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VOICES FROM THE BENCH: THE NARRATIVES OF LESSER FOLK IN MEDIEVAL TRIALS

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CHAPTER 5

THE TODDLER IN THE DITCH: A CASE OF PARENTAL NEGLECT?

Ronald C. Finucane

On the morning of September 7, 1303, inhabitants of the royal stronghold of Conway (Conwy)—representing castle, church, and community—were wrenched from humdrum routines by the discovery of the frost-covered body of a little boy. Roger, age two years and two months, son of Gervase and Dionysia, was lying at the bottom of a ditch at Edward I's relatively new Welsh castle. Thanks to appeals to the dead Thomas Cantilupe, a Hereford bishop who would be canonized in 1320, Roger "returned from the dead." Because of Roger's mishap and miracle, reactions and interactions of Conway's various ranks, from servants to mayor, over a single night and day, are briefly but brilliantly illuminated.

Unusually, we have a letter about the event—sealed by numerous members of the local secular and ecclesiastical elite—composed that very morning.¹ It was written in St. Mary's church, where the revived child was carried by his thankful mother trailing a joyous crowd. A few weeks afterwards, several people involved in the miracle (including Roger and his parents) went on pilgrimage to Thomas's shrine in Hereford cathedral, telling their tale to the canons and leaving the letter as evidence of the wondrous event. Four years later a small group of Conway people arrived at Hereford, summoned to testify about this miracle at the local fact-gathering (*in partibus*) phase of Cantilupe's canonization process, overseen by three papal nominees. Transcripts of their depositions form the documentary basis of this essay.² In addition, the letter of 1303 was introduced and copied into the record; among the eight Conway people who testified in October 1307, two had appended their seals to that letter. The witnesses'

statements and different interpretations, though structured by a list of interrogatories, reveal how each witness had created unique memories of that September morning, and what led up to it the evening before, when the toddler "died."

The Body

Conway castle and town were divided by a man-made ditch spanned during the day by a drawbridge. Excavations indicate that the ditch was about twenty-four meters wide and at least nine meters deep.³ About sunrise on that morning four years earlier, gatekeeper John Griffin testified, as he was about to lower the bridge, that John de Havering's son Nicholas, whose room was in a castle tower, told him that just before going to bed the previous evening he'd heard a child cry out in the ditch.

Fearing that it might be his own child, John found Roger lying under the bridge on the "town side" of the ditch. One leg was bent, the other straight; only the whites of his eyes were visible; there was frozen spittle on Roger's closed mouth; the unclothed body, cold and stiff, was covered in white frost. John could detect no signs of life, though there was nothing broken in Roger's limbs, bones or skin; there was no bleeding, just some redness on the left jaw, on which the boy lay. Griffin told the pope's committee that Roger was dead for as long as it took to walk three English leagues, a common mode of measuring time.⁴

Meanwhile, William de Cicon, constable of the castle (and Conway's mayor), and others, including his seneschal John de Boys and the vicar of St. Mary's church Simon of Watford—all castle residents—were watching from the bridge.⁵ When Griffin picked up the child to take him from the ditch, Cicon instructed him to put Roger down, to await the coroners. John returned the boy to the spot where he had lain, and in the same state. Then, at Cicon's mandate, John went to summon the coroners.⁶

The coroners (Stephen de Gamowe/Gannowe, and William of Nottingham, burghers of the town) arrived, with William—their clerk who also was the town's common scribe—and a jury of twelve. They and Griffin examined Roger and adjudged him dead. About this time vicar Simon, having seen enough, left the scene. The coroners asked for pledges or sureties from Griffin as first finder.⁷ Before he could provide the requested sureties, and while he, the coroners and jurors were still in the ditch, he testified, Roger came to life. In concluding their reportage of Griffin's testimony on October 26, 1307, the notaries saved time and parchment by stating that his responses to the last six interrogatories were "in effect the same" as the replies given by the very first witness to testify (on the 23rd), vicar Simon.⁸ Those interrogatories and replies were: (1) Was the

miracle then and is still ascribed in Conway and nearby places to Thomas's merits? Yes. (2) Did he believe that, following human reason, Roger would have revived without a miracle? No. (3) Did he and other townspeople learning of the miracle become more devout, glorifying God and St. Thomas? Yes. (4) Did he know of, or believe or hear it said, that anything whatsoever about the miracle involved fraud, artifice, or machination; or any sortilege, superstition (*superstitio*), incantation or invocation of a demon (*demonum invocatio*); or whether anything natural or artificial had been involved in the miracle? No. (5) Did he have notification, with others, about proving the miracle? Yes. (6) (The usual final question put to witnesses in contemporary trials) Did he testify at anyone's request or order, through fear, hatred or love, or for money given or promised, had he been coached, or had he agreed with other witnesses, about their depositions? No.

Another person down in the ditch was John Syward of Conway, perhaps a lower-level official, for that morning in response to the constable's summons, while walking over the drawbridge he saw Roger on the rocks below.⁹ Cicon ordered him too to notify the coroners.¹⁰ Syward returned to the ditch with coroners, scribe, and jury; by then, many others had gathered round the body. To Griffin's description, Syward added that Roger was stone-cold (*frigidus ut lapis*), his limbs stiff as a dry stick (*ut lignum aridum*). Among the jurors was Simon of Flint.¹¹ He claims to have been drafted (*assumptus*) for jury duty at the clamor of Roger's mother (*ad clamorem matris*). In the ditch before prime, he found the body bespattered with dirt and dross. He tried to straighten the bent leg but gave up, fearing to break the sinews. The jury then moved away to complete their report (back up to the bridge, says Simon of Flint; still in the ditch, Syward reports).

Gervase testified that he learned of his son's death from the constable, who met the cook as he was returning to the castle. Cicon refused his request to remove his son's body, since the coroners had not yet arrived. At the ditch, Gervase saw the dead boy lying on his side, unclothed. Conway's bailiffs asked him for sureties or pledges because of the death, but Gervase couldn't recall whether he provided them. After the coroners' arrival, he left his son's body since he'd heard that his wife, hearing of Roger's death, was nearly out of her senses (*quasi extra sensum suum*); he went to control (*regendam*) and console her. Dionysia was being restrained by neighbors lest she throw herself into the ditch with her son. Gervase says very little else about his encounter with his son's body. Dionysia testified that she'd been thrown into this frenzy when (at daylight) gatekeeper Griffin came to the house asking where Roger was; Dionysia didn't know.¹² When John told her that he lay dead in the castle ditch she collapsed to the ground in grief,

nearly out of her mind (*essel quasi extra mentem suam*); her neighbors took, restrained, and bound her (*capia ligata et retenta*).

Richard of Newcastle, priest of Conway church, also witnessed the scene at Roger's body.¹³ He testified that, on that morning, before prime and after sunrise, leaving the church after Matins and heading for the castle, he saw Roger in the ditch. He named the royal coroners Stephen de Gamowe and Robert Rossel of Flint, the only time this latter individual appears. Several others were present, including John Syward, in the ditch; on the bridge were vicar Simon, John de Havering, and William Cicon, "knights," Thomas of Cambridge, "clerk and royal counselor"; and Hugh of Leominster, "clerk and chamberlain of the Prince of Wales at Chester."¹⁴ Many of these eminent folk had gathered at Conway for John of St. John's memorial service.¹⁵ Though Richard went into the ditch he didn't examine Roger, accepting the general opinion that the boy was dead—everyone who touched him said so. John de Boys, seneschal whose household had once included Roger's mother Dionysia, testified that just after sunrise he'd heard (along with Cicon and the vicar) Griffin relate Nicholas de Havering's report about an infant who "lay dead in the ditch."¹⁶ Boys went down with Griffin and others. The jury and coroners of the Prince of Wales "now king of England" arrived, whom Boys assisted. Finding that Roger was dead, Boys, the coroners and jury left the body in place, withdrew a bit, and began writing up their report.

The Parents' Explanation of the Accident

Gervase testified that he went to vigils for Gerard de Pyneye, the constable's servant, and Cecilia, maid to the constable's wife, around sunset, leaving his wife and Wenthlana (a castle servant) in the house, along with the three children: Agnes and Ysolda, then about three and five; the boy was bound (*ligatum*) into his cradle, as infants usually were.¹⁷ About a (walk of an English) league later, the two women came into church. Dionysia, he claimed, left her daughters sleeping in one bed, Roger asleep in his cradle. Closing the door as they set out for church, the women didn't secure it with a bar (or bolt), or any other fastener because there was none on the outside of the door, and because the church was a stone's throw from the house. Although there was a bolt or bar (*barra*) on the inside of the door, the girls did not bolt it. The two women maintained a vigil in the church the whole night.

After Gervase had been in church for (a walk of) four English leagues, he returned to the house and found the door open, his daughters asleep, but not Roger; his bindings and clothing were in his cradle. Gervase searched in the neighborhood, particularly where master Thomas the *medicus*

lived, and William Godeswey. They had been asleep a good hour, and knew nothing of Roger. Then, assuming that some other neighbors had taken Roger in, he returned to church, where he told his wife that Roger was not in the house; she replied that she would not leave the church all night.¹⁸ Gervase remained in church until about midnight, when, being disturbed (*turbatus*) by Roger's disappearance, he took a light and went back home; as before, he wasn't there. Having looked in the neighborhood again, he returned to church, since it was so late, he hadn't awakened any neighbors. After sunrise, as Gervase was returning to the castle, constable Cicon hastened up and asked where he'd been that night. To the reply that he'd been at vigils, the constable retorted that he'd maintained a bad vigil as far as caring for his son, who was dead in the ditch.¹⁹

Gervase believed that Roger unwrapped himself in his cradle, but he didn't know if he'd done this at other times, since he didn't live continuously with his wife, but in the castle. Finding no one in the house but his sleeping sisters, Gervase postulated that Roger opened the unsecured door and took his usual path toward the castle. He fell into the ditch on a dark night; Gervase remembered this, because he'd used a candle when searching the streets for his son. The commissioners then asked a question suggested by another witness (Syward, see below): was he or his wife drunk that evening? No, replied Gervase. There was another question not put to other witnesses in quite this form: in the town of Conway, are there (*sunt*) any sorceresses (*mulieres sortilege*) by whose machinations he believed his son could have been carried into the ditch and/or (*vel*) killed? No. How did it happen that his son was not smashed up (*totus confactus*) after falling from a high place? Gervase, who estimated the drop to be about thirty-three feet, said he didn't know. The notaries wrote that he responded to the last six interrogatories, in effect, as the first witness had done. (Among those six, there is a question about demonic invocation and superstition, but no mention of *mulieres sortilege*.)

Dionysia, the only woman testifying to the miracle, stated that her son, bound in his cradle as infants were (*infantile more ligato*), was lying near her daughters Ysolda six, and Agnes five.²⁰ Leaving the house with Wenthlana that evening, echoing her husband's testimony, Dionysia deposed that she drew the door closed but didn't secure it, because there was no way to do this from outside. Nor was the door secured inside, because her children were sleeping (and therefore couldn't bar the door). The two women went directly to vigils for Gerard and Cecilia, whom Dionysia had cared for during her fatal illness. After they had been there for about a walk of two English miles, her husband left to go home, carrying a burning candle (*candela*). Around one English mile's duration later, he returned and told her that he couldn't find Roger in the house or in the neighborhood.

He believed a neighbor had taken him in. Dionysia, who remarked that she would not leave the church (*inde non recesserat se*), believing the same, didn't worry about going to look for him (*non curavit ne ad querendum eum*). She remained in the church with Wenthlana and others, among whom, she believed, was her husband, for over an eight-mile walk. At first she didn't dare leave the church because of the darkness. Then, by moonlight, she, Ger vase and Wenthlana walked home before dawn and before Maïns were said. Roger wasn't there; the girls were sleeping, and in the cradle were the bands with which Roger had been tied (*involutus*). Because this made her so sad, and because of her earlier vigils, about a mile's walk before sunrise she fell into a deep sleep that lasted until daylight.²¹

Dionysia assumed that her son got out of his cradle, which was low (about a foot high), sitting on the ground; he opened the door, and, not seeing her or his father, who were in church, he went toward the castle and fell into the ditch, by as much after sunset as a three-mile walk.

The Community's Explanations

First finder Griffin set out his (and a commonly held) reconstruction of the events leading up to the child's accident which generally resembled the parents' version. He added that, some time ago, he saw a certain John de Brok, a castle servant, blown off the bridge by the wind into the ditch, where he died instantly. The bridge about which Griffin and the other witnesses testified was a wooden drawbridge, parts of which were still extant in the seventeenth century. When Edward I's master mason James of St. George built the walled town and castle of Conway (mainly through the period 1283–87) entry to the castle from the "town" side was by way of a long artificial masonry ramp that ended abruptly above a man-made ditch.²² During the day this ditch was spanned by the bridge, the end of which rested on the top end of the inclined ramp. Raising the drawbridge left a nearly vertical drop, as witnesses testified, of almost thirty feet. Little Roger didn't fall from the bridge, but from the top of the ramp. Griffin stated that Dionysia's house was a stone's throw from the castle; another witness claimed that it was, likewise, a stone's throw from St. Mary's church where the vigils took place; presumably, then, the house was somewhere between church and castle. Since the church, still in use today, is about 200 feet from the castle, Roger may have toddled perhaps 100 feet before tumbling into thin air.

When vower Syward testified about the accident, he raised a striking possibility: he had heard that it was related by the boy's mother (*se audivisse referri a matre dicit R.*), and it was commonly believed in Conway, that the night before Roger was found dead, she was drunk (*ebria erat*).

According to this scenario, she undressed Roger and put him to bed. After the boy's father left the house and went to the castle, and while his mother was not paying attention, Roger followed after his father. Since every night the bridge was raised for castle security, and it was especially dark, everyone assumed that Roger fell in when trying to cross the bridge. It was also commonly believed that his mother went through town looking for him that night, and didn't find him. None of this accorded with the parents' testimony.

Next morning, Syward testified that Nicholas de Havering told him and others that before he went to bed in the castle he had heard, just once, a weak, childish (*parvilem*) voice, and he and others conjectured that it had been Roger's voice as he fell. Syward saw the child lying in the ditch for about a walk of five English leagues. After commenting, as had Griffin, that the other path into the ditch was dangerous and not near Roger's body, Syward noted that anyone falling from the "stone" rising above the ditch on the town side would have landed in the middle, which, he claimed, is where Roger was found; other witnesses put him more toward the "town" side.

The juror Simon of Flint, whose testimony resembled other witnesses' as to the circumstances of the accident, added an interesting point: that evening, he claimed, some women saw Roger toddling about after leaving his house, but it was said that they didn't concern themselves about it. The other Simon, vicar of St. Mary's, believed that Dionysia had remained in church all night; in the morning, returning home and realizing that Roger was gone, it was said that she looked for him throughout the town, but couldn't find him, another variance from her own statements.²³ Vicar Simon then retold the story that was generally accepted regarding Roger's ending up under the bridge. The vicar had himself measured the distance from bridge to ditch bottom with a cord, and found it to be twenty-eight feet; Simon also noted that there was no water, mud, or earth in the ditch, excavated into the rock during the castle's construction. Priest Richard related the commonly accepted circumstances behind the accident, adding that Roger was in his mother's house without any watching (*sine aliqua custodia*).

The Miracle in the Community

John Syward, as he and the community believed, was the miracle's catalyst. He claimed frequent pilgrimage to Cantlupe's tomb (where he'd heard of many of the saint's miracles) prior to the accident. After the coroners and jury withdrew to write their report, disregarding the coroners' prohibition against interfering with the corpse, with some effort Syward straightened

out Roger's leg, succeeding where Simon the juror had failed. He then made the sign of the cross on Roger's forehead with a silver penny. He bent the coin and tied it round Roger's neck.²⁴ Syward prayed openly to God to resuscitate the child through Thomas's merits, vowing that if this happened Roger's mother would take her son to Thomas's tomb in Hereford cathedral, along with the penny. Then, just before going off to do other things, Syward testified, he forced open Roger's mouth and saw his tongue move. Seeing this he said (to bystanders) that he hoped through God and St. Thomas the child was alive. Opening the mouth further, he saw more movement. He told the coroners and jury that he had hopes for Roger's life. Clapping the boy to his chest, he carried him into Richard the Mercer's house, near the ditch. While holding Roger near the fire to warm him, he deposed, the child emitted some weak cries and opened and moved his eyes for a little while. Syward then gave him to his mother Dionysia. From later testimony it appears that after the child was taken to the mercer's nearby house and warmed, he was carried to Dionysia's house. Since Roger was so cold, Syward continued, having lain on the rocks unclothed through a frosty night, Dionysia put him next to her skin under her clothing. She immediately carried Roger, still under her clothing, to the church, followed by a joyful crowd, including Syward, coroners, jury, and many others.

In church where they were celebrating St. John's memorial service, Syward, while in front of the Cross, some time between Communion and the end of Mass noticed that Roger seemed to be more lively under Dionysia's garments. At this, he began loudly to sing *Te Deum Laudamus*, the others (among his group) following (the singing) because of the miracle. At the conclusion of Mass, Anian, bishop of Bangor (1268-1305/6), Abbot David of Maenan, John de Haveing, William de Sutton, William de Cicon, Thomas de Cambridge, Thomas de Esthall, and Robert de Chishulle (not mentioned in the letter) who had earlier—in Syward's presence—seen Roger lying dead and then, evidently, walked on to church, had a letter patent attesting to the miracle written in the church, sealing it as Syward looked on.²⁵ This letter, Syward continued, was exhibited to the lords commissioners by Hereford's proctor as proof (*ad probationem*) of the miracle. Syward couldn't explain why Roger didn't break any limbs, which one would naturally expect. Everyone was amazed (*mirabantur*), but they believed (*credebant*) that a little dirt, about a bushel (a measure usually containing two measures of horse fodder, Syward explains) thrown out of one of the castle towers into the ditch where Roger was found, was soft enough to prevent fractures. Juror Simon of Flint found Roger lying on some broken rock, but, he claimed, between him and the rock was about a finger's thickness of hard dirt (*terra dura*) that had fallen from the bridge.

The vicar of St. Mary's, Simon, and Richard the priest were the only ecclesiastics to testify in 1307. In recognition of their rank, Simon was the very first witness to be called, and then Richard. Since the vicar left the scene before Syward's vow, he knew of the miracle only through hearsay. He was the only witness, however, to state that the coroners had prohibited anyone from entering the ditch, which, as we've seen, Syward blatantly ignored. According to Simon, the ditch, excavated into rock, contained neither water, nor mud, nor earth.²⁶ He'd heard that after Syward's vow the boy's right arm moved a bit, as well as his tongue. Simon was in church when Roger was brought in, and was a party to the sealed letter. The day of the revival, about none, Simon spoke with Roger: the child didn't seem to be in pain, and could walk about his mother's house, though not as well as before the accident. The bruise on his face vanished completely some days later, and Roger was walking normally after three days. Priest Richard's version of the miracle was, also, based on hearsay; after observing the dead child, the next time he saw Roger was in church, where Richard joined in the *Te Deum*. He too is mentioned in the letter. Both vicar and priest noted that the child would have died from exposure alone, regardless of the fall itself. Presumably they had discussed their version of the story beforehand.

One of the witnesses to Syward's manipulations of Roger was the castle seneschal, John de Boys, whose testimony raised a serious issue.²⁷ The fourth to be called to give evidence after the vicar, priest, and Syward had testified, he related that when Griffin wanted to bring Roger out of the ditch, Boys told him to wait for the coroners. The child was put back onto the rocks, sharp as the toe of a man's shoe.²⁸ There was no chaff, earth, or dust there, just rock and frost. Boys claimed that in the crowd surrounding the boy down in the ditch there was a certain Lombard (*guidam Lombardus*) whose name he didn't know. Boys heard the Lombard say that he would bend a *denarius* over Roger's body in honor of the Holy Cross (in St. Mary's church) by which God very often worked miracles in Conway, for the boy's resuscitation. Boys saw the Lombard make the sign of the cross with the coin on the child's forehead and with both hands bend the *denarius* in honor of the Holy Cross. Boys couldn't recall whether he hung the coin round Roger's neck. After that, because Roger showed no signs of life, John Syward—in Boys's hearing—said that he would bend another *denarius* over Roger's body for his resuscitation, in honor of St. Thomas of Hereford, for whom God also worked miracles. As the seneschal watched, Syward took a coin from his purse and made the sign of the cross on the boy's forehead. He bent the coin, but Boys couldn't recall whether he placed it round Roger's neck. The seneschal, assisting the coroners, noted that just as the *scripior* William put pen to parchment to begin writing up

the inquest on this death, Syward shouted that he had opened Roger's mouth and saw his tongue move a little (though Boys didn't witness this). Going to Syward who held the child in his arms, Boys had him put Roger back on the ground; this done, Boys saw the child's shoulder move. He told Syward to quickly take the child to his mother so that she could warm him; and John Syward did so.

Then Boys immediately went to the church where Anian was officiating at St. John's memorial service, and told John de Havering (who had observed the activity round the inert body) and many others in the church (about Roger's revival); there was great joy, with many in tears. Havering told Boys to wrap the child in moist linen by a fire, which Boys did. Boys must have left the church to carry out Havering's suggestion. After about an hour, around prime, Boys gave Roger to Dionysia,²⁹ who, followed by Boys and others who were weeping and crying out, took him to church (Mass not yet finished); there, before the Cross, the bells were rung and a *Te Deum* sung because of the miracle. Later that week John de Boys saw Roger walking, and as well as before.

When the papal judges asked him whether the miracle was ascribed to the Holy Cross, to which Roger had been first signed and vowed, Boys replied no, because after this, no signs of life appeared in the child; not until Syward signed and vowed Roger to St. Thomas were there indications of resuscitation. The rest of Boys's testimony is unexceptional, apart from his roughly dating the fatal accident of castle servant John de Brok, swept off the bridge by the wind—it happened some sixteen years earlier (i.e., 1291, when the castle and town walls were in final stages of construction). In addition, Boys claimed that it was miraculous that Roger wasn't killed, falling such a distance, however much he may have been clothed, and though the wind may have supported him.

After dismissing Boys, who as noted was the fourth to testify, in considering his statements the papal commissioners realized that some discrepancies in testimony needed to be examined. Thus, "on account of the [testimony of the] preceding witnesses," *ex officio* they recalled the first three witnesses, the vicar, the priest, and Syward. They were examined on three points (*quintis*): (1) whether, while he was dead, Roger had been signed, measured, or vowed to the Holy Cross or to any other saint apart from Thomas; (2) whether, in the place where Roger lay dead in the ditch, there was any dirt, dross, or wood present, and (3) whether the ground there was smooth or jagged.

The first to be recalled, John Syward, now (on cross-examination, as it were) came clean: after he'd bent the coin and hung it round Roger's neck, for *maioem gratiam* (greater grace, favor, or mercy) he measured him with a string to the Holy Cross through which God did many miracles in

Conway church.³⁰ He didn't think anyone else measured him to the Cross or Thomas or any other saint. He didn't mention a "Lombard" at all. Because the tongue moved after he'd vowed Roger to Thomas, he attributed the miracle to him and not the Cross. The measuring, then, occurring after signs of life appeared, was for insurance or "greater mercy." More than a hundred people were there when he measured the boy, but he didn't know whether everyone saw the measurement; many could have seen it. As for the ditch, he said it was as he'd deposited earlier: between the rock and Roger there was soft dust/ashes (*pulverem mollem*) thrown from a castle tower. To the third point he replied that the surface under Roger was flat, though there were sharp rocks about three feet (from the body).

When reexamined, vicar Simon now stated that he'd heard it said by some of his parishioners, whose names he can't recall, that after Syward signed Roger with the coin to the honor of God and St. Thomas, the boy was measured to the Holy Cross by which God worked miracles. He didn't know by whom, or whether before or after the resuscitation, but after the publication of the miracle, he hadn't heard it ascribed to the Holy Cross, but to St. Thomas. As to the second point, he said that it seemed to him, and he didn't vary from his deposition of yesterday (though clearly he did), that there was some hard sandy soil, he didn't know how thick, on the ground where the body lay; he believed that the dirt had come from the shoes of people crossing the bridge. On the third point, he hadn't gone into the ditch, but looking from the bridge it seemed that Roger lay on a surface not entirely flat, nor entirely rocky.

Finally, recalling the priest Richard of Newcastle, the papal commission now learned that Richard had heard from trustworthy persons of Conway, especially John Syward and Roger's parents, that he had been measured—he didn't know by whom—to the Holy Cross by which God worked miracles in the church. If Syward himself had measured Roger, presumably the priest would have known this, if Syward was his source of information. Before the measuring, however, he'd been signed with a *denarius*, after which the tongue was seen to move, and the miracle was ascribed to Thomas "and not to the Holy Cross." On the second point he believed that between the rock and the body there was some hard dirt (*terra dura*) that had fallen from the bridge in about the amount one could hold in an ordinary hood; he saw this but hadn't touched the dirt. The surface of the ditch bottom was level, though there were broken rocks about two feet from the boy.

When directly questioned on these points, all three of these witnesses backtracked and revealed what they had suppressed in earlier testimony, namely, that there was possibly a rival supernatural power at work in Roger's resuscitation, about which there was significant confusion in the

testimony. Another "new" possibility was that the boy's fall may have been cushioned by material that had collected in the ditch. Subsequently all witnesses were asked about these points, added to the list of interrogatories that scripted the proceedings.

The sixth witness, gatekeeper Griffin, testified that Syward and "a certain Lombard" with about a hundred other people loudly invoked Thomas of Hereford to resuscitate Roger. It's unclear to whom the plural verb refers; Griffin probably meant that both Syward and the Lombard made vows though, as we have seen, the Lombard did not call on St. Thomas. He's the only other witness to mention the Lombard. After Syward signed with the coin and saw the tongue move, Griffin stated, he (Syward) then measured Roger to the Holy Cross. As to whether the miracle was ascribed to the Holy Cross to which Roger had been measured and then carried, Griffin replied no, but to St. Thomas. First the boy had been signed with the *denarius* while Thomas's name was invoked; then he'd been measured to the Holy Cross prior to the movement of the tongue. Here Griffin contradicts himself on the sequence of events. Griffin's testimony generally confirms Syward's on the measuring, as on the matter of the ditch itself. The place where Roger lay wasn't totally flat: the boy's head was somewhat higher than his feet, and between his body and the stone bottom of the ditch there was some rough earth that had fallen from the bridge, about two fingers thick. Griffin also stated that he put a little clean dirt and some soiled straw that he'd found nearby, under Roger when he put him back down. This suggests that the ditch was littered with all sorts of debris, which one would expect since the castle's construction had been completed more than eleven years earlier.³¹ The gatekeeper testified that, learning of Roger's recovery and reexamining the boy, the coroners and jury joyfully dispersed, lauding the miracle. They took Roger to his mother in Richard the Mercer's house (*reddidunt matrem sue in domo Ricardi*), near the ditch. There is confusion here. Why not take the child to his mother's home? She herself testified (below) that she was in her own house when Roger was brought in. Griffin continued: Dionysia warned Roger with her bare skin and the fire, carried him before terce to church and put him "before the cross" (*ante crucem*): bells were rung and there was singing (Griffin didn't know what was being sung). Four or five days later he saw Roger walking, but he didn't seem fully recovered for another fifteen days.

Griffin could not explain why Roger's body wasn't smashed up (*confictus*) after such a fall. He admitted that there was a path that many children used during the day when they went to beg alms from castle residents. By night, however, it was dangerous; Roger would have needed great care in going into the ditch before he would end up where he was found; anyway, the path wasn't near the place where Roger lay. (Priest Richard claimed that it was eighty feet from the body.)

Simon of Flint, deliberating with his fellow-jurors on the bridge, saw Syward sign with a coin, bend it, and put it round the child's neck while loudly praying to Cantilupe. After the tongue moved and the coroners withdrew, Simon went off on business to distant places. Returning three days later, he found Roger alive and as well as before the accident. Simon complicates his own testimony, however, in responding to the now-standard question, whether Roger was measured, signed, or vowed by anyone to the Holy Cross or any saint other than Thomas: he'd heard that Roger's mother had measured him to the Holy Cross after signs of life had appeared.³² Still, he attributed the miracle to Thomas since life first reappeared after the signing. Nevertheless, we now have a "Lombard," Syward, unknown person(s), and Dionysia as the measurer.

Gervase, having viewed his son's body, didn't see Roger again, he testified, until he was carried into the church. That suggests that he'd left Dionysia, having "consoled" her, and gone to church. He'd heard that in his absence Roger was signed to Cantilupe, measured to the Holy Cross, and then brought, alive, to the church and put before the Cross while Anian celebrated Mass. In naming others in the church, Gervase added one more clerk of the Prince of Wales, William de Bilibury.³³ On the advice of John de Havering, Gervase added, the miracle was confirmed in a letter with pendant seals. His wife testified that after she had been in her house (not Richard the Mercer's) until about the third hour, Roger was carried in; he seemed dead, because she felt no breath even though she put her tongue in his mouth; it was so cold that she couldn't keep her tongue there. Cutting the upper part of her clothing down to the belt, she put him to her bosom to warm him (*ad calefaciendum*). After holding him thus for a while, she carried him next to her bosom into the church and sat with him in front of the Cross, among many bystanders—more than 200, she believes. After Bishop Anian finished Mass, he came and made the sign of the cross with his thumb on Roger's forehead. The child looked at him in terror and Dionysia felt him move one elbow and his heart beat very quickly. She shouted out, fearing that on account of the (rapid) heartbeat he would die again (*iterum debere mori*). But, seeing that he remained alive, she praised God and sweet St. Thomas of Hereford, thanking them, as did the bystanders. She'd heard that John Syward measured Roger to St. Thomas, and after the measuring or bending of a coin over him, signs of life appeared. She hadn't heard that he'd been measured or vowed to the Holy Cross or any other saint. She doesn't mention that she herself measured Roger, as juror Simon claimed.

When Roger was brought home, Dionysia stated, his only injury was a small lesion on the right side of the jaw, and a little bruising on the outer part of the hip. During the week Roger developed a painful swelling in his right eye which obstructed vision, and a seepage from his right jaw, on

which he was said to have been lying when found. Other witnesses specified the left side, a common species of memory slip in trial testimony. The day he revived Roger could stand, and that evening Dionysia suckled him; he was walking within three days, though it took three weeks for him to recover his pristine health.

Dionysia claimed that, even before the miracle, she and her husband were especially devoted to Cantilupe: while she was pregnant with Roger she went barefoot—her husband was shod—to Thomas's tomb some eighty-five miles from Conway to pray that he would help her and her infant. Other than that, she and Gervase were not exceptional in matters of faith, when compared with their neighbors; though poor, they led a good life. Again, as in her husband's testimony, she was asked in particular whether there were any sorcerers or witches (*sortiane* [sic] or *malefice*) in Conway parish, by whose *maleficiis* she believed Roger to have been borne into the ditch and/or (*vel*) killed; no. They didn't ask if she had been drunk that night, nor do the commissioners seem to have asked this question of any witnesses apart from Gervase.

Because of the miracle, within three weeks she and her husband took Roger to Thomas's tomb, out of devotion and to publicize the miracle. They were accompanied by William de Cicon, John de Havering, Thomas of Cambridge, Hugh of Leominster, and several others. After a week's stay in Hereford the party began the return trip; before they had gone forty miles Roger's eye and jaw were perfectly healed (*perfecte curatus*).

Evidently requiring verification on some points, on the same day (October 28, 1307) the papal commissaries recalled Gervase, whose words were the last to be recorded in this miracle-testimony. The same question was put to him: before the miracle, did he or Dionysia have any doubts as to the faith, or excellence of life beyond their neighbors, or greater devotion to Thomas than to other saints? Gervase replied that he had no hesitations as to the faith, that he led a good life but no more excellent than others' lives, and that he and his wife were more devoted to Thomas than to other saints. Prior to the miracle the two of them had gone thrice on pilgrimage to Thomas's tomb some ninety-three leagues from Conway. Finally, Gervase noted that when, within a month of the miracle, they took Roger to Hereford, they were accompanied by the same four men named by Dionysia, whom Gervase says are of the council (*de consilio*) of the prince, now king of England, and many others.³⁴

The Miracle in the Letter

Because it was composed, witnessed, and sealed on the day of the event, then deposited at Hereford cathedral a few weeks later, the letter may

represent Roger's story before it could be embellished or distorted through reinterpretation and elaboration by the Conway community. On the other hand, it contained its own species of departure from the oral testimony of 1307.

On October 22, 1307, the proctor of Hereford cathedral (presenting the case for Cantilupe) interrupted the commissioners' hearing of a miracle about a mute boy to introduce the Conway witnesses who, he stated, had come a long way and could tarry no longer in the city; at the same time he placed the letter in evidence. Many of its red wax seals were no longer decipherable. However, several individuals, present in the church that September morning, were named in its text. These included Bishop Anian and David whose seal identified him as abbot of Aberconway.³⁵ Listed separately as witnesses to the miracle, also attending St. John's service that morning, were three knights and three clerics, members of the council and household of Edward Prince of Wales;³⁶ and Simon of Watford, vicar of Conway church, along with three Conway priests.³⁷ As we have seen, the vicar and one of his priests also testified at Hereford (on October 23) four years later.

The sealed letter, copied into the canonization record, is straightforward. "On 6 September 1303 during the first hour of the night, at Conway castle in Wales Roger, an infant two years and three months old, son of castle servant Gervase and his wife Dionysia, fell from the castle bridge into a ditch twenty-eight feet below, and lay there on the hard rock, unclothed, until around the middle of prime next morning." The letter here is at odds with those witnesses who testified that the ditch bottom was not bare rock. "The coroners found that the boy was dead. Afterwards, a Conway resident, John Syward, took a *denarius* from his wallet; with this he made the sign of the cross on the infant's forehead and chest, vowing to God and Thomas Cantilupe that, if the boy revived, he [Roger] would visit Thomas's tomb." Syward makes no mention of signing Roger on his chest, nor is there any reference to measurement in the letter. "As if in the blink of an eye (*quasi in ictu oculi*) the boy revived and was immediately (*statim*) restored to his mother, who gave him her breast, which he sucked." Roger did not recover immediately, as is evident from the testimony of several witnesses, nor was he immediately restored to his mother, nor did she suckle him until that evening. "After very little time (*paululum*), the boy was joyous and happy, without any wounds on his body." As Dionysia and others remarked, recovery took time, and the wounds did not heal for some three weeks. "The people and clergy took up the boy and went into [St. Mary's] church singing *Te Deum Laudamus*, in the presence of bishop Anian and Abbot David, who were there at that time celebrating John of St. John's memorial service." The letter then lists the witnesses "of this

miracle," *huius miraculi sunt testes*. In addition, it concludes, over 200 men and women were present, who had seen the boy resuscitated from death. "As perpetual memorial of the miracle the bishop and abbot append their seals to this writing, along with seals of the knights, clerics, and priests [all named in the letter]. Dated at Conway, 7 September in the year aforesaid."

This letter, written in the church on the very morning of the reputed miracle, is at odds with sworn testimony presented four years later. How to account for such variance? Since the bishop and abbot were the senior ecclesiastics present, we may assume that they were responsible for most of its content. Knowing how miracles are supposed to be described, they created their own interpretation of events: they emphasize the hardness of the rock; the more elaborate signing by Syward; the cure happening "in the blink of an eye," a topos in descriptions of miracles attributed to countless other saints; the lack of wounds; and Roger's immediate recovery and return to health. No witness of 1307 made such claims; even the vicar, a party to the letter of 1303, did not claim instantaneity of cure in 1307. In this instance, then, documentary "evidence," composed immediately following the accident, provides an abbreviated and skewed account when compared with later testimony. Here the mid-thirteenth century dictum of Innocent IV rings true: it was unnatural "to trust the skin of a dead animal more than the voice of a living man."³⁸

Dionysia's Negligence?

John de Griffin, the first finder, was expected to provide sureties, which is the normal routine; but Gervase also was asked to do so. This suggests that negligence may have been imputed to the father, though if anyone was negligent, it was Dionysia. A cloud of contradictory testimony surrounds her. To begin with, she had cared for the woman in her last illness whose vigils were being observed, so it may be assumed that her desire to participate in the nightlong service was particularly strong. When Gervase told her that Roger was missing, she replied that she was not going to leave the church that night; and Gervase took up the search without her assistance. In fact, she seems to have conflated his first search and his second, when he took a candle with him. In the morning she claimed to have been so saddened by her son's disappearance and by the exhaustive vigils, that she went to sleep. When the news was brought to her, she collapsed, seems to have become suicidal, and was restrained by neighbors; she never did go to the site of her son's accident. The first time she saw him that day, he was brought in either to the mercer's house or to her own. In any case, she does not seem to have gone looking for him that morning, as the vicar stated; and one wonders how she raised a hue and cry as the juror claimed.

Dionysia's house was left unlocked when she and her friend went to church; presumably, she couldn't expect her sleeping children to bar the door from the inside, and the church was only a "stone's throw" away—no need to worry. And yet, when Griffin took her the news in the morning, he presented it in an accusatory manner: not "your son is dead," but "where is your son?"—Griffin knowing full well where Roger was. And the constable's comment to Gervase is also revealing: Roger's father had "vigilled badly as to taking care of his son" who lay dead in a ditch. Nicholas the priest also commented that the child had been left "without any[one] watching" him.

Perhaps the most ominous suggestion of negligence that might have led to the real death of Roger was Syward's accusation that Dionysia was drunk; so much so, apparently, that she didn't notice her son wandering out the door. Vigils were notorious occasions for unchurchly behavior even before St. Augustine's complaints about them. If she were inebriated, her desire to sleep it off at dawn is understandable; her reaction is unusual unless she truly believed that her son was being cared for in a neighbor's house. Syward also claimed that she went looking for Roger that night but could not find him, but if as she claimed she remained in church all night, this was impossible. If, on the other hand, Roger had slipped out of the house before she went to church, she may have lied about leaving him in his cradle. She would be the only one to know this, as Gervase had already left. The only other person who would know, her friend Wentliana, did not testify at Hereford, although she was still living at that time.

Plenty of evidence shows that most medieval parents were much like modern ones when it came to loving and caring for their children, but as is the case today, sometimes children were victims of parental abuse, such as the boy, aged ten, who was whipped to death by his enraged mother; or the widow whose neighbors prevented her suicide, after which she went home and murdered her two sons and daughter; or the woman who killed her two-year-old daughter with a knife, then forced another daughter (age four) to sit in the flames of the hearth.³⁹ Apart from such extreme cases, parental negligence also arose, often—as in Roger's case—because of absent parents: when the parents and household went to church leaving behind their two-year-old, he toddled out the door and down a well, in spite of an older sister who was supposed to be watching him; while Edith attended morning services, her infant daughter died in her cradle, a victim of fire; and while another set of parents were away at church one evening, an infant was burned in the hearth.⁴⁰

The chronicler of this last case reported other examples of parental negligence, remedied through the intercession of the defunct King Henry VI. For instance, the parents of the child just mentioned, who fell backwards onto the hearth, had left him alone, "negligently"; another infant, not yet

two, was "neglected," while his mother went out to bleach her linen in the sun; he fell into the family cess pit. A Kent girl was flattened when run over by a cart "negligently" operated; and another infant, "neglected" by his watchers, fell down a well.⁴¹ Prefacing another such story, the writer waxes rhetorical: "Where anything negligent is done regarding infants, much adverse fortune will follow; permitting an infant to have its freedom so often turns laughter into tears. . . ." and so on.⁴²

Suggestions of parental negligence in Roger's case, and especially his mother's, came pointedly from the "castle" folk: the constable and gatekeeper told them of the accident with overtones of accusation; and fellow-townsman Syward's claim that Dionysia was drunk was a seriously damning charge. The two clerics Simon and Richard tended not to impute negligence so clearly, though Richard did note that the child was unintended. What is more interesting is the reluctance of the papal commissioners to probe more deeply into the accusation of drunkenness; they seem deliberately to have skirted this issue, believing perhaps that this might have negative implications for Cantilupe's canonization. Another peculiarity is the original suppression of any mention of the miraculous powers of the Holy Cross of Conway church, which (Syward's testimony apart) one would have expected vicar Simon and priest Richard eagerly to have espoused; the miraculous object was, after all, in their own church. Yet they did not, and only revealed this competing supernatural power under direct questioning by the pope's judges. Perhaps they were reluctant to buck what appears to have been the consensus of a community to which they ministered. Whatever the reasons, the two clerics did not at first fulfill their oaths (taken by all the witnesses) to tell "the whole truth."

The Conway case demonstrates once again the fragility and mutability of human perception and memory. Though their reasons for testifying as they did may be out of reach, certainly the witnesses' variant readings of a not so distant past emphasize the limits of historians' use of trial testimony. This is in addition to the now widely recognized scripping of testimony via interrogatories, as well as the barrier of notarial translation of nuanced vernaculars into blunted, formulaic, clerical Latin. Roger's case also presents overtones of collusion between witnesses (vicar and priest, father and mother) in testimony, another de-"objectifying" mechanism.⁴³ This too limits our reconstruction of a single past, transposing events into multiple pasts. The apparently calm, rational atmosphere of the judicial tribunal where truths are supposed to be revealed is an inviting, useful but unstable forum for the exercise of micro-history, a genre which attracts pointed and often appropriate criticism.⁴⁴

Roger landed literally and figuratively in the overlap of two spheres of contemporary life, church and castle; when his parents, being pulled into church activities, left him alone he was drawn into that other context with which he was familiar, the castle. Dying in the latter context, he came fully

to life in the former. Moreover, the hierarchies of each sphere are present in this narration: mayor/constable, seneschal, coroners, jurors, and bailiffs examining potential breaches of the law; and in the other sphere, we have seen supernatural forces expressed through a would-be saint, Thomas Cantilupe, a miracle-working object, the Holy Cross in the town's church; and the imputed powers of a bishop whose touch roused Roger fully and finally to life. Community bonds are also manifested in the expectation that "neighbors" would take in a toddler wandering through town at night; perhaps the women who witnessed Roger walking toward the castle that evening didn't hinder him because of this expectation—someone, surely, would care for him before he harmed himself. In the end, as we have seen, church, community and castle came together in celebrating the child's revival, a miracle attested in a letter composed in St. Mary's church and sealed by representatives of the secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies.

As for the results of this jumble of mixed memories and conflicting statements elicited in 1307, the papal commission's transcripts, boiled down to manageable size at the papal curia, ended up under further scrutiny between 1318 and 1320.⁴⁵ In this reexamination, only two issues were raised about Roger's miracle: why the body wasn't totally mangled after the fall (because of its departure from a perpendicular line of descent and its lightness of weight—good Aristotelian thinking). The fact that witnesses disagreed about the softness or otherwise of the ditch bottom didn't vitiate the miracle "as to the substance of the thing that happened" *quantum ad substantiam facti quod evenit*.⁴⁶ Second, if the body was unmarked, what killed him? (Internal injuries; and perhaps movement of the wind and fear while falling). These points having been satisfactorily addressed, the matter then passed into papal hands. The case suggests what probably lies behind many other miracles that ended up as a few lines in papal canonization bulls. John XXII's bull of April 1320, in a brief statement about Roger's miracle, notes that the boy was revived after being measured; there is no mention of coin-bending.⁴⁷

In the midst of so much confusing testimony, perhaps the last word should come from the victim himself, whose post-miracle career can be traced for at least a few more years.⁴⁸ On October 23, 1307 Roger was brought before the papal commissioners and was asked, without an oath—on account of his tender age, as he was under seven—whether he knew anything about his case, his death, or the miracle. He said no; nevertheless, he added that he no longer wanted to go up to the bridge.⁴⁹

Notes

1. The process is found in Vatican MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 188r–203v collated with MS Vat Lat 4017; the letter on fols. 188v–89r, and Oxford MS, Exeter

- College 158 fol. 38v. Unless specified otherwise, all folio references below are to MS 4015.
- MS 4015 was used by Robert Bartlett in examining another of Cantilupe's purported miracles in *The Hanged Man: A Story of Miracle, Memory and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). The papal committee and their fates post-1307 on pp. 126–38. Michael Goodich also discusses the Hereford miracles in the present publication.
 - Ian Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, UK: Phillimore, 1983), p. 114.
 - Griffin was witness number 6, fols. 198v–200r. Perhaps Griffin specified “English” leagues to distinguish them from “local” leagues, or the notaries, their documents destined for the papal curia, though it a helpful qualification. The commissioners also asked Griffin how long he believed that Roger had been dead, thus distinguishing the time he saw the boy dead, from the total time that Griffin believed he’d been dead. In reply Griffin explained how (he assumed) Roger fell into the ditch the night before.
 - William de Cycon (Cicon) was one of Edward I’s Savoyard household knights, Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London: Methuen, 1988), p. 209, 215. Vicar Simon’s testimony in MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 189r–91v; he was the first witness to give testimony.
 - Valerie J. Flint discusses the Cantilupe miracles, coroners, and this case in “The Saint and the Operation of the Law: Reflections upon the Miracles of St. Thomas Cantilupe” in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 342–57. Errors in detail—the ditch never was intended to be a water-filled moat; Syward vowed Roger to make a pilgrimage, not himself; the coroner’s name given as Ganvy is probably something like Gannowe—are perhaps due to the faulty *Acta Sanctorum* printed version.
 - On “first finders” see Ronald Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (1997; repr. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 119.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 191r.
 - He was the third of the eight witnesses to be examined, MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 192v–94r and 196r–v.
 - As we have seen, the constable also sent the first finder, John de Griffin, on this mission; Griffin and Syward would presumably have had to seek out the coroners and jury living at various places in Conway.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 197r–98v.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 201v–203v; she was the eighth and final witness.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 191v–92v; this passage is lacking in Vat Lat 4017; he was witness number 2.
 - For the chamberlain of the Prince of Wales at Chester, and other details of local administration and personnel, see Thomas F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, vol. II (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937–67), pp. 169–73. Edward I appointed Havering justiciar for north and south Wales following the Welsh wars (1280s), and overseer of military matters in Merionethshire in the revolt of the 1290s,

- during which Conway often served as the king’s headquarters; David Walker, *Medieval Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 150, 154–56. He was the first layman listed (after the bishop and abbot) in the 1303 letter taken to Hereford.
- John of St. John had died the year before; he was a trusted lieutenant of Edward I in Gascony and Scotland.
 - Another version of Nicholas’s message was merely that he’d heard a child’s cry that evening; now, he is reported as saying that a child was lying dead in the ditch.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 200r–201v, 203c. Gervase was witness number 7, recalled after his wife testified.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 200v, MS Vat Lat 4017, fol. 75v: *respondit quod non exiret ecclesiam de tota nocte*.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 200c–201r, *male vigilaverat circa custodiam dicti Rogeri filii sui...*
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 201v–203v; parents assign them different ages.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 202r: *et cum propter predictam esset dolore nimio et propter vigilias praedictas sompno gravata dormivit usque ad diem datam...*
 - Arnold J. Taylor, *Conwy Castle* (Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, rev. ed. 1986), pp. 2–4, 14.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 189v.
 - Bending and dedicating a particular coin to a saint was a very common curative practice; Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: Dent & Sons, 1977, repr. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, 2004), pp. 94–95.
 - Fol. 193v, *fecerunt in dicta ecclesia scriberi quandam litteram... in attestacionem...* However, there is no evidence that the bishop or the abbot witnessed Roger’s “dead” state.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 190v.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fols. 194r–96r, on October 25, 1307; Boys was witness number 4.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, 194v, 4017, 67v, a reference presumably to the elongated footwear of fashionable dandies.
 - Evidently Boys took Roger from Dionysia, carried out de Havering’s instructions, and then returned the child to his mother.
 - On the “measuring” technique see Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 95–96. It also suggests that even in an urban environment, and under the very eyes of the mayor, manipulation of a presumably dead body could take place; one would expect this in a rural setting where coroners might take days or longer to reach such victims.
 - MS Vat Lat 4015, fol. 198r.
 - For William of Blyborough, keeper of the Prince’s wardrobe then chancellor, see Tout, *Chapters II*, 166–68, 170–71. He is not mentioned in the letter or elsewhere in the process; he, Thomas of Cambridge, and John de Havering were named local auditors in Wales on May 1, 1303 and were at work from June 24 to September 4; three days later, all three were in Conway church when Roger was brought in: Tout, *Chapters II*, 179.

34. For Hugh of Leominster, see Tout, *Chapters*, IV, 71, VI, 61. Edward I died July 7, 1307.
35. David's seal may still have read "Abterconway" although Edward I had already in 1284 shifted the site of this Cistercian abbey from Conway to Maenan; the letter's text, identifying him as abbot of Maenan, is more "accurate" than its seal.
36. John de Havering, William de Sutton, and William de Cicon. The clerics were Thomas of Cambridge, Hugh of Leominster, and Thomas of Esthall; see Tout, *Chapters* vol. II, p. 171: "Altogether there were fourteen clerks acting [for the Prince of Wales] at one time."
37. Richard of Newcastle, Roger of Bruges, and Thomas of Dinbey, all residents of Conway.
38. Quoted in James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995), p. 133.
39. Barbara Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300-1348* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 124, 147-48.
40. Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 209-211.
41. Paul Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Anglie Regis Miracula Postuma* (Société des Bollandistes: Brussels, 1935), pp. 157, 194, 200, 215.
42. Translation in Finucane, *Rescue of the Innocents*, p. 39, from Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 260. For further examples of parental negligence, Finucane, *Rescue*, pp. 40, 51, 115, 124-31 (which includes Roger of Conway's case), pp. 134-35, 144, 153.
43. For pertinent comments on these problems see Robert Swanson's essay in the present volume.
44. Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 75-80; Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1977), pp. 101-17; Sigurdur Gylfi Magnússon, "The Singularization of History: Social History and Microhistory Within the Postmodern State of Knowledge," *Journal of Social History* 36.3 (2003): pp. 701-35.
45. André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 640-41, from BN MS 5373A; Bartlett, *Hanged Man*, pp. 121-22.
46. Exeter College MS 158, fols. 54v-55r; not did confusion about Roger's lying on his right or left side affect the substance of the miracle.
47. Giusto Fontanini, *Codex constitutionum quos summi pontifices ediderunt in solenni canonizatione sanctorum a Johanne XIV ad Benedictum XIII* (Rome: Ex typographia reverendae cameræ apostolicæ, 1729), p. 133.
48. See Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 70 and *Rescue of the Innocents*, pp. 137-38; Bartlett, *Hanged Man*, p. 134.
49. Exeter College MS 158, fols. 191r-91v.



In the fall of 1453 in a small town in Brittany, a panel of three papal commissioners opened an inquest into the sanctity of Vincent Ferrer. Born in Valencia in 1350, the celebrated Dominican had devoted the final two decades of his life to a preaching tour that took him throughout most of western Europe, culminating in his death in the Breton city of Vannes in 1419.¹ His burial in the cathedral in Vannes touched off a wave of miraculous activity, leading to the opening of the canonization process in 1453. Among the 313 witnesses who testified in Brittany, more than a dozen told the story of the miraculous cure of a Vannes citizen named Perrin Hervé, nicknamed "Fatry" (*Graessel*). The gist of their tale was this: Several years after Vincent's death, Perrin had experienced what might today be called a psychotic break. To many observers in the fifteenth century, however, it appeared to be a case of demonic possession. One morning Perrin had gone out of his senses and had become violently agitated and verbally abusive to the point that it was necessary to physically restrain him. Nonetheless, after he was taken to Vincent Ferrer's tomb, where he quieted and rested a while, Perrin returned to his old self and never again suffered a similar episode. The cathedral clergy rang the bells as a sign of the miracle, and all who had seen what happened said Perrin had been cured miraculously through the intercession of Vincent Ferrer.