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# The Lion Looks West: Change in the Welsh Marches During the Last Half of the Eleventh Century

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**The Lion Looks West:  
Change in the Welsh Marches During the Last Half of the  
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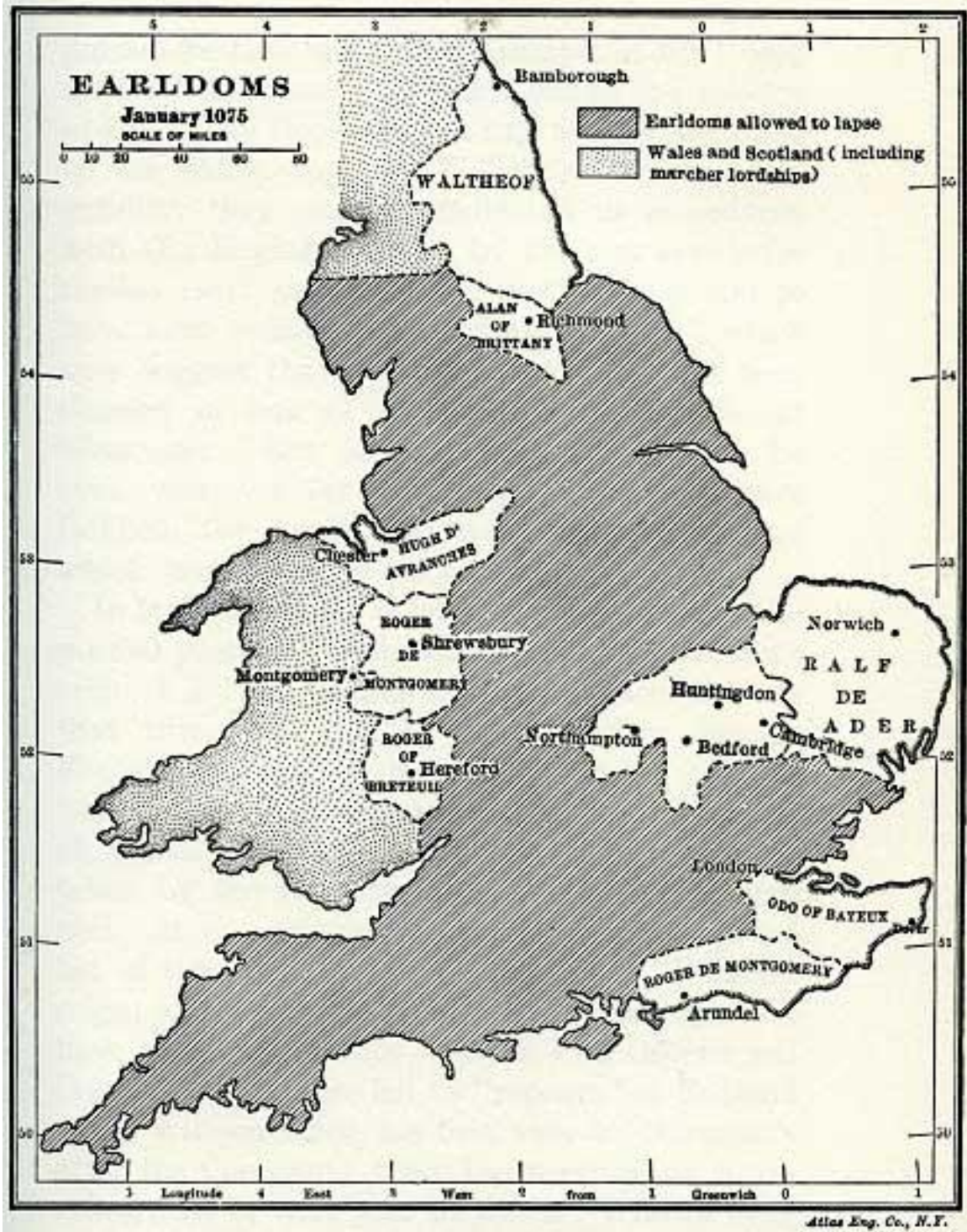
**By**

**David M. Price**

**Senior Seminar: Hst 499  
Professor David Doellinger  
Western Oregon University  
June 4, 2014**

**Readers  
Professor Elizabeth Swedo  
Professor John Rector**

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<http://www.1066.co.nz/library/conqueror/chap11.htm>

In the Year 911, a band of Northmen was granted land in France from Charles the Simple, land which would come to bear their name, Normandy.<sup>1</sup> A century and a half later, the leader of the descendents of those Northmen, now called Normans, would lay claim to the throne of England.<sup>2</sup> The English blood line claimed by that eleventh century leader, William I, or as he become known to history, William the Conqueror, changed the course of history for England and Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the Normans under William the Conqueror influenced many aspects of life in England, including castles, leaders, national identity, and the economy. The overriding attitude among scholars for the last century and a half has been that the Normans also brought change with them to the Welsh Marches when they conquered England from the Anglo-Saxons. Textbooks discuss the Norman arrival to England by claiming that William, "proceeded to seize control of all the lands of the realm, to distribute them to his followers, and to secure his claim to the throne by building castles throughout the country."<sup>4</sup> One region of England where the Normans had a significant impact is that of the Welsh Marches: that borderland between Wales and the Midlands of England.<sup>5</sup>

The change with the coming of the Normans to the Welsh Marches was not as encompassing as scholarship indicates, based on primary source analysis. Castles and leadership in the Welsh Marches did indeed change, yet the economy continued to be fluid and semblances of nationalism scholars attribute to the last half of the eleventh century have been

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<sup>1</sup> Le Goff, Jacques. *Medieval Civilization*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2000. 44

<sup>2</sup> Le Goff, 63

<sup>3</sup> Barlow, Frank. *William I and the Norman Conquest*. Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1965. ix

<sup>4</sup> von Sivers, Peter, Charles A. Desnoyers, George B. Stow. *Patterns of World History: Volume 1: to 1600*. New York, Oxford:2012. 349

<sup>5</sup> This thesis is an extension of the paper "The Normans interactions with the Welsh and the Scots", written for Dr. Alaric Trousdale's class on Medieval England at Western Oregon University in May 2013. Dr. Trousdale has been gracious enough to consult on this thesis, and his efforts are greatly appreciated.

distorted. While a glimpse of the countryside and a history book will shout the word "CASTLES", there is more to the Norman arrival, to the people who lived in the region of the Welsh Marches, and to the Welsh, than simply the construction of new castles. Aspects such as the day to day lives of the inhabitants, the economic impact, the social structure, and the concept of nationalism in the Welsh Marches cannot be assumed to change based only upon the concept that with new overlords comes change to all aspects of life. The relevance of this endeavor is to better understand life in the Welsh Marches rather than attach the epithet "change" to what occurred with the arrival of the Normans, accomplished through analysis of surviving chronicles and administrative records as well as current scholarship done on the region.

In 1050 England king Edward the Confessor was busying himself cementing his authority by eliminating competition. He exiled the Godwines of Wessex after that family, the most powerful in the realm at that time, had secured and pacified the borderlands between the Midlands and the Welsh.<sup>6</sup> Once the Godwines power was broken, England had a period of growth and prosperity. He brought some Norman clergy to the island and appointed them to important offices and Episcopal sees.<sup>7</sup> Edward had been exiled in Normandy prior to his ascendency to the English throne.<sup>8</sup> When Edward died in 1066, Harold Godwinson laid claim to the throne of England, but challengers to this title fought Harold for it.<sup>9</sup> First Harald Hardrada and then William of Normandy would come to the island, battling Harold for the throne.<sup>10</sup> In the end, it was William of Normandy who would defeat Harold Godwinson at the

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<sup>6</sup> Cannon, John. *The Oxford Companion to British History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 329

<sup>7</sup> Cannon, 329-330

<sup>8</sup> Cannon, 329-330

<sup>9</sup> Cannon, 456

<sup>10</sup> Cannon, 456

battle of Hastings and claim the title as king of England, setting the stage for future events in the Welsh Marches.

The view of the Normans has developed over time, from conquerors to colonizers, yet the theme of change has stayed quite constant. Evaluating the accomplishments and activities of the Normans within the Welsh Marches has been done with a top down approach. Few scholars address the Welsh Marches in terms of what existed prior to the coming of the Normans as well as what the Normans did upon their appearance in the area. No account is given to the Marches themselves other than in terms of castles and earls. The impact on the lives of the people of the Welsh Marches, primarily their economy, is at best overlooked if not at worst egregiously misinterpreted.

The primary sources for this thesis are used to demonstrate patterns that can be followed to logical conclusions in the foci of castles, leadership, the economy, and nationalism, categories that are varied and complex. They give insight into the lives of the leaders and the people of the Welsh Marches as well as to the land itself. The use of the primary source documents included for this work have been interpreted through the biases of personal lenses by modern scholars in their own secondary source works. Finding a single piece of evidence that validates their viewpoint seemed to be sufficient for these authors to make broad, generalized statements. Attaching easy labels to them, as some recent scholars want to do, makes interesting, if inaccurate, reading, but not historical in its application.

What is clear is that many scholars use political change as an umbrella to bundle other change under. The idea that if political leaders change other elements follow suit is naive and unsupported by the evidence in the primary sources. Recent historians have looked elements of nationalism with both the proto-English Norman realm as well as the Welsh. The record shows

that by William's allotment of county palatines (a shire where the earl has complete autonomy over his subjects) along the border with the Welsh, is counter the idea that William I was creating an empire, particularly in the Welsh Marches. For the Welsh, the short amount of time that one man was able to claim kingship over a united Wales is shown to be much more of an aberration of circumstance and force by one Welsh ruler's will than a sense of nationalism. Scholars have been unable to restrain themselves from advancing concepts of a united England and a united Wales in their works, concepts that the primary sources do not validate.

The Welsh historian John Davies claims early in his chapter the High Middle Ages that the Welsh were moving forward towards "political unity."<sup>11</sup> He goes as far as to use Offa's Dyke (a Mercian construction of the eighth century delineating Wales) as an example of unity for the Welsh.<sup>12</sup> While king Gruffudd of Gwynedd was able to consolidate power and influence over a single entity in Wales between 1056 and 1063, his death at the hands of his own people and the subsequent reversion of Wales to minor kingdoms squabbling for small territories as depicted in the primary sources gives no indication for a grand desire for a Welsh nation-state.<sup>13</sup> Davies points towards Europe's growth beginning in the last half of the eleventh century as evidence for similar growth in Wales.<sup>14</sup> Again, there is little evidence beyond one monastery in Wales transcribing of the lives of past saints to back up this claim.<sup>15</sup> Davies has many examples of life within Wales during last half of the eleventh century, but none back up his assertion of Welsh political unity.

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<sup>11</sup> Davies, John. *The Making of Wales*. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1996. 46

<sup>12</sup> Davies, John. *The History of Wales*. New York: Penguin, 1993. 80

<sup>13</sup> Richards, T. "Brut y Tywysogion." In *Archaeologica Cambrensis*. London: Smith and Parker, 1864. 53-87

<sup>14</sup> Davies. *History*, 80

<sup>15</sup> James, J.W. *Rhigyfarch's Life of St. David*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967. xi-xiii

James Campbell's acknowledgement that the English word for knight derives from the Anglo-Saxon word "cniht" and not the French word "chevalier," argues against wholesale change in the upper echelon.<sup>16</sup> This fact indicates that the Norman lords made use of some of the existing knightly class, rather than relying solely upon transplanted Norman knights for service in their forces and the management of their lands, within the Welsh Marches as well as throughout England.<sup>17</sup> This is important to understand how the lordly class operated and to the interactions that those lords had with the land of the Welsh Marches.

Francis James West tackles the issue of change throughout Norman England in the context of the colonization of England by the Normans. He notes that authors have combined the ability to change the economics as implementing the change of a society.<sup>18</sup> Making change reliant upon other factors is conditional at best. Change is shown in the primary sources to occur when the outcome alters a previous pattern, and if the pattern remains as it was previously then change is a misnomer attached to the action, not the end result. Change happens with or without invitation, and is not assured to occur.

In his article, H. C. Darby takes extended amounts of time detailing the changes to the landscape of the Welsh Marches, and how the continual raids laid waste to extensive areas.<sup>19</sup> Pointing to the numerous locales that inhabitants deserted, Darby uses this to put forth the idea that the Welsh Marches were in continual decline. While this is, in part, true, and recorded in the primary sources, it selectively ignores those locations where the population increased, land use rose, and the value increased. The idea that people would move to more secure places

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<sup>16</sup> Campbell, James. *The Anglo-Saxons*. New York: Penguin, 1991. 233

<sup>17</sup> Campbell, 233

<sup>18</sup> West, James Francis. *Colonial History of the Norman Conquest*. Malden, Blackwell. 1999. 235

<sup>19</sup> Darby, H.C. "The Marches of Wales in 1086". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol 11 No 3 (1986). 259-278



where they could continue to live their lives is not considered, while the slaughter of anyone and everyone the Normans or the Welsh encountered is.<sup>20</sup> The primary sources do not back up Darby's assertion.

W. E. Wightman focuses on the lordship and arrival of the Normans to the county palatines writing of which earl owned what territory.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of whom is the lord of a shire, life goes on for those living within its borders. Wightman uses the Norman earls to put forth the idea of change along the Welsh Marches, but that change is lost when looking beyond the titles of those earls. One item is evident in Wightman's work, the civil wars and religious instability that did affect and change other parts of England were not felt in the Welsh Marches, due in part to the existence of the earls of the Marches and the county palatines.<sup>22</sup> Wightman gets his point across but beyond the details of ownership he makes no strides forward.

Wendy Davies' focus on southern and southeastern Wales revolves around the good farming lands found in this area. Davies uses the words "change" and "chaos" frequently while discussing the situation in south Wales, yet gives little evidence other than the changing of kings and lands under those kings.<sup>23</sup> She accepts the premise, as does Darby, that evidence of waste is evidence of change. The ownership of the land was changing, but the people occupying that land and their activities are not shown by the primary sources to be chaotic.

J. L. Grassi's paper about the holdings of Edward the Confessor as opposed to those of king William detailed in *Domesday* gives few evaluations of the Welsh Marches region. Other than stating that mints and mills add to the value of an estate, Grassi's work concludes that the

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<sup>20</sup> Darby, 259-278

<sup>21</sup> Wightman, W.E. "The Palatine Earldom of William fitz osbern in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire (1066-1071). *The English Historical Review*. Vol 77 No 302 (Jan 1962). 6-17

<sup>22</sup> Tyerman, Christopher. *Who's who in Medieval England*. London, Shepheard-Walwyn: 1996. 51-53

<sup>23</sup> Davies, Wendy. "Land and Power in Early Medieval Wales". *Past & Present*. No 81 (Nov 1978). 15-16

value of the holdings of William I exceeded those of Edward the Confessor.<sup>24</sup> Grassi's work focuses on the details of *Domesday*, assessing what is deemed valuable in a place. While comprehensive, it gives little insight to the Welsh Marches.

Three primary sources that contain specific information relating directly to the Welsh Marches during the second half of the eleventh century are key to gaining an understanding of that region. They are *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *Domesday Book*, and *Brut y Tywysogion* (*Chronicle of the Princes*). They all share the attribute that they are anonymous. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Brut y Tywysogion* were recorded and collected by monks to document the important events affecting the lands of England and Wales, respectively, over centuries, presented as a whole generations after they had been begun. *The Domesday Book* was commissioned by William I of England, with the information gathered by assessors and detailed by scribes, both groups of which have had their names lost to time. Vernacular English was used for the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.<sup>25</sup> Norman records such as *The Domesday Book* were recorded in Latin.<sup>26</sup> The *Brut y Tywysogion* was written in vernacular Welsh.<sup>27</sup> These different languages help highlight the differences between the three groups. There was no single commonality of language, of culture, or of futures for the three. They were quite different, yet shared commonalities that will be explored within the scope of the Welsh Marches.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* presents the concerns and views of the Anglo-Saxons who lived and controlled England during the time of the invasion of the Normans under William. Begun during the reign of Alfred the Great of Wessex in the late ninth century, the *Chronicle* was updated until well into the twelfth century. The accounts it contains record events such as

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<sup>24</sup> Grassi J.L. *The English Historical Review*. Vol 117. No 471 (Apr 2002) 281-282

<sup>25</sup> Chibnall, Marjorie. *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*. New York: Manchester, 1999. 1

<sup>26</sup> Chibnall, 1

<sup>27</sup> Richards, T. "Brut y Tywysogion." In *Archaeologica Cambrensis*. London: Smith and Parker, 1864. 2

deaths of leaders, raids, battles, invasions, important gatherings, and fires, to give some major examples that were important to those who were on hand when William of Normandy arrived in England. It will be used to show how the people who occupied the lands that the Normans would take following the battle of Hastings viewed important events that impacted their lives.

*The Domesday Book* is an account of the lands under the control of William I that was compiled by the Norman leadership in London during 1085 and 1086, the details the holdings of England of which William was king and were under his ultimate taxation authority *The Domesday Book* is an accounting of the holdings throughout the realm of England that was completed in 1086.<sup>28</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* notes the creation of *Domesday* as follows: "He sent his men all over England into every shire and had them ascertain how many hundreds of hides there were in the shire", the 'He' being William I.<sup>29</sup> For this paper, the economic information concerning property values, holdings, and improvements within *Domesday* will provide details for the assessment of the land and property that the Normans had in the Welsh Marches. This will provide information about the state of the lands from the Norman perspective, how affected they were by comparing hideage rolls from the reign of Edward the Confessor to the holdings of William I, which *Domesday* provides when Edward's information exists for the Norman writers to include.<sup>30</sup> In this way *Domesday* will allow detailed investigation of the Welsh Marches in the afore mentioned areas of concern.

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<sup>28</sup> Hoskins, W.G. *A New Survey of England*. London: Devon: 1954. 87 (which is a remarkable in itself considering the scope and scale of the work. England would not see another compilation of land holdings to this extent again until the 19th century)

<sup>29</sup> Swanton, Michael. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 216

<sup>30</sup> The information that the Norman scribes had about Edward the Confessor's holdings has not survived to the present day.

The *Brut y Tywysogion* is a chronicle of the Welsh people that was begun in the seventh century and maintained in various forms until the fourteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Similar to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, this annals recounts events such as activities of leaders, raids, battles, invasions, and important gatherings. The *Brut y Tywysogion* will provide a perspective of the Welsh view of events in the Welsh Marches region that are the focus of this paper. It will be used much in the same way that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* will be in that the events that made impressions on the authors will be utilized to create an overall view of life within the various Welsh kingdoms.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun in the 9th century, likely at the behest of king Alfred of Wessex, and continued in some form until 1154. As time progressed, it was kept and recorded separately in different parts of Anglo-Saxon England. The *Chronicle* was combined through putting the multiple texts together, creating not just a *Chronicle*, but displays the insight that one event has through the lens of multiple viewpoints. There are six versions of the *Chronicle* used in the translation for the purposes of this thesis: the Worcester, the Abingdon, the Winchester, and the Peterborough manuscripts, the Canterbury epitome, and a fragment separate from the others. These versions are commonly identified with the letters A through F. As Worcester (the D version) lies within or adjacent to the Welsh Marches (depending on the definition being chosen), the focus will principally be on that manuscript with assistance from the others as a primary source record. The D version was compiled by a monk or a scribe connected to the bishop of Worcester, who also happened to be the Archbishop of York.<sup>32</sup> As this Archbishop retained his positions until his death in 1069, there are potential political biases

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<sup>31</sup> Jones, Thomas. *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hengest Version*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955. xi-lxii (There are thirty two separate versions of the *Brut y Tywysogion* that were kept in various locations around Wales. The two used here are the Red Book of Hengest version and the Peniarth MS 20 version, which are the two most complete versions of the text. Many are subsets of one of the two versions here, kept for shorter lengths of time for unknown reasons.)

<sup>32</sup> Campbell, 222

that need to be taken into account.<sup>33</sup> The *Chronicle* will give the Anglo-Saxon view in regards to events within and surrounding the Welsh Marches, allowing for comparisons with the *Brut y Tywysogion*, and enable a different perspective for the foci of castles, leadership, nationalism, and the economy to be examined.

The *Chronicle* spends time detailing events involving the earls and kings of England and other lands who come to England for a variety of reasons. It talks about goings on inside Wales, and the activities of the Welsh leaders. Deaths are noted, both clerical and secular. Church events such as a synod and the founding of a minster in the Holy Roman Empire, the attendance of Pope Leo is noted, and that two bishops from "this land were sent".<sup>34</sup> Taxes are said be to abolished, noted as "oppressing the whole English nation".<sup>35</sup> Raids are mentioned, with the actions taken about them such as which earls are called to aid the king's efforts, plans that were settled upon during council, hostages that were exchanged, and how an army was raised through a later council.<sup>36</sup>

The Worcester manuscript is the only *Chronicle* version to record a Welsh raid in 1052 by the Welsh king Gryffudd.<sup>37</sup> The activities of ships belonging to various earls is put down in the *Chronicle*, leading to the idea that the Anglo-Saxons had not simply maintained their maritime heritage that brought them to England, but they kept tabs on continental naval gatherings and were able to respond in kind defensively. Whether this extended to the defense of merchant routes if necessary is not known based on the *Chronicle*.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cannon, 318

<sup>34</sup> Swanton, 170

<sup>35</sup> Swanton, 173

<sup>36</sup> Swanton, 173-175

<sup>37</sup> Swanton, 176

<sup>38</sup> Swanton, 178-179

1063 is the first year where a raid by the Anglo-Saxons into Wales is recorded in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Earl Harold left from Gloucester in the southern March and sallies to Rhuddlan in northwestern Wales.<sup>39</sup> The use of ships in moving from the south to the north is noted, for secrecy and speed ostensibly. Welsh king Gryffudd is mentioned as being killed by his own men for fighting against the English having the fate of his head presented to earl Harold, who in turn presented it to king Edward.<sup>40</sup> Two years later, Harold built up defenses in the southern March, but they were attacked and burned down by the Welsh.<sup>41</sup> This shows that the English, before the Normans arrived, were fighting against the Welsh and involved in the Welsh Marches. It also indicates that infighting amongst the Welsh was known beyond the boundaries of Wales.

1066 records the changes in the rulership of England, from Edward to Harold, and from Harold to William.<sup>42</sup> The actions and lack thereof by various Anglo-Saxon earls is detailed, as well as those of the clergy in recognizing William as king after the battle of Hastings.<sup>43</sup> Whether they did so because of William's claim, because of their dislike of Harold, for their own personal interests, or another reason is not mentioned. This acknowledges the change of the rulers and ruling class of England. It also confirms the account given in the *Brut y Tywysogion*.

The next few years show Worcester's monks taking note of the Welsh becoming more bold, the town of Hereford in the southern March was attacked, raids beyond the Marches to the city of Bristol , and elsewhere.<sup>44</sup> More and more French bishops, abbots, and monks are named, giving the sense that a large number are coming to England to solidify the king's

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<sup>39</sup> Swanton, 191

<sup>40</sup> Swanton, 191

<sup>41</sup> Swanton, 191

<sup>42</sup> Swanton, 195-200

<sup>43</sup> Swanton, 199-200

<sup>44</sup> Swanton, 200-204

position and control of the church.<sup>45</sup> Some actions of Norman earls against the king are noted, how William was able to control the situation with both the earls and a Danish fleet that arrived, as well as a successful invasion of the county of Maine in France.<sup>46</sup>

The death of William in 1087 and the circumstances surrounding it are poetically documented.<sup>47</sup> The brief struggle of succession is noted, with William Rufus gaining the support of the English earls and fending off other Norman incursions.<sup>48</sup> The Welsh, actions of the Marcher lords, or any mention of the Welsh Marches do not occur in the *Chronicle* again until 1095. Montgomery castle in the central Marches, built by the Marcher lord whose name it bears, is razed, prompting the king to call up an army to exact retribution.<sup>49</sup> The king pursues the Welsh but familiarity with the land and the terrain allows them to stay a step ahead of the king's forces and the campaign was abandoned with the coming of winter.<sup>50</sup> The same year it is noted that the crops were quite poor because of "unseasonable weather" throughout the land.<sup>51</sup> Then in 1097, the king came to Wales with a "great raiding-army" assisted by Welsh scouts.<sup>52</sup> The summer of 1097 passed without battles being noted, but that "men, horses, and many other things" were lost.<sup>53</sup> The aftermath resulted in the king returning to England and "quickly after that he had castles made along the borders".<sup>54</sup> In 1098 a Norman earl is killed in northwest

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<sup>45</sup> Swanton, 201-207

<sup>46</sup> Swanton, 206-209

<sup>47</sup> Swanton, 217-222

<sup>48</sup> Swanton, 222-225

<sup>49</sup> Swanton, 231 (A Marcher lord is a powerful noble entrusted to protect the border with Wales)

<sup>50</sup> Swanton, 231

<sup>51</sup> Swanton, 232

<sup>52</sup> Swanton, 233

<sup>53</sup> Swanton, 233

<sup>54</sup> Swanton, 233

Wales island of Anglesey by "foreign vikings", which ended a Norman attempt of dominion over that island.<sup>55</sup>

*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* spends very little time with the Welsh, Wales, or the Marches. It gives the impression that, even though the Worcester manuscript was written by monks close to the Welsh Marches, that Wales and the Marches were a backwater frontier in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxons. It is interesting to note that during the time of the establishments of the county palatinates of the Welsh Marches, the Worcester manuscript says little about them.<sup>56</sup> Their names are mentioned, but specifics about their holdings or activities in the March are not. When *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* does cite events in the Welsh Marches, it is in terms of conflict. The *Chronicle* focuses on events on events that impact England, the lords of the various shires of England, laws, revolts, events that affected the church or its leaders, and the political shifts that caused reactions.

*Domesday Book* was compiled during 1086 by agents in the service of King William I. It was created so that the king would have a clear understanding of the value of the lands under his authority so that tax collection could be accomplished with a degree of certainty as to what the value on a detail level of individual English locations was. At the time *Domesday* was recorded, estimates have the total population of England at two million.<sup>57</sup> The encompassing detail within the pages of *Domesday* would not see an equal in England for nearly eight hundred years.<sup>58</sup> Domesday online is the resource being used for the translation of the book. Each location has individual entries that record elements such as: population, tax assessed, number of

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<sup>55</sup> Swanton, 234

<sup>56</sup> Cannon, 719 (Palatinates were border regions where the increased demands of security dictated that the local rulers should have special powers, particularly to raise troops and to administer justice to all levels.)

<sup>57</sup> Campbell, 226

<sup>58</sup> Hoskins, 87



households and their breakdown as the type of household, plough land, resources, and ownership.<sup>59</sup> This thesis will use the detailed economic information regarding locations in the four shires that encompass the English border with Wales, parts of the Welsh Marches, to investigate the wealth within them and any changes to that valuation. The four shires in question, north to south, are: Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire.

*Domesday Book* views each location with a three tiered manner: county or shire, hundred, and place. "The county (otherwise the shire) has been the main unit of provincial government in England from before the Norman Conquest into modern times."<sup>60</sup> "Hundreds were the principle subdivisions of most English shires from before the Conquest and for many centuries afterwards."<sup>61</sup> Each hundred is broken down into individual places, with the number of places listed by name, the number of households contained, and the tax paid for each place.<sup>62</sup> Place is the individual location, village, or town. A geld is the value of the land in an unimproved state. A hide, the unit of tax, is defined the land required to maintain a household that was determined by the king and his counselors.<sup>63</sup> Confusingly, this figure could range in acreage from as low as forty acres to as many as one hundred and twenty.<sup>64</sup> A carucate, or plough land, is the term given to the amount of land an eight oxen team could plough in a season, which equals approximately one hundred and twenty acres. It is used as a term for taxation and is equivalent to a geld or a hide.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Palmer, John, and George Slater. "Open Domesday." *The Domesday Book*. University of Hull. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.domesdaymap.co.uk/>

<sup>60</sup> Cannon, 252

<sup>61</sup> Cannon, 497

<sup>62</sup> Palmer and Slater, About

<sup>63</sup> Cannon, 479

<sup>64</sup> Cannon, 479

<sup>65</sup> Cannon, 479

In Cheshire, there are four hundred and thirty five places listed within the shire. West Derby in Cheshire has the greatest number of households in the shire at 128, while one hundred and fourteen are listed as having no households.<sup>66</sup> Salford, listed as having the third highest number of households at sixty three, has the highest tax paid at sixty nine point eight converted carucates units, both noted as being very large.<sup>67</sup> One area being looked at here in detail is the hundred of Ati's Cross in the northwest of the shire. It contains the castle and village of Rhuddlan, which the Normans had taken from the Welsh, and was described thusly: "'were waste when earl Hugh received them' (in the 1070s)."<sup>68</sup> According to the Domesday Book, Rhuddlan had a silver mint where coins were produced.<sup>69</sup> The mint made the village potentially more valuable and advised William I of this detailed information. Additionally, Domesday records Rhuddlan and a number of other locations in the Marches as boroughs.<sup>70</sup> Eighty-seven places are listed as being within the Ati's Cross hundred.<sup>71</sup> Dodleston is listed as having the greatest number of households with 25.<sup>72</sup> Three locations are given as having no households: Brynhedydd, Lache, and Radington.<sup>73</sup> The village of Hawarden has the highest tax paid, at 3 geld, noted as being medium in value.<sup>74</sup> Hawarden is listed as having fourteen households consisting of four villagers, six smallholders, and four slaves, also noted as being medium.<sup>75</sup> Of the eighty seven locations within Ati's Cross, seventeen had a tax paid attached to them.<sup>76</sup> As this hundred had been conquered by the Normans in the early 1070s, there is no

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<sup>66</sup> Palmer and Slater, Cheshire

<sup>67</sup> Palmer and Slater, Salford

<sup>68</sup> Bartlett, Robert. *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1075-1255*. New York: Oxford, 2000. 69

<sup>69</sup> Thomas, Roger. *Castles in Wales*. London: AA Wales, 1982. 17

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, R. 17

<sup>71</sup> Palmer and Slater, Ati's Cross

<sup>72</sup> Palmer and Slater, Ati's Cross

<sup>73</sup> Palmer and Slater, Ati's Cross

<sup>74</sup> Palmer and Slater, Hawarden

<sup>75</sup> Palmer and Slater, Hawarden

<sup>76</sup> Palmer and Slater, Ati's Cross

listing for a previous value of the lands within this hundred.<sup>77</sup> For comparison, a region of Cheshire that had been of king Edward's realm is the hundred of Hamestan, in the northeast of the shire, farther away from the Welsh border. There are twenty seven places identified as being within this hundred.<sup>78</sup> The largest in terms of households and of tax paid is Adlington, with eleven households, noted as being quite small, and the tax assessed as being 4.5 geld, noted as quite large.<sup>79</sup> Surprisingly, it is recorded that the value to the current lord, earl Hugh of Chester, is one pound, while the value to the lord in the time of Anglo-Saxon lordship is eight pounds.<sup>80</sup> Why the value of Adlington to its lord is out of proportion to its size is unspecified and open to speculation: the land had lost value or was set aside for a different purpose, the tax revenue was allocated in a manner that *Domesday* does not specify, or perhaps a disaster had befallen the village and valuable assets were lost.

In Shropshire, there are four hundred and ninety five places identified within the shire.<sup>81</sup> Stanton has the greatest number of households with one hundred and thirty two and a half.<sup>82</sup> Shrewsbury has the highest tax paid at one hundred two and a half geld.<sup>83</sup> Focusing on a village near the Welsh border, Clun, nearby to Clun Castle, is listed as having forty three households, noted as being very large, and assessed a tax of fifteen geld, also very large.<sup>84</sup> Three values are mentioned: in 1066 the value to the lord was twenty five pounds, in 1070 the value is three pounds, and in 1086 the value is ten pounds.<sup>85</sup> This shows that the village, while still listed as having a very large tax assessed, had undergone major shifts in its fortunes. A mill

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<sup>77</sup> Johnson, Paul. *Castles of England, Scotland and Wales*. New York: Sterling, 1989. 16

<sup>78</sup> Palmer and Slater, Hamestan

<sup>79</sup> Palmer and Slater, Adlington

<sup>80</sup> Palmer and Slater, Adlington

<sup>81</sup> Palmer and Slater, Shropshire

<sup>82</sup> Palmer and Slater, Shropshire

<sup>83</sup> Palmer and Slater, Shropshire

<sup>84</sup> Palmer and Slater, Clun

<sup>85</sup> Palmer and Slater, Clun

is listed as a resource of Clun, and while it is unknown as to when the mill was constructed, it adds to the overall value, and its productivity as well as the village as a whole is growing again.<sup>86</sup> In eastern Shropshire is the village of Quatt. With a very large population of thirty eight households and a medium tax assessed of 3 geld, Quatt had a value to its lord of five pounds in 1086, slightly down from the six pounds attributed earlier.<sup>87</sup> This indicates that this part of Shropshire was fairly stable, as far as eleventh century life goes.

Herefordshire is a region noted in the other two primary sources as seeing raids and battles of significance. There are three hundred and fifty eight places in the county.<sup>88</sup> Longdon is listed as having the most households with one hundred and nineteen, as well as having the highest tax paid at thirty point three.<sup>89</sup> The hundred to which Longdon belongs is Pershore, located in the lower reaches of the River Severn between the towns of Worcester and Gloucester. Pershore is recorded as having 41 places, on average more sizable than the hundreds examined in Cheshire, with only four places listed as having no households.<sup>90</sup> Powick in the Pershore hundred is identified as belonging to the abbey of Westminster St. Peter.<sup>91</sup> Although it has eighty two and a half households, and is said to have a large meadow, a mill, and a church, the tax assessed is 3 geld, which is small based on the size and holdings.<sup>92</sup> The value to the lord, in this case the abbey, is twenty pounds in 1086, which is a four hundred percent increase over its previously listed value.<sup>93</sup> As Powick is on the western, or Welsh side of the Severn, the apparent thriving village may be due in part of a respect the Welsh have for the church at Powick or the abbot it belonged to, or it may be simply that it is not located in a

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<sup>86</sup> Palmer and Slater, Clun

<sup>87</sup> Palmer and Slater, Quatt

<sup>88</sup> Palmer and Slater, Herefordshire

<sup>89</sup> Palmer and Slater, Herefordshire

<sup>90</sup> Palmer and Slater, Pershore

<sup>91</sup> Palmer and Slater, Powick

<sup>92</sup> Palmer and Slater, Powick

<sup>93</sup> Palmer and Slater, Powick

convenient location in terms of terrain for raiding. Regardless of the speculative reasons for Powick's value, it demonstrates that lands that the Normans had in a shire that saw significant raiding were able to thrive. Farther into the Marches within Herefordshire is the Castlery hundred that contains the village of Caerleon. Only three places are listed as being within the Castlery hundred, giving the sense that this was land where while there were few holdings at the time of the Domesday book's creation, the Normans had plans for expansion in the area.<sup>94</sup> Caerleon is the smallest of the three in the number of households with eight, yet it has a high tax paid number, which is eight carucates.<sup>95</sup> There is nothing in the record to indicate an extraordinary value to the land or the holdings there, other than the note that amongst the households are three Welshmen.<sup>96</sup> That Welshmen would be taxed at a much higher rate does not have a precedent when examining other villages, so the amount has another reason that Domesday itself does not make apparent.<sup>97</sup>

The southernmost shire in what is considered the March is Gloucestershire. There are five hundred and twenty nine place listed as being within the shire.<sup>98</sup> The largest of these is Chippenham with one hundred and seventy seven households, and interestingly Chippenham has a tax paid of only one point nine geld.<sup>99</sup> Closer inspection shows that there are only two households listed in the detail, with a value equal to what it had been previously of one pound of value to the lord.<sup>100</sup> Where the other one hundred and seventy five households are is a mystery that *Domesday* does not divulge. Chippenham is not near the border with Wales, so the stability the value shows is not surprising. Much more within the borders of the Welsh

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<sup>94</sup> Palmer and Slater, Castlery

<sup>95</sup> Palmer and Slater, Caerleon

<sup>96</sup> Palmer and Slater, Caerleon

<sup>97</sup> Palmer and Slater, Caerleon

<sup>98</sup> Palmer and Slater, Gloucestershire

<sup>99</sup> Palmer and Slater, Chippenham

<sup>100</sup> Palmer and Slater, Chippenham

Marches is the hundred of Bromash and the village of Kingstone. The Bromash hundred has twenty three places listed. Upton has the greatest number of households at thirty seven, and also shares the highest amount of tax paid with seven geld with two other locations, noted as very large and quite large respectively.<sup>101</sup>

The *Domesday Book* is a treasure trove of detailed information about the lands within the area known as the Welsh Marches. There are indications, such as the numerous wastes recording in *Domesday*, that the continuing hostilities were affecting the lives of the people within the March, yet the utter devastation and destruction that raiding would entail is not seen to be widespread. Darby makes the reasonable assessment that damage to the lands would recover.<sup>102</sup> The Normans, in establishing their hundreds within the Marches and Wales itself, were anticipating the enlargement of their holdings. The general stability combined with the expansion of Norman control indicates that the lives of the majority of people living within the Welsh Marches was, by and large, not changed significantly before *Domesday* in 1086. Bishoprics and abbeys held property and churches, people worked the land, villages and towns worked to provide for themselves and their lords, and the Normans worked to enlarge their territories at the expense of the Welsh kings.

The *Brut y Tywysogion*, translated as "Chronicle of the Princes", is a set of Welsh annals begun in the year 682 and maintained for the next six hundred and fifty years, until 1332. The work is thought to have been compiled primarily by monks associated with the Cistercian order of Strata Florida in central Wales.<sup>103</sup> The records that pertain to the scope of this work, the latter

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<sup>101</sup> Palmer and Slater, Bromash

<sup>102</sup> Darby, 260

<sup>103</sup> Burton, Janet, and Karen Stober. "Chronicle of the Princes, Brut y Tywysogion." *National Library of Wales*. Monastic Wales. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.monasticwales.org/archive/25>

half of the eleventh century, will be used as a primary source used to view and interpret the Welsh perspective of events.

The "Chronicle of the Princes" focuses on the kingdoms and kings of Wales. It also covers ecclesiastical events, battles involving kings and princes, and some international events that involve Wales. Recorded in chronological order, *Brut y Tywysogion* rarely discloses much detailed information, as evidenced by the complete entry in the Red Book of Hengest version for 1074, "Then for the second time the French ravaged Ceredigion."<sup>104</sup> It merely highlights events important to the monks who recorded the events. Pertaining to the time period in question with this work, there are a number of entries. There are years where multiple events are documented, but not every year has an entry. The first year being looked at here, 1050, has three separate events within the pages, yet the next entry doesn't occur for six years, 1056. While that five year gap is the largest in the time frame that is being looked at, there are additional years and blocked of years for which there is no entry. What that breaks down to is that for the fifty year period for this work, eighteen of those years have no notation in the *Brut y Tywysogion*.<sup>105</sup> The reasons for this are wholly unknown, although open to speculation. Were supplies for making new entries unavailable, were the monks responsible for writing the annals advised to not make certain entries, were the monks influenced by a particular group of lords or kings, was there a shortage of monks who could write in Welsh, these are but a sample of the questions that can be brought upon the annals.

The *Brut y Tywysogion* emphasizes the idea that the Welsh fought primarily amongst themselves. The 1050 entry tells of a Welsh raid to the Anglo-Saxon town of Hereford, with a great amount of plunder taken along with the destruction of the defenses and the burning of the

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<sup>104</sup> Jones, 29

<sup>105</sup> Richards, T. 53-87

town.<sup>106</sup> However later that same year, a battle over the lordship of south Wales pitted Welsh against Welsh.<sup>107</sup> The details about the great loss of life on both sides seem to pale when the annals tells of an Anglo- Saxon raid into south Wales, giving catalog information about what the Anglo-Saxons took as well as pointing out that the raid was "against the peace firmly made on oath between the prince of Glamorgan and the king and earls of the Saxons."<sup>108</sup> The remainder of the 1050 record recounts that an Irish fleet bound for northwestern Wales to either raid or invade was swamped at sea during a storm with a great loss of ships and life. Another confrontation between the leaders who had fought earlier in the year, this time with the northwest kingdom and its leader victorious, pillaging after the reverse had been done in the first part of the engagement.<sup>109</sup>

The entry for 1050 is typical of life for the Welsh in the latter half of the eleventh century according to the information within the *Brut y Tywysogion*. Between battles and warfare, raiding and pillaging, death and destruction, lords and bishops, Wales is shown to be a turbulent land by the annals. The rulers of the land are more concerned with internal conflicts than with their borders or those beyond it. The accounts for many years recount similar skirmishes, disunity, and hostility. There are, to be sure, battles against Anglo-Saxon earls and kings, later to be Norman earls and kings, but it is the struggle within Wales that took up the majority of the various Welsh kings' time and resources as well. The pattern of the annals does not change; the Welsh fight amongst themselves, the Irish raid, the Welsh fight amongst themselves, a bishopric changes hands, the Welsh fight amongst themselves, the Anglo-Saxons raid and plunder, the Welsh fight amongst themselves, kings die and new ones take power, the

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<sup>106</sup> Richards, T. 53

<sup>107</sup> Richards, T. 53

<sup>108</sup> Richards, T. 53, 55

<sup>109</sup> Richards, T. 55



Welsh fight amongst themselves, treaties are made and broken, the Welsh fight amongst themselves, the Normans raid and plunder, the Welsh fight amongst themselves.<sup>110</sup>

The annals note that in 1066, William "came as an intruder to the island of Britain", defeated Harold, and "acquired the sovereignty by violence and usurpation".<sup>111</sup> The entry itself serves as notice that a change has occurred in England, but it is not noted as being extraordinary, simply that the English have a new king and that he came from overseas. Two years later, conflict is noted between Welsh kings and Saxons "who had fled from the intrusion of the Normans".<sup>112</sup> The annals goes over the combatants and in the end notes that the "Saxons" held control of northern and central Wales through a Welsh king while the southern lands remained under a Welsh king.<sup>113</sup> This intrusion, invasion, and infringement of the "Saxons" into Wales points to the realization that some "Saxons" were continuing to struggle against the coming of the Normans, and who, like the Welsh centuries before at the coming of the Saxons and others, been forced from their English lands.

In 1080 the *Brut y Tywysogion* states, "William the Bastard came on a pilgrimage to Wales", indicating that this is noteworthy, yet it is done so in a matter of fact manner.<sup>114</sup> The annals acknowledge the death of William in 1087, along with the death of a Welsh king and more internal fighting.<sup>115</sup> Interestingly, the document gives an account of the earl of Hereford ravaging the neighboring shires of Worcester and Gloucester, which prompted the Norman king at that time, William Rufus, to "renew the liberties and privileges of all the countries in

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<sup>110</sup> Richards, T. 61-67

<sup>111</sup> Richards, T. 59

<sup>112</sup> Richards, T. 59, 61

<sup>113</sup> Richards, T. 59, 61

<sup>114</sup> Richards, T. 67

<sup>115</sup> Richards, T. 67

Wales and England".<sup>116</sup> 1088 and 1089 have a greater number of entries for each in the Peniarth MS 20 version.<sup>117</sup> The shrine of St. David is noted as being "taken by stealth" in the Red Book of Hengest, which is not included in the Peniarth MS 20 version.<sup>118</sup> More internal fighting, more incursions from the Normans, and more names of Norman lords and their actions, Normans being granted lordship over lands, primarily in the areas of the Welsh Marches and southern Wales due to the territorial gains the Normans had made.<sup>119</sup> By 1090, Roger Montgomery is the only event given, taking possession of a key castle in central Wales and naming it after himself.<sup>120</sup> From 1091 on, the mention of castles, their construction, and manner of materials used is begun to be noted, as well as the Normans coming to southern and southeastern Wales and "taking the best lands", building castles as they move.<sup>121</sup>

The year 1093 notes a famine that affects "the whole island of Britain".<sup>122</sup> After this, 1094 marks an apparent change. The Normans are more actively recorded as pushing against the Welsh across the entire March, north, central, south, and beyond.<sup>123</sup> This time the Welsh fight back more effectively; multiple battles are won by the Welsh, castles are taken or destroyed, and lands in the Marches and inside English borders are attacked, raided, or pillaged.<sup>124</sup> The conclusion of these events was a treaty signed granting the Welsh "lands and privileges", the nature of which is not specified.<sup>125</sup> The Red Book of Hengest version makes no mention of this treaty.<sup>126</sup> The Welsh attacked Norman holdings in southern Wales, and themselves were

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<sup>116</sup> Richards, T. 69

<sup>117</sup> Richards, T. 69-73

<sup>118</sup> Jones, 33

<sup>119</sup> Richards, T. 69-77

<sup>120</sup> Richards, T. 77

<sup>121</sup> Richards, T. 77

<sup>122</sup> Richards, T. 79

<sup>123</sup> Richards, T. 79-83

<sup>124</sup> Richards, T. 79-83

<sup>125</sup> Richards, T. 81, 83

<sup>126</sup> Jones, 35

attacked.<sup>127</sup> This was followed in 1096 by an invasion by the "Red King" (William Rufus/William II), who fought and lost to a Welsh army and left with dishonor.<sup>128</sup> The rest of the annals to the year 1100 notes a gradual regaining of strength and lands by the Normans, that scholarly learning ceased in southern Wales, the Red King died, and the Welsh continuing to resist and fight in the manner they knew how.<sup>129</sup> These events during the last years of the eleventh century illustrate that the Normans were becoming a major concern for the Welsh and their kings. The Welsh were being attacked more and more regularly, and that the tactic of avoiding pitched battle against the Normans and their mounted cavalry to pursue what today would be called guerilla strikes is evident in the pages of the annals.

There are slight differences between the Red Book of Hengest version and the Peniarth MS 20 version. This most notably is seen when the annals record which leaders fought battles, how they were killed, or succession of kingdoms within Wales. In 1080, the Peniarth MS 20 version mentions that a bishop, Sulien, is appointed for a third time and is angry about the event, the Red Book of Hengest version states that it is for the second time and while the appointing is "against his will", makes no mention of anger over it.<sup>130</sup> The island-wide famine that the Peniarth MS 20 version records as occurring in 1093 is completely absent in the Red Book of Hengest version.<sup>131</sup> The Red Book of Hengest version refers to William II and his hosts in 1096 fruitlessly attempting to engage the forces of the Welsh kings, but the dishonor that the Peniarth MS 20 version attaches to his leaving without doing so is absent.<sup>132</sup> The information

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<sup>127</sup> Richards, T. 83

<sup>128</sup> Richards, T. 83

<sup>129</sup> Richards, T. 83-87

<sup>130</sup> Jones, 31

<sup>131</sup> Jones, 33

<sup>132</sup> Jones, 35

from both versions creates an overall insight into the land of Wales and what was occurring during the last half of the eleventh century.

Applying the primary sources to the four foci, for the Normans, castles were a means of control. There are a vast list of definitions for what a castle is, or means. The employed strategy was to use the castle as a base from which cavalry patrols could maintain Norman peace, and retreat to upon encountering a superior force.<sup>133</sup> In this way castles not only provided security for the immediate surroundings such as the population nearby who would be under the auspices of the Norman lord, they were able to project power through the use of their cavalry further afield. Mounted knights were the key part of the Norman's military.<sup>134</sup> The tactics, training, and equipment were quite new to England and in particular to the Welsh Marches.<sup>135</sup> For the Welsh kings the construction of castles and the Norman forces of those castles held gave the Welsh more and more obstacles placed in lands they had ancestral ties to.

Of the castles built within the boundaries of Wales that are able to have their construction dated, thirty eight were constructed between during the last half of the eleventh century.<sup>136</sup> The archaeological evidence that is ongoing indicates that there were more castles built during the last half of the eleventh century that have yet to be confirmed with a definitive date.<sup>137</sup> Other written sources have individual castles as being confirmed built during the time frame in question.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Johnson, Paul. *Castles of England, Scotland, and Wales*. New York: Sterling, 1989. 12

<sup>134</sup> Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Dark Ages*. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987. 208

<sup>135</sup> Wood, 208

<sup>136</sup> Thomas, Jeffrey L. "Tables 1, 2, and 3." *Welsh Castle Database*. The Castles of Wales. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.castlewales.com/database.html>

<sup>137</sup> Cannon, 174-175

<sup>138</sup> Oman. Charles, W.C. *Castles*. New York: Beekman, 1978. 152

Motte and bailey castles were the standard type of castle constructed by the Normans in the Welsh Marches.<sup>139</sup> They were what the Normans found, then used, and finally improved upon after their arrival in England according to Arnold.<sup>140</sup> This attribute of the Normans is reminiscent of Roman engineers who adopted and adapted new technology to their own uses.<sup>141</sup> Soon after their arrival to the Welsh Marches, the Normans began constructing some of their castles with stone when available.<sup>142</sup> This alleviated the danger of fire to timber structures, whether that fire was accidental or intentional, as well as eliminating the deterioration of timber by weather and rotting.<sup>143</sup> A motte and bailey castle could be constructed in weeks or months depending on the materials and manpower available.<sup>144</sup> This short period of time necessary for the construction of a defensible structure gave the Normans an advantage in establishing themselves within newly acquired lands.

The castle of Rhuddlan was constructed by Robert in 1073 in north Wales, to provide the base of his new barony within the earldom of Chester, and henceforth would give him the title Robert of Rhuddlan.<sup>145</sup> The castle became a staging point for future Norman efforts in northern Wales.<sup>146</sup> William fitzOsbern, the earl of Hereford, constructed numerous motte and bailey castles in the Welsh Marches, which led to the eventual conquest of the kingdom of Gwent in southeastern Wales.<sup>147</sup> At Chepstow in 1075 CE, which was the River Wye's lowest bridging

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<sup>139</sup> A motte and bailey is a castle with a wooden, or later, a stone keep on raised ground or earthwork called a motte, often taking advantage of natural terrain. The motte is complemented by an enclosed courtyard, or bailey, which is surrounded by a defensive ditch.

<sup>140</sup> Arnold, John H.. *What is Medieval History?* Malden: Polity, 2008. 73

<sup>141</sup> Davies R.R. *Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales*. Royal Historical Society. Vol 29 (1979). 50- 51

<sup>142</sup> Thomas, R. 18

<sup>143</sup> Thomas, R. 18

<sup>144</sup> Thomas, R. 88

<sup>145</sup> Higham, Nicholas J. and Martin J. Ryan. *The Anglo-Saxon World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. 415

<sup>146</sup> Bartlett, 72

<sup>147</sup> Davies, *Making*. 36

point, fitzOsbern had the first secular stone building erected in the British Isles since the Romans left in 410 CE.<sup>148</sup>

Beyond the military applications of castles and castle construction were the settlements that inevitably grew up around castles. Castles do not simply exist, there is a support system that arises within and around them. Those stationed within the castle need food, they need supplies, they need goods, and they need entertainment. Castles within Wales and the Welsh Marches, as elsewhere, could find themselves as the beginning of a settlement for villagers, peasants, priests and merchants.<sup>149</sup> The idea that castles were solely generated by the economic growth of an area is misguided.<sup>150</sup> This view assesses only the value of existing locations, and has no consideration towards the idea of strategic, defensible locations where the Normans wishes to establish control.

The castles in the Welsh Marches were a change that the Welsh kings had not had to deal with previously on the scale and scope with which the Normans employed them. The primary sources note not just their existence but the growing role they were playing in the Norman strategy of subjugating the land. Castles were the backbone of the Norman method of control in the Welsh Marches as well as bases of operations for future campaigns.<sup>151</sup> The speed with which they could be constructed made them ideal in a region the primary sources show to be contested. The coming of the castle in scope and application were a definite change to the Welsh Marches.

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<sup>148</sup> Davies, *Making*. 37

<sup>149</sup> West, James Francis. *Colonial History of the Norman Conquest*. Malden, Blackwell. 1999. 225

<sup>150</sup> Beeler, John H. "Castles and Strategy in Norman and Early Angevin England." *Speculum*. Vol 31 No 4 (Oct 1956). 597-598

<sup>151</sup> Thomas, R. 150

Focusing on leadership, the senior landowners of England were largely replaced by Normans in the wake of the conquest by William I.<sup>152</sup> The three shires that would become county palatinates of the Welsh Marches were granted to Hugh d'Avranches, Chester, Roger of Montgomery, Shrewsbury, and William fitzOsbern, Hereford.<sup>153</sup> These earls and the men who were lords under them were "tightly knits groups of politically motivated men who stood the most to gain in William's eventual conquest."<sup>154</sup>

The first Marcher earl was William fitzOsbern.<sup>155</sup> He began his lordship of Hereford by taking the Welsh speaking lands of that shire, then pushing on further to southern Wales, with castles at the Dore, Monnow, and Wye Rivers.<sup>156</sup> After the end of the earldom of Hereford due to treason in 1075, the palatine pressure of Herefordshire in the southern Marches was lessened against the Welsh, while the lords of Wigmore, Weobley, Clifford, and Richard's Castle within Herefordshire worked to increase themselves and their holdings within what had been lands of the earl.<sup>157</sup> In the years following the arrival of the Normans, Davies views the relationship between Welsh and Norman leaders as that of equals, and would remain so "for generations".<sup>158</sup> The following fifteen years of Norman-Welsh political relations were marked less by fighting each other, and much more of fighting between the Welsh amongst themselves.<sup>159</sup>

In the central Marches, Roger d'Montgomery, as the palatine earl of Shrewsbury, established Montgomery Castle.<sup>160</sup> Using this as a base of operations, Roger built further castles into the Mid Welsh region of the March and by 1086 was ready to support further Norman

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<sup>152</sup> Davies. *History*, 103

<sup>153</sup> Barlow, 113-115

<sup>154</sup> Wood, 208

<sup>155</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>156</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>157</sup> Davies. *History*. 105

<sup>158</sup> Davies. *History*, 103

<sup>159</sup> Davies. *History*, 104

<sup>160</sup> Thomas, R. 14

advances into Wales.<sup>161</sup> In the north March was the palatine earldom of Chester under Hugh d'Avranches.<sup>162</sup> Hugh's lieutenant and cousin, Robert, drove into northern Wales and built Rhuddlan Castle at an important crossing of the River Clwyd in 1073.<sup>163</sup> Two years later, Robert pressed deeper into Wales. At the crossing point of the Conwy River estuary, Robert had Deganwy Castle built.<sup>164</sup> When Robert passed away in 1088, his lord d'Avranches continued the Norman advance, building further castles into the lands of Gwynedd.<sup>165</sup> By the year 1079 in the south western Welsh kingdom of Dheubarth, Rhys ap Tewdwr was able to gain the recognition of William I of his right to rule.<sup>166</sup> For fourteen years he served as a Norman vassal state, giving a semblance of stability and peace along this front allowing the Normans to consolidate in the southern and central March, as well as expand their progress beyond it.<sup>167</sup> By the time of Rhys' death in 1093, the Normans were ready to act and press deeper into Wales.<sup>168</sup> At the end of the 11th century, the Welsh had regrouped and using guerilla tactics attacked Normans and their castles, burning and destroying what they could, which was the precursor to three plus centuries of conflict in Wales.<sup>169</sup>

In northern Wales, the Normans under Hugh d'Avranches were even more adventurous, taking the northern coast of Wales and going as far as the Isle of Anglesey and constructing a castle there.<sup>170</sup> By the time of Domesday, the Normans had castles at Chepstow, Monmouth, and Caerleon.<sup>171</sup> The Peniarth MS 20 version of the *Brut y Tywysogion* notes that in

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<sup>161</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>162</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>163</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>164</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>165</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>166</sup> Jones. 31

<sup>167</sup> Thomas, R. 14

<sup>168</sup> Jones. 35

<sup>169</sup> Thomas, R. 16-17

<sup>170</sup> Davies. *Making*, 37

<sup>171</sup> Davies. *History*, 104



1069, a northern Welsh king fought a southern Welsh king with the aid of Norman troops.<sup>172</sup> Later in the same year, the son of the northern King who took over lands in southern Welsh Marches, as the King of his new lands, fought against the Normans who were raiding in southwestern Wales.<sup>173</sup> While this act earned him the respect of the lords of that area of Wales, he died the following year from wounds he received in the battle.<sup>174</sup> This points to the idea that Marcher lords would at times aid various Welsh kings against each other.

William the Conqueror had a set of ten laws attributed to him that give an idea of what he was attempting to accomplish.<sup>175</sup> There are efforts within them to maintain the basic legal structure that the people of England had lived under, and warned the incoming Frenchmen from violating those laws or the people themselves.<sup>176</sup> William refers to the laws and customs of king Edward, who he identifies as "my kinsman" to emphasizing his bloodline, that he is a continuation of rule for the English.<sup>177</sup> The document gives a rather clear view that William was seeking to portray himself not just as the rightful and legitimate heir to the English throne, but as an English king upholding the laws of the realm and the rights of those within it that already exist. While this was a basic idea for England and the English, the Welsh Marches were governed slightly differently. The Marcher lords of Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, were free to create their own laws, hold their own courts, make their own treaties with the Welsh, and rule as autonomous princes.<sup>178</sup> The laws of the realm within the land remained essentially intact during this period. While the Marcher lords did have independent authority to create and enforce laws, there is little evidence for much beyond Norman lords creating

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<sup>172</sup> Richards, T. 61

<sup>173</sup> Richards, T. 61

<sup>174</sup> Richards, T. 61

<sup>175</sup> Halsall, Paul. "Laws of William the Conqueror." *Medieval Sourcebook*. Fordham University. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/will1-lawsb.asp>

<sup>176</sup> Halsall, 1

<sup>177</sup> Halsall, 1

<sup>178</sup> Davies R.R. 41

methods of exerting their authority towards the neighboring lords and the lords under the dominion of their earldoms. To the lands of the Welsh Marches, this had the effect of being incentive for the individual Marcher lords to expand their holdings by taking what they could from the Welsh kings, as the laws did not apply to them or their lands. The primary means of doing this was to build castles and exert control from them. It is also key to take note of royal actions in response to Marcher lords who overstepped their authority. The example of Herefordshire being seized by William I in 1075 and not being reestablished as a county palatine until the twelfth century not only shows that the king was willing to exert his ultimate authority but serve as setting an example to the rest of the Marcher lords that lines still existed that could not be crossed.<sup>179</sup>

The economic focus is based on *Domesday Book*. *Domesday* clearly shows that the population and economy of the Welsh Marches are overall unchanged. Wendy Davies' chaos is business as usual within the March. Orderic Vitalis, called by Cannon "the great historian of the Normans", notes, "The English and French lived peacefully together in the boroughs and towns and intermarried."<sup>180</sup> He comments that available trade goods were from both England and France, and that the English were beginning to wear French clothing.<sup>181</sup> It is likely that such integration of wider economic opportunities were developing in the Welsh Marches as well, albeit at a much slower pace.

R.R. Davies states that "pride and greed were the incentives that drove the marcher lord, Robert, to unrestrained plunder and slaughter."<sup>182</sup> While this attitude may apply towards the views of the marcher lords towards those whom they viewed as their Welsh opponents, there is

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<sup>179</sup> Davies R.R. 53-54

<sup>180</sup> Barlow, 113

<sup>181</sup> Barlow, 113

<sup>182</sup> Davies, R.R. 45

very scant evidence contained within the pages of *Domesday* to back up the idea that the whole of the March was devastated by warfare. There are locations within the Welsh Marches that are identified as waste, yet *Domesday* has shown that these numbers are not a significant change when compared to the records that were available to the scribes of the day of Edward the Confessors lands and holdings.<sup>183</sup>

Examining the focus of nationalism, Offa's Dyke was constructed during the last half of the 8th century by Mercian rulers, and the Mercian king Offa has had his name traditionally attached to the earthwork. Stretching the length of the Welsh-English border, the dyke is less of a defensive structure and more of a delineation of cultures and control. Scholars like John Davies have pointed to the existence of the dyke as a sign of national identity for the Welsh.<sup>184</sup> Prior to the arrival of the Normans, the Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn united the various Welsh kingdoms and from 1055 until his death in 1063 led the Welsh nation.<sup>185</sup> Gruffudd is recorded as taking an army to Hereford, on the southern border with England. He and his host of Britons, conquered a Saxon army arrayed against them, then after pillaging the town of Hereford the Welsh leader destroyed the fortress and set fire to the town.<sup>186</sup> This was in concert with an attempt at claiming lands in the southern marches area: Whitford, Hope, Bangor Is-coed, Chirk, Presteigne, and Radnor. In 1063, Gruffudd was killed in battle.<sup>187</sup> The end for this united Wales came at the hands of Harold of Wessex, who invaded Wales.<sup>188</sup> Lands were taken

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<sup>183</sup> Higham and Ryan, 407 (Worthy of note is that *Domesday* shows a much greater number of places in a state of 'waste' in Northumbria than in the Welsh Marches. This is attributed to the rebellions of the Northumbrians and subsequent suppression by William I, that have become known as the 'Harrying of the North'.)

<sup>184</sup> Davies, *History*. 80

<sup>185</sup> Davies, *Making*. 35

<sup>186</sup> Jones, 25

<sup>187</sup> Jones, 27

<sup>188</sup> Davies. *History*. 101

once more by the Saxons after Gruffudd was killed.<sup>189</sup> The primary objective of Harold, according to John Davies, was not to take large portions of territory, but simply to rid himself of Gruffudd and end Welsh unity.<sup>190</sup> If this was his goal, he succeeded, as Wales broke into four separate kingdoms through succession: Gwynedd and Powys, Dheubarth, Gwent and Gwynllwg, and Glamorgan.<sup>191</sup> Harold would go on to become king of England, and find his fate at Hastings.<sup>192</sup> The Welsh would go back to having small kingdoms within Wales.

Trumpeting the fact that Welsh rulers were able to by a throne in Anglo-Saxon England's side and retake territories lost to the Normans, Davies states that "without its comparative success, it is unlikely that Welsh nationhood could have survived in any form."<sup>193</sup> Reviews of Davies' works have taken issue with his apparent Welsh nationalist view. Of particular note in reviews of his work is the lack of acknowledgement that much of the history of Wales is intertwined with that of England.<sup>194</sup> The role that the Welsh played within their own borders is seemingly over-emphasized while the impact that the Anglo-Saxons or Normans had is barely mentioned. Davies somehow gives the impression that Wales was an entity that during the last half of the eleventh century, was beholden to itself and its kings, and that the Normans were something that could have been removed if only the Welsh had found a way to remain united beneath the red dragon.<sup>195</sup>

When West says that "a small, alien, conquering minority, nevertheless settled among an indigenous majority, and worked a governmental, tenurial and legal revolution, creating a new and unique frontier society.", he is doing so without any apparent thought towards the

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<sup>189</sup> Davies. *History*. 101

<sup>190</sup> Davies, *History*. 101

<sup>191</sup> Davies. *History*. 102

<sup>192</sup> Davies. *History*. 101

<sup>193</sup> Davies. *History*, 108

<sup>194</sup> Horstman, Allen. *Historian*. Winter 1995, Vol 57. Issue 2

<sup>195</sup> The red dragon is a modern national symbol of Wales.

indigenous majority.<sup>196</sup> These are the everyday people of the eleventh century. They want to live their lives and do the best they can, the politics of lords does not concern them beyond who they owe their taxes due to. Without a specific reason inciting them, the arrival of the Normans was more of the same; lords come and lords go, but life continues and there are greater day to day realities to manage. The language spoken by the population of the Welsh Marches was different from the Normans, yet there had been centuries of interaction between the two languages of Welsh and English within the Welsh Marches that already existed, let alone any incursions from various seafaring wanderers that potentially occurred.<sup>197</sup> West's assumption that the Normans speaking French would cause a rift between the inhabitants and their 'invaders' over steps, like John Davies, into a much more modern concept of nationalism.

When asking the question what changed in the Welsh Marches during the last half of the eleventh century, the apparent idea that change was the by-word that came with the Normans oversimplifies the evidence. Changes occurred most definitely. From those who ruled the land, the shires, and the castles, the Anglo-Saxon order was out and the Norman one was in. The flurry of castle construction that the Normans adapted to their use of armored cavalry enabling them to command, control, and extend from is unquestioned.

What didn't change were, first and foremost, the people. The people were mostly the same people who had inhabited the Welsh Marches before the coming of the Normans. While some scholars want to make differences an example of change, this is not shown to be the case with the information available. Lords who spoke in a foreign tongue would not impact the inhabitants simply because of the use of a different language. Their lives continued as they had and would into the twelfth century. They had seen the island through the coming of the

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<sup>196</sup> West, 227

<sup>197</sup> West, 231

Romans, the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes, the Danes, and now the Normans. The ebb and flow of kings and nobles fighting for control of the land was nothing new for them.

The fact that a unified Wales was a rare occurrence, and during this fifty year period it did exist for a brief moment, did not impact the Normans as it was before their arrival, and played no part upon their coming to England and the Welsh Marches. Unified or not, Welsh interest in England was primarily as a place to raid and plunder, as well as to attack strongholds to cripple their enemies ability to strike. Religious activities continued seemingly unchanged, bishops were appointed, left office via retirement or death, and were replaced, although the note that learning had ceased in the south leads to the idea that one or more important monasteries were closed, destroyed, or abandoned for one reason or another.

There were changes within the Welsh Marches in the latter half of the eleventh century. The primary sources however do not confirm change being as encompassing or sweeping as some scholars would lead one to believe with their work. Castles were definitely changed, with the construction of many locations within the Welsh Marches by the Normans during this period. Leadership was also changed, with the earls and other lords coming from William I's Normandy. There is evidence that a small number of lesser Anglo-Saxon lords in parts of England were able to retain their position, yet there are no signs in the sources that any Anglo-Saxon lords did within the Welsh Marches. The economy is not shown to change significantly with the coming of the Normans. While some scholars portray the waste locations within the Welsh Marches at the time of *Domesday* as a sign of change, the book itself notes locations that were waste previously, does not record a significant increase in the number of lands that were waste, and also notes the growth in the economy of some other places. Economically the people within the Welsh Marches are evidenced to be living much the same as they had. Tax records

indicate that the majority of locations within the March were stable. For every indication of a location suffering in its ability to generate goods for one reason or another, other locations show significant improvements to their overall condition. Taking into account the needs of a more militarily focused frontier, this would make sense. Change, if any, is slightly positive in terms of its impact. Nationalism is pointed to by some scholars in this era. The primary sources show no signs of nationalism within the Welsh Marches by either the Welsh, the Anglo-Saxons, or the Normans. The Anglo-Saxons were uncentralized, reliant upon earls to maintain authority. The Normans were attempting to be much more centralized, but this did not apply to the Welsh Marches. The Marcher lords and county palatinates emphasize the lack of nationalistic thought. The Welsh were divided into a number of minor kingdoms who primarily squabbled amongst themselves. Working at the same time against the Normans they did make territorial recoveries, but this was due to independent actions occurring simultaneously rather than a united, coordinated effort.

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