

**Walter Map: The Welsh Writings of a Twelfth-Century Cleric
and the
Marches of Wales**

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Abstract

Walter Map is regarded today for a collection of Latin texts called the *De nugis curialium* (courtiers' trifles), an apparently confused and disorganized assemblage of his literary compositions. *De nugis* includes a variety of popular tales and commentaries which incorporate a number of thematic threads concerning the Welsh and the Marches of Wales. This thesis will focus upon the importance of these writings and what they may reveal concerning the historical and cultural complexities of this region in the twelfth-century. Walter's role as a cleric and as a courtier at the Angevin court expanded his access to potential source material, from both the oral tradition and Welsh literary texts. Closer examination of such sources suggest how Walter, and his clerical peers, may have served as conduits for the transmission of popular tales and literary texts to the court and secular society. Supernatural and Otherworld concepts in his storytelling, and his use of the Matter of Britain, gives an insight into the perception of a royal courtier regarding political dilemmas confronting the ruling elite. His writings also reveal the depth of discrimination towards Wales and the Welsh. Walter's work has been underestimated and he has been perceived simply as an entertaining recorder of tales and a writer of narratives. However, when read in a broader context his narratives reveal important details about this period of Marcher history including the potential use of early and contemporary Welsh material to create insightful narratives on contemporary subjects. His tales are also important as records of medieval folklore and tradition. In modern times certain tales have impacted upon antiquarians and collectors of folklore and continue to inspire modern re-workings and other creative output. This thesis will conclude that Walter's work is important in its contribution to our knowledge of popular tales from the twelfth-century and especially for what it can reveal concerning the cultural milieu of the Welsh border in the twelfth-century from the perspective of a seemingly untypical Anglo-Norman cleric.

Introduction: ‘A Dweller on the Marches of Wales’¹

Walter Map was a twelfth-century secular cleric and a royal courtier in the service of Henry II.² A wit and a teller of tales he is remembered today for a collection of satirical verse and narratives contained in the only known surviving collection of his work *De nugis curialium*, ‘courtiers’ trifles’. *De nugis* comprises of a broad collection of anecdotes and commentaries which address a variety of subjects, from the shortcomings of the royal court to the follies of Cistercian monks.³ It is an important text and contains a significant body of material regarding early examples of medieval folkloric motifs and legends, many related to the Welsh border region.⁴ Walter wrote that he was a ‘dweller on the marches of Wales’ and it will be seen how during his employment at King Henry’s court he was able to make the most of this status, providing advice and insight for his audience regarding the supposed complexities of the Welsh.

It is beyond the scope of this work to examine all of Walter’s Welsh tales but a sample will be considered to demonstrate how Walter’s writing has much to reveal about the historical and cultural complexities of the Welsh Marches during the twelfth-century. His use of supernatural and Otherworld concepts in his storytelling gives the careful reader an insight into the political dilemmas confronting the ruling elite and it will be demonstrated how he used the medieval appetite for legends and tales of the ancient past to showcase his commentaries. Through considering samples of possible source material, including his use of folktales and the ancient Britain past, this thesis will consider how Walter skilfully gives his reader a unique insight into medieval perceptions of Wales, unveiling a vital legacy of information concerning a marginal area of Britain’s medieval history. The importance and significance of the writings of Walter Map, this ‘dweller on the marches of Wales’, and the lasting quality of some of these tales will be

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- 1 M. R. James, ed. and trans. C.N.L. Brooke, and R.A.B. Mynors, rev. *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium, Courtiers’ Trifles* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1983). pp. 194-195. Walter describes himself as a *marchio sum Walensibus*, ‘a dweller on the marches of Wales’ apparently to imply that he had some specialist role at court providing the ruling elite with insight and expert knowledge regarding Wales and the Welsh.
 - 2 Ibid. pp. xii-xiv. J. Byron Smith, *Walter Map And The Matter Of Britain* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 2- 3. Smith writes that Walter probably saw himself as a ‘servant’ of the church rather than a servant of the king (p. 3).
 - 3 The purpose of *De nugis* is unknown. At times it appears to parody other works such as John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* (c. 1159) but it also contains satirical observations of the court and religious orders, *exempla* and narratives. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium* pp. xxxii – xxxiv. Walter refer to an unknown individual he calls Geoffrey who asked him to ‘write, and to write from the court’. Ibid. pp. 24-25. See also pp. xxxiv- xxxv.
 - 4 J. Wood, ‘Walter Map: The Contents And Context Of *De Nugis Curialium*’, *Transactions Of The Honourable Society Of Cymmrodorion*, (1985), p. 92.

demonstrated by examining their endurance as folktales and their influence upon later story tellers and artists.

Walter was born c. 1130, in south-west Herefordshire along the borderlands of England and Wales.⁵ Little is known about his early years but by 1154 he was studying at university in Paris.⁶ By the 1170s he was a royal clerk at the court of King Henry II, receiving patronage from the bishop of London, Gilbert Foliot, and holding a succession of ecclesiastical positions including posts in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.⁷ When Henry died in 1189 Walter withdrew from the court and focused upon his work in the church, eventually moving to the archdeaconry of Oxford where he died in either 1209 or 1210.⁸

It is not clear if Walter's work was widely known during his lifetime but it is likely that his fellow clerics, including Gerald of Wales, were at least aware of his literary aspirations.⁹ Walter's satire against marriage, the *Dissuasio Valerii*, which Brooke identifies as 'one of the most brilliant anti-feminine satires produced in the Middle Ages', was certainly popular and widely circulated.¹⁰ After his death his reputation seems to have endured with a large quantity of secular verse, including goliardic poetry and a Lancelot prose cycle, accredited to him but later refuted.¹¹ *De nugis curialium* is the only known work of Walter's to have survived and is contained in a single

- 5 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xiii. J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 15-16. Walter appears familiar with this southern part of the Marches referring to Ross, Hay-on-Wye and the Black Mountain on the border with England and Wales. For other examples see *Fig. 1*.
- 6 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xv. Walter may have studied theology or canon law with Gerald la Pucelle in Paris. His knowledge of theology is suggested by his representing Henry II at the Lateran council of 1179 in Rome. See *Ibid.* p. xvii. Paris hosted a number of important university schools during this period attracting much academic interest from both scholars and students. See R. N. Swanson. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) pp. 21-22.
- 7 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xv-xvii. As well as a royal clerk Walter had acted as a royal justice (1173), a canon of St Paul's and of Hereford and later, a canon and chancellor of Lincoln. He held the living Ashwell in Hertfordshire, presented to him by Henry II (the advowson belonged to Westminster Abbey) and acquired a number of churches including at Westbury on Severn near Gloucester.
- 8 *Ibid.* p. xviii. Walter died an archdeacon on 1 April 1209 or 1210, having twice failed to obtain a bishopric for which he was mentioned at both Hereford and St David's.
- 9 A. K. Bate, 'Walter Map And Giraldus Cambrensis', *Latomus*, 31(3) (1972), pp. 874-875. Bate challenges the traditional assumption that Walter and Gerald were good friends. He goes further implying that they hardly knew each other and that Gerald had access to written copies of Walter's work and plagiarised them. Bate writes that Gerald would have acknowledged Walter if they had been friends. It is known they were part of the same royal circles and intellectual groups and would have known of each other at least but the depth of any friendship is unknown. It could also be argued that any similarities in their work may be due to their use of contemporary material and language and that they sometimes wrote about similar subjects. See J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 64-72 (pp. 71-72).
- 10 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xix-xxi. *De nugis* did not circulate unlike the *Dissuasio Valerii*. p. xxi. The popularity of the *Dissuasio Valerii* continued into the later medieval period appealing to 'misogynist readers everywhere'. Its popularity was such that in 1468, Walter became the first English author to appear in print. J. B. Smith. *Walter Map*, p. 4.

fourteenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Bodley 851 (3041).¹² It is disorganised, muddled with an inconsistent timeline, a prologue in the middle of the text and missing folios and chapter headings.¹³ As a result, *De nugis* has been described as an ‘enchanted jumble’ of literary prose that Walter worked upon haphazardly and intermittently before his death.¹⁴ Yet the evidence suggests that its current form may be due to the actions of later scribes responsible for redacting the text, revising and reorganizing some of its contents.¹⁵

Chapter One will introduce the Welsh Marches and their relationship to the Anglo-Norman elite. Following a brief account of Walter’s background and education it will be demonstrated how his potential connections to St Peter’s Abbey at Gloucester may have given him access to Welsh texts of the region. The use of such literary material in his work may have resulted in their transmission from Wales into some of the major cultural centres of the period as opposed to the traditional premise that wandering players were largely responsible for the dissemination of folktales and other traditional material. Wales was a place in flux, still adapting and resisting the impact of the Norman conquest and some of the texts from this period demonstrate the

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- 11 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xx. A. Bate, ‘Walter Map And Geraldus Cambrensis’, p. 860. J. B Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 155-157. The prose cycle of Lancelot consisted of the *Lancelot*, the *Queste del Saint Graal* and the *Morte Artu*. It was originally believed that Henry II had Walter translate the *Queste* and the *Mort Artu* from a Latin original kept at Salisbury Abbey. This may have been partly due to a reference made by his contemporary, Hue de Rotelande, in a verse of a medieval romance. Hue refers to Walter as being accomplished in the art of lying which led to later assumptions that Walter had written the French romances. But Hue, who most likely knew Walter as he lived not far from Hereford Cathedral, may have been referring to the liberties taken by Walter in his composition to support of the diocese of Hereford’s acquisition of land at Lydbury North to be discussed in chapter two. Smith writes that Walter ‘could have’ written the romances and would have heard examples during his travels and visits to the European courts but it is unlikely given that the text is ‘infused with Cistercian thought’ (p. 157). Walter was openly critical of this order after the Cistercian monks of Flaxley Abbey refused to pay their tithes to his church at Westbury-on Severn. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xliii–xliv. The goliardic poetry also attributed to him was a lively and satirical type of poetry, often considered rather low-brow and ribald. It was written in Latin and popular in the twelfth-century. See R. N. Swanson. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 43.
 - 12 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xix and p. xiv. pp. xlv–xliv. It appears that the original manuscript may have passed into the hands of the Oxford scholar and monk of Ramsey, John of Wells and redacted at either Oxford or Ramsey. In 1601 Cuthbert Ridley gave the text (MS Bodley 851 (3041)) to the Bodleian Library and early antiquarians began to show interest in its contents. It was edited and published by Thomas Wright in 1850 with later improvements and re-edits. (p. xlix).
 - 13 J. B. Smith. *Walter Map*, p. 37.
 - 14 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xiii and pp. xxvi–xxix.
 - 15 J. Hinton, ‘Walter Map’s De Nugis Curialium. It’s Plan and Composition’. *Modern Language Association*, 32(1) (1917), pp. 81-132. (pp. 81-83). Hinton explores Walter’s text in depth writing that some of the fragments may have circulated amongst his friends and some subsequently lost. The surviving fragments were roughly edited by someone who did not necessarily understand all of the content of the work. pp. 124-125. See also J. Byron Smith. *Walter Map*, pp. 37-62. There is also evidence of revision of the texts by Walter, suggesting that he reused tales and re-worked them to structure his narratives. For example, see his re-working of the tale of King Herla in his critique of Henry’s court. See p. 49. There is also evidence of scribal interpolations in the text, suggesting that a glossator has been at work who was unfamiliar with Wales and Welsh words and made fundamental errors such as mistaking *Deheubarth* as a region in North Wales. pp. 68-73. (p. 69).

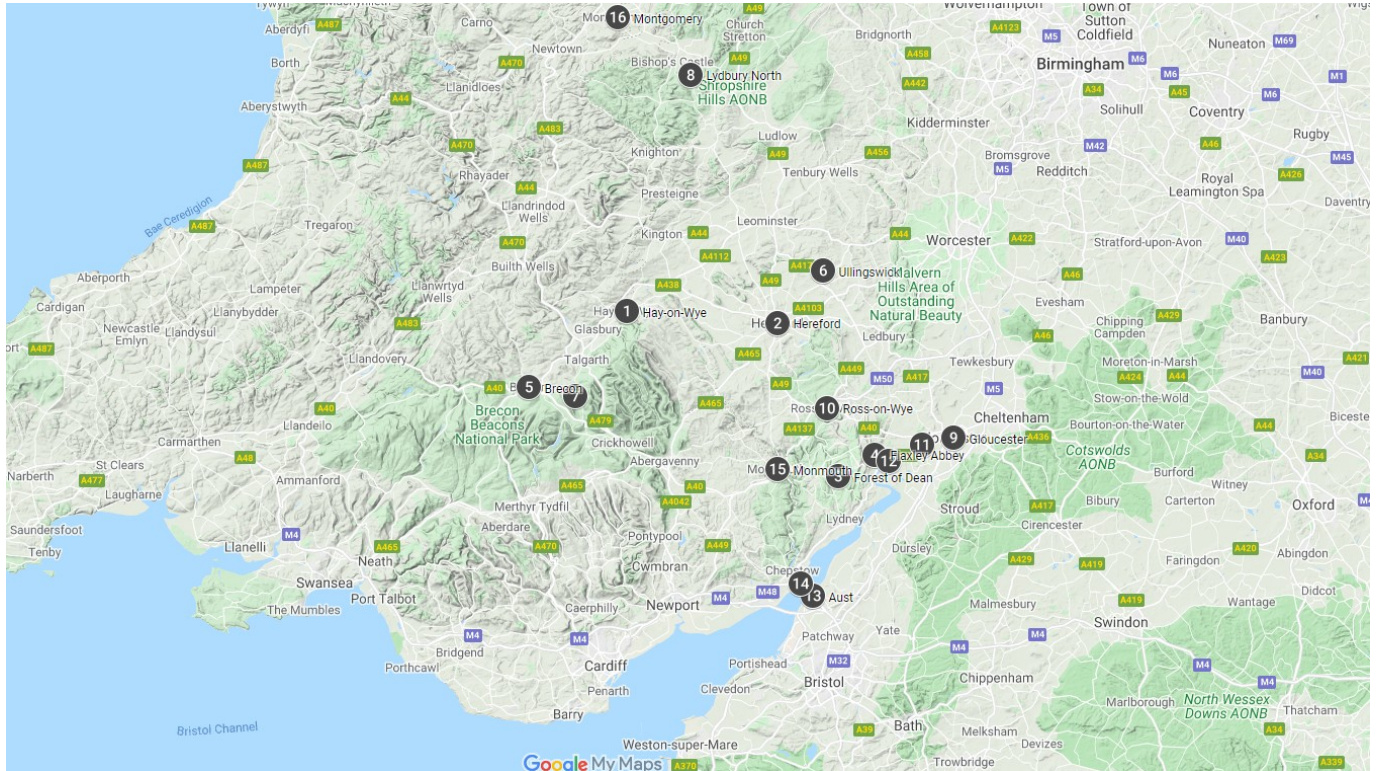
discrimination and negative stereotypes aimed towards the indigenous Welsh. It will be shown how Walter reveals his own insights into matters 'Welsh' through his 'expert' credentials.

Chapter Two will focus on the historical context and commentary of Walter's Welsh tales and his utilization of existing texts, using the supernatural world as a metaphor with which to illuminate his Welsh tales. Walter clearly set himself up as an expert on the Welsh and examples will be given to demonstrate how he exploits his 'specialist knowledge' by using contemporary and ancient themes, including the Matter of Britain, to link the fate of the Welsh to the British ancient past.

The final chapter examines the development of the folkloric content of some of the better-known tales in more detail, and how such medieval tales became popular and featured in later folktales.¹⁶ Although a lengthy discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this thesis it will endeavour to demonstrate the importance of the Welsh tales of Walter Map and how the assimilation of these narratives into the popular themes of nineteenth-century folktales risked losing the vital components of the medieval historical dialogue. It will become clear that Walter's narratives deserve more recognition for what they contribute towards our understanding of the history of the Marches and the life, personality and writings of a royal clerk. Finally, and importantly, this chapter will conclude with demonstrations of examples of the enduring quality of certain tales which continue to influence writers and storytellers in the twenty-first century.

16 See K. Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), p. 4. 'Folkloric context' refers to material which has been collection from the ordinary classes rather than the ruling elite. Jackson writes that before the end of the Middle Ages the distinction between 'folk' literature and other popular literature was not made and that it wasn't until the spread of literacy and the appearance of such tales in print in the seventeenth-century that there was a perception of such tales belonging to the 'rural lower classes'. pp. 2-3.

Figure 1: The Welsh Marches
of Walter Map



- ① Hay-on-Wye
- ② Hereford
- ③ Forest of Dean
- ④ Flaxley Abbey
- ⑤ Brecon
- ⑥ Ullingswick
- ⑦ Llangorse Lake
- ⑧ Lydbury North
- ⑨ Gloucester
- ⑩ Ross-on Wye
- ⑪ Minsterworth
- ⑫ Westbury-on-Severn
- ⑬ Aust
- ⑭ Beachley
- ⑮ Monmouth
- ⑯ Montgomery

Chapter 1: *Marchia Wallie*¹: The Environs and Affiliations of Walter Map

But while my song is of mischief, worthy no doubt of chalk and charcoal – granted, I am an imbecile, yet I do not forge and flatter. And tasteless? Inasmuch as salt avails nothing against an evil smell, I confess myself a foolish and dull poet – yet not a writer of lies, for he does not lie who repeats a tale, but he who makes it.¹

The Marches of Wales, or *Marchia Wallie*, were established during the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries to distinguish between the territories of the invading Normans and those remaining under Welsh rule.² It is a diverse region bordering England and Wales and has a long history of occupation and warfare.³ Roman and later Saxon incursions from Mercia left their mark upon the culture and diversity of the area with long lasting effects, some still evident today in the landscape and language of the region.⁴ By the eleventh century the Marches had entered a time of struggle and oppression culminating in the Norman invasion and subsequent campaigns into Wales as attempts were made to subjugate the Welsh.⁵ This was a costly and time consuming business. Territories were fought over, established and re-established amongst the Welsh and Lords of the

1 D. Stephenson, *Medieval Wales c. 1052-1332* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), p. 11. By the 1160's there are regular references in the Pipe Rolls regarding the borderland between Powys and Shropshire. By the 1180's it seems it includes areas further south becoming known as a region of tension and conflict between the Marcher lords and Welsh population.

1 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 113.

2 D. Stephenson, *Medieval Wales*, p. 63. The Welsh considered this region as Welsh territory held by the Anglo-Normans who had introduced and claimed their own special rights there along with a 'quasi-regal status.

3 T. Rowley, *The Welsh Border, Archaeology, History And Landscape*, (Gloucester: The History Press, 2016), p. 9. The Marches have a varied geography stretching from the Dee estuary in the north down to the great Severn estuary in the south. The landscape varies considerably including the flat plains of Cheshire and north Shropshire down to the rolling hills and uplands of South Shropshire and Herefordshire. The city of Hereford and town of Shrewsbury, founded upon the banks of the rivers Wye and Severn respectively, have long and ancient connections with the political and cultural development of the Welsh Marches. See pp. 12-22.

4 Ibid. pp. 63-88. (pp. 77-79) The largest landmark is Offa's Dyke, the longest linear earthwork in Britain. Recent research suggests that it may precede the eighth-century Saxon King Offa by two hundred years. The incursion of the Saxons into Wales took place gradually. By the seventh-century they were claiming victories over the Christian Welsh with battles at Oswestry and Chester, establishing slow but steady control over parts of the border. Celtic culture and languages survived alongside those of the English and Anglo-Normans and the area retains dialect features specific to the region which are still detectable today (p. 72). Certain words continue in use in parts of the English side of the Marches which may have a Welsh origin. For example, a hard form of dark granite called 'dhustone', said to be derived from 'du' Welsh for 'black'. See G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Word-Book, A Glossary Of Archaic And Provincial Words, Etc., Used In The County* (London: Trüber & Co, 1879) p.117. This stone is found in the Clee Hills where it is commonly referred to as 'dhustone' as familiar to the author. In Oswestry the word 'keffyl' was used for a 'worthless' horse (Welsh, *Ceffyl*, horse) and a 'stupid person; as 'gwerian' (Welsh, *gwirion*). See R. Palmer, *The Folklore Of Shropshire* (Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 2004), pp. 41-42.

5 J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2007), pp. 104-106.

March.⁶ These lords were Norman barons, subjects of the English king but with their own laws, building castles and waging war independently as they enforced their own regimes with little supervision or control.⁷

The boundaries between the divided territories of the Marcher barons were mostly established by time of the reign of Henry I (1100-1135).⁸ However, there was a growing uncertainty regarding the future kingship of England. King Henry wanted his daughter, Matilda, as his successor but when he died in 1135 his nephew Stephen seized the throne. Many Marcher lords would not acknowledge Stephen as king and supported Matilda in her fight for the crown.⁹ It was into these uncertain times that Walter Map was born and when Henry II ascended to the throne in 1154, Walter had crossed the English Channel to study in Paris.¹⁰

Very little is known about Walter's earlier years. He writes that his family had been 'faithful and useful' in their service to the king, before and after Henry's accession to the throne.¹¹ Records show that by 1173 Walter was a cleric in the service of King Henry II.¹² Although secular clerics often came from aristocratic families, the twelfth-century was a time of increasing social

6 Ibid. pp. 106-108. The boundaries between the Marcher Lords and the Welsh, the *Marchia Wallie* and the *Pura Wallia*, had largely been established by the reign of Henry I (1100-1135) although over time their limits would fluctuate.

7 J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*, pp. 107-110. Although nominally subject to the English crown, the borderlands were ruled by the Law of the March with its own courts, enforced from a line of castles and fortifications along the border with England. Some held vast estates and were among the most powerful men of Britain. The kings of England tried to constrain their powers and excesses with variable success and the following two hundred years became a time of flux and uncertainty for the indigenous population with 'rural colonization' and changes in land ownership which impacting directly upon the Welsh. See also R. R. Davies, *Domination & Conquest. The Experience Of Ireland, Scotland And Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also D. Stephenson, *Medieval Wales*, pp. 63-83. Stephenson notes the movement of people from and into Wales in this region which acted as a 'zone of containment of Welsh territorial advance' on occasion resulting in an ethnic mix of its inhabitants. p. 64. By the twelfth-century there was a notable and affective integration between the Welsh and English through marriage, forming alliances and appropriating land. pp. 72-73. Walter may have been the son or descendant of such a marriage.

8 J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*. p. 106.

9 Ibid. pp. 120-122. This was the 'Anarchy' when the barons increased their power and privileges and the resulting instability and unrest provided the Welsh with the opportunity to regain lost territories but the resulting battles and land loss took a heavy toll on the local population. By 1154 Henry II, Matilda's son and grandson of Henry I, was sitting on the throne of England. Henry created alliances with some of the ruling Welsh by facilitating alliances through marriage, military campaigns and other means of coercion, bringing some stability to the Marches and other parts of Wales.

10 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xv.

11 Ibid. pp. 494-495. Walter implies that his parents good service that had enabled him to find favour with Henry II. He writes of himself: *Hic ipsi carus fuit et acceptus, non suis sed parentum suorum meritis, qui sibi fideles et necessarii fuerant ante regnum et post*. 'He was dear and acceptable to the king, not for his own merits, but for those of his forbears who had been faithful and useful to the king, both before his succession and after it'.

12 Ibid. p. xvi.

mobility when those from humble backgrounds could work their way up in service through the ranks of the religious institutions.¹³

Walter Map was born into exciting times. The twelfth-century was a time of great cultural change, flourishing with new ideas, art, literature and philosophical debates influencing society and culture to such a degree that this period is often referred to as the 'twelfth-century renaissance'.¹⁴ University cities such as Paris, Bologna and Cologne offered students the opportunity to study, debate and exchange ideas concurrent with an education that would give the aspiring cleric a sound, competitive edge when seeking patronage and employment on his return to England.¹⁵ The secular clergy were one of the most important professional groups operating outside the limitations of the monastic idiom.¹⁶ The highbrow capabilities of these highly educated clerics were 'crucial' to the development of blossoming ecclesiastical institutions, government agencies and centres of learning such as schools and universities.¹⁷ They provided pastoral care for the laity and recorded information for church and the court.¹⁸ This period saw the emergence of important cathedral schools throughout the country, such as at Hereford, served and occupied by clerics such as Walter.¹⁹ These men were often considered 'too wordly', shifting between two

13 H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy In England, 1066-1216* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 38-39. A clerk had high status, often equal to knights with the same privileges and social standing. The notion that those from modest backgrounds could attain such lofty status could result in tension between the aristocratic and non aristocratic clerks. p. 49. R. N. Swanson. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, pp. 27-28. 'Academic mobility' in the twelfth-century meant that students like Walter could travel to schools in Europe due to distance-funding from patrons. Student were now able to earn money to cover expenses retaining more control over the nature of their studies.

14 R. N. Swanson. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, pp. 1-11. To succinctly define this label is difficult. Its context is broad and challenging in relational to the numerous cultural, political and ecclesiastical changes, just a few of the transformations that were taking place throughout western Europe. It also covers a much longer period than the twelfth-century stretching from c. 1050 to c. 1250 and encompasses Europe. See also H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy*, pp. 7-8. There were also negative developments but for many scholars including H. M. Thomas, it aptly represents the great changes and developments of this time.

15 Ibid. pp. 228-238 (p. 228). A good education gave a sound competitive edge to clerics seeking patronage or employment on their return to England. Paris was a prime centre for studying the arts and theology, attracting English scholars, many later establishing themselves as secular clerics. Such schools of excellence often attracted scholars and teachers from all over Europe, enhancing the diversity of learning and instruction. Gerald la Pucelle later returned to England to become bishop of Coventry. (p. 232). Many English clerics studied at the European universities, such as Gerald of Wales, John of Salisbury and Walter Map and would have studied a range of diverse subjects including languages, literature, poetry, hagiography, theology, astrology and philosophy. English clerics, in particular, made an important contribution towards the establishment of English universities and other cultural developments of the time. pp. 240-242 (p. 240).

16 Ibid. p. 7.

17 Ibid. pp. 6-8.

18 Ibid.

19 J. Barrow, *The Canons And Citizens of Hereford, c.1160- c.1240*, *Midland History*, 24 (1999), pp. 1-23. A see was founded in Hereford as early as c. 680 (p. 3). By the twelfth-century Hereford cathedral was employing a number of canons, many with the title '*magister*' implying that they were highly educated men. Several Hereford canons, including Walter, were archdeacons in other diocese. pp. 6-7.

worlds, one of doctrine and religious piety and the outside world where they often lived quite comfortably.²⁰ Secular clerics often returned from their studies into positions within the church or with the powerful elite and Walter found a position at the royal court along with renowned scholars such as John of Salisbury, Gervase of Tilbury and later, Gerald of Wales.²¹ Walter seems to have been a 'trusted' courtier, remaining in Henry's service until his death in 1189.²²

Walter's career progression was typical for a cleric at this time of ecclesiastical expansion finding advancement and promotion in the employ of both bishops and kings.²³ It was during this period that he wrote *De nugis curialium*.²⁴ In his introduction to the revised translation of *De nugis* in 1983, the historian C. N. L. Brooke described it as 'a rough inventory of the mental furniture of a learned and witty 12th-century clerk, a marvellous guide to a fascinating lumber-room'.²⁵ Yet Walter's use of satire, his observation of matters Welsh, and his apparent re-crafting of folklore and traditional tales suggest that *De nugis* is worthy of broader study, revealing a considered and revealing complexity in his writing especially in regards to the historical and political milieu in which he lived and worked.²⁶

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- 20 H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy*, pp. 6–8. See also chapter 4, *The Wealth of the Secular Clergy*, pp. 56–87. In the early Middle Ages clerics married and had children. This was increasingly disapproved of and discouraged in varying degrees. They could also own property, pp. 156–190 (p. 169). Map was not married but he did own property and complained about being manipulated by his servants and exploited by his nephews. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 16–17 and pp. 22–23.
- 21 H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy*, pp. 229–241. (p. 238). For Gerald of Wales see G. Henley and A. J. McMullen, 'Gerald Of Wales: Interpretation And Innovation In Medieval Britain', in *Gerald Of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley and A. J. McMullen (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2018), pp. 1–16. (p. 2). After his early schooling at St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, Gerald went to Paris for further education from 1165–74 returning again in 1176 until 1179. It is not known whether he met with Walter in Paris but Walter may have made the journey on more than one occasion in the 1160's, before receiving patronage from Gilbert Foliot, bishop of Hereford. See also *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xv–xvi. H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy*, p. 238. The university models of Paris and Bologna were used in the beginnings of such universities as Oxford and Cambridge.
- 22 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 2–3. Like many of Henry's courtiers after his death, Walter may have found little approval with his brother Richard but his other brother, John, gave him the revenues from the archdeaconry at Brecon suggesting Walter may have found some favour with him.
- 23 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xvi–xix. Walter became a canon at Hereford and later appointed as canon at Paul's by the bishop of London, his patron Gilbert Foliot. By the 1170's he was a royal clerk, accompanying Henry II on occasion. After Henry's death he moved to Oxford where he became an archdeacon until his death. For a chronology of Walter's career see *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300: Volume 8, Hereford*, J. S. Barrow, ed. (London: University of London, 2002), p. 93.
- 24 The inconsistencies in the time frame of *De nugis* and its fragmentary appearance suggests that Walter worked on his various compositions over time, adding to and developing them. Much of this work may be dated to the early 1180's but some passages are probably later. *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xxv–xxvii.
- 25 Ibid. p. xix. This quote from C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors's introduction to *De nugis* is reflective of how his work is often perceived by modern scholars and not taken as seriously as it deserves. This may have also been the case during his own time. J. B. Smith suggests he may even have been regarded as a 'twelfth-century Oscar Wilde'. J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 6.
- 26 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 5–7. Smith argues that the assumption by certain scholars that *De nugis* is a compilation of erratic notes and narratives has 'produced untidy readers' of his work, especially in its entirety and

By the twelfth-century, earlier accounts of the British past were being examined and re-worked in Latin by Anglo-Norman clerics, ostensibly using older accounts of myths and histories concerning the ancient British past.²⁷ History was important to scholars in the twelfth-century but its utilization had a practical and moral role in providing guidelines and precedents for its audience and it was not considered an ‘academic discipline’.²⁸ One of the most important and popular histories written during this period was the *Historia Regum Britanniae* by the cleric, Geoffrey of Monmouth.²⁹ Geoffrey’s *Historia* claimed to be an account of the origins of the British based on earlier Welsh manuscripts but modern historians are generally cynical and suspicious of Geoffrey’s claim. Brooke describes him as ‘mendacious’ and quite merciless in depicting, or inventing, events for which there seems no substance.³⁰ Jankulak is less scathing, calling the *Historia*, ‘pseudo-history’, an assimilation of various events and traditions which, like other medieval histories, gave a ‘corporate version of history in early medieval Europe’.³¹ She writes that the *Historia* should be considered independently and not ‘just for its superficial similarities and dissimilarities to what we now term ‘history’’.³² Geoffrey is clearly a skilled writer, re-working stories, using famous names and places to give kudos and plausibility to his accounts. Whatever his motives he appears to have understood the power of such creativity, as Sims-Williams puts it, ‘myth is more powerful than history, especially myth in the guise of history’.³³ His writings seem to have resonated with the Anglo-Normans who had a fascination with tales concerning the British past and they provided later writers, such as Walter, a basis upon which to write about the relationship of Wales to the Anglo-Normans.³⁴ Walter was familiar with Geoffrey’s writings and

on closer inspection it represents at least five different works in progress, much under revision (p. 6).

- 27 P. Sims-Williams, ‘Some Functions Of Origin Stories In Early Medieval Wales’, *History And Heroic Tale: A Symposium* eds. T. Nyberg, I. Piø, and P. M. Sørensen (Odense, Odense University Press, 1985), p. 97-98. There was less distinction between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ in early medieval literature with each often woven into ‘historical’ writing.
- 28 R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, pp. 54-57. History or ‘*historia*’, a story, did not have the same connotations as it has in the modern period. It was used and recorded by chroniclers such as Orderic Vitalis (c.1075-1142) and William of Malmesbury (c. 1095-1143) to record and illustrate saints *Vitae* and other significant events.
- 29 C. N. L. Brooke, ‘Geoffrey Of Monmouth As A Historian’, in *The Church And The Welsh Border In The Central Middle Ages*, eds. D. N. Dumville and C. N. L. Brooke (Woodridge: Boydell Press, 1986), pp. 95-106. Geoffrey’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the ‘History of the Kings of Britain’, was said to be the history of the rulers of Britain dating back to Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas. p. 95.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 K. Jankulak, *Geoffrey Of Monmouth* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010) pp. 22-23 (p. 23).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 P. Sims-Williams, ‘Some Functions Of Origin Stories’, p. 98.
- 34 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters Of Britain In The Twelfth-Century*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014) p. 59. Geoffrey’s *Historia* led the way for works such as the mid twelfth-century text Old French text, *Description of England*, suggesting that the Anglo-Normans were fearful of a ‘reverse conquest’, with the Welsh reclaiming the island of Britain’. pp. 55-57 (p. 56).

his myth making. He may even have used Geoffrey as ‘a literary quarry’ for inspiration and material as Geoffrey himself had used his sources.³⁵ He would also have been aware of the derogatory role that ‘Welshness’ played in Geoffrey’s writing and in that of his own contemporary, John of Salisbury in whose main work, *Policraticus*, the Welsh are portrayed as opposing examples to the high morals of the ancient philosophers.³⁶ Walter responded with his own tales and anecdotes drawn from Welsh tradition producing a satirical and critical response to such compositions.³⁷ Another contemporary of Walter’s who demonstrated his knowledge of the Welsh in his writing was the Anglo-Norman cleric, Gerald of Wales.

Gerald of Wales was a royal clerk and chaplain to Henry II and part of the same intellectual circle as Walter.³⁸ It has been assumed that the two were friends but the inevitability of this friendship has been questioned as shared commonalities, such as education and society, should not imply that they were subsequently friends.³⁹ Gerald’s familiarity with Walter’s work suggests that Walter’s commentaries were circulating in his lifetime and some of their work is similar in style and content suggesting that they may have had some contact.⁴⁰ Walter had access to other important influential writers of this time but for our purposes Gerald and Geoffrey are important references in Walter’s world due to a shared ambiguity in their relationship with Wales and the Welsh.

Walter spent part of his working life in Hereford and its environs, close to the Black Mountains along the English and Welsh border. He gives his audience unique examples of this

35 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*. p. xl.

36 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*, pp. 71-72.

37 *Ibid.* Walter makes a direct response to John’s *Policraticus*, *De nugis curialium at de vestigiis philosophorum* by referring to it’s subtitle in his own work, *De nugis curialium*. (p. 71). John of Salisbury wrote *Policraticus* in c. 1159. It is addressed to Thomas Becket and a critical study of the trivialities of the court and politics in the twelfth-century. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*. pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

38 G. Henley and A. J. Mc Mullen, ‘Gerald Of Wales’, pp. 1-13, (p. 2-3). Gerald was born in Pembrokeshire to a Marcher family and his grandmother was the Welsh princess Nest, daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, an important last king of Deheubarth. Gerald was educated at St Peter’s in Gloucester and also studied in Paris before returning to Britain. He strived towards the bishopric of St Davids but failed and devoted his life to academic study. J. B. Smith, ‘Gerald Of Wales And Walter Map’, in *Gerald Of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley & A. J. McMullen (Cardiff: University Of Wales Press, 2018), p. 69. Both Gerald and Walter attended the royal court and were canons at Hereford, moving in the same circles and likely knew each other. There is no record of Walter mentioning Gerald but Gerald refers to Walter twelve times, including mention of a walking stick he sent to Walter. It was Gerald who proposed Walter for the bishopric at St Davids.

39 A. K. Bate, ‘Walter Map And Geraldus Cambrensis’, pp. 86-863. Gerald had read Walter’s work and refers to him in admiring tones, but there is no evidence that this was truly reciprocated.

40 J. B. Smith, ‘Gerald Of Wales And Walter Map’, pp. 68-72. Smith concludes that, given the nature of their similar interest and shared places of work and society, Walter and Gerald were at least acquaintances and probably friends, p. 72.

areas folklore and local traditions, retaining such geographical and cultural details to render his work an invaluable representation of narratives of the twelfth-century.⁴¹ Medieval tales were often recorded by chance or used in literary works, subsequently losing much of their original ‘folk context’ and relevance.⁴² Wood writes that Walter is our only link to the original stories and to those who told them but adds that ‘Map was certainly no ordinary teller of folk-tales’.⁴³ It is important for us to remember that Walter was not a member of the local community; he was an educated cleric, certainly spoke Latin and Anglo-French and his knowledge of Welsh is dubious, likely perceived by him, along with English, as a foreign language.⁴⁴ Yet his familiarity with the area and his professional standing would bring him into contact with material, and people, that he could potentially exploit and utilize in his writing. These sources are important for further understanding of Walter and his authorship.

Evidence of Walter’s literary and classical learning may be found throughout *De nugis curialium*, in tales such as *Sadius and Galo* and in his allusions toward the Arthurian romances.⁴⁵ Like other writers of the twelfth-century, Walter saw little distinction between history and fiction. Brooke wrote that Walter liked to relate ‘unfamiliar stories about familiar heroes, to give a pretence of copying to what was really his own invention’, demonstrating his powers of invention and creativity.⁴⁶ Wales has a strong oral tradition and Walter’s apparent affinity with Wales has perhaps strengthened the assumption that he had access to legends and myth of the indigenous population. The border regions had been culturally affected by the advance of Anglo-Norman society and although bardic tradition continued to thrive in Wales in the twelfth-century it was also influenced by popular entertainments and literary works of the day such as the Arthurian Romances of Chrétien de Troyes.⁴⁷ Minstrels, crusaders and pilgrims and wandering troubadours travelled from court to great hall, exchanging songs and stories and Walter’s opportunist

41 J. Wood, ‘Walter Map: The Contents And Context Of *De Nugis Curialium*’, p. 92. Walter included tales from Europe in *De nugis*. They are also important resources for study and comparison with other examples from both medieval and modern periods.

42 Ibid. p. 93. Such tales were often re worked, re written and inserted into other tales by writers of the period.

43 Ibid. pp. 92-98. Wood calls Walter ‘a tradition bearer’, linking us with the original story tellers who ‘undoubtedly’ passed their tales via oral tradition.

44 Ibid. p. 93.

45 Ibid. p. 98.

46 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xxxix. Brooke also writes that Walter ‘uses a certain license, enjoys a display of falsification which is mild and sometimes not so mild’. p. xxxviii. Although it is clear that Walter knew British history his accounts are often inconsistent and subjective, qualities reminiscent of Geoffrey of Monmouth. p. xli.

47 W. W. Comfort, *Chrétien de Troyes Arthurian Romances*, ed. and trans. (London: The Aldine Press, 1958). pp. vi–vii. Chrétien de Troyes was writing in Champagne in the 12th century. His works were influential and very fashionable within the courts of the time and many are thought to have roots in the legendary tales of Britain.

encounters with them may also have provided inspiration for his Welsh narratives.⁴⁸ Faletra writes that the transmission of cultural material via minstrels is understudied and often misunderstood with the assumption that they were responsible for transmitting ‘Celtic’ material to the Anglo-Normans and ultimately across to France and beyond.⁴⁹ In reality, how much of such material would have been appropriate as entertainment in the halls of the Anglo-Norman ruling elite given the inequalities in power and the cultural differences of the audiences at these events is unclear. Faletra continues:

the absence of information should not lead us to naïve ideas that songs were sung (or tales were told) to passive audiences who lay outside the orbit of Anglo-Norman power.⁵⁰

It is likely that Walter did come across folkloric tales and traditional material in this manner, either during his student years or when representing the king on diplomatic missions.⁵¹ Recent studies show that Walter’s sources were ‘typical’ of their time, not only from orally acquired material but from manuscripts preserved in the great abbeys and scriptoria of the twelfth-century Marches.⁵² Smith writes that the textual sources used in *De nugis curialium* demonstrate how Welsh material probably travelled to one of the ‘most important cultural centers (sic) in Europe’, the court of Henry II, and provided writers such as Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France with material to inspire and rework.⁵³ The transmission of older material through such writings into and beyond royal court is suggestive that Walter and his clerical peers could have been conduits for the transfer of Welsh traditions from Wales to Europe and that their own writings could have in turn, influenced the writing of the later vernacular poems and literature.⁵⁴

48 J. Wood, ‘Walter Map: The Contents And Context Of *De Nugis Curialium*’, p. 92.

49 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*, p. 12.

50 Ibid.

51 This is certainly suggested by his early account of the Italian folk tale of Nicholas Pipe, or Cola Pesce as he is known in Italy. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 368-371. And his account of the Whirlpool of Saturnalia is the earliest in Europe. See J. Wood, ‘Walter Map’, pp. 99-100. Map was also familiar with tales concerning the crusades which he may have first heard from crusaders or pilgrims on his travels.

52 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 107. Smith concludes that Walter’s interest and use of such texts suggests that he had an interest in ancient British history. This exchange of material within ecclesiastical institutions is an area relatively unexplored but recent study is suggesting it was wider than once thought.

53 Ibid. pp.162-171. (p. 171).

54 Ibid. Smith concedes that this does take some of the responsibility away from the Welsh in the creation of Arthurian literature and other ‘Celtic elements found in popular stories of this period but it may still have been instrumental in their development.

Walter likely had connections with the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter's at Gloucester, possibly going to school there as a boy. It may also have been there that met his patron, Gilbert Folio, then abbot.⁵⁵ At least he had visited St Peter's, suggested by his account of Gregory, a monk of Gloucester who he had met and to whom he prayed for safe passage during a violent storm in the English Channel.⁵⁶ Gloucester occupied a strategically important place between the lands of England and Wales, where the river Severn starts to broaden into the estuary flowing into the Severn Sea. Smith describes Gloucester as a 'liminal place' where people met to trade and work, eliciting a mutual exchange of culture between the Welsh and the English.⁵⁷ It was here that one of the largest collections of Welsh literary material outside Wales was kept at St Peter's Abbey and from where many of textual contents ultimately found their way to the court of Henry II.⁵⁸

An important early task for the invading Normans had been the control of Welsh lands and dioceses in the more accessible area of Wales.⁵⁹ Many Welsh churches were considered inferior by the invaders with their income and affects transferred to English monasteries and their churches reduced to simple parish places of worship.⁶⁰ The subsequent appropriation of Welsh manuscripts ensured a significant 'cultural and literary exchange' between Gloucester and its Welsh holdings although its extent is difficult to evaluate as few archives survive.⁶¹ It is known that Gloucester collected *Vitae*, along with historical records of land and property rights, the 'common interpretative lens' through which these communities understood and wrote their entitlement to

55 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xv. J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 117-118. Gilbert Folio was Gloucester's abbot from 1139-1148 and Walter worked as his clerk while he was bishop of London (1163-1187). Smith notes Walter's high regard for Gilbert and that their careers seem to follow each other at times. (p. 118). Walter held the church of Westbury-on-Severn several miles down the estuary from Gloucester and he witnessed several charters for Llanthony Abbey in Gloucestershire which had links with Gloucester. This suggests a familiarity with this area. The monks of St Peter's in Gloucester were certainly aware of Walter: they describe a property in Hereford as extending 'until Walter Map's oak'. (p. 118).

56 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 132-135. Gregory was a respected monk of St Peter's, according to Walter. During the voyage he had a vision of Gregory walking amongst them and when he woke the storm had passed. Given Gregory's great age and infirmity it was likely at Gloucester that the two met. J. B. Smith, 'Walter Map', pp. 117-118.

57 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 107. Gloucester's position on the border occupying a transitional space between England and Wales ensured a 'cultural exchange' between the two countries and between those arriving at the port. It was from here that many military campaigns were launched adding to the prestige of St Peter's abbey in post-conquest England.

58 Ibid.

59 P. Sims-Williams, 'The Book of Llandaf as a Historical Source' (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019). The clerics of these locations retaliated by writing, even re-creating, new cartularies and charters confirming their land rights. pp. 11-13.

60 J. Davies, 'A History Of Wales', p. 115. The church at Llancarfan is an example of such a church which was acquired by Gloucester.

61 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp.109-116. (p. 113). St Peter's also had a copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (p. 112).

land and other holdings.⁶² One example is St Cadog's *Vita* which may have been written especially for Gloucester, along with other saints *Vitae* by Caradog of Llancarfan.⁶³ Walter was not necessarily tapping into a stream of Welsh traditions directly from traditional Welsh storytellers, the *cyfarwyddiaid*; he may have been discovering material in Welsh manuscripts appropriated by the great Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical institutions.⁶⁴

Walter was not alone in his use of Welsh-Latin documents. Geoffrey of Monmouth had used a similar network of texts in constructing his *Historia*, demonstrating a process of assimilation of older material that had been happening for some time.⁶⁵ It is known that Welsh texts were exchanged far beyond Gloucester, such as at St Augustine's in Canterbury and the religious houses in the north of England, in an establish mode of transmission that pre-dated the Normans.⁶⁶ Smith writes that 'although the Norman presence in Wales incited a vogue for traditions about ancient Britain, the mechanism through which these traditions spread into England and beyond was nothing new.'⁶⁷

Walter used a variety of source material when crafting his commentaries concerning the Welsh using varying degrees of criticism and apparent empathy. Like Gerald of Wales, he may have had mixed Norman and Welsh parentage but this remains unconfirmed.⁶⁸ In the short narrative, 'Of the Manners of the Welsh' he refers to *compatriote nostri Walenses*, 'my compatriots the Welsh' before going onto describe his 'compatriots' as being 'unfaithful', passionate, skilled in arms and generous in their hospitality.⁶⁹ We have already heard how he referred to himself as a '*marchio sum Walensibus*', 'a dweller on the Marches of Wales'.⁷⁰ Walter's seemingly casual remarks about his 'Welsh' credentials may have been to justify his ability to advise and converse on matters 'Welsh' and to enhance his credibility at court.⁷¹ The requirement for such information

62 Ibid. p. 144.

63 Ibid. p. 112. The *Vitae* of St Gwynllyw and St Tatheus may have been written for use in a property dispute with Robert of Gloucester.

64 Ibid. pp. 145-146.

65 Ibid. p. 164. Geoffrey probably had access to all manner of documentation. His motives for his texts, including his representation of Arthur, continue to be examined today. Geoffrey's connections and interests are partially revealed in his dedication of his *Historia* to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who was a patron of St. Peter's Abbey at Gloucester.

66 Ibid. pp. 164-167.

67 Ibid. p. 167.

68 G. Henley and A. J. McMullen, eds. 'Gerald Of Wales', p. 2.

69 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 182-183.

70 Ibid. p. 194-195.

71 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 18-28. (p. 19). Smith writes that Walter's description of this encounter with the chancellor, Thomas Becket, has a 'performative aspect' to it suggesting he had recited such anecdotes on other

implies that Welsh society and its people remained an enigma to Henry and his court who, it would appear, consulted local ‘specialists’ such as Walter and Gerald. How actually engaged Walter was with the local populace is unknown; he was a French speaking member of the English elite regardless of his Welsh credentials. Walter’s references to the geography and locations in the Southern Marches indicate that he had some local knowledge and the name ‘Map’ may be a version of the Welsh ‘Mab’ or ‘ap’ meaning ‘son of’ or it could also have been a nickname.⁷² Such associations may add to speculation regarding Walter's connection to Wales but they do not mean that Walter had a close understanding of the country and its inhabitants and at times he demonstrates a prejudicial attitude towards his compatriots. His claims in *distincio* 2 that the Welsh were generally hospitable but could also be aggressive and warlike are reminiscent of ancient stereotypes regarding the European Celts as wine swilling, ‘war mad’ drunkards with moustaches.⁷³ Such representations have been made throughout history and similar racial stereotypes may be found in modern society. It could also have been Walter’s way of ‘playing to his audience’, being aware of any prevailing racial perceptions and prejudices and distancing himself from his audience and his sponsors. Further ‘observations’ regarding the Welsh are given during his tirade against the Cistercians monks of whom he had a considerable low opinion:

The Cistercians have numbers of coats, the Welsh none. The former use no linen, the latter no wool, except for certain plain, short cloaks they wear; the one class has boots and shoes, the other goes bare-foot and barelegged. The monks eat no meat, the Welsh no bread. The monks give alms; the Welsh have none to give to.⁷⁴

occasions. There were also other ‘specialists’ on the Welsh in court circles: Gerald of Wales was also consulted for his ‘specialist knowledge’. pp. 18-19.

72 Ibid. pp. xiii-xiv. See also J. Byron Smith, *Walter Map*. pp. 14-15, concerning the use of the name ‘Map’ and its use in the area around the Welsh Marches. Walter mentions a number of places, including the well known local landmark, the Black Mountain, part of the Brecon Beacons. Other places mentioned in this area include Ross on Wye, Wollaston, Beachley, Aust Cliff, the Forest of Dean, Hay on Wye and Ullingswick. See *fig. 1*.

73 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 182- 83. See B. Cunliffe, ‘In the Fabulous Celtic Twilight’, in *The Barbarians of Ancient Europe*, ed. Larissa Bonfante (New York: Cambridge University, 2014) p. 194. Despite the differences and complexities concerning the many tribes displaced by the onslaught of the Romans they were often grouped together by the Classical Greek and Roman writers to create a ‘distinctive image’, a ‘Celtic Stereotype’ that was relatively consistent, rarely challenged and pervaded well into the last century, evolving into the romantic notion of a ‘noble savage’. It is still prevalent in some quarters today. See also P. Sims-Williams, ‘Celtomania and Celtoscepticism’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 36 (Winter, 1988), pp. 1-35.

74 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 100-101.

He continues:

I must say that the Welsh carry people captive and kill then with less shame and more open violence than the monks; they are always in tents or in the open.⁷⁵

It is difficult to determine whether Walter's agenda is to further deride the Cistercians or whether this is an historical account of the Welsh plight under the Normans. It may also be further Anglo-Norman stereotyping or perhaps, a mixture of all three. In his use of common stereotypes his work is indicative of the contemporary attitudes of the prevailing Anglo-Norman elite towards the Welsh and so revealing an important indictment of such attitudes in the twelfth-century.⁷⁶ It could also be that Walter's attachment and involvement with the Welsh has been completely overestimated. A. K. Bate in particular has claimed that the Welsh origins of the name 'Map' have been mistaken along with assumptions regarding his supposed friendship with Gerald of Wales for which there is little evidence.⁷⁷

There are differences between Walter and Gerald, not least that Gerald had a notable Welsh pedigree which bought him into contact with Welsh traditions, both oral and literal.⁷⁸ Walter never actually identifies himself as a 'Welshman', but rather as a 'Marcher' and in his conversation with Becket he suggests that this qualifies him as an authority on matters 'Welsh'.⁷⁹ Likewise, Gerald writes of his usefulness to the court through his knowledge of the Welsh, due to his background and his 'local' knowledge. Both men would have been familiar with this 'frontier society' covering the borders between the Anglo-Normans and Welsh, geographically and culturally.⁸⁰ Gerald of Wales, despite his name, did not speak fluent Welsh. Like Geoffrey of Monmouth he was Welsh, according to historian Julia Crick, 'primarily by osmosis, by virtue of residence or origin in the border area under Anglo-Norman control'.⁸¹ It could be argued that the same could be said about Walter and it is significant that although both Thomas Becket and Gilbert Folio had Welsh clerics

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 28. J. Wood, 'The Contents And Context' pp. 96-97.

⁷⁷ A. K. Bate, 'Walter Map', pp. 860-863.

⁷⁸ H. Pryce, 'Gerald Of Wales And The Welsh Past', in *Gerald Of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley and A. J. McMullen (Cardiff: University Of Wales Press, 2018), pp.19-20. Walter may have been aware and even 'open' to Welsh culture but Gerald's experience was of someone from an aristocratic background (p. 34).

⁷⁹ *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 194-195.

⁸⁰ J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 19. Smith refers to the Marches as a 'frontier society', complex and diverse. It is within this unpredictable environment that Walter circulated, amongst barons, knights and bishops, referencing the Welsh directly and the dangers of warfare and conflict.

in their employ, none achieved positions of high office including Walter who was twice unsuccessfully put forward for a bishopric.⁸²

Although Gerald of Wales and Walter made use of traditional Welsh material their lack of proficiency in the Welsh language may have necessitated their use of latimers, professional Anglo-Welsh translators, employed in aristocratic circles to translate and facilitate communication with Welsh speakers.⁸³ However, there is no direct evidence that the latimers enabled any Welsh literary transmission as their function seems to have been political rather than literary.⁸⁴ This further reinforces that clerics were using Welsh literary material they had found within Latin texts. Furthermore, if Walter was deriving his material from Welsh oral tradition we would expect him to have some knowledge of Welsh. Conversely, he could be copying and adapting words from the literary transfers within the abbey libraries and scriptoria. As will be suggested in the following chapter, tales such as 'Of Cadog, the Welsh King' were likely collected from ecclesiastical libraries containing documents pertaining to the Welsh traditions.⁸⁵ Walter does use Welsh words but is inconsistent and often mixes Latin with the vernacular suggesting he was unfamiliar with the orthography of the Welsh Language, although he does use and spell correctly certain Welsh names which he may have heard or encountered in everyday life.⁸⁶ He probably did come across Welsh tales recited orally but it is more likely that he encountered them through his acquaintances and peers rather than through native inhabitants. One example is the story given him by Lord William de Briouze about a Welshman who prayed naked until dawn but who was a wild and bloodthirsty warrior who took pleasure in 'crime and murder', the tale concluding that the Welsh may appear kind but 'in most they show themselves ill-tempered and savage'.⁸⁷ Walter writes that de Briouze is

81 J. Crick, 'The British Past And The Welsh Future: Gerald of Wales, Geoffrey of Monmouth And Arthur of Britain', *Celtica*, 23 (1999), pp. 62-64.

82 Ibid. p. 63. Possibly their apparent proximity to the Welsh made them undesirable.

83 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. p. 158.

84 Ibid. p. 161.

85 Ibid. p. 139. Walter may have found the sources for these tales in the library at St Peter's, Gloucester. 'Of Cadog, the Welsh King' appears to be based on the story of St Illtud's conversion as told in the *Vitae* of St Cadog. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 148-149, *fn.* 1.

86 Ibid. pp. 142-146. Walter is more likely to use Latinized versions of names, familiar through reading such works as Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gerald of Wales. He would also have been familiar with documents pertaining to Welsh history and Welsh matters of church and politics. But it is also possible that Walter was familiar with everyday Welsh words such as *brycan*, a word used for a blanket or cover, words he could have been familiar with as a border dweller. See p. 69. The text reads *qui super bracanum dormiebant*, 'who slept on the carpet'. *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 200-201,

87 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 145-147.

experienced in battle and the reader cannot help but wonder about the subtext of such a tale, especially if it came from a man such as de Briouze.⁸⁸

It has been seen that although there is no indication that Walter had direct access to the *cyfarwyddiaid*, and their knowledge of Welsh tradition and history the evidence suggests that much of his source material and inspiration may have come from Welsh-Latin texts residing in the great abbey libraries, especially at St Peter's. Walter lived during interesting times in a rapidly changing border land subject to political and cultural change. His writings illuminate issues concerning Welsh border culture but it is an important point that Walter was an Anglo-Norman cleric, writing about his world from his perspective: in short, Walter was 'an interested observer but not a member of Welsh culture'.⁸⁹ Bearing this caveat in mind, the following chapter will consider how Walter's writing skills, particularity in relation to politics and cultural issues, and his employment of them led further to his reputation as a specialist regarding matters 'Welsh'.

88 Lord William de Briouze was Lord of Brecon and Abergavenny. He had a brutal reputation for murder and treachery. See D. Stephenson, *Medieval Wales*, p. 65.

89 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. p. 143.

Chapter 2: A Forest of Jottings: History, Context and the Liminality of Narrative

I set before you here a whole forest and timberyard, I will not say of stories, but of jottings...I am but your huntsman, I bring you the game, it is for you to make dainty dishes out of it.¹

Walter employed his observational skills along with his knowledge of classical and ecclesiastical literature to create a literary ‘forest’ for his audience to make what they would out his ‘dainty dishes’. This chapter will examine a selection of Walter’s Welsh border tales in light of their historical and motivational context to consider what more they may tell us concerning this period of history in the Welsh Marches. Walter had plenty of opportunity to hunt for material during his perambulations as a cleric and courtier at the English court and this is reflected in the diversity of his characters which include kings, hermits, saints, fairy brides, revenants and thieves. Henry II’s court, and especially that of his wife Queen Eleanor, was wealth, attracting poets, writers and other creatives, a receptacle for new ideas, gossip and literary endeavours.² There would have been much to inspire Walter both at home in England or in Europe on court business where he would have much opportunity to encounter new ideas and stories.³ Walters narratives, and those of his contemporaries have been regarded as reliable representations of court and society but such literary compositions are inevitably framed by a language and motivation peculiar to twelfth-century society and caution is required in their interpretation.⁴ Davenport compares the language of such tales to an old mirror, that over time has ‘become blurred and pockmarked,

1 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 209.

2 Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II, was a patron of the arts. She favoured troubadour poets and was familiar with tales of King Arthur and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Matter of Britain*. Aristocratic women of this period were expected to show appreciation and support for creative activity and surrounded themselves accordingly with people and affectations reflecting personal tastes and favourites. See H. Leyser, *Medieval Women, A Social History Of Women in England 450-1500* (London: Phoenix Press, 1996) pp. 245-246. (pp. 240-241). Henry II would have been familiar with Geoffrey’s *Historia*. He was raised in the household of Earl Robert of Gloucester, a patron of Geoffrey. Certainly court and ecclesiastical circles were familiar with the *Historia*. See M. Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Imagination*, p. 60.

3 Walter travelled widely throughout France and Italy. In 1189 he represented Henry at the Third Lateran Council, visiting other courts including those of Marie de Champagne and King Louis VII of France. As such courts he may have encountered Chrétien de Troyes, a favourite writer and poet whose work was to have impact on the medieval court and literature. See T. Davenport, ‘Sex, Ghosts And Dreams: Water Map (1135?-1210?) and Gerald of Wales (1146-1243)’, in *Writers of the Reign of Henry II: Twelve Essays*, eds. R. Kennedy & S. Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 133 -50, (p.147). Walter’s tale ‘Of Nicholas Pipe, the Man of the Sea’ may be an example of one such tale gleaned on one of these journeys. It resembles the old Italian folk tale of Cola Pesce and Walter’s was the first ‘extended account’ of this tale. See J. Wood, ‘Walter Map: The Contents And Context’, p. 99. For Walter’s account, see *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 323-324.

4 T. Davenport, ‘Sex, Ghosts And Dreams’, pp. 133 -136.

leaving it by no means easy to read'.⁵ Bearing this caveat in mind, a closer examination can still illuminate some dark corners concerning medieval perceptions of the Welsh and border politics.

Most of Walter's 'Welsh' tales are found in *distinctio* 2 and follow a short collection of miracle tales.⁶ The previous chapter noted how some of Walter's contemporaries, such as John of Salisbury, wrote contemptuously about the customs and character of the Welsh. Walter also used negative stereotypes but his writing does not contain the vitriol of Geoffrey of Monmouth, his Welshmen appearing more 'canny and guileful rather than barbaric'.⁷ Faletra writes that Walter's

graceful style, replete with Ovidian transitions and wordplay, helps the text maintain an ironic distance from the vagaries of what an Englishman might see as the Welsh national character.⁸

Walter manages to maintain a certain familiarity with his subject while keeping his distance. Beginning with the '*Indiscriminate Devotion of the Welsh*', he writes that the Welsh can 'appear kindly' but that they revel in bloodshed and violence, showing themselves as 'ill-tempered and savages'.⁹ He follows this with a charitable account of Helyas, a Welsh hermit, he 'once saw' and who was of 'eminent faith and approved life'.¹⁰ Two tales set in Wales follow, the first concerning an early Welsh saint, Cadog.¹¹ Walter tells us that both of these tales 'the Welsh relate

5 Ibid. p. 148. Davenport writes that these texts combines twelfth-century perceptions of history and fiction entwined with personal reflection and experience.

6 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp.133-135. The first miracle tale is that of *Gregory, a Monk of Gloucester* as referred to in the previous chapter.

7 M. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Imagination*, p. 77. Geoffrey is more extreme in his statements regarding Welsh vices that he writes contained the Galfridian Welsh vices of 'sodomy and incest'. p. 77.

8 Ibid. p. 78.

9 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 145-146. Walter tells us this tale was told to him by one Lord William de Briouze, possibly known to Walter through the court. Williams nephew was clerk to de Briouze's son, Giles de Briouze, bishop of Hereford. Given that William of Briouze was a Marcher lord of Brycheiniog, 'a man most experienced in warfare', it is likely that this report was influenced by William's subsequent relationship with the Welsh. See p. 146, *fn*, 2.

10 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 147. The hermit, Helyas, kept a number of animals in the Forest of Dean. A mare was stolen by the ferryman at Aust Cliff. When he learnt of this, Helyas sent money to the ferryman for his trouble.

11 Cadog, or Cadoc, is recorded as founder of the church at Llancarfan in the 6th century. D. Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 83. Welsh saints were often real people who became 'Christianized folk heroes', experiencing similar struggles to those of secular heroes. See E. Henken, *The Saint as Secular Ruler: Aspects of Welsh Hagiography*, 98(2) (1987), pp. 226-232, p. 226. Also, W. Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Leicester University Press, 1982) p. 174. Cadog was venerated locally and further afield. His monastery at Llancarfan was an important and prominent house in South-East Wales. See pp. 163-164. Cadog is never given the title of king in his *Vitae* but his father is Gwynllyw, king of Gwynlliog. Walter's version may be an example of him re-working source material to 'fit' with his other tales of secular and sacred figures in *dist. ii*. See J. B. Smith. *Walter Map*. p. 125.

to us' suggesting that they are both Welsh in origin.¹² He writes that Cadog was a Welsh King who gave up his kingly lifestyle for one of devotion and solitude. After many years, his successor sent a messenger asking Cadog for bread for himself and his knights. When Cadog replied he did not have enough the successor threatened him with fire. Cadog sent the bread but put a curse on it which the men ignored and so, as they were eating all but Illtud, a knight who had abstained, were swallowed by an earthquake.¹³ The possibility of Walter's version being an 'aurally acquired' tale is suggested by the differences found in Cadog's *Vitae* where Illtud does not arrive until after the men have eaten and Cadog is a king rather than just a prince who gave up his throne.¹⁴ However, as will be demonstrated, it maybe that Walter had access to literary sources concerning Cadog.

A renewed interest in land-rights and the *Vitae* of native Welsh saints is demonstrated in the twelfth-century Book of Llandaff, a collection of texts concerned with the ecclesiastical properties of South-East Wales.¹⁵ *Vitae* of Welsh saints are also be found in the collection of manuscripts known as Cotton Vespasian A. xiv (twelfth-century), including a copy of *Vita Sancti Cadog* written by Caradog of Llancarfan.¹⁶ These *Vitae* would have been known at St Peter's in Gloucester, not least because St Cadog's principle church at Llancarfan and it's library had been important acquisitions for the abbey in the early twelfth-century.¹⁷ Walter would likely have been aware of the politics and the uneasy relationship between abbey and church as there had been a dispute

12 Walter Map *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 148-149.

13 Ibid. Illtud was also a Welsh saint. This account is similar to that in the *Vita Illuti*. p. 148. *fn.* 1. See also above, *fn.* 93.

14 E. Henken, *Traditions Of Welsh Saints* (Brewer: Cambridge, 1987), pp. 89-98. (pp. 93-94). Henken writes that Walter 'appears to be fairly reliable in the recording of aurally acquired stories, whether traditional or gossip', p. 93.

15 J. R. Davies, *The Book Of Llandaff And The Norman Church In Wales* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003). This renewed interest was largely a result of the Norman appropriation of holdings according to property rights of Welsh saints. However, internal conflict between the principle kingdoms in Wales may have contributed to this being an 'extension' of an earlier tradition. See p. 77. For information regarding the complexities of the text see also P. Sims-Williams, *The Book of Llandaf As A Historical Source* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019).

16 K. Hughes, 'British Library MS. Cotton Vespasian A XIV (*Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*): it's purpose and provenance' in *Celtic Britain In The Early Middle Ages*, ed. D. Dumville (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1980), pp. 53-66. p. 59. Cotton Vespasian A xiv is a collection of texts, including *de Situ Brecheniauc*, written primarily in the twelfth-century, reflecting the expansion of Gloucester with which it was closely associated and the rise of Llandaff. Within the texts are conserved a number of poorly understood and recorded traditions. Many have been much debated in terms of their reliability and the pedigree of the pre-Norman Welsh church. p. 66. The Welsh church was changing and it was useful for the monks to develop their knowledge of local lore and traditions. Subsequently, there were many 'studies and speculations' made of the earlier accounts of *Vitae* and customs concerning the indigenous saints, re-recorded and often reworked. p. 54.

17 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 119-126 (p. 121). Walter had clear links with this area due to his church at Westbury-on-Severn and as canon at Hereford. Cadog was one of three important saints for Gloucester along with St Gwynllyw (Cadog's father) and St. Tatheus (a student of Gwynllyw).

between Llancarfan and his patron, Gilbert Foliot when Foliot was abbot of Gloucester.¹⁸ According to Smith, Walter's use of Welsh-Latin suggests that he was using written Latin source material for his narrative concerning Cadog rather than aurally acquired material.¹⁹ Smith's examination of the literary evidence leads him to conclude that such tales belonged 'to an educated, Latin-speaking minority' with a common interest in property rights that led to the re-writing, or even re-invention, of old traditions to support the aspirations of the Anglo-Norman church.²⁰ Walter's connections and possible familiarity with Gloucester would have brought him into contact with these *Vitae* and manuscripts.

The following tale is an example of Walter use of the supernatural world in an important variant of a well-known persona of Welsh folk-tales, the fairy bride.²¹ The tale of the fairy bride is a widespread genre of tale about a supernatural woman who marries a mortal, eventually returning to her own 'Other' world.²² Such tales were popular in the Middle Ages. Some noble families, including Henry II's, even claimed descent from water spirits who had married mortals.²³ The supernatural components of such tales have led to a traditional premise that Walter had taken otherworldly elements from traditional 'Celtic legend'.²⁴ This may be an inevitable assumption given the nature of the tales but on closer inspection they are reflective of the medieval trend and interest in pseudo-history as well as in the supernatural.²⁵ The first tale, '*Of Illusory Apparitions*', concerns Gwestin Gwestiniog and his son, Triunein Vagelauc.²⁶

18 J. R. Davies, *The Book Of Llandaff*, pp. 107-108. Caradog of Llancarfan seems to have had a close connection with Gloucester, and most likely wrote a Life of St Cadog for the abbey.

19 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp.122-125 (p. 122). p. 136. Walter does not use the proper Latin form of Welsh for the names *Cadocus* and *Iltutus*. p. 124.

20 Ibid. p. 145. These stories had a political point to make regarding the appropriation of land and property, regardless of whether they were gleaned from older traditions, ecclesiastical or vernacular.

21 J. Wood, 'The Fairy Bride Legend In Wales', *Folklore*, 103(1) (1992) pp. 56-72. (p. 57).

22 Ibid, p. 58.

23 S. Kingshill, *Mermaids* (Cornwall: Little Toller Books, 2015), pp. 101-106 (p. 104). Gervase of Tilbury wrote one such tale which later became the story of Melusine. Melusine was a beautiful woman who was found by a river and married to a rich benefactor. One day, her spying husband watching her bathe discovered her serpent's tail. See also G. Benwell and A. Waugh, *Sea Enchantress* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), pp. 78-80, (p. 80). Walter may have been aware that Henry II's family were said to be descendants of Melusine.

24 J. Hinton, *Walter Map's De Nugis Curialium*. pp. 81-132 (p. 104). The Welsh folklorist, John Rhys, includes Walter's version of Gwestin's tale in his collection of Celtic folklore along with other folkloric accounts of Walter's contemporary, Gerald of Wales. J. Rhys, *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) pp. 70-74. See chapter 3.

25 K. Hughes, 'British Library MS', p. 54.

26 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 148-155.

Gwestin Gwestiniog lived by the lake of Brycheiniog.²⁷ On three consecutive moonlit nights he saw a group of women dancing in his oat field. On the third night Gwestin followed them and heard them discussing how they may be caught before diving into the lake. On the fourth night he caught one. She ‘yielded’ and married him, stating that she would stay with him until he hit her with his bridle. After he had hit her with the bridle she left him, taking all their children except the youngest, Triunein Vagelauc, who was caught by Gwestin. In the following part of the tale Triunein travelled north to serve the king of Deheubarth.²⁸ This king was a boastful man and Triunein deliberately provoked him by saying that his own King Brychan was a better example of valour and strength. The king headed south to see if this was true and Brychan was so furious that his army brutally slaughters Deheubarth’s men. Walter concludes that it was believed that Triunein was saved by his mother and lived with her in the lake but that this was actually a lie to explain the whereabouts of the missing Triunein!²⁹

In the second part of the tale Gwestin has become Brychan, the founder of the kingdom of Brycheiniog in the south-east of Wales. Brycheiniog was once a powerful, important region, existing as early as the seventh-century, according to the Llandaf charters.³⁰ By using the ancient British past as a setting for the tale Walter is reflecting this popular trend for both writers and their audiences in the medieval period. Kathleen Hughes observed:

Where Anglo-Norman and Celtic influence met, there was sometimes inquiry into the history of pseudo-historical past. It was both profitable and interesting for the monks to know the origin and development of the traditions into which they had entered.³¹

Walter’s use of specific local geographical information in this tale suggests a literary origin, typical of documents pertaining to property and land rights.³² It is possible that the character of Brychan had become part of a cycle of vernacular tales, an heroic figure from the ancient past.³³

²⁷ The lake of Brycheiniog is Llyn Syfaddon, also known as Llangorse Lake.

²⁸ *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 150-151. Deheubarth is in South Wales but whether Map had his own reasons for locating it in the north or whether it is a later scribal error cannot be determine. p. 150. *fn.* 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 148-155.

³⁰ W. Davies, *Wales In The Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 91-92.

³¹ K. Hughes, ‘British Library MS’, p. 54.

³² J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 136-137. Walter uses the correct name for a local river and writes that the lake is about two miles in circumference. Such details are often specific to property rights. No further analysis or comparison may be made of this tale as no other versions have survived if they ever existed.

³³ Brychan was already being credited with being the father of twenty-five saintly daughters. His history, including a hagiographic, can be found in the *De situ Brecheniauc*. The earliest extant copy of this text was written in the time of Gerald of Wales, possibly at St Mary’s priory at Monmouth. It is likely Gerald would have seen a copy at

Walter may have used both oral and written sources accounting for certain anomalies in the tale such as Gwestin's transition from Triunein's father to his overlord.³⁴ Of course, Gwestin could have been both. Smith writes that Walter may have been working from an older 'myth' as recorded by earlier Welsh scribes which linked Gwestin to an obscure saint called Gastayn who had an association with Llangasty on the shore of nearby Llangorse Lake.³⁵ It is also possible that Walter had his own copy of *De situ Brecheniauc* from Brecon which contains a short account regarding the life of Brychan.³⁶ By selecting certain historical material and using the more dramatic Welsh *Vitae* as a 'thematic hinge', Walter is able to skilfully manipulate his source material moving 'the narrative from traditional hagiography to secular supernatural phenomena'.³⁷ Walter was adeptly walking a liminal line between the saintly and supernatural worlds. The scene was now set for his next fairy bride story concerning Eadric the Wild.³⁸

One night, the lord of Lydbury North, Eadric Wild, was returning from a hunt when he came upon a group of women on the edge of the forest. The women were very tall and beautiful, dancing and singing in a language he could not understand. Eadric was seized with violent passion and caught the most beautiful, dragging her away from her sisters and 'for three days and nights used her as he would'.³⁹ Only then she broke her silence, telling him that he would be successful in all ways until the day he reproached her about sisters or her home in the wood. After this, everything would fail. They were married and Eadric's bride attracted many admirers, her beauty proof of her fairy nature. One day, after she had been missing for some time, Eadric accused her of visiting her sisters and suddenly she vanished. Eadric died in sorrow but he left an heir, Alnoth. Alnoth was holy and wise. In old age he developed a palsy which could not be cured so he visited the shrine of Saint Ethelbert at Hereford and was healed. In thanks Alnoth gave the Bishop of Hereford his manor of Lydbury which yielded thirty pounds a year.

Brecon Priory, See B. Guy, 'Gerald And Welsh Genealogical Learning' in *Gerald Of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley and A. J. McMullen (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2018), pp. 49-50.

34 J. Wood, 'The Fairy Bride', pp. 57-58. Wood attributes the fairy part of the tale to an oral source and the later section relating to the king to written sources.

35 J. B. Smith, 'Walter Map', p. 135.

36 Ibid. pp. 126-139. In 1202 Walter was ordered by King John to take possession of the revenues from Brecon where his contemporary, Gerald of Wales, was archdeacon (p. 139). Smith surmises that Walter may have had a copy of *De situ Brecheniauc* or a version may have arrived at Gloucester with other material from Llandaf or Llangarfan. *De situ* is a Latin account of Brychan, his founding of Brycheiniog and his twenty-four saintly daughters. Gerald was acquainted with *De situ*, perhaps through Brecon Priory. See B. Guy, 'Gerald And Welsh Genealogical Learning', in *Gerald of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley and A. J. McMullen (University of Wales Press: Cardiff, 2018), pp. 48-50. p. 49.

37 Ibid. p. 138.

38 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 154-159.

39 Ibid., pp. 156-157.

Walter's second fairy bride tale is 'untypical' of its type, this version containing fewer otherworldly motifs and features than usually found in such tales.⁴⁰ Towards the end Walter gives an explanation as to how a manor in Shropshire at Lydbury North, became the property of the diocese of Hereford.⁴¹ Lydbury North was a large estate owned by the Diocese of Hereford since before the Conquest, according to the Domesday Book, and where Eadric Wild, an Anglo-Saxon thegn from the Welsh Marches, likely had held some part of the manor.⁴² Eadric lost most of his lands to the invading Normans, mainly to Ralph de Mortimer, a huge loss for one of the most important and richest thegns in the Marches before the Conquest.⁴³ He had a reputation; the twelfth-century chronicler, Orderic Vitalis, recorded how 'Eadric the Wild, a powerful and warlike man', took up arms with the Welsh against the Normans and lay siege to Shrewsbury.⁴⁴ Walter and Gerald of Wales, both canons at Hereford Cathedral, each wrote accounts, albeit very different, to explain how Hereford had acquired the manor of Lydbury North.⁴⁵ The original records of this events were lost as many of Hereford's early documents, including land rights, were destroyed in 1055 when the Welsh King, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, sacked the city and Walter uses Eadric, an Anglo-Saxon folk hero, to give kudos to an ancient claim for the manor of Lydbury North.⁴⁶ It would appear that Walter used an earlier tale on which to build his story concluding that Eadric's son, in grateful thanks to Hereford's Saint Ethelbert for his healing, gave his manor of Lydbury to the Bishop of Hereford.⁴⁷ Smith observes that 'Walter has written the only fairy story that draws to a close with the formulaic language of charter, for which he deserves some praise'.⁴⁸

40 J. Wood, 'The Fairy Bride Legend In Wales', *Folklore*, 103(1) (1992), pp. 56-72 (p. 58). For example, water is often used as a link or conduit between the fairy women and the Otherworld or Faery. However, Walter does follow the Welsh tradition in other ways such as the fairy bride setting her own terms for remaining with her captor.

41 J. B. Smith, 'Gerald Of Wales, Walter Map And The Anglo-Saxon History Of Lydbury North', in *Gerald Of Wales. New Perspectives On A Medieval Writer And Critic*, eds. G. Henley and A. J. McMullen (University of Wales Press: Cardiff, 2018), pp. pp. 63-77. The fifty-three-hide estate would have provided a significant income for Hereford but how it came into Hereford's possession has not been clearly understood by medieval and modern scholars. (p. 63).

42 A. Williams, *The English And The Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995). pp. 89-94. p. 93. Although Eadric initially submitted to William in 1067, he joined the revolt of 1069 -70 before being reconciled with the king in 1070. He joined William's invasion of Scotland in 1072 before being heard of no more although there is some suggestion he may have returned to Shropshire.

43 Ibid. pp. 91-92. Eadric belonged to the family of Eadric *Streona*, ealdorman of Mercia, 1007-1017.

44 T. Forester, trans. *The Ecclesiastical History Of England And Normandy By Orderic Vitalis*, vol. II. (London: Bohn, 1853), p. 126.

45 J. B. Smith, 'Gerald Of Wales', p. 64. Gerald's account involves King Offa and the tale of Edwin Shaky-Head who is cured of his palsy by St Ethelbert himself as Edwin kept vigil at his tomb in Hereford. (p. 67).

46 Ibid. pp. 64-65. A. Williams, *The English*, p. 92.

47 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 58. Walter writes that Lydbury was in 'the Welsh country'. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 159.

48 J. B. Smith, 'Gerald Of Wales', p. 66. There is a shorter version of this tale in *dist. 4* suggesting that the longer version is an expansion of Walter's original narrative.

However, as Faletra has observed, by using Otherworld motifs and setting his narratives in Wales Walter was utilizing its perceived liminality and strangeness to suggest that Wales had retained some element of 'other' and remained a separate entity in the colonizing Anglo-Norman world view.⁴⁹ In short, 'the fairy brides who elude their men also represent the potential for any group to successfully resist assimilation or control'.⁵⁰ By using the narrative device of the fairy bride as a metaphor for Wales, the tale of Eadric becomes 'a cautionary tale' warning against interfering with other powers, in this case, with Wales and the Welsh.⁵¹

In each of Walter's fairy bride stories despite each woman being assaulted and apparently subdued they ultimately leave their husbands broken and bereft. Is Walter suggesting that there is something about Wales that is beyond the control of the Anglo-Norman machine?

The figure of the fairy bride, and specifically the Welsh fairy bride, drives home the point that Wales cannot for Map simply stand as a barbarized periphery in binary opposition to the civilized centrality of the court (as it does for Geoffrey and John), but instead, that there is something resolutely unassimilable about Wales, something that ultimately refuses to be brought into the colonial thought-world.⁵²

It is important that Walter's use of women in these tales should not be seen as a celebration of femininity.⁵³ His female characters are usually without name and are incidental to the story. This is unsurprising. Women generally had a low status in medieval society, their status was defined primarily by their position as either virgins, wives (mothers) or as widows.⁵⁴ Walter's diatribe against marriage, *Dissuasio Valerii*, is described by Brooke as 'one of the most brilliant anti-feminist satires produced in the Middle Ages', exhibiting traits of misogyny often to be found in

49 M. Faletra, *Wales And The Colonial Imagination*, p. 79.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid. pp. 81-82 (p. 82). See also J. Wood, J. 'The Calumniated Wife In Medieval Welsh Literature', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 10 (1985), pp. 25-38. Walter is also using a familiar theme in Welsh secular prose, the Calumniated Wife. This folkloric motif is found in medieval Welsh literature including the *Mabinogi* where it forms part of the stories found in the first two Branches, *Pwyll* and *Branwen*, concerning Branwen and Rhiannon. It often has an important role within a tale and can contribute towards our broader understanding of medieval folktales and their cultural context. (p. 38).

52 M. Faletra, *Wales And The Colonial Imagination*, p. 89.

53 Ibid.

54 H. Leyser, *Medieval Women, A Social History Of Women In England 450 -1500* (London: Phoenix Press, 1996) p. 93 and pp. 249-251. Leyser explores the claim that misogyny can be found throughout medieval texts. The traditional view of the medieval romances is that they showed women as 'privileged and adored mistresses of all they surveyed'. See p. 248. A more recent view is that this a naive perception and that women were often discounted, sexually objectified and that the 'celebrated twelfth-century invention of romantic love turns out to be nothing but a game for the glamorisation of rape'. p. 249.

medieval literary texts. Walter is perhaps representative of many of the societal norms of the twelfth-century but it is to his reputation as an authority on the Welsh, his status as a '*marchio sum Walensibus*' that we return.

Walter's duties bought him into contact with the Anglo-Norman Marcher Lords and other members of the ruling elite, men responsible for shaping the cultural discourse of the borderlands at the dazzling court of Henry II. It would seem that Walter's Welsh tales were intended for such an audience which suggests that Walter did have a reputation as an expert on Welsh affairs, choosing his tales 'with particular care'.⁵⁵ One such tale was recited to the royal chancellor, Thomas Becket, when he asked for advice on how far the Welsh could be trusted:⁵⁶

A knight called Franco came across King Louis while hunting. Franco, unaware of Louis's identity, allowed the king to examine his fine sword. The king then commanded Franco to bring him a stone to sit upon. Under fear of the sword Franco brings the stone but when his sword is returned to him he demands that the king takes the stone back. Now it was the king's turn to be afraid of the sword and he did as told. Louis, impressed with the young man's courtesy and bravery, rewarded him accordingly.⁵⁷ Walter uses this tale to illustrate the 'faith' of the Welsh, explaining to Becket that 'while you hold the sword they will submit, when they hold it they will command'. He continues,

'The glory of the Welsh is in plunder and theft, and that they are so fond of both that it is a reproach to the son that his father should have died without a wound. For which reason few grow grey. There is a proverb there, 'Dead youth or poor old man' meaning that everyone should brave death early rather than beg when he is old'.⁵⁸

Smith observes that some of Walter's passages have a 'polished feel', succinct and direct in their delivery and suggestive of repeated use.⁵⁹ It would seem that Walter is 'a man in the habit of explaining the Welsh'.⁶⁰ In this time of struggle and border warfare Walter would have been aware

55 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 13.

56 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 18-19. Walter may have met Thomas in Paris. He gives the impression that he, as 'Marcher to the Welsh' is in a good position to offer advice to Thomas on such matters.

57 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 194-197.

58 *Ibid.* p. 197.

59 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 19.

60 *Ibid.*

of the fragile instability of the Welsh Marches, choosing his commentaries with care, and relevance.⁶¹

Walter continues to elaborate further upon the Welsh relating details likely familiar to his English audience to illustrate the more unusual aspects of Welsh culture they may have found distasteful; an unusual legal system, a cultivation of prophecy, and extreme political violence.⁶² He uses the character of a Welsh king he calls 'Llywelyn king of Wales' to illustrate the discrepancies with the Welsh.⁶³ In the first tale a young man dreamt that he had an affair with the king's wife. The king was furious and demanded recompense. Because the 'offence' took place in a dream the fine of one thousand kine was endorsed by making the young man gaze upon the reflection of one thousand kine standing on the banks of Llangors Lake: the reflection of the kine was the shadow of the truth, the truth was the reality of the actual fine of one thousand kine.⁶⁴ Walter's story cleverly showed that the Welsh do things differently, even in law.⁶⁵

The following tale depicts Llywelyn as a young man, lazy and useless. One New Years Eve his sister pleaded with him to 'make a trial of himself', to do something subversive like take part in a raid or eavesdrop in the hope of hearing a prophecy about himself, a tradition for young men at this time of year.⁶⁶ Llywelyn, roused into action secretly crept into a household to listen to their conversation. He heard the cook declare that a piece of the meat would not settled down in the pot but kept rising to the top so he took this as an omen: he must rise above the rest and so he did, becoming a cruel and terrible leader. Walter makes Llywelyn's prophecy 'amusingly mundane' in an allusion to Geoffrey's Welsh and English dragons, much reduced in Llywelyn's case to a pot of

61 The twelfth-century was a time of instability and danger throughout Wales and along it's border with England. The years of the 'Anarchy' had provided opportunity for the Welsh to gain territory but also for the Marcher lords to increase their authority away from the English crown. Henry II bought some stability but his authority weakened after he quarrelled with the Archbishop Thomas Becket and the Welsh began to regain territories previously lost. See J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*, pp. 120-122.

62 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 23.

63 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 189. This king is likely intended as Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (d. 1063). See J. Byron Smith 'Walter Map', p. 22. Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was a ruthless ruler of Wales and a serious threat to English affairs particularly along the March. In 1055 Gruffudd harried Hereford and burnt down its cathedral, expelling many of the people living along the border. See J. Davies, *A History of Wales*, pp. 97-98. As cleric of Hereford Walter would have been aware of Gruffudd's brutality and his destruction of the cathedral.

64 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp.186-189.

65 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 24. This tale addresses the complexities of *sarhad* in Welsh law, compensation for harming someone's honour demonstrating that Walter was familiar with the Welsh legal system.

66 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 189. Walter may have got his dates muddled, confusing All Hallows with New Years Day. All Hallows was more commonly a time for divination.

bullock stew.⁶⁷ This is no great leader as far as Walter is concerned but a someone who achieved his ends through cruelty and brutality, a sentiment the English would have recognised.⁶⁸ Llywelyn is more thief than heroic leader.

This anecdote speaks to an English perception that plunder, and not noble claims to recovering the Island of Britain, is what truly motivates Welsh rulers, in spite of what their grand prophecies may say.⁶⁹

Walter was sure of his English audience, one who would be familiar with Welsh border issues and who would relate to his adept use of metaphor, impressed by his local knowledge and insight. His use of otherworldly characters further allowed him to manipulate and illustrate his stories in a genre familiar to a twelfth-century audience, aligning courts and characters to a liminal world. Walter's skill with this genre is evident in his well known tale of the British King Herla.⁷⁰ This is an early example of the ramblings and meanderings of a ghostly court or hunt and a prime example of Walter exploiting the legendary past and remodelling existing sources.⁷¹ It will be seen that it is significant that Walter wrote this tale while still at Henry's court, probably no later than 1189.⁷²

One day, Herla, 'a king of the most ancient Britons', was approached by a small man with a long red beard and hooved feet riding a goat. The little man flattered the king and said he would return to attend Herla's wedding but that Herla was obliged to attend his own nuptials the following year. The little king returned as promised with his retinue who served a lavish feast for everyone. A year later he reappeared and summoned Herla to repay the debt. Herla followed the king into a cave lit by many lamps where there was a lavish feast to celebrate the little king's marriage. When it was time to leave Herla was presented with a small bloodhound and strict

67 Walter may have been aware of similar tales of meat that will not cook properly, including an episode in the 'Life of Cadog'. In § 41 it is written that oxen were stolen from Cadog's townspeople by the men of Maredudd, King of Rheingwg. One ox was killed for the king's supper but would not cook either by roasting or boiling. The king ordered the return of the oxen and the slaughtered ox appeared unharmed. The townspeople praised Cadog for this miracle. M. Jones, *The Life Of Saint Cadog*, <<http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/cadog.html>> [Accessed 9th June 2020]. The tale of the two dragons is one of the most important stories in Geoffrey's *Historia* concerning the 'motif of sovereignty'. See J. Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, p. 31-32. Geoffrey's dragons are fierce and terrible, representing the British and the Saxons.

68 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 26.

69 Ibid. pp 25-28 (p. 25).

70 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 26-31.

71 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 83-84. Smith writes that Walter used a pre-existing tale and made it part of the Matter of Britain, enhancing his literary creations by using the ancient past to create the tale of King Herla.

72 J. Hinton. 'Walter Maps de Nugis Curialium: its plan and composition'. *Modern Language Association*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1917), p. 96. Walter wrote that he withdrew from the court after the death of Henry suggesting that he wrote this piece before July 1189. In the version found in *dist iv* he refers to King Henry as 'our present lord'. *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 371.

instructions that it should be carried at all times, no-one dismounting until the dog had jumped down. Back outside Herla approached an old shepherd asking for news of his queen. The shepherd replied he was a Saxon and could hardly understand Herla's speech. He told them that the queen of that name was long dead, her king had disappeared with a 'pygmy' into the hill before the Saxons drove out the British two hundred years ago. At this, some of the company panicked and jumped down from their horses, turning into dust. Forbidden to dismount, 'King Herla still holds on his mad course with his band in eternal wanderings, without stop or stay'. Many had seen the wandering company but in the first year of Henry's reign they disappeared after many Welshmen saw them plunge into the Wye, 'the river of Hereford'. Walter concludes that they have transferred their wanderings to his own court.⁷³

There is another, shorter version of a wandering nocturnal company in *De nugis*, describing how a nightly household called the *Herlethingus*, peopled by the dead, wandered aimlessly and silently.

This household of Herlethingus was last seen in the march of Wales and Hereford in the first year of the reign of Henry II, about noonday: they travelled as we do, with carts and sumpter horses, pack-saddles and panniers, hawks and hounds and a concourse of men and women.⁷⁴

This second tale uses a Saxon name, *Herlethingus*, and lacks the details and otherworldly 'Celtic' quality of the first story.⁷⁵ Walter also refers to similar tales, including one from Brittany, suggesting his familiarity with other versions of the Wild Hunt and ghostly entourages including European folklore and myth.⁷⁶ The origins of this version are not necessarily Welsh and this will be addressed in the following chapter but there is little doubt that the setting is the Welsh Marches. Walter mentions the Wye, the Welsh border river, and Hereford, an important crossing place on the Wye since at least Roman times.⁷⁷

⁷³ Walter Map *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁴ Walter Map *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 370-371. This shorter tale is most likely an earlier version of the story which was later revised and developed by Walter. See J. Byron Smith. *Walter Map*, pp. 89-90.

⁷⁵ J. Wood, 'Walter Map: The Contents And Context', p. 95.

⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 93-95.

⁷⁷ T. Rowley, *The Welsh Border*, p. 54. After much conflict between the Welsh and the Normans, Hereford became a centre for Norman control along the Welsh Marches. Along with Chester and Shrewsbury, Hereford was one of three Norman Border territories in a region heavily defended by a series of castles and defences. William I gave the land and settlement of Hereford to his relation, William Fitzosbern. Fitzosbern was the first of the Norman lords to 'plant' towns in Wales giving their inhabitants the same privileges as those of the burgesses of Hereford. pp. 83-85. See J. Davies, *A History of Wales*, p. 101 and p.112.

In Walter's longer and probably later version, Herla has become a Welsh king with a Welsh sounding name.⁷⁸ Despite the colonization of Welsh territories by the Anglo-Normans, 'Celtic' tales were very popular during the twelfth-century and influenced later writers such as Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France.⁷⁹ This 'Welsh' version is an example of how Walter and other writers used the framework of the Matter of Britain for their writing.⁸⁰ Later interpretation of these works has assumed that they originate from a 'Celtic' past but closer examination suggests that Walter seems to have been utilizing his local knowledge and the fate of the ancient British to create an engaging story about a wild and unruly court, a parody he was well familiar with.⁸¹

From that day that troop has nowhere been seen; they seem to have handed over their wanderings to us poor fools, those wanderings in which we wear out our clothes, waste whole kingdoms, break down our own bodies and those of our beasts, and have no time to seek medicine for our sick souls.⁸²

As a member of Henry's court Walter was aware of its instability and wrote critically of its chaos and confusion: 'I do not call it hell, but it is almost as much like hell as a horse's shoe is like a mare's'.⁸³ Not only is the Herla's tale a cleverly fashioned satire on the royal court but it places the Welsh within the context of the political climate of the region. Faletra writes

it also introjects into the book a consideration of the place of Wales and the Welsh within the imagined British polity of Henry II's insular domains, and in doing so extends the antagonistic dialogue Map had begun with John of Salisbury's work to Geoffrey of Monmouth's as well.⁸⁴

The fate of the British is linked to that of the Welsh. When Herla's troop disappear into the Wye, Henry's court inherits their ramblings: 'the phantom journeying has ceased, as if they had transmitted their wanderings to us, and betaken themselves to repose.'⁸⁵ Smith suggests that the court has inherited the 'inquietude of the ancient British past' as like Herla it has unknowingly

⁷⁸ J. Byron Smith. *Walter Map*, pp. 97-98 (p. 98).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 84. Byron Smith uses the term 'Britonization' to describe this process, 'setting tales in the ancient British past'.

⁸¹ M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*. pp. 75-76.

⁸² *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 370-373.

⁸³ Ibid. pp. 510-511.

⁸⁴ M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*. p. 74. Walter's response to John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, which describes the moral weaknesses and corruption within the court, challenges and defines his perception of such activities translating them into satire and 'witty anecdotes, lurid gossip'. See p. 71.

⁸⁵ *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 31.

entered into a pact outside its control and it's chaotic existence is part of this inheritance.⁸⁶ It is through Walter's inventive and satirical response to the colonial ramblings of the court that he is able to challenge other writers such as John of Salisbury and even Geoffrey's *Historia*, astutely understanding the role that Wales and Welshness played in their construction.⁸⁷ Through his use of irony and inventiveness it is clear that, in Faletra's words, 'Walter Map also displays the ability of the Matter of Britain to generate its own counter-discourses'.⁸⁸ It is also a piece of satire, an observation regarding the shortcomings of the court and part of an on-going critique of other writers and their use of the Welsh in their own writings. Walter is subtle in his own observations with his evocation of the liminality and otherness of Herla and subsequently Wales, a land where there was potential for resistance and rebellion. This would have been a reality his audience would have been acutely aware of. Walter writes as a man from the Welsh border with less superior notions and more insight than his contemporaries such as John and Gerald, drawing on his knowledge of European folk tales and Welsh legends for inspiration. Furthermore, he displays a canny use of the Matter of Britain, elegantly employing it as a vehicle for his satirical intent. Smith writes that the tale of Herla, 'built upon the framework of a common folk tale, is transformed into a sophisticated piece of courtly literature in Walter's hands'.⁸⁹ And the placement of this tale within the liminal and nebulous region of the Marches adds to it's mysterious and otherworldly appeal with the River Wye, a significant boundary river, as the stage where the troop disappears, 'witnessed' by the Welsh, notably the descendants of those greater Britons of ancient times.⁹⁰

We have seen how Walter frequently uses the theme of the ancient past, cleverly utilised and threaded with tales from secular and vernacular traditions to create commentaries and tales that not only entertain but highlight complex issues of border politics and colonization. But, the result is not necessary a straightforward reflection of medieval border politics and culture. Walter, like his contemporary Gerald of Wales, is reflecting the broad tastes of a twelfth-century elite, the Anglo-Norman court. There are many 'cross-currents' in their writing, reflecting their audiences desire for tales about the glorious past, the grotesque, the erotic and chivalric but this is sometimes complicated by their often contradictory roles of churchmen and civil servants.⁹¹ The contribution

86 J. Byron Smith, *Walter Map*. p. 103.

87 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*. pp. 71-72.

88 Ibid. p. 72.

89 J. Byron Smith, *Walter Map*. p. 103.

90 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*. p. 76. Walter would have been mindful of the circumstances regarding the contemporary Welsh being linked to the fate of the Ancient Britons.

91 T. Davenport, 'Sex, Ghosts And Dreams', pp. 147-148. Davenport is also writing about the works of Gerald of Wales in this paper.

of Walter's work to our understanding of this period of Marcher history is not straightforward but, like Gerald of Wales, he gives his reader an insight into how fiction 'interrelated' with his personal life, enabling some expression of vulnerability and uncertainty to creep into his writing.⁹² Davenport writes that the results are

an intriguing combination of sophistication and uncertainty: both capable of assertive expression of their own wits and self-confidence, they nevertheless betray their various instabilities of personality and position.⁹³

Walter walks between many worlds, offering us a window into his past and encouraging us to make what we will of his 'dainty dishes', but closer inspection suggests that we should do so with care. Walter gives us a complex and sometimes, personal mixture of a time far removed from our own giving us insight into his own struggles and concerns.

In this pitiable and care-ridden court I languish, renouncing my own pleasure to please others. While there are very few who can help one, it is in the power of anyone to injure...If I take the place of a worthy man so as to become enviable, they will backbite me, and say that my supporters are taken in by appearances.⁹⁴

The challenges involved in considering the historical context of Walter's Welsh narratives are considerable and it is their appeal as entertainment that has perhaps led to their survival, primarily as folklore. Walter's tales concerning the Welsh Marches are perhaps his most widely known and the following chapter will examine their enduring quality and their relevance eight hundred years later.

92 Ibid. p. 148.

93 Ibid.

94 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 372-373.

Chapter 3: Folklore and the Uncertain Framework of the Past,

The Legacy of Walter Map

In a like spirit of perplexity I may say that in the court I exist and of the court I speak, and what the court is, God knows, I know not. I do know however that the court is not time; but temporal it is, changeable and various, space bound and wandering, never continuing in one state.¹

These opening lines from *De nugis* ostensibly describe Walter's feelings of uncertainty and insecurity regarding the English court and we have seen how his eclectic use of literary and oral sources enabled him to create clever commentaries concerning such contemporary issues as the political climate and cultural milieu of the Welsh borders. This final chapter will examine the evolution of some of these tales and why, beyond storytelling and references to a lost ancient past, his writing is important and continues to engage scholars, inspiring artists and storytellers. It will become apparent that his work has not always been given the importance and credibility it deserves especially in regards to its commentary concerning the twelfth-century Marches. First, it is useful to trace the journey of *De nugis curialium*, Walter's only surviving manuscript and its impact on folklore studies.

Almost five hundred years after Walter's death *De nugis* and other works of antiquity were attracting the attention of scholars such as Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709). Lhuyd was a Welsh philologist and antiquary whose work subsequently inspired closer examination of Welsh textual matter, furthering the study and collection of Welsh folklore.² Medieval texts were a potential source of evocative stories about the heroic British past, a subject appealing to artistic and literary communities. The Welsh intellectual, Edward Williams (1748-1826), better known by his bardic name *Iolo Morganwg*, used such texts to create and write about a past of his own conjecture, and to promote his own vision of a romantic 'Celtic' past.³ With a taste for ancient tales and traditions and a need to validate his own writing, Williams used Walter's work, amongst others, as evidence of the 'literary precocity' of the medieval culture of the southern Welsh Marches'.⁴ Williams's

1 Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 2-3.

2 B. F. Brinley, 'Edward Lhwyd (c. 1660-1709): Folklorist', *Folklore*, 120(1) (2009), pp. 36-56. Lhuyd was a pioneer in the recording of Welsh folklore. J. Thomas, 'The Development Of Folklore Studies In Wales, 1700-1900', *Keystone Journal*, 20(4) (1975), pp. 33-52 (p. 34). Sir John Rhŷs was one such scholar inspired by Edward Lhuyd.

3 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 4.

4 Ibid. Amongst William's claims was that Walter was the son of a Welsh princess and Norman knight and accountable for Geoffrey's *History Of The Kings Of Britain*. Such was his obsession with Walter that Williams

work was eventually discredited but the attractive concept of a Celtic identity continued to inform folklore studies and contributed towards defining the nature of Welsh identity and heritage.⁵ The appeal of the past may still be seen throughout Wales permeating the public consciousness and imagination primarily through the tourist industry as reflected in many bookshops and tourist centres.⁶

During the mid nineteenth-century, the burgeoning scientific communities witnessed many new theoretical developments. One was the theory of ‘cultural evolution’, prominent in anthropological studies and promoted as an ‘evolutionary approach to culture and society’.⁷ The newly formed Folklore Society adopted the evolutionary method in an attempt for the study of folklore to be taken seriously as an academic subject and enable folklorists to join the scientific community: ‘folklorists had no choice if they wanted to be scientists, they had to be evolutionists’.⁸ The artistic and intellectual movement of Romanticism was becoming very popular and supernatural and mysterious tales set amongst the wild, untamed Welsh landscape were a favourite subject with the Welsh scholar, John Rhŷs (1840-1916), first professor of Celtic at Oxford and vice-president of the Folklore Society.⁹ Rhŷs's book ‘Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx’, contains an important collection of Welsh folklore gleaned from field work and his correspondence with fellow academics.¹⁰ Rhŷs is known especially for his work on fairy lore. He collected twenty-five examples of the fairy bride tale from Wales and cites Walter’s tale

created the *Llyfr Gwallter Demapsy* (The Book Of Walter Demapsy) containing false biographical information about Walter. His work was so popular that it endured for almost one hundred years before being discredited. See also J. Wood, ‘Perceptions Of The Past In Welsh Folklore Studies’, *Folklore*, 108(1997), pp. 93-102. (p.97).

5 J. Wood, ‘Perceptions Of The Past’, pp. 94-96. See full article for how perceptions of the Welsh past has been interpreted and its rich and complex history has contributed toward modern concepts of national identity, perpetuated today through tourism and the heritage industry. J. B. Smith, ‘Walter Map’. p. 4.

6 J. Wood, ‘Perceptions Of The Past’, p. 99.

7 G. Bennett, ‘Geologist And Folklorists: Cultural Evolution And “The Science Of Folklore”’, *Folklore*, 105 (1994), pp. 25-37. (p. 25). This ‘evolutionary approach’ to folklore surmised that folklore was derived from remnants of ancient belief and ritual pertaining to our ancient past. In the nineteenth-century, geology was the leading edge of science. As a result, the ‘Bible centred’ view was wavering, especially under the challenge of the publication of ‘The Origin Of The Species’. For folklorists to be taken seriously they had to become ‘evolutionists’. pp. 26-30. The success of this theory may be seen by the publications of fifty seven editions of James Frazer’s book, *The Golden Bough*, which remains popular today. p. 33. J. Wood, ‘Perceptions of the Past’, p. 97.

8 G. Bennett, ‘Geologist And Folklorists’, pp. 30-31 (p. 30). Folklore was rapidly developing as a new field of study along with a burgeoning interest in philology, culture and society. Collectors and writers were contributing to a growing reservoir of material and sought recognition and credibility amongst fellow academics. This contributed towards this the founding of the Folklore Society being founded in 1878.

9 J. Wood, ‘Perceptions of the Past’, p. 98. Rhŷs was a leader figure in the development of the Folklore Society.

10 J. Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore, Welsh And Manx* (Hawaii: University of the Pacific, 2004). See J. Wood. ‘Folk Narrative Research’. pp. 331-332. Wood writes that Welsh folklore differs from Irish and Scottish traditions as it does not contain the ‘rich vein of märchen tales and heroic ballads’. Rhŷs’s research had confirmed that Welsh folklore does not have the same components as the Gaelic Celts although he gives no reason for this. Wood points out that the contrast between the two genres from the medieval period onwards has still not been resolved (p. 330).

concerning Gwestin Gwestiniog as the oldest recorded version.¹¹ Rhŷs introduces the tale by referring to *De nugis* as a ‘curious miscellany of anecdotes and legends’ and that the story serves as an origin tale ‘of a certain Trinio’.¹²

For Rhŷs Walter was a credible source for legends concerning ancient kings such as Brychan Brycheiniog, giving Rhŷs and his fellow antiquarians a glimpse of tales from the distant Welsh past. However, we have seen how Walter used different elements from literary and oral sources to embellish and structure these tales accordingly not simply as records of folktales and ancient legends but to construct satirical commentary regarding the court and border politics. Walter’s Otherworld or fairy bride tales are, however, important examples of early variations of this tale type from the medieval period and perhaps evidence of earlier tale cycles.¹³ Many of Walter’s tales are now considered ‘invaluable’ records of medieval ‘folktales’, although it is reasonable to assume that he would not have thought of these tales as ‘folklore’ in our modern sense.¹⁴ Before exploring the modern context of some of the better known narratives it is useful to consider what is meant by folklore and by its defining narratives of folktale, legend and myth.

The academics and folklore collectors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm first defined ‘folklore’ in the nineteenth-century as ‘the voice of the people’, a lore that transmitted the traditions that conveyed the ‘essential identity of a nation’.¹⁵ Today, ‘folklore’ is more broadly defined as ‘the traditional, unofficial culture of communities (folk groups)’ and ‘folklore study’ is characterised as its organisation in a ‘scholarly textual form’.¹⁶ The oral transmission of folklore means that its study can be especially problematic for medieval folklorists because the source and original context is variously located in a very distant past.¹⁷ In her exploration of the connection between

11 J. Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, pp. 70-72, p. 70. *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 149-155.

12 Ibid. p. 70. Rhŷs wrote that the root of this tale was ostensibly a family origin legend concerning Triunein, the son of Gwestin and a fairy. p. 77.

13 J. Wood, ‘The Fairy Bride’, pp. 57-58. We have already seen in the previous chapter how Walter’s tale may have been derived from an older cycle of tales attached to Brychan Brycheiniog and the supernatural element of the women of the lake, remnants of a family origin legend.

14 J. Wood, ‘Walter Map’, pp. 102-103. Little Welsh material survives from this period and so Walter’s work is an important record. Walter is possibly using and adapting earlier traditions to fashion and ‘tell’ his stories.

15 J. F. Nagy, ‘Folklore Studies And The Mabinogion’, in B. Maier et al, eds, *150 Jahre Mabinogion Deutsch Walisische Kulturbeziehungen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001). pp. 91-100, (p. 91). Ibid. pp. 91-92. The Brothers Grimm were nineteenth-century academics and folklore collectors who pioneered the notion of ‘folklore’ Nagy writes their influence was such that even texts such as the medieval Welsh *Mabinogion* were ‘conceived as ‘key-witnesses to a ‘Celtic’ folk sensibility’.

16 Ibid.

17 C. Lindahl, ‘Folklore’ in *Medieval Folklore*, eds. By C Lindahl, J, McNamara, J. Lindow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.138-142. The term ‘folklore’ was first used by the antiquarian William J. Thoms to replace ‘popular antiquaries’. p. 138. Medieval folklore is found only within written sources, often fragmentary

folklore and the past, the antiquarian and former president of the Folklore Society, H. R. Ellis Davidson, wrote that folklore ‘retains the characteristics of oral tradition set within a literate culture and this is particularly so where historical folklore is concerned’.¹⁸ But Ellis was cautious about using folklore as a signpost to the past, writing that perceptions of history are open to interpretation, not least by those who perpetuate the customs and tales, the tradition bearers.¹⁹ The Grimm brothers first divided the narrative components of folklore into folktales, legends and myth, prose categories which are used today, each narrative having its own defining qualities. Carl Lindahl and the anthropologist William Bascom define ‘folktales’ as fictional and secular in nature.²⁰ A legend has a historical setting, is also secular but can also be sacred. Tangherlini gives this definition of a legend: ‘A historicized and localized traditional oral prose narrative presented as a true account, often centering (sic) on a supernatural or other extraordinary occurrence’.²¹ Finally, myths are defined as ‘sacred’ narratives, often associated with ritual and theology, and ‘featuring divine settings, normally unfolding in the timeless past’.²² Fifty years ago the linguist, Kenneth Jackson, wrote he preferred the term ‘popular tale’ rather than ‘folktale’ because many stories were favoured not only by the ‘folk’ but by all classes and adapted from both folktales and literary sources.²³ Walter’s narratives seem more suited to Jackson’s definition but given their seemingly fictional and, at times, supernatural settings, they are usually classified as either folklore or legends by folklorists.²⁴

and in different formats; folktales, *exempla*, Latin and vernacular prose. As a tradition in constant flux reflecting the changing world of its participants, folklore which is collected and written down in a later period, will not accurately reveal attitudes and beliefs of an earlier time. Lindahl writes this is an important caveat to bear in mind when considering modern interpretation of medieval prose.

18 H. R. Ellis Davidson, ‘Folklore And History’, *Folklore*, 85(2) (1974), pp. 73-92, (p. 75).

19 Ibid. pp. 73-92 (p.75). Davidson points to the difficulties in determining how earlier societies differentiated between myth and history and asks whether the distinction was even important to them. In later times the collector can only transcribe the perception of the tradition or story as given by the person bearing it. It is interesting that Wood refers to Walter as a ‘tradition bearer’. See Chapter One, *fn.* 43.

20 C Lindahl, *Medieval Folklore*, p. 142. W. Bascom, ‘The Forms Of Folklore: Prose Narratives’, in *Sacred Narrative. Readings In The Theory Of Myth*, ed. By A. Dundes (London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 5-29. Over fifty years ago Bascom expressed concern at how folklore had long been ‘plagued by inconsistent and contractionary definitions’. The term, prose narrative, includes myths, legends and folktales which are seen as subdivisions of folklore, pp. 7-8.

21 T. Tangherlini, ‘Legend’, in *Medieval Folklore*, ed. By C. Lindahl, J. McNamara, J. Lindow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 240-243. (p. 240). Medieval authors were amongst the earliest ‘collectors’ of folklore giving us a ‘snapshot’ of a ‘rich and vibrant oral tradition’. p. 242.

22 C Lindahl, ‘Myth’ in ‘*Medieval Folklore*’, pp. 283-285. Classic mythology provided narratives, popular as entertainment during the Middle Ages. Many inspired such works as *Sir Orfeo*, based on the story of Orpheus. p. 285.

23 K. Jackson, ‘*The International Popular Tale And Early Welsh Tradition*’, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), pp. 3-4. Jackson notes that all types of popular tales have features in common and are often widespread, sometimes simple or long and complex.

24 J. Simpson, *Folklore Of The Welsh Border*. (rev edn. Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2003) pp. 82-83. E. M. Leather, *The Folklore Of Herefordshire* (Otley: Smith Settle, 1992. First printed 1912) pp. 172-174. C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, (Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd, 1973. First printed 1882) pp. 59-61.

The twelfth and thirteenth-centuries saw an increase in the popularity of historical ‘wonder’ tales embodied by Geoffrey’s *Historia Brittonum*.²⁵ The literate clerics were responsible for transcribing these tales rather than the laity although the latter were the ‘folk’ who traditionally preserved and orally transmitted the lore.²⁶ Subsequently, any fragmentary records of medieval folkloric beliefs that remain are evidence of ‘the products of clerical pens, of a literate culture rather than the predominantly oral culture in which beliefs were held and practices used’, according to Watkins.²⁷ As such they risked losing their earlier ‘folk context’ when the author adapted the narrative from its original format.²⁸ Yet the distinctions between the beliefs and practices of the clerics and local communities were not clear cut, and they may have shared some localised and traditional practices and superstitions. This further endorses Watkins and Davenport’s concern that medieval ‘folklore’ should be explored in its broader context in relation to its cultural and historical framework in order for it to reveal anything meaningful about past beliefs and traditions.²⁹ However, like his contemporaries, Walter was writing for a ‘sophisticated’ audience, the elite not the laity.³⁰

An examination of a sample of these narratives will demonstrate how they have endured into the twenty-first century and remain of interest not only to folklorists but to storytellers and other creatives. One example is the tale of Eadric, arguably Walter’s best-known character, yet the best-known version of this story is not necessarily derived from Walter’s original. Walter may have been using an existing concept to frame his story concluding with the gift of Ledbury North to Hereford, by Alnoth, Eadric’s half-fairy son as previously discussed in chapter two.³¹ Almost seven-hundred years later, Charlotte Burne, the Shropshire folklorist, is credited with rescuing Eadric’s story ‘from the obscurity of medieval Latin’ ensuring that this ‘picturesque tale has an assured place among English legends’.³² In 1883 Burne had published *Shropshire Folk-Lore*

25 C. Watkins, ‘“Folklore” And “Popular Religion” In Britain During The Middle Ages’, *Folklore*, 115(2) (2004), pp. 140-150, (pp. 140-141). Watkins gives examples of fantastic tales including those of green children and wild men fished from the sea but he recommends that such folklore should not be seen in isolation but as an ‘organic whole’ due the complexity of its construction and motivation. See also K. Janulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, pp. 20-21.

26 C. Watkins, ‘“Folklore” And “Popular Religion”’, p. 141.

27 Ibid. p. 142.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid. p. 147. T. Davenport, ‘Sex, Ghosts and Dreams’, p. 148.

30 J. Wood, ‘Walter Map’, p. 93.

31 Ibid.

32 J. Simpson, *Folklore Of The Welsh Border*. pp. 82-83. Simpson writes that the folklorist Charlotte Burne ‘rescued’ the tale of Eadric from the twelfth-century work of Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, calling it a ‘typical medieval romance’. p. 82.

writing that it was ‘curious to find that Wild Eadric was already the centre of myth and legend within scarcely more than a century of his own life-time’.³³ Whether Shropshire’s other traditions concerning Eadric are descended or related to Walter’s narratives is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. Eadric is certainly remembered as a local hero, the ‘leader of the revolt on the Welsh borders’, a ‘shadowy’ figure, almost forgotten.³⁴ His status locally as a folk hero may account for certain elements in the later tale. Davidson writes that

folklore heroes are in general individuals who have moved over a wide area and whose actions have affected many. They are adopted as it were by the people as a whole, and their doings linked with certain places and with accepted patterns of folk tradition.³⁵

Burne’s records of tales concerning Eadric contain several typical folkloric motifs.³⁶ These elements are absent from Walter’s version and include sleeping knights, black dogs, magic swords and ‘knockers’. ‘Knockers’ are ‘fairies’ or supernatural miners, so called because they could be heard working and ‘knocking’ in the tunnels.³⁷ In Shropshire tradition, Eadric and his retinue were ‘imprisoned in the mines of that wild west country’, as punishment for submitting to William,³⁸ It is difficult not to make comparisons with Galfridian allusions to Arthur and his knights sleeping in various locations until Britain is returned to its ‘rightful’ owners, especially as tradition tells us Eadric cannot die until all ‘wrong has been made right’ and England reverts to its rightful state.³⁹

33 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 61.

34 Ibid. pp. 25-32 (p. 25). and p. 28. A. Williams, *The English*. p. 92. Before the conquest Eadric held land throughout Herefordshire and Shropshire. Many of his estates passed to Ralph de Mortimer, a Marcher Lord and Norman baron.

35 H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Folklore And History*. p. 74.

36 K. M. Briggs, ‘Possible Mythological Motifs In English Folktales’, *Folklore*, 83(4), pp. 265-271, p. 266. A motif is a ‘strand’ of the components of a folktale. For example, A571 is the motif applied to heroes sleeping underground, waiting to return to the mortal world and so applied to Eadric and his retinue described as they wait to be called from under the Shropshire hills. There are many examples and may be found in Stith Thompson ‘Motif-Index of Folk Literature’. p. 265.

37 The ‘knockers’ are known in Cornwall folklore as a supernatural race found in the tin mines. They were considered as lucky, as the sound of them could lead to rich tin lodes, or as omens of disaster as such sounds could sometimes preclude a pit-fall. Such traditions are known in mines in other parts including Germany. See J. Westwood and J. Simpson, *The Lore of the Land. A Guide to England’s Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2005), pp. 664-665. The author’s husband remember elderly relatives from this area telling him tales about Eadric and the ‘knockers’.

38 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 28.

39 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 28. Also K. Janulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote in his *Historia* that Arthur would return to bring victory again to the Britons. He may have taken this from earlier sources rather than it being his own invention. Arthur’s tale was anglicized and developed and by the sixteenth-century there was a belief that Arthur was sleeping in a cave near Glastonbury waiting to be woken to redeem England. pp. 75-77. This has translated into a number of accounts throughout Britain concerning sleeping heroes waiting to redeem their country when called. For examples see J. Westwood & J. Simpson *The Lore Of The Land*,

The embellishment of these folkloric motifs upon Eadric's story gives it additional legendary credentials but tells us little either historically or culturally unlike Walter's narrative. Gone are the references to Lydbury North and land ownership, the abduction and rape of Eadric's supernatural bride and the comments concerning English identity verses 'Welshness'.⁴⁰ In its later form it tells us more about the popular narrative styles of the nineteenth century and how folklore was being recorded and interpreted than contemporary politics and attitudes toward women and the Welsh in the period of Marcher history.

Curiously, a further addition to the Shropshire version recorded by Burne describes Eadric riding across the Marches with his knights and his fairy wife. Eadric's fairy bride is now identified as a 'Lady Godda', resplendently dressed in green, her long, 'golden hair' falling to her waist and a band of gold and linen around her forehead.⁴¹ This account was collected from a young servant girl from a small hamlet on the Welsh border who had witnessed the company with her father who had seen them previously years before.⁴² She added that her father made her cover 'all but her eyes, and on no account speak, lest she go mad'.⁴³ Burne identified Eadric and his entourage as a 'Wild Hunt', a popular theme in modern folklore and considered by Burne as 'most dangerous'.⁴⁴ But this is a later association for Eadric as Walter did not place him with the Wild Hunt; he reserved that place for Herla.

pp. 310-311.

40 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*. pp. 156-157. 'He took her with him, and for three days and nights used her as he would'. The rape of the unnamed fairy follows her assault and kidnapping by Eadric and his page during which her companions fought with 'nails and teeth' to protect her.

83. In this narrative Walter is keen to stress that Alnoth, although the product of a fairy mother, is not a demon: he is a pilgrim. *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. 159.

41 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 29. Burne makes a connection between the name 'Godda' and the German goddess, Frau Gauden or Gode whose enthusiasm for the 'chase' doomed her to follow it indefinitely. Godda was wearing green, a colour once associated with the fairies. See J. Simpson and S. Roud, *Oxford Dictionary Of Folklore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 153.

42 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, pp. 28 – 29. Rorrington is a small hamlet in Shropshire on the Welsh Marches not far from Montgomery.

43 *Ibid.* The young woman stated that the miners would know when war was coming when they saw the hunt. This occasion was shortly before the Crimean War broke out and her father had seen them before the Napoleonic wars. She describes Eadric as wearing 'a green cap and white feather, a short green coat, a horn and a short sword hanging from his golden belt'. p. 29. The folklorist R. Palmer is sceptical about its authenticity writing that it 'smacks suspiciously of a Robin Hood saga'. See R. Palmer, *The Folklore Of Shropshire*, (Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 2004), p. 73.

44 C. S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 29.

The ‘Wild Hunt’ is a term used to describe a procession of spectral or demonic huntsmen, carousing through sky and countryside in pursuit of sinners and lost souls.⁴⁵ It was a popular phenomena during the medieval period. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reported that in 1127 hoards of huntsmen were seen riding black horses and billy goats near Peterborough.⁴⁶ It would seem that this tradition predated Walter as Orderic Vitalis wrote of an earlier tale concerning a priest who had encountered a ghostly purgatorial procession of lost souls in a wood one hundred years earlier.⁴⁷ It has long been assumed that Walter was responsible for recording a Welsh variation of a widespread folktale or that he had developed an existing story containing ‘Celtic’ elements as would be expected from an ‘authentic piece of folklore from the Welsh Marches’.⁴⁸ Equally he could have made them up.⁴⁹ However, the motif of the broken taboo, in this case that no man dismount before the dog had leapt down from its bearer, is reminiscent of the eighth-century Irish tale, Immran Bran, set firmly in the ‘Celtic twilight’ in which Bran’s kinsman turn to dust when he steps onto the seashore after their return from the Otherworld.⁵⁰ These associations have added further to the premise that Water had recorded a genuine Welsh folktale, very old and that the name ‘Herla’ was a name of ‘great antiquity’.⁵¹ It is possible that Walter was drawing upon an older, lost Welsh text

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- 45 R. Hutton, ‘The Wild Hunt In The Modern British Imagination’, *Folklore*, 130 (June 2019), pp. 175-191 (p. 176). The ‘Wild Hunt’ was a term coined by Jacob Grimm in the nineteenth-century to describe various unconnected phenomena he had found amongst folklore examples, especially Germanic accounts and medieval texts from the early medieval period to the Middle Ages. They included spirits who rode out on night visitations, nightly processions of the penitential human dead, demons and a spectral huntsman who hunted both animals and humans. Hutton suggests that these stories were developed from later traditions from the early to high Middle Ages, often led by Herlechin also known as Herlewin or Hellequin. (p. 176).
- 46 G. N. Garmonsway, trans. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: J. M Dent & Sons, 1972), p. 258. The chronicle states that the reason for this disturbance was the arrival of the unpopular abbot, Henry of Poitou.
- 47 The second account was written by the eleventh/twelfth-century Shropshire chronicler, Orderic Vitalis. He wrote that in 1091 a young priest called Walkelin encountered a great host in the woods of Brittany, wandering in purgatory alongside demons, corpse bearers, knights, bishops and other lost souls. He called them ‘Harlequin’s people’ (from Herlechini). Orderic wrote that he learnt of this account from Walkelin himself and saw the scar on his face where he was struck by a tortured knight. T. Forester, trans. *The Ecclesiastical History Of England*, pp. 511-520.
- 48 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. pp. 88-93. Walter appears to have use the earlier, shorter version as a base for the longer piece to develop a satire and a commentary on the workings of the royal court of Henry.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 K. Meyer, *The Voyage Of Bran, Son Of Febal To The Land Of The Living*, *Sacred Texts*, 2011, < <http://sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/vob/von02.htm> > [Accessed 23 January 2020]. The tale contains other ‘Celtic’ motifs which have added to the evidence a Celtic origin’. See also J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 88.
- 51 W. H. Browne, ‘Harlequin and Hurly-Burly’, *The Sewanee Review*, vol.18(1) (1910), pp. 23-31 (p.30). <www.jstor.org/stable/27532251> [Accessed 23 January 2020]. Browne was convinced of the origins of Herla in ‘ancient’ Welsh folkloric tradition and that his name could be linked with that of Harlequin (Old French, *Herlequin* or *Hellequin*), the leader of ‘night riding demons’. See also R. Hutton, ‘The Wild Hunt’. pp. 176-177. Hutton suggests that Grimm developed his notion of a Wild Hunt from traditions concerning nocturnal ramblings of spectral huntsmen and the undead, once popular in the Middle Ages. Harlequin was said to be one such leader. For the origins of the name ‘Herla’ see J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. pp. 98-99. Smith writes that Walter chose this name because it sounds more Welsh and he wanted a Welsh king to feature in this tale.

that he adapted to suit his own narrative. Certainly Walter's creativity was eclectic and imaginative and his Welsh tales do appear to aptly reflect the atmosphere and traditions of their environs.

Tales concerning Wales and the ancient past were popular with the Anglo-Normans. The influence of Geoffrey's *Historia* was insidious and medieval writers would model their narratives to fit into the framework of the Matter of Britain, resulting in narratives such as Walter's 'King Herla' which can appear to our modern sensibilities as having 'Celtic' origins.⁵² We have seen how its composition appears to have been a result of Walter utilizing his local knowledge with the 'fate' of the ancient British to create an engaging story about Henry's wild and unruly court using Herla's court as a metaphor.⁵³ The phenomena of this unruly company, shifting and otherworldly, is deliberately located the Welsh border river, the Wye and near Hereford, a significant centre for Norman border control on the Welsh frontier, both well known to Walter.⁵⁴ This significance was not lost on its twelfth-century audience but it may be lost on a modern one. Although the tale of Herla has retained its legendary credentials it is now known as a representation of the Wild Hunt in the Celtic tradition rather than a satirical piece of writing concerning the medieval court of Henry II. It may have gone on to influence other tales and has been credited as responsible for later influencing the Middle English lay of *Sir Orfeo*.⁵⁵

Walter's Marches narratives have not all survived in the same manner as King Herla or Eadric's tale, either as local folktales or by finding places in folktale compendiums. They remain Walter's 'trifles' or entertaining stories at the expense of the Welsh but certainly worth closer inspection. Other examples are the four short anecdotes concerning a Welsh king Llywelyn ap Gruffudd who we encountered in the previous chapter and who was most likely intended as Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. Walter clearly thought little of this king writing of his ignorance and cruelty and referring to his deadly treatment of the young men of Wales by his comment, 'I kill no one, but I blunt the horns of Wales, that they may not hurt their mother'.⁵⁶ This reference

52 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 83-84.

53 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*. p. 74. The narrative puts Wales and the Welsh firmly into Henry's orbit reflecting the courts instability.

54 Ibid. pp. 83-85. J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*, pp. 101 and p. 112.

55 R. S. Loomis. 'Sir Orfeo And Walter Map's De Nugis.' *Modern Language Notes*, 51(1) (1936), pp. 28-30.

<www.jstor.org/stable/2912410> [Accessed 14 January 2020]. Loomis wrote that he believed that Walter's tale was a combination of different elements including the classical tale of Orpheus and a Welsh or Breton tradition of the Wild Hunt which would later formed the Breton lay, *Sir Orfeo*. p. 30. See also J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 85. For Smith the lay of *Sir Orfeo* shows signs of Britonicization.

56 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 190-191.

regarding Gruffudd, was used by the modern historian John Davies as an example of the Welsh king's cruelty although Davies refers to Walter somewhat unflatteringly as 'the garrulous storyteller from Hereford'.⁵⁷

Although Walter's anecdotes serve to belittle 'Llywelyn' and his countrymen, he does write of one act done 'nobly and courteously'.⁵⁸ The story goes that in an attempt to avoid further conflict between the two countries, Edward the Confessor met with Llywelyn on the opposing banks of the Severn with Edward remaining at Aust Cliff in England and Llywelyn at Beachley in Wales.⁵⁹ Their negotiations were conducted by messengers sailing to and fro across the estuary with Llywelyn claiming 'precedence' as his people had inherited the land of Britain from his forefather, the giants, and Edward's ancestors had taken it from the giants therefore showing themselves as their equals. Eventually, Edward decided to sail across to Llywelyn. Seeing the English king's humility Llywelyn took off his cloak and waded out to him, throwing open his arms and carrying the English king ashore before doing him homage.⁶⁰ According to Smith this tale is a clear reference to Geoffrey's *Historia* with Llywelyn representing its beginning, illustrated by the references to giants of the ancient past and Edward representing the end signified by the conquering of the Welsh.⁶¹ These anecdotes have not survived as 'popular' folklore and are entertaining tales but when they are considered in their historical context they give the reader an important insight into the portrayal of the Welsh and their relationship to contemporary events. Their significance would have been recognisable to the twelfth-century Anglo-Normans, the ruling elite of the Marches.

Another less well-known narrative of Walter's is '*Of Cheueslin the Thief*', possibly one of the earliest examples of the Master Thief tale in Europe.⁶² This tale concerns a man called Cheueslin (or Genillyn) from North Wales who is frustrated in his attempts to steal the mare of

57 J. Davies, *A History Of Wales*, p. 98. An example how, although Walter's observation is worth noting, the author does not taken too seriously.

58 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 192-193.

59 There has been a river crossing between Aust and Beachley known as the Old Passage since ancient times. It was known as *Traiectus Augusti* to the Romans and features in folktales on both side of the River Severn. See R. Palmer *Folklore of Gloucester* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2001) p. 8.

60 *Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 192-195.

61 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, pp. 26-28, (p. 27). Although it may have appeared to Walter's audience that this was an argument of the English and Welsh claims to Britain, Walter does not seem to support either side. Walter was of the opinion, as he points out to Thomas Becket, that the Welsh cannot be trusted and will be ruled only by the sword. p. 28.

62 J. Wood, 'Walter Map', p. 96.

Cadwallon of Gelligaer. Cheueslin is outwitted by a rival, Traer, a man from the south, who successfully steals the mare, winning fame amongst his people.⁶³ Part of the historical value of Cheueslin's tale is its early reference to a rivalry between North and South Wales found elsewhere in Welsh tradition.⁶⁴ Later versions of the Master Thief tale appear throughout Welsh border folklore where he takes the form of Jack of Kent, a wily magician, famous for outwitting the devil.⁶⁵ Walter's treatment of folklore in his narratives is important, skilfully combining history and fable. It was during this period when popular tales re-entered the fashionable itinerary of the elite, an important 'cultural shift' in literature.⁶⁶ It is tempting to imagine that Walter made some contribution towards their popularity

Walter's use of historical details in his tales reinforces the viability of other contemporary accounts suggesting that some were popular subjects known to author and audience. '*Of Gado, that most Valiant Knight*' is another example of Walter using pseudo-history as a creative writing tool and illustrating his familiarity with the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The story is about Gado, the son of the king of the Vandals. Gado sails to England where he meets King Offa who had 'girdled the Welsh into a small corner of their Wales by means of a dyke which still bears his name'.⁶⁷ Walter's narrative records that the penalty for any Welshman who crossed the dyke was the loss of a foot.⁶⁸ Walter's contemporary, John of Salisbury, also wrote of a similar penalty set by Harold Godwinson, that any Briton bearing a weapon across Offa's dyke into England would have their right hand cut off.⁶⁹ Several hundred years later, George Borrow wrote of his encounter with a man near Llangollen who told him there was once a time when it was 'customary for the English

63 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 198-201.

64 J. Wood, 'Walter Map', p. 96. J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 142. This tale provides an historical example of a North-South divide in Welsh tradition and a further example of Walter's claim that the Welsh were thieves who revelled in plunder. This could also be said of his tale of Conan the Fearless which precedes that of Cheueslin the thief. Conan was a bandit leader from Glamorgan who fails in a raid because he does not follow the Welsh custom regarding hospitality, an important Welsh custom. See *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 196-199.

65 J. Simpson 'Folklore Of The Welsh Border', pp. 59-63. Tales about Jack o' Kent or Jacky Kent are well known in the Welsh Marches. His original identity is unknown and there are several contenders. Jack is famous for outwitting the devil with whom he had made a pact with in trade for his powers agreeing that they devil could have him when he died whether he was buried in or outside the church. The devil never did get Jack as he had himself buried in the wall of the church. p. 61.

66 R. Edwards, 'Walter Map: Authorship And The Space Of Writing'. *New Literary History*, vol. 38(2), 2007, pp. 273-292. (p. 279).

67 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 166-175. (p. 167), Brooke, pp. xl-xli. (p. xli).

68 Ibid. pp. 166-169. A similar penalty is referred to by Walter's contemporary, John of Salisbury, who wrote that Harold Godwinson made a law, following his brutal campaign upon the Welsh in 1063, that stated that any Briton bearing arms beyond a certain point, 'to wit the Fosse of Offa', would have a hand cut off'. M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Medieval Colonial Imagination*, p. 70.

69 Ibid. p. 70. John of Salisbury was older than Walter but it is possible that the two could have met as they occupied the same court circles. p. 71.

to cut off the ears of every Welshman who was found to the east of the dyke and for the Welsh to hang every Englishman they found to the west of it'.⁷⁰ Whether Borrows's account links to earlier unrelated folklore or to a later version of Walter's or John of Salisbury's story is unknown but it does suggest that it is an old and enduring story that has been used in various popular tales. The influence of Geoffrey is clear throughout Gado's tale with its Roman emperors and references to that most prominent monument, the earthwork known as Offa's Dyke, marking the boundary between England and Wales and evidence of an auspicious ancient history.⁷¹ In his introduction to *De nugis* Brooke wrote that twelfth-century writers did not just relate to history as an informative doctrine, it was also there to entertain.

It is this notion of history as literature – edifying and true, but also intended to amuse – which explains why so many of the best historians of the Middle Ages, and especially those of the twelfth-century, wrote such readable chronicles, and why some of them read more like historical novels than sober history. History as 'literature' was fashionable in the ancient world and is still fashionable today.⁷²

We have seen how on closer inspection Walter's writing has much to tell the reader about the culture and attitudes of the literary elite in the twelfth-century Welsh Marches, also giving clues regarding the transmission of earlier tales. Walter appears, at times, to be exploiting his knowledge of earlier narratives and certain elements may have survived into modern period through their reworking and reuse as literary tools. This is suggested by Borrows's account of the penalty concerning Offa's Dyke with similar examples occurring hundreds of year earlier. The same could be said of the later apparent diversity in the Shropshire versions of Eadric's tale. The legacy of these examples is clearly a vibrancy that has determined their longevity and appeal to later readers. Walter's work has been adapted, used and remodelled by many writers and artists demonstrating its value, still relevant today with new versions of certain tales still published and enjoyed. The liminality of these border tales is reflective of their transitional environment and origin, from a region of struggle and uncertainty, where 'one world meets another'.⁷³ In her book of Shropshire folklore the professional storyteller, Amy Douglas, features a lengthy retelling of

⁷⁰ G. Borrow, *Wild Wales*, (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd, 1986. First printed 1862) p. 46.,

⁷¹ *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xxxi-xli. Brooke wrote that Gado is derived from the legendary hero, Wade, who may have given his name to Wat's dyke, in the northern Welsh Marches and Walter maybe making a connection between the two dykes, Wat's and Offa's.

⁷² *Ibid.* pp. xli-xlii.

⁷³ A. Douglas, *Shropshire Folktales*, (Gloucester: The History Press, 2011), pp. 81-88, (p. 81).

Walter's tale concerning Eadric, retaining key characteristics of the narrative and using other elements to capture the attention and imagination of her audience such as well-known land marks, places and characters.⁷⁴ Using familiar features is a hallmark of storytelling and the use of certain motifs such as the universal Supernatural Passing of Time in the Otherworld (Motif F 571) with its links to such stirring phenomena as the Wild Hunt, are guaranteed to elicit some kind of emotional response in the audience.⁷⁵ Twenty-first century authors are equally capable of poetic licence when it comes to developing existing tales as was Walter; the storyteller David Phelps gives us details of Herla's pedigree in his version of the story by making him a royal leader of the Dobunni, a tribe who once held the land along the southern Marches.⁷⁶

Walter's capacity to place himself at the centre of his writing also makes his work important, as he seemingly is writing from his own viewpoint.⁷⁷ Whether this for his own self-interest or for the benefit of his audience it is this personal perspective that is prevalent rather than an intent to educate or moralize as with many of his contemporaries.⁷⁸ Through his unique style we are treated to an insight into the writers personality but it could also be said that the entertaining and sometimes irreverent nature of his writing seems to have led to his work being taken less seriously than it deserves. We have seen how there have been recent attempts to remedy this situation with closer scrutiny of his potential source material and his motivation for writing, particularity in regards to his Welsh writing, in the work Faletra and Smith. It is to be hoped that further examination of his work will serve to illuminate Walter's historical value even further as to what his writings may reveal about literary composition and transmission in the twelfth-century, especially concerning the Marches of Wales and that his lesser known tales become wider known as popular tales from the medieval past.

74 Ibid. Douglas writes that stories grow up around people and places, adapting to the time and place of its telling. See the introduction pp. 10-11. In Eadric's tale she uses history and local landmarks to develop her story extending it to accommodate another tale involving Lady Godda's brother, the 'King of the Fair Folk', in her tale 'The Stolen Cup'. The nineteenth-century folklorist Charlotte Burne is cited for the source of this tale rather than Walter and that of 'Eadric and the Wild Hunt' 'which follows. pp. 180-181.

75 K. M. Briggs, 'Possible Mythological Motifs in English Folktales', *Folklore*, 83(4) (1972), pp. 265-271, pp. 270-271. This article relates to the possibilities of mythological content contained within English and 'Celtic' folktales, a premise which is now largely outdated with little evidence to support.

76 D. Phelps, *Herefordshire Folktales*, (Gloucester: The History Press, 2009), p. 42. Phelps does credit Walter with this story noting 'the miraculous passage of time' is a common theme in 'Celtic' stories.

77 R. Edwards, 'Walter Map: Authorship And The Space Of Writing'.pp. 274-275.

78 Ibid. Edwards gives example of two critical approaches to Walter's writing, the 'anecdotalist', the traditional approach of viewing Walter as a gifted writer of narratives and the metacritical which uses parody and self-examination in the critical analysis of the world around him. An important part of Walter's appeal is his ownership of his writing and the importance he places upon his readership and reception.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated how the writings of Walter Map have much to contribute towards a modern understanding of the Anglo-Norman relationship with the culture and environs of the Welsh Marches. We have seen how Walters connections with this area gave him an insight into its history and traditions but the literary context of his work suggests that he also had access to Welsh textual sources such as those acquired by the ecclesiastical libraries of Hereford and Gloucester.¹ In Chapter One it was shown how Walter's position as cleric and courtier placed him firmly within the orbit of the ecclesiastical establishments and society of the Anglo-Norman elite, including the Royal Court. Walter was a man of his time. His education in Paris and subsequent career as royal courtier gave Walter access to some of the great courts of Europe with opportunities to encounter some of the most influential literary figures and performers of the period.² Walter was not simply repeating tales and traditions or recording folklore he had acquired during his clerical perambulations and duties; he was using a variety of material, aural and literary, as quarry to frame and enhance his narratives.³ His use of Welsh texts and their consequent merit as source material for tales and narratives is revealing, demonstrating how historical traditions from Wales could find their way across the border and into the important courts and cultural centres of England and Europe with Walter and his clerical peers acting as conduits for their transmission.⁴

As we have seen Walter put his experience and imagination to good use, reflected in the diversity and liveliness of his writing yet his sense of humour and his sometimes indelicate observations has perhaps resulted at times in his work not being taken as seriously as it should merit.⁵ His use of the ancient British past was certainly not unique for writers of this period and he used anecdotes he had heard from others familiar with the Marches. However, it would seem that few of these sources were Welshmen reminding us that it is important to understand the context and cultural framework of these tales.⁶ Nevertheless, many of his

1 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. p. 139.

2 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xxiii. J. Wood, *Walter Map*, p. 93. T. Davenport, 'Sex, Ghosts and Dreams', p. 147.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid. pp. 147-171, (p. 167).

5 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, p. xiii. The first page of the introduction to M. R. James' translation of *De nugis curialium* refers to this work as 'that enchanting jumble'.

6 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. pp. 141-143.

Welsh tales are unique and are worthy of further research and analysis. We have seen in Chapter Two how recent investigation of the tale of Gwestin Gwestiniog and his fairy bride has shown that it may contain possible remnants of older Welsh traditions, reworked to create ‘new’ traditions about old figures.⁷ And we have seen how, along with other narratives, Gwestin's tale contributes towards our understanding of the reuse and reworking of older Welsh material and further insight into the stereotypical attitudes of the twelfth-century ruling elite towards Wales and its inhabitants.⁸ Walter used his position as a Marcher to perhaps give himself more authority and expertise as was demonstrated in his response to the chancellor Thomas Becket when consulted on the ‘faithfulness’ of the Welsh.⁹

It is apparent that Walter brings a very personal perspective to his work, a most important legacy. By retaining some control and perspective in his authorship he appears to reveal at times his apparent insecurities and frustrations with the world around him but his clever use of wit and parody often risks overshadowing the personal nature of his writing.¹⁰ It is through his use of satire, woven with folklore, throughout his Welsh narratives that Walter offers us a commentary regarding the court and politics, sometimes in contentious response to the works of his peers.¹¹ By using Otherworld metaphors in his portrayal of the Court and border politics he subtly alludes to the chaotic uncertainty of the court along with the potential threat of Wales and its return to its former glory.

The folkloric content of his work is undoubtedly invaluable and his work reveals much concerning twelfth-century culture, especially concerning the early transmission of the literary legacy of medieval Wales to Britain.¹² Walter's use of the ancient past and the Matter of Britain, a popular subject for the Norman elite, was well suited to the wild and unpredictable environment of Wales. The liminality of Walters work, indicated by his use of Otherworld motifs and supernatural metaphors, can be seen as a reflection of the transitional nature of the Welsh Marches, his storytelling capturing the essence of the place with its uncertain and unpredictable nature.¹³ In Chapter Three we saw how Walter crafted tales such

7 Ibid. 134-139. (p. 137).

8 Ibid. pp. 18-21.

9 *Walter Map De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 194-195.

10 R. Edwards, ‘Walter Map: Authorship And The Space Of Writing’, pp. 274-275.

11 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Colonial Imagination*, p. 74.

12 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*. pp. 161-162

13 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Colonial Imagination*, p. 89.

as King Herla and Wild Eadric with a charm and vibrancy that has enabled them to endure. His use of the supernatural and Otherworld motifs has retained a morbid appeal for the modern reader, eliciting an emotional and creative responses in audience and artists that has perhaps ensured their popular survival into the twenty-first century.¹⁴ Although his use of fiction and history to convey narrative and politic commentary is typical of this time, Walter's subtlety in his use of the ancient past as a parody of King Henry's court and the historical past is not only entertaining but provides his readers with a record of medieval folklore and storytelling.¹⁵ Fairy brides and ghostly horsemen are heady combinations for the imagination and a reminder of a desired Celtic past which has encouraged antiquarians and folklorists to explore Walter's tales for clues of a largely forgotten history.¹⁶

Walter remains an enigma and we cannot claim to entirely understand his motivation and back story. His commentaries can be ambiguous: sometimes the Welsh are kind and hospitable, sometimes they are cruel.¹⁷ He gives us a very individual insight into the mind of a twelfth-century cleric, writing in region that was unpredictable and violent at times. His writing can appear uncertain and anxious, especially when writing about the court with its ramblings and excesses and his attitudes to women may be reflective of his time, or of the man. Walter appears to have walked a line between different worlds: cleric and courier, secular and spiritual, Anglo-Norman and Welsh, king and church, war and peace, Wales and England.

In conclusion, this thesis has shown how the writings of Walter Map's may contribute important information regarding twelfth-century Wales and its Marches. Through broad analysis and examination they have much to convey regarding the accumulation and use of Welsh literary source material to create informative and entertaining narratives. Walter's work also gives the reader a personal insight into the cultural, historical and political attitudes of this period, particularly in relation to the use of Welsh literary texts, *Vitae* and the subsequent transmission of such material. His narratives certainly contribute towards our knowledge of folklore and tales from this period but caution is required and any

14 A. Douglas, *Shropshire Folktales*, pp. 81-88. D. Phelps, *Herefordshire Folktales*, (Gloucester: The History Press, 2009), pp. 42-46. See fig 2. The stained glass artist, Tamsin Abbott's portrayal of Eadric at Hopton Castle, a well-known Marches landmark in Shropshire is an example of an artist's eclectic use of sources from different time frames to inspire a unique piece of artwork.

15 J. Wood, Walter Map, pp. 102-103.

16 J. Wood, 'Perceptions Of The Past', pp. 93-94. J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 4.

17 *Walter Map De nugis curialium*, pp. 182-183.

interpretation should consider their context within a historical and cultural medieval framework.

More work is required to understand the use of early Welsh texts and traditions and their subsequent impact upon later folkloric content of popular tales and the public imagination. Popular conceptions of Celticism and the use of the romantic ancient past as a vehicle for storytelling may have contributed towards certain misunderstandings regarding the objectives and priorities of writers such as Walter.¹⁸ The collective and collaborative expertise of historians, folklorists, Celticists, philologists and other disciplines in the further analysis of literary sources and transmission will contribute towards our further understanding of this important period both in historical terms and attitudes and concerning the older tales and traditions of the Marches. Although he writes from his perspective of an Anglo-Norman cleric Walter has a unique and insightful perspective as an Anglo-Norman and a *Marchio sum Walensibus*, 'a dweller on the marches of Wales' making his work an important and a vital part of the history of the Welsh Marches and of Wales.¹⁹ By using the framework of Marcher politics, Culture and the court of Henry II, he gives his reader a window through which to 'view the Welsh through a medieval English lens'.²⁰ In so doing, Walter Map provides an invaluable and unique insight into this turbulent period of Marcher history from his perspective as Anglo-Norman cleric, courtier and man of the Marches.

18 J. Wood, 'Perceptions Of The Past', pp. 94-95.

19 M. A. Faletra, *Wales And The Colonial Imagination*, pp. 71-72.

20 J. B. Smith, *Walter Map*, p. 28.

Figure 2: ‘Wild Edric looks on the fallen Hopton Castle’. Tamsin Abbott. Private collection.



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