gelwyd y vot yn vab y Veredud vrenhin ac y mynawd y alw ehun yn vrenhin. Ac y kymerth gwyr y Deheu ef yn arglwyd ar y teyrnas, a'e henw vu Rein. Ac yn y erbyn y ryfelawd Llywelyn ap Seisyll, goruchaf vrenhin Gwyned a phenaf a chlotuorussaf vrenhin o'r holl Vrytanyeit. Yn y amser ef y gnotae henafyeit y teyrnas dywedut bot y gyuoeth ef o'r mor py gilyd yn gyflawn o amylder da a dynyon, hyt na thybygit bot na thlawt nac eissiwedic yn y holl wladoed, na thref wac na chyfle diffyc.

Ac yna y duc Rein Yscot lu yn dilesc, a herwyd defawt yr Yscotteit yn valch syberw annoc a wnaeth y wyr y ymlad, ac yn ymdiredus adaw a wnaeth vdynt mae ef a oruydei. Ac ymgyuaruot a oruc yn ehofyn a'e elynyon. Ac wynteu yn wastat diofyn a oryssant y chwydedic drahaus anogwr. Ac ynteu yn hu diofyn a gyrchawd y vrwydyr,

a gwedy gweithaw y vrwydyr a gwneuthur kyffredin aerua o pop tu, a gwastat ymlad drwy lewder o'r Gwyndyt, yna y goruwyt Rein Yscot a'e lu.

A herwyd y dywedir yn y diaereb – anoc dy gi ac nac erlit – ef a gyrchawd yn lew ehofyn ac a gillawd yn waratwydus o lwynogawl defawt. A'r Gwyndyt yn llidyawc a'e hymlynawd drwy lad y lu a diffeithaw y wlat ac yspeilaw pop man a'e distryw hyt y Mars. Ac nyt ymdangosses ynteu byth o hyny allan. A'r vrwydyr hono a vu yn Aber Gwyli. A gwedy hyny y deuth Eilad ynys Prydein. Ac y diffeithwyt Dyfet ac y torret Myniw.

And then a certain Irishman falsely pretended that he was the son of King Maredudd, and insisted on calling himself a king. And the men of the South took him as lord over the kingdom, and his name was Rhain. And Llywelyn ap Seisyll, supreme king of Gwynedd and highest and most praiseworthy king of all the Britons, made war against him. In his time the old men of the kingdom used to say that his territory was from sea to sea totally filled with an abundance of wealth and men, until it could scarcely be thought that there was any poor or needy man in all his lands, nor an empty town nor a place of want.

And then Rhain the Irishman led a host vigorously, and in the manner of the Irish he proudly and haughtily instigated his men to fight, and confidently promised them that he would prevail. And he met with his enemies fearlessly. And they constantly and fearlessly awaited the swollen, arrogant inciter. And he boldly and fearlessly approached the battle, and after the battle was done and a common slaughter had been made on every side, and after constant, brave fighting on the part of the men of Gwynedd, Rhain the Irishman and his host were defeated.

And as is said in the proverb – urge your dog but do not pursue – he attacked bravely and fearlessly and retreated shamefully in a foxlike manner. And the men of Gwynedd

wrathfully pursued him, killing his host and destroying the land and despoiling every place with their destruction as far as the March. And he never showed himself from that time forth. And that battle was at Abergwili. And after that Eilaf came to the island of Britain. And Dyfed was laid waste and Menevia was broken.

Brenhinedd y Saesson (BS, p. 54)

Anno Domini .m.xx. y doeth nebvn Yscot kelwydauc a dywedut y vot yn vab y Moredud vab Oweyn, a Rein oed y henw. Ac y kymyrth gwyr y Deheu ef yn bennaf arnadunt. Ac y damunws ynteu Gwyned yn erbyn Llywelyn vab Seissyll, y brenhin clotuorussaf a wydit o'r mor pwy gilyd. Ac yn y oes ef ny bu eissieu da yn y gyfoeth na neb gouudus nac vn dref wac na diffeith. A gwedy dyuot y lluoed hyt yn Aber Gweili, y kyrchws Rein yr ymlad yn valch bocsachus gan annoc y wyr. Ac yn hynny y goruuwyt arnaw ef ac y ffoas yn llwynogeid ffyrnic, ac y llas y wyr yn olofrud, ac yd anreithwyt yr holl wlat. Gwedy hynny y doeth Eilaf y dir Kymmre a thorri Myniw a diffeithiaw Dyfed.

Anno Domini 1020. A certain lying Irishman came and said that he was Maredudd ab Owain's son, and Rhain was his name. And the men of the South took him as chief over them. And he desired Gwynedd, opposing Llywelyn ap Seisyll, the most praiseworthy king that was known from sea to sea. And in his time there was no want for wealth in his territory, nor was anyone distressed nor one town empty or desolate. And after the hosts had come as far as Abergwili, Rhain approached the fighting proudly vaunting whilst urging on his men. And thereupon he was defeated and he fled fiercely like a fox, and his men were mercilessly killed, and the whole land was pillaged. After that Eilaf came to the land of Wales, destroying Menevia and plundering Dyfed.

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Bold type indicates personal consultation of the manuscript itself.

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(*Llyfr Du Basing*); 13210D; 21608D

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Cwrtmawr 453

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