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The resuscitation of Roger of Conwy: a Cantilupe miracle and the society of Edwardian north Wales

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This article uses one of Thomas Cantilupe's miracles of resuscitation as a lens through which to view the society of late thirteenth-century Conwy, a centre of English power in the recently conquered territory of north Wales. Combining the evidence of the Cantilupe canonisation process, contained in The Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, with what is known of the history, topography and architecture of town and castle, it examines the relationship between town and castle and, more generally, the structure, operation and spatial expression of hierarchy in Conwy. Taking a micro-historical approach, it further suggests ways in which memories of the miracle itself – the resuscitation of the toddler son of a castle servant – were shaped by that hierarchy and, especially, in a silent negotiation between the powerful and the relatively powerless.

Keywords: Conwy; medieval Wales; Thomas Cantilupe; bishop of Hereford; miracles; resuscitation; castles; hierarchy

On 23 October 1307 a small boy was brought before the bishops of London and Mende, commissioners appointed by the papacy to inquire into the life, reputation and miracles of Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford.¹ The men examined the child's face and head, looked at those parts of his limbs not hidden by his clothes and scrutinised the way that he walked. They also asked him whether he knew anything about what had happened to him on the day when he was said to have fallen from a drawbridge into the rock-cut ditch of Conwy Castle, died, and been miraculously resuscitated. 'No', he answered – 'but I don't want to go onto the bridge any more.'²

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¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: BAV: The Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; TNA: Kew, The National Archives.

The depositions concerning this miracle are contained in BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 188r–203v. Susan Ridyard is editing the Cantilupe canonisation process for publication in the Oxford Medieval Texts series.

² Cf. MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 191v. 'Eodem die dictus Rogerus, coram ipsis dominis commissariis personaliter exhibitus, requisitus absque iuramento, propter teneritudinem etatis sue, cum nondum diceretur attigisse septimum annum, si sciebat aliquid de casu suo vel morte aut miraculo supradictis, respondit quod non. ... Dixit tamen quod nolebat amplius ascendere pontem.'

The small boy was Roger, son of Gervase, a cook serving the constable of Conwy Castle, and his wife Dionysia. Unlike William Cragh, on whose miracle this special issue centres – but like many others believed to be dead and resuscitated – Roger had no memory of what happened during the crucial hours. Those who knew more, and who were fully interrogated in 1307, were Simon of Watford, perpetual vicar of the church of Conwy; Richard of Newcastle, priest of Conwy; John Siward, burgess of Conwy; Simon of Flint, resident of Conwy; John of Gyffin and John de Boys, respectively gate-keeper and steward of Conwy Castle; and of course Roger's parents, Gervase and Dionysia. Furthermore, the commissioners had before them a uniquely authoritative piece of evidence, a letter patent, to which some of the most influential people of the time had appended their seals and which was dated 7 September 1303, probably the day after the miracle.³ This letter, unparalleled elsewhere in the Cantilupe canonisation process, provides rare evidence of how a miracle was understood in its immediate aftermath. Taken together, the letter and the witnesses' depositions offer multiple insights into the society of Conwy, a new town founded by Edward I as a centre of English power in north Wales.

In particular, these rich sources afford insight into three themes. First, they offer unique evidence concerning the inter-relationship of castle and town, as this was seen in the daily lives of people not only of the elite but also, more unusually, of the servant classes, and as it was expressed in their ways of thinking about the topography of the castle ditch and the drawbridge over it. Second, they show something of the structure, operation and spatial expression of hierarchy in the community. Finally, when the depositions and the letter patent are, as it were, placed under the microscope, we can suggest that the miracle itself – or, more accurately, the way in which it was remembered – was a product of a silent negotiation between the powerful and the relatively powerless. Our study will, we hope, complement the readings of the William Cragh miracle and its context in Swansea.

The town of Conwy was founded by the English Crown in 1283, immediately after the defeat of Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Wales and the annexation of all Wales to the kingdom of England.⁴ In the spring and summer of that year King Edward I founded three completely new castles (complementing four already built after his first war in the previous decade), forming what later commentators have called an 'iron ring' around the Welsh princes' heartland of Snowdonia.⁵ The castles are justly famous as outstandingly well built and well preserved examples of medieval military architecture, built in a single programme by the royal works organisation under the direction of the Savoyard master mason James of St George. But a crucial element of the English castle-building strategy was the establishment of new towns beside all the new castles, to provide some of the essential goods and services for the castle garrisons, which were otherwise dangerously remote from sources of supply in England or Ireland.

Many of the inhabitants of these towns were to be colonists from England, especially the north-west and the Welsh marches, induced to move there by trading privileges and monopolies. In practice, the ethnic composition of several of the towns was more mixed, with a small but significant number of Frenchmen and Savoyards, including some of the craftsmen who had initially come to Wales to build the castles, and relatives of some of the high-ranking

³ There is some inconsistency between witnesses, but it is most likely that Roger's accident took place on the evening of 5 September and his recovery on the morning of 6 September. See further below, n. 14.

⁴ Edward A. Lewis, *The Medieval Boroughs of Snowdonia: a Study of the Rise and Development of the Municipal Element in the Ancient Principality of North Wales* (London: Henry Southeran, 1912), 44–6.

⁵ Diane M. Williams and John R. Kenyon, eds., *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), *passim*.

officials in the government of north Wales. Though evidence is patchy before the 1300s, it is likely that from the outset a small number of Welsh men and women lived in several of the towns, even holding the status of burgess, though a great many more of lower rank must have been resident, or traded in the towns on an occasional basis.⁶

Conwy was among the larger and more vigorous of these new towns; in 1303 it contained between 112 and 125 burgage plots, divided between over 100 burgesses, probably indicating a total population around 500.⁷ The town was regularly planned, with main streets at right angles, a central marketplace close to the parish church, and a complete circuit of stone walls, with 21 mural towers and three gates.⁸ It gave no indication of its origins; from around 1200, the site had been occupied by the important Cistercian abbey of Aberconwy, under the patronage of the princes of Gwynedd, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and his sons and grandsons, many of whom were buried there.⁹ In March 1283, the English army moved into the abbey precinct, co-opting some of the monastic buildings as a supply base and temporary royal palace, initiating what must often have been an uneasy cohabitation with the Welsh Cistercian monks, as royal agents began to set out the boundaries of a new town, and labourers commenced the excavation of new ditches for the castle, only 80 yards or so to the south-east.¹⁰ In the following year, with encouragement and financial help from the English king, the monks moved to a new site, at Maenan, around eight miles inland, making way for the new inhabitants of the town, and leaving the former abbey church to serve as their parish church.¹¹

The government of the town of Conwy comprised a series of inter-locking structures, intended to maintain the rights of the Crown and to assist its officials in upholding the king's peace, while also safeguarding certain liberties of the town's burgesses. At the highest level, castle and town were both under the authority of the constable of Conwy, the Burgundian knight Sir William de Cicon, charged both with the defence of the castle as its commanding officer and the maintenance of order within its district, and with at least the ceremonial government of the town, as mayor *ex officio*.¹² But the administration of Conwy and the other new boroughs entailed a delicate balance, and though the constable reserved the right to preside over cases of life and limb, and to imprison the most serious offenders within the castle, the burgesses of Conwy generally saw themselves as independent of the military authority. Greater day-to-day responsibility fell to officials elected from among their own number: two bailiffs, who presided over three-weekly borough courts, collected rents and tolls, and oversaw the 'free prison' in the town, and two coroners, who arranged the investigation of suspicious deaths, and disposed of the chattels of those dying intestate or executed for felony.¹³

On the morning when Roger's body was found in the castle ditch many of these actors in Conwy's story came together. Had his body been found and his miracle taken place on any other day, we might know nothing about it; we certainly would not have the unique evidence of the letter patent. But that morning, as Roger's body lay in the ditch, and as the coroners did

⁶ John Griffiths, 'Documents Relating to the Early History of Conway', *Caernarvonshire Historical Society Transactions* 8 (1947): 5–19.

⁷ TNA SC 12/17/87; SC 12/17/88.

⁸ Keith D. Lilley, 'The Landscapes of Edward's New Towns: Their Planning and Design', in *Impact of Edwardian Castles*, eds. Williams and Kenyon, 99–113.

⁹ David M. Robinson, *The Cistercians in Wales: Architecture and Archaeology 1130–1540* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2006), 223–35.

¹⁰ TNA E 101/351/9, mm. 5–9.

¹¹ *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1277–1328* (London: HMSO, 1912), 285–8.

¹² *Calendar of the Charter Rolls of Henry III and Edward I, 1257–1300* (London: HMSO, 1906), 276–7, 291.

¹³ Lewis, *Medieval Boroughs of Snowdonia*, 122–31, 159–63.

their work of determining – with a jury of townspeople – whether he was dead and, if so, whether foul play was involved, a very different group of people gathered in the parish church to remember an event of national significance: the death the previous year of the prominent knight and royal servant John of St John.¹⁴ Bishop Anian of Bangor was celebrating a memorial mass, in the company of Dafydd, abbot of Maenan. With them were William of Sutton, justiciar of north Wales, John of Havering, former justiciar of the same, and William de Cicon, constable and mayor, all three described as members of the council and household of Edward, prince of Wales. Also present were Thomas of Cambridge, Hugh of Leominster and Thomas of Asthall, all clerks of the council and household of the prince of Wales,¹⁵ and the four priests of the church of Conwy, Simon of Watford, Richard of Newcastle, Roger of Bridgnorth and Thomas Denbigh. Of these, at least three and probably six – William de Cicon, Simon of Watford, John of Havering, Thomas of Cambridge, Hugh of Leominster and Richard of Newcastle – had just seen Roger lying dead in the ditch. They were no doubt a little shaken by the experience, and they must have been amazed when the castle steward, John de Boys, rushed into the church and told them that the child had revived.¹⁶ And then, in the middle of the solemn mass, a crowd of around 200 townspeople poured into the church, at their centre a woman clinging to the newly resuscitated child. Stunned by what they saw and heard, and aware of the continuing drive to secure Cantilupe's canonisation, the distinguished men who had gathered for the mass decided to set down in writing their testimony to the miracle, presumably with the intention that their document would be kept 'on file' at Hereford Cathedral.

The story they told began with a statement that Roger fell, 'in the first hour of the night' ('tempore nocturne, in prima hora noctis') from the drawbridge of Conwy Castle to the bottom of the rocky ditch. They went on to note that he lay there naked until the following morning, 'around mid-prime' ('circa mediam horam prime'), that is, probably, half-way between the canonical hours of Prime and Terce, adding the detail that the distance from the bridge to the bottom of the ditch was 28 feet. The town's coroners arrived and found Roger to be dead. Then a burgess of Conwy, John Siward, approached the body, took a penny from his bag, and made the sign of the cross with it on the child's forehead and chest, making a vow to God and St Thomas, bishop of Hereford, that the child, if he recovered, would visit the said St Thomas' tomb. Then, seemingly in the blink of an eye, Roger revived. He was immediately given to his mother, who began to nurse him; and he soon appeared happy and cheerful, with no trace of any injury. It was soon after this that the joyful crowds made their way to the church.¹⁷

The circumstances of Roger's miracle ensured that a consensus about it was reached and recorded in this document within little more than 24 hours of his resuscitation. But it is important to pay some attention to whose consensus this was. According to Roger's father, it was the former justiciar of north Wales, John of Havering, who took the initiative in having

¹⁴ For this influential knight and royal servant, who died 6 September 1302, see M. Vale, 'St John, Sir John de (d. 1302)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison, online edn., <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24499> (Accessed 6 September 2013). The anniversary mass most likely took place on the actual anniversary of his death, thus giving 6 September as the most probable date for the miracle.

¹⁵ For William de Cicon, see R. Allen Brown, Howard M. Colvin and Arnold J. Taylor, *History of the King's Works*, vols. 1 and 2 (London: HMSO, 1963), 1: 323–4, 342, n. 6; *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1277–1328*, 291; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1292–1301* (London: HMSO, 1895) 165; TNA E 372/141, rot. 28. For John of Havering, see W.H. Waters, *The Edwardian Settlement of North Wales in its Administrative and Legal Aspects (1282–1343)* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1935), 11, 13–14. For William of Sutton, Thomas of Asthall and Hugh of Leominster, see Waters, *Edwardian Settlement*, 12, 35–44.

¹⁶ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4014, f. 195v.

¹⁷ ff. 188v–189r. The letter was also copied into a chronological list of Cantilupe's miracles, ff. 306r–306v.

the miracle recorded.¹⁸ Another influential figure may have been Simon of Watford, perpetual vicar of Conwy, who put his seal to the letter patent and was among the witnesses in 1307; indeed, he was responsible for assembling them in Hereford.¹⁹ Simon clearly had close ties to the castle, having spent the night of the accident inside its walls: this suggests that he may also have served as chaplain to the garrison, a role prescribed by Edward I.²⁰ Simon had seen the body in the ditch, and he testified in 1307 that he had personally measured the depth of the ditch as '28 of his own feet'.²¹ The fact that this detail about the ditch's depth appears in the letter written so soon afterwards suggests that Simon may have had a significant hand in drafting what became the 'received version' of the miracle. Furthermore, it is striking that the letter includes no mention of how Roger came to be in the ditch or of how people came to find his body and realise that he was dead – except for the official finding of the coroners. What we have here, in short, is a 'top down' account of the miracle, one that reflects what the churchmen, knights and clerks who put their seals to the document knew and what they thought worth remembering. Some of these men may have known Cantilupe; Bishop Anian almost certainly did so and, two years later, he was among the churchmen and nobles who petitioned the pope for a canonisation inquiry to be set in motion.²² At least one of them likely had experience of Cantilupe's curative powers: John of Havering, whose initiative in having the letter drawn up was noted by Roger's father, could hardly be unaware that in 1287 a young man of his own household had been cured through Cantilupe's intercession after being deaf for three years.²³ As men who moved largely in Cantilupe's own social and cultural world, it is not surprising that they seized on the events of that September morning as further evidence that God did indeed work miracles through him.

For the commissioners of 1307, and those who would read their report, the 'view from above' contained in the letter patent may have been a useful starting point. But it was not in itself adequate to prove that a miracle had taken place. For instance, only the coroners' verdict was cited in evidence that Roger was actually dead. And no proof was given that it was a fall from the bridge that had killed him. The witnesses questioned in 1307 filled these and other gaps, both in their initial depositions, when they were asked to relate what they knew about the alleged miracle, and in subsequent cross-examination. Their depositions, while not contradicting the letter, reveal much more about the events and about the society in which they took place.²⁴

¹⁸ f. 201r.

¹⁹ f. 189r.

²⁰ *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1277–1328*, 291.

²¹ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 191r ('viginti et octo pedes suos').

²² Cantilupe's register includes copies of two letters to Bishop Anian, from 1296 and 1280; R.G. Griffiths and W.W. Capes, eds., *Registrum Thome de Cantilupo, episcopi Herefordensis, A.D. 1275–1282* (Hereford: Cantilupe Society, 1906), 105, 253. The first asks Anian to urge the Welsh Prince Llewellyn to restore three villages that the see of Hereford claimed; the second asks the bishops of St Asaph and Bangor to discharge certain episcopal duties on Cantilupe's behalf during his absence overseas. Neither necessarily implies a personal acquaintance, but it is very likely that the two men had encountered one another. Anian's letter of 1305 is found in BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 262v–263. He is not named among the writers of earlier letters listed in the register of Cantilupe's successor, Bishop Swinfield, but this listing is not complete.

²³ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 190v.

²⁴ Substantial methodological issues are involved in any attempt to make constructive use of witness depositions in this and other canonisation processes; these will be addressed in Ridyard's edition of the Cantilupe process. In the present paper we treat the written record as conveying the substance, but not necessarily the exact words, of the witnesses as they stated their recollections of events. The recollections themselves were not necessarily accurate, and indeed some of the most interesting insights emerge when

Turning first to the depositions concerning the manner of Roger's death, and to the theme of the relationship of castle and town, we see how the institutional interdependency discussed above had shaped the lives of one group of townspeople, the castle servants, about whom we would otherwise know almost nothing. Gervase, because of his work, spent much of his time in the castle, while his wife lived with their three children in a house 'a stone's throw' away.²⁵ She, moreover, had her own connection to the castle: she had formerly belonged to the household of the steward, John de Boys,²⁶ and she maintained connections with those who continued to work and perhaps, in some cases, live in the castle. On the evening of Roger's accident, she had been in her house with a castle servant named Gwenllian.²⁷ The two women and Gervase had then spent the night attending a vigil in the parish church for two deceased castle servants, one of whom (Cecilia, servant to Lady Joan de Cicon, the constable's wife) Dyonisia had nursed in her final illness.²⁸ Moreover, according to several witnesses, Gervase was accustomed to taking Roger with him when he went to work in the castle.²⁹ It was this that made the explanation for the presence of Roger's body in the ditch seem obvious: all the witnesses agreed that he must have managed to get out of his cot or cradle and set off toward the castle, looking for his father and following a familiar route. He had tried to cross the drawbridge, as he and his father usually did, but the drawbridge was raised and the night was dark,³⁰ he stepped out into a void.

Other married castle servants doubtless likewise divided their time between the castle and a family home in the town; and one incident concerning John of Gyffin suggests that Gervase was not alone in sometimes bringing a child into the castle. On the night when Roger fell, John of Havering's son, Nicholas, was staying in the castle, in the north-west tower, which flanked the ditch in close proximity to the drawbridge and a structure interpreted as a porter's lodge.³¹ The following morning, he told John of Gyffin that he should check the ditch for a body because the previous night he had heard a noise like a child crying out; given the proximity of the ditch, he reasoned correctly that someone must have fallen into it, but with a remarkable lack of common sense he had done nothing about it because he heard nothing beyond that first cry. John's reaction on hearing this was one of dread, his first thought that one of his own children might have fallen to his death, in just the same way that Roger actually had: clearly it was not out of the question that they too might come into the castle with their father.³²

The castle servants such as Gervase and John of Gyffin crossed from town to castle on most days of their lives; at least some of the other witnesses may have done so with some regularity. Their depositions offer some useful insights into how they, and others, thought about the physical

we consider the discrepancies between them and the ways in which cross-examination led some witnesses to change their minds about what exactly they did remember.

²⁵ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 189v ('non distante a castro nisi per iactum lapidis vel circa'), 192r ('propinqua castro ad iactum lapidis'), 194r ('prope castrum quasi ad iactum lapidis'), 195v–196r ('prope castrum ad iactum lapidis'), 198r ('propinqua castro ad iactum lapidis'), 199v ('prope castrum ad iactum unius lapidis'), 200r–v ('prope castrum ad iactum unius lapidis'), 201v–202r ('propinqua castro ad iactum unius lapidis').

²⁶ f. 194v.

²⁷ ff. 200r–v, 202r.

²⁸ ff. 189v, 192r, 195v, 198r, 199v, 200r–v, 202r.

²⁹ ff. 190v, 192r, 194r, 196r, 198r, 199v, 201v.

³⁰ ff. 189r, 190v, 192r, 194r, 195v, 198r, 199v, 201r–v, 202v–203r.

³¹ Jeremy A. Ashbee, *Conwy Castle and Town Walls* (Cardiff: Cadw Welsh Assembly Government, 2007),

27.

³² BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 194v, 198v.

space through which they moved, particularly the ditch and the entrance to the castle. The ditch formed the outermost defensive line for the castle, excavated from 1283 onwards as the first operation in the castle's construction, and providing much of its building stone.³³ Engineering works in the nineteenth century, particularly the construction of new roads and railways, and modern landscaping around the castle, have affected every part of the ditch, and it is difficult to reconstruct its original profile. Nevertheless, some of its character can still be seen on the side under the castle walls, a very steep slope of sharp and jagged rocks. Over this the drawbridge was constructed, approached by a steep stone ramp from the town. Some of the witnesses most familiar with this approach had good reason to identify the drawbridge as a particular hazard. The castle gate-keeper, John of Gyffin, remembered watching helplessly 16 years previously as a certain John de Broc was blown from the bridge by the wind and fell to his death.³⁴ Simon of Watford and John de Boys remembered the same incident and used it, when questioned, to support their view that Roger, having fallen from such a height, could not 'in accordance with the way and power of human nature' (or, more commonly, 'the way of nature') have escaped without his body being completely shattered; the implication was that some form of divine protection was already at work.³⁵ Surviving accounts reveal the drawbridge as a structure requiring heavy maintenance: it had needed replacement only two years after its first installation.³⁶ More generally, all of the witnesses showed an awareness that the point where one stepped from the ramp onto the drawbridge was particularly dangerous, especially on a dark night. And all drew attention to the jagged rocks that formed the sides and bottom of the ditch, although there was some disagreement about the exact shape of the rock on which Roger was found. Both drawbridge and ditch, therefore, were understood to be places of potential danger.

And yet the same depositions reveal that the ditch was far from being a 'no-go area'. In responding to questions that probed whether Roger could possibly have walked rather than fallen into the ditch, they reveal that the townspeople in particular were using the ditch in a number of ways. Simon of Watford insisted that Roger could not have got down either by the path that the coroners had used that morning or by any other route, implying that there was more than one way into the ditch.³⁷ Richard of Newcastle mentioned a path that townspeople used for drawing water, noting that no small child could have negotiated it and that it was around 80 feet from where Roger was found; and John Siward said substantially the same thing.³⁸ John de Boys referred to 'paths', noting that they were narrow and treacherous and that he had never heard of Roger entering the ditch by these paths, which were 40 feet and more from where he was found.³⁹ Simon of Flint knew of a path but did not believe Roger could have reached the place where he was found by it; Dionysia said much the same.⁴⁰ John of Gyffin explained that there was a path, by which many boys (or children) were accustomed to go down into the ditch in search of 'elemosinam castellani', perhaps a euphemism for food thrown out from the castle kitchen.⁴¹ But this path would be dangerous at night and was not

³³ Ashbee, *Conwy Castle*, 7, 45.

³⁴ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 199v.

³⁵ ff. 191r ('secundum viam et potentiam nature humane'), 196r ('secundum viam nature').

³⁶ TNA E 101/485/28, m. 4. References to the need for further repairs and replacements appear in works accounts for the castle, such as E 163/4/42 and E 101/489/7, rot. 1.

³⁷ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 191r.

³⁸ ff. 192r, 194r.

³⁹ f. 196r ('vias').

⁴⁰ ff. 198v, 203r.

⁴¹ f. 200r.

close to the place where Roger was found; moreover, he had never seen Roger in the ditch. Gervase, on the other hand, said that there was a path by which adults could get down but not children – and specifically not Roger.⁴² On the basis of this, the only surviving evidence for access to the ditch, it is impossible to know whether there was one path, described differently by different people, or a network of small tracks by which people got down into the ditch; but they did get down and they had no qualms that in doing so they would be crossing a legal or psychological boundary between 'town' and 'castle'. Rather the patterns of access mentioned by the witnesses suggest that this space had to a significant degree been 'claimed' by the townspeople, while the castle officials and garrison would have had no need to draw water, search for food, or allow children to play there. From an institutional standpoint, moreover, the fact that the castle constable summoned the town's coroners to investigate the apparently dead child in the ditch suggests that the ditch was perceived as under the jurisdiction of the town and not part of the castle proper.

More evident in the sources than a simple distinction between communities of 'castle' and 'town' is a pervasive sense of hierarchy, based on office, social status, or a combination of factors, including perceived moral standing. The depositions concerning the finding of Roger's body provide a striking vignette of this hierarchy in operation. On that September morning a small group of men was leaving the castle, presumably to attend the anniversary mass in the parish church. According to Simon of Watford, this group included himself, William de Cicon, the constable, and John de Boys, the castle steward; John de Boys himself says the same thing.⁴³ Richard of Newcastle, who arrived on the scene a little later, noted that John of Havering, the former justiciar of north Wales, Thomas of Cambridge, royal clerk, and Hugh of Leominster, chamberlain of the prince of Wales, were also on the bridge.⁴⁴ John of Gyffin stated that the constable was on the bridge 'with some other people whose names he does not remember'.⁴⁵

As the emergency unfolded, it was these men on the bridge who took charge, giving orders from an appropriately elevated position to their inferiors – castle servants, townspeople and even the two coroners – in the ditch. According to Simon of Watford, who remained there throughout, the constable ordered John of Gyffin to go down into the ditch to see if the child was dead, and when John's natural instinct told him to bring the body out of the ditch, John de Boys reminded him not to do so until the coroners had viewed the body.⁴⁶ According to John Siward, he himself was summoned to the castle by the constable (although this may have been by pre-arrangement) and was then sent to bring the coroners, with whom he entered the ditch.⁴⁷ John de Boys remembered the constable's instruction to John of Gyffin to go into the ditch to examine the body.⁴⁸ He also remembered that he himself ordered that the body be left in place until the coroners could be summoned and that later he instructed John Siward to carry the revived child to his mother. He himself then went to the parish church, where he reported the miracle to those who were attending the anniversary mass. At this point he was instructed by John of Havering to have the mother soak a cloth in warm water and use this to warm the child.⁴⁹ John of Gyffin's account is a little different. He deposed that he was on his

⁴² f. 201v.

⁴³ ff. 189v, 194v.

⁴⁴ f. 191v.

⁴⁵ f. 199r ('cum quibusdam aliis de quorum non recordatur nominibus').

⁴⁶ ff. 189v, 194v.

⁴⁷ f. 192v.

⁴⁸ f. 194v.

⁴⁹ f. 195v.

way to lower the bridge around sunrise when Nicholas, son of John of Havering, told him he should look around in the ditch to see if there was a child there, because he had heard a child's cry the night before. He went immediately, and on finding Roger and satisfying himself that he was dead, he was about to bring the body out of the ditch when the constable himself – not John de Boys – ordered him to leave it in place; when he emerged from the ditch, the constable sent him – not John Siward – to summon the coroners.⁵⁰ Roger's parents, of course, were not present when the body was found. But as the child's father returned to the castle to start work, the constable approached him and asked where he had been all night. When he explained that he had been in church at the vigil, the constable answered that he had not been very vigilant with his own child, who was lying dead at the bottom of the ditch. When Gervase asked if he could take the body out of the ditch, he was told to wait until the coroners had done their work.⁵¹

What we see here, despite the contradictions between witnesses, is the exercise of authority in accordance with a hierarchy of office and social status. William de Cicon, as both constable and mayor, knew what needed to be done and ordered John de Gyffin and others to do it. John de Boys, who repeatedly stressed the importance of his own actions, gave orders to those below him in the castle hierarchy while obeying those from above. Particularly interesting is the way in which John de Boys and John of Gyffin followed instructions from John of Havering and his son respectively. Neither Sir John nor Nicholas held positions of authority in castle or town at the time, but no one was likely to forget the father's status and the power he had held as justiciar of north Wales or the status and potential of the son. Nicholas was almost certainly expected to follow his father and older brother into royal service, as eventually happened.⁵² It is reasonable to imagine him as a man of potential importance, and therefore of some influence. Furthermore, John Siward mentioned the useful detail that Nicholas had been lodged in the tower beside the gate, the present north-west tower of the castle. One peculiarity of this tower is that it could only be entered by passing through a building in front, interpreted as the porter's lodge.⁵³ This suggests that the high-ranking young man and the castle gate-keeper may already have been well acquainted – at least well enough for their relative social positions to be firmly established.

Turning from those depositions in which the witnesses describe the events of that memorable morning to those in which they identify themselves and place themselves in relation to one another, we see further dimensions of the society of Conwy and its region. First, like all other witnesses in the Cantilupe inquiry, they were asked their 'condition', a question which in practice seems to have been put to witnesses in the form of asking what their legal and/or social status was, how they gained their living, and whether they had any special connection with Cantilupe, his family, or the church of Hereford. On the matter of legal status, John Siward was a burgess of Conwy, while all the others stated simply that they were free. Siward also stated elsewhere that he was at that time a royal official in the town and that he was summoned by the constable that morning; he apparently held a special position in the interrelated structures of town, castle and royal government: like Nicholas of Havering, Siward's position was enhanced through family connections, as the younger son of an

⁵⁰ f. 199r.

⁵¹ ff. 200v–201r.

⁵² Nicholas first appears as 'escheator' in Gascony, where his father was sent as seneschal, in April 1305: *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 338.

⁵³ Ashbee, *Conwy Castle*, 27.

important knight in the royal government of lowland Scotland.⁵⁴ These combined factors perhaps help to account for Siward's featuring as prominently as he does in people's memories of the miracle; he was well-known and respected, and people noticed and remembered his actions. On the matter of income, all but Roger's parents lived, they said, on the income from property; Roger's parents, propertyless and living from Gervase's work as cook, were doubtless considered, and would consider themselves, to be somewhat lower in the social hierarchy than the other witnesses.⁵⁵

Second, each witness was asked whether he or she knew the *other* witnesses and, especially important, whether they were of good repute. Only one full answer to this last is preserved, that of Simon of Watford; the others said 'the same in effect' (*idem in effectu*) as he. What the vicar said was that he knew them all, and 'they are free men, trustworthy, and of good repute in the parish of Conwy, and that they have their own property, from which they live – except John de Boys and the father and mother of the said Roger, who live by their service'.⁵⁶ John de Boys, had he heard this, would surely have been offended; he himself makes no reference to his service as pertinent to his 'condition', stating only that he lived from the income of properties in Wales.⁵⁷ One wonders whether Simon of Watford did not know this, did not think of it, since his own connection with de Boys centred on the castle, or had some reason to wish to diminish de Boys' status in the eyes of the commissioners. To the general consensus that all of the witnesses were 'of good repute' ('bone reputationis') John of Gyffin added a small but interesting point: Gervase and Dionysia, he said, had the reputation of being 'good poor people'.⁵⁸ There is perhaps an implication here that 'goodness' in poor people was not necessarily the same as 'goodness' in those better-off, or at least that it manifested itself in different ways in proportion to their different resources. Dionysia herself made a similar distinction, saying that she and her husband lived 'a good life, as poor people'.⁵⁹

But did they? And did everyone agree that they did? John Siward, while in general saying 'the same in effect' as the vicar on the matter of his fellow-witnesses' reputations, began his answer to the question of how he thought Roger had died with a statement that immediately called into question Dionysia's 'goodness' and her capacity as a mother: 'he had heard it said by Roger's mother and generally in the town, that on the night [when Roger fell] his mother was drunk, and undressed Roger to put him to bed ...'⁶⁰ After this, he continued, Gervase left the house for the castle, and the toddler was able to slip out without his mother noticing. We can never know whether Dionysia actually was drunk, although it might explain some otherwise

⁵⁴ For the military career of John Siward's father, see Gerard J. Brault, ed., *Rolls of Arms, Edward I (1272–1307)* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), 392; David Simpkin, *The English Aristocracy at War: From the Welsh Wars of Edward I to the Battle of Bannockburn* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 42.

⁵⁵ The hierarchy evident in the witnesses' answers to these questions is reflected in the different languages in which they deposed. Simon of Watford, the principal priest of Conwy, deposed in Latin; John de Boys deposed partly in Latin and partly in French; and all the others deposed in French, with the exception of Dionysia, who – despite being known as 'Poitevin' – knew only English. It is interesting that she had been able to work in the steward's household knowing only English while her husband, as cook, had at least a working knowledge of French.

⁵⁶ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 191r ('et quod sunt homines liberi, fide digni et bone reputationis in dicta parochia de Conewaye, et quod habent de suo unde vivunt exceptis Johanne de Boys et patre et matre dicti Rogeri qui vivunt de servitio suo').

⁵⁷ f. 194r.

⁵⁸ f. 198v ('boni homines pauperes').

⁵⁹ f. 203v ('bonam vitam, ut pauperes').

⁶⁰ f. 194r ('dixit se audivisse referri a matre dicti Rogeri, et communiter in dicta villa, quod in nocte ... dicta mater ebria erat et expoliaverat dictum Rogerum ut collocaret eum in lecto ad dormiendum').

puzzling aspects of her behaviour, such as falling asleep when she discovered her child was missing.⁶¹ She was not herself questioned on this, although the commissioners did ask Gervase whether he or his wife had been drunk, to which his answer was 'No'.⁶² Nor can we ever know whether Siward was, as he claimed, citing a general rumour, or whether he had some more personal reason for wishing to undermine Dionysia's reputation – if indeed that was what he intended to do. Even his statement that 'he had heard it said by Roger's mother, and generally in the town' is problematic; it is not clear whether it refers specifically to this first part of his conjecture or to the whole of the reasoning that follows and that perhaps was pieced together from different people's accounts. Nonetheless, Siward's statement certainly suggests that the inhabitants of Conwy did not all think as highly of one another as they claimed. While no one would have dreamed of judging Dionysia by modern standards of 'good parenting', a readiness to 'think the worst' when things went wrong might well have gone hand-in-hand with an awareness that this family was the poorest and had the lowest status of all those involved.

While there may have been tensions, temporary or long-standing, between the townspeople of Conwy, some individuals were so different as to have been virtually invisible to them, or to some of them. John of Gyffin's comment that the constable appeared on the drawbridge that morning with people 'whose names he did not remember' might be understood in this way;⁶³ he may have simply paid no attention to men who were outside his normal range of acquaintances. More striking, however, is the case of a Lombard who, according to some, played a significant part in the events in the ditch. This Lombard – if he existed at all – seems to have known the town well, certainly well enough to know about its parish church; he may even have been resident in Conwy.⁶⁴ But no one remembered his name; he was identified, and marginalised, by his foreignness.

The physical spaces that feature most prominently in the miracle of Roger of Conwy are the castle ditch and its immediate vicinity. But the sacred space of the parish church also had a significant part to play. First, according to all of the witnesses except Siward, it was here, attending the vigils for two castle servants, that Roger's parents had spent all, or almost all, of the night that he went missing.⁶⁵ Castle servants, present and past, came together for this, some no doubt with their families. Second, it was to the parish church that Roger's parents carried the newly resuscitated child, in the company of large numbers of their fellows.⁶⁶ Both of these points speak to the centrality of the parish church for the urban community of Conwy, including those whose work was in the castle. Finally, it was here, on a morning that was far from ordinary, that the social worlds of the castle cook, the Burgundian constable, the Welsh bishop and the English rulers of Wales converged.

The use of the parish church of Conwy for the mass to commemorate Sir John of St John is in some ways surprising and may cast some light on the concerns of the English elite who planned the event. This was certainly not the only religious building available for the ceremony. Within Conwy Castle there were at least two chapels: a larger structure adjacent to the Great Hall in the outer ward, presumably used routinely for the devotions of the soldiers of the garrison, perhaps accompanied by some of the officials and servants, and a smaller circular chapel

⁶¹ f. 202v.

⁶² f. 201v.

⁶³ f. 199r.

⁶⁴ See below.

⁶⁵ See above, n. 28.

⁶⁶ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 189v (the letter patent, where it is said to have been the 'cleri et populi' who took the child), 193v, 199v, 202v (Dionysia).

occupying the middle floor of the north-east tower within the castle's inner ward. This chapel, more ornate in design, provided with a 'watching chamber' at a high level behind its west wall, and directly adjoining the royal apartments, was undoubtedly built for the private worship of the king and queen when they resided in the castle; in their absence it is unclear whether anyone occupied the apartments or worshipped in the private chapel, but it is certainly possible that the constable of Conwy and his wife expected to use it.⁶⁷

The English governors of north Wales may well have known these chapels much better than the parish church at Conwy. But the parish church was doubtless seen as more suitable, both in size and in the dignity of its associations, for the solemn, and politically charged, ceremony they were planning. The present church building, apart from the lower portions of the west wall, is most likely a rebuilding on the site of the Cistercian monastic church, almost certainly at some point after 1303. It is reasonable to expect that the original building, the premier monastic foundation of Gwynedd and the burial place of its princely family, was even larger than the present church, perhaps nearly 200 feet long.⁶⁸ This was certainly the largest and most prestigious sacred building available in Conwy. It was also the best option available in north Wales as a whole. None of the other English boroughs of north Wales could boast anything as substantial: for example, the borough of Caernarfon, despite being politically more important, contained no church within its walls, although a chapel had just been founded.⁶⁹ Perhaps, moreover, the English officials felt that only a church within a town under their control was appropriate (or safe enough) to commemorate an English royal knight and military champion: this may explain why the mass could not be held in Bishop Anian's own cathedral at Bangor, for example, or at Maenan Abbey, the new site of Aberconwy Abbey.

When the large group of townspeople brought Roger into the church, they found Bishop Anian celebrating mass at the high altar. One can imagine some of them slipping in quietly, others loudly sharing their joy, and in their midst, Roger himself still in his mother's arms. Dionysia herself described how she sat down with him before the cross, presumably at the front of the crowd in the nave, and Bishop Anian, after celebrating mass, came and made the sign of the cross on Roger's forehead, apparently terrifying the already traumatised child.⁷⁰ It was after this that the miracle was formally made public, and it was probably the following day that the sealed document describing it was composed; those with the habit of command had made Roger's miracle into 'their' cause.

In the process, and certainly in the four years between the miracle and the canonisation inquiry, other voices were submerged. This is suggested by one of the most puzzling, and potentially most damaging for Cantilupe's cause, of the many inconsistencies between witnesses. What the commissioners needed to gather was evidence not only that a miracle had occurred but also that the miracle was indeed Cantilupe's miracle and was believed to be so by the community in which it took place. In this context it was important to know by whom and how the saint was invoked. The letter patent, of course, states clearly that John Siward took a penny, made the sign of the cross over the child with it, and made a vow to St Thomas Cantilupe.⁷¹ Siward himself gave a more detailed account: he was on his way into the castle

⁶⁷ Ashbee, *Conwy Castle*, 28–30, 37–9.

⁶⁸ Robinson, *Cistercians in Wales*, 223–5.

⁶⁹ Arnold J. Taylor, *Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls* (Cardiff: Cadw Welsh Assembly Government, 2004), 42; Michael Fradley, 'Space and Structure at Caernarfon Castle', *Medieval Archaeology* 50 (2006): 165–78.

⁷⁰ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 202v.

⁷¹ f. 189r.

when he saw Roger lying naked and apparently dead under the bridge. On the constable's order, he summoned the coroners and the 12 men who would assist them, then went with them into the ditch and was present when Roger was declared dead. He himself seems to have felt the body after the others, confirming that Roger was dead and straightening one of his legs which was badly bent. Then, as the coroners prepared to write their report, he took a silver penny from a bag, made the sign of the cross over Roger's forehead with it, then bent it and hung it by a string round Roger's neck – all of this in the hope that God would restore the child to life through the merits of St Thomas Cantilupe. In this he seems to have been prompted by the fact that he himself had already been, *frequenter*, as a pilgrim to Cantilupe's tomb. He even made a vow that if Roger were to be revived, the child's mother would take him, with the penny, to Hereford Cathedral. After this, he forced open Roger's mouth, saw his tongue palpitating a little, and said that he hoped the child might live. After opening Roger's mouth further, and seeing more movement of the tongue, he again said publicly that he was hopeful that the child would live, and then carried him to the house of Richard Mercer, which we know to have been immediately beside the ditch, at the foot of the drawbridge ramp, to warm him by the fire.⁷²

John Siward was the third witness examined in 1307; the first two witnesses, Simon of Watford and Richard of Newcastle, had both heard the same version of events, although neither was present for the actual invocation of the saint.⁷³ The fifth and sixth witnesses, Simon of Flint and John of Gyffin, had both observed Siward's signing of the child to St Thomas.⁷⁴ The final witnesses, Roger's parents, had not been present in the ditch, but both had heard their son had been signed or measured to St Thomas, Dionysia naming Siward as the person responsible.⁷⁵

The fourth witness, John de Boys, said something quite different. He related that he was with the coroners in the ditch as they prepared to write up their report. At this point, a certain Lombard – he never knew the man's name – said, in John's hearing, that he would bend a penny over Roger's body in honour of the Holy Cross, 'for which God very often works miracles in the town'. He then watched the Lombard make the sign of the cross with the penny and bend it; he did not remember whether he hung it round Roger's neck. It was only *after this*, according to this witness, that Siward thought of Cantilupe. When Roger still showed no sign of life, Siward said that he would bend another penny, this one in honour of St Thomas of Hereford, through whom God was also working miracles; he did so in the witness' sight, although again the witness could not remember whether he hung the penny round the child's neck. He did remember, though, that just as the coroners' scribe was beginning to put pen to parchment, Siward said that he had opened Roger's mouth and seen the tongue moving a little.⁷⁶

This was the first that the commissioners had heard about either a Lombard or the Holy Cross. They seized upon this in their first question for de Boys: was 'the aforesaid miracle ascribed to the power of the Holy Cross, to which Roger had first been signed and vowed?' 'No', answered the steward, 'because ... no signs of life had appeared in him until he was signed and vowed by John Siward to St Thomas – and therefore his resuscitation was ascribed by everyone at the time, and

⁷² ff. 192v–193r. The location of Richard Mercer's house is given in ff. 193r and 199v, and is supported by burgage surveys of c.1295 and 1305, which include his name near the head of the lists, and presumably began at the castle gate: TNA SC 12/17/87 and 88.

⁷³ BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 190r, 192r.

⁷⁴ ff. 198r, 199v.

⁷⁵ ff. 201r, 203r.

⁷⁶ ff. 194v–195v, quote at f. 195r ('pro qua Deus in dicta villa sepiissime miracula operatur').

still is ascribed, to a miracle performed by the merits of the said St Thomas'.⁷⁷ Following de Boys' examination, the commissioners called back the first three witnesses and asked each of them, among other things, whether Roger had been signed, measured or vowed to the Holy Cross; the issue was also addressed in their examination of the remaining witnesses. The question elicited significant changes to the first three witnesses' accounts of what had taken place. Simon of Watford, once his memory was jogged, said that he had not seen Roger being signed, measured or vowed to anyone other than St Thomas; however, he had indeed heard some of his parishioners, whose names he did not remember, saying – but not publicly – that *after* Siward signed Roger to St Thomas the child had been measured – he did not know by whom – to the Holy Cross 'for which God is said to work miracles in the church of the town of Conwy'. Furthermore, he did not know whether this was before or after the signs of life appeared in Roger.⁷⁸ Richard of Newcastle remembered hearing from 'trustworthy people', including John Siward and Roger's parents, that the child had been measured to the Holy Cross of the church of Conwy.⁷⁹ John Siward, bizarrely, recalled that he himself, after signing Roger to St Thomas, and after the first signs of life, went on to measure him to the Holy Cross, even though he thought Roger was alive, in order to obtain greater grace for him.⁸⁰ Simon of Flint, who had seen Siward's invocation of St Thomas, added when pressed that he had heard of Roger's being measured *by his mother* to the Holy Cross *after* the signs of life appeared.⁸¹ John of Gyffin, in his initial deposition, attributed the invocation of St Thomas to Siward and 'a Lombard, whose name he does not remember' – and went on to state that Siward had also measured Roger to the Holy Cross, after seeing the first sign of life.⁸² The coroners, he noted, left the ditch, praising 'St Thomas who had performed this miracle, and also the Holy Cross, to which, after the palpitation of his tongue, John Siward had measured the same Roger with a string ...'.⁸³ Roger's father deposed that he had heard that Roger was signed to Cantilupe and also that he had been measured to the Holy Cross.⁸⁴ Dionysia said nothing in her initial deposition about the invocation of either saint or cross, although she did state that she gave thanks to God and St Thomas when she found Roger to be alive. Questioned further, she said that she had heard that he was measured to St Thomas by John Siward, or a penny bent over him. She had not heard any mention of the Holy Cross or any other saint.⁸⁵ On one point, however, all witnesses were agreed: the miracle was ascribed to St Thomas rather than to the Holy Cross. Those who gave a reason were unanimous in stating that this was because it was after the invocation of St Thomas that the first sign of life appeared in the child.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ f. 195v ('Requisitus si predictum miraculum ascribebatur virtuti Sancte Crucis, ad quam primo consignatus et vodatus fuerat, respondit quod non, quia ... non aparuerant in eo aliqua signa vite, quousque fuit per predictum Iohannem Syward consignatus et vodatus ad dictum sanctum Thomam, et ideo resuscitatio dicti Rogeri fuit tunc communiter ab omnibus ascripta et adhuc ascribitur miraculo facto meritis dicti sancti Thome').

⁷⁸ f. 196v ('pro qua Deus in ecclesia dicte ville de Conweye dicitur miracula operari').

⁷⁹ f. 197r ('personis fidedignis').

⁸⁰ f. 196v.

⁸¹ f. 198r.

⁸² ff. 199r–199v ('quidam Lumbardus, de cuius non recordatur nomine').

⁸³ ff. 199r–199v ('sanctum Thomam, qui fecerat virtutem illam et etiam sanctam crucem, ad quam post palpitationem lingue dictus Iohannes Syward cum uno filo eundem Rogerum ... mensuraverat.')

⁸⁴ f. 201r.

⁸⁵ f. 203r, 195v.

⁸⁶ ff. 195v, 196v, 197r, 198r, 200r.

It becomes clear from this analysis that this miracle, one of the most important ascribed to Cantilupe and the one attested, in the letter patent, by the most authoritative witnesses, was associated in some way, at some time and by some people with a completely different agent – a local miracle-working cross. *Someone* seems to have done *something* that was construed as invoking this cross; and although in 1307 no one openly ascribed the miracle to it, there may well have been some, initially, who wished to do so. It is also clear that whatever tendency there initially was to ascribe the miracle to the Holy Cross was quickly submerged in a flood of claims that this was Cantilupe's miracle; the early consensus, contained in the letter patent, and shaped by the elite of Conwy and north Wales, allows for no other interpretation of the events. And it seems clear that none of the witnesses brought forward in 1307 intended to mention the Holy Cross – until John de Boys, perhaps simply out of carelessness, departed from the consensus and, in so doing, made it necessary for others to address the issue.

The story of Roger of Conwy provides, then, an excellent example of the way in which a miracle – and, most importantly, the way in which it was remembered – might be shaped by the realities of power in the community where it took place. What it does not fully reveal is the intent behind such shaping. It is tempting to think of it as a calculated political act – in this instance that those with 'clout' in the community chose to promote the distant and aristocratic English bishop over the local agency of a miracle-working cross. But this was not necessarily the case. Rather we may be looking at something more mundane but no less important, the way in which, in their everyday actions and interactions, those with the habit of command assumed leadership and shaped a communal memory of events while others, especially those of lower status, vacillated, changed their minds, or simply accepted what the louder and more powerful voices said. In this way rumours about the Holy Cross may have been submerged rather than suppressed – but only to bubble up, unwanted, in private talk among the parishioners and, eventually, in John de Boys' deposition.

Three weeks or so after the events in Conwy, Roger and his family arrived in Hereford to give thanks at Cantilupe's tomb. According to Dionysia, they did not come alone:

out of devotion, and to make the said miracle public, William de Cicon, constable of the castle, and John of Havering, knights, Thomas of Cambridge and Hugh of Leominster, then clerks of the lord prince of Wales, and many others went with Roger to the tomb on that occasion.⁸⁷

In his initial deposition, Gervase made no mention of this elite company, and indeed seems not to have mentioned this visit to Hereford at all; but when questioned again, he corroborated what Dionysia had said.⁸⁸ If she were right, the episode is remarkable evidence of the extent to which these men, powerful and busy as they were, had been moved by this miracle or at least had chosen to throw their considerable weight behind it and claimed for themselves a part – indeed, the dominant part – in shaping its memory.

At this point, the story of Roger's miracle comes strikingly close to that of William Cragh, who, according to several witnesses, was taken or accompanied to Hereford Cathedral by members of the English elite, in this case William de Briouze, the very man who had

⁸⁷ f. 203r ('ex causa devotionis, et ad publicationem dicti miraculi, domini Willelmus de Cycouns, constabularius dicti castri, Johannes de Haueringe, milites, Thomas de Canteburg' et Hugo de Leminist', clerici tunc domini principis Wallie, et plures alii venerunt tunc cum dicto Rogero ad tumulum supradictum').

⁸⁸ f. 203v.

condemned him to hang, and his wife.⁸⁹ What, if anything, was the connection between these two pilgrimages to Hereford? Did those who took Roger to the cathedral have the example of the William Cragh miracle in mind? Should we see these journeys, if not the episode of the Holy Cross, as pointing to a kind of 'cultural imperialism', with the English elite promoting the cult of the English saint in Wales and in relation to the Welsh? An attempt to connect the journeys in this way is almost certainly over-simplified. It fails to take into account the facts that the miracles and resulting pilgrimages took place at very different times (c.1290 and 1303) and in very different political contexts – and that there was a world of difference between their beneficiaries, an innocent toddler of English or Anglo-Welsh parentage on the one hand and a violent Welsh rebel on the other. Any political significance the journeys may have had must be understood in relation to these circumstances. So, for instance, those who took Roger to Hereford may well have been less concerned with the complexities of Anglo-Welsh relations than with seizing an opportunity to re-visit England and to reaffirm through a public act their own membership of the cultural world of Edward I, a strong supporter of Cantilupe's cult, and the broader English elite. Finally, we must remember that pilgrimage is, above all else, an act of devotion and, in the two cases discussed here, of thanksgiving. Perhaps this, rather than political calculation, was the most important thing that united the two groups of pilgrims to Hereford and the people of very different social ranks who, for a short time, were able to travel together.

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⁸⁹ ff. 10, 11v, 14, 221v.