

Offa's Dyke Journal



Volume 4

Borders in Early Medieval Britain

Edited by Ben Guy, Howard Williams and Liam Delaney

Aims and Scope

Offa's Dyke Journal is a peer-reviewed venue for the publication of high-quality research on the archaeology, history and heritage of frontiers and borderlands focusing on the Anglo-Welsh border. The editors invite submissions that explore dimensions of Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke and the 'short dykes' of western Britain, including their life-histories and landscape contexts. *ODJ* will also consider comparative studies on the material culture and monumentality of frontiers and borderlands from elsewhere in Britain, Europe and beyond. We accept:

1. Notes and Reviews of up to 3,000 words
2. Interim reports on fieldwork of up to 5,000 words
3. Original discussions, syntheses and analyses of up to 10,000 words

ODJ is published by JAS Arqueología, and is supported by the University of Chester and the Offa's Dyke Association. The journal is open access, free to authors and readers: <http://revistas.jasarqueologia.es/index.php/odjournal/>. Print copies of the journal are available for purchase from Archaeopress with a discount available for members of the Offa's Dyke Association: <https://www.archaeopress.com/>

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Front cover: The River Dee looking east from the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. Here, the Offa's Dyke Path traverses the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2022, with thanks to Rose Guy for assistance). Cover and logo design by Howard Williams, Liam Delaney.

Offa's Dyke Journal

*A Journal for Linear Monuments, Frontiers and
Borderlands Research*

Volume 4 for 2022

Special issue: Borders in Early Medieval Britain

Edited by Ben Guy, Howard Williams and Liam Delaney



University of
Chester

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Borders in Early Medieval Britain: Introducing the Special Issue

Ben Guy

The contents of this special issue comprise the proceedings of a conference held over Zoom on the weekend of 11–12 July 2020. The event was originally planned to take place in Cambridge, but, as the unforeseeable events of 2020 began to unfold, it was soon realised that it would be necessary either to cancel the event or move it into digital space. The latter path was taken, making this conference part of the first wave of academic Zoom events that we have subsequently become so accustomed to. It was a steep learning curve, but hopefully a valuable learning experience for all concerned!

The name of the conference was 'The Borders of Early Medieval England', reflecting the original intention to hold a multi-disciplinary event that would consider the nature of 'borders' around and within England during the early medieval centuries. The event was planned as the culmination of my research fellowship in Robinson College, part of the purpose of which was to conduct research into Anglo-Welsh interaction in the region of the River Dee in the Middle Ages. The intention was to study processes of political, cultural and linguistic interaction in a regional border zone as a cohesive unit, moving beyond consideration of these areas as merely places where the boundaries or 'frontiers' of larger polities or cultural groups collided. There is a well-established historiography on this subject that Dr Lindy Brady helpfully recounts in her contribution to this issue, but studies of the Anglo-Welsh border (and of the other political/cultural borders of early medieval Britain for that matter) have not always kept pace with it. As it transpired, this research led me to reconsider the history of the entire Anglo-Welsh border zone in the early Middle Ages, along with the nature of the Anglo-Welsh interaction that took place not so much across it, but within it. My hope for the original conference was that it would help to put some of this work in perspective, allowing the experience of the early medieval Anglo-Welsh border to be compared with the experiences of other borders and borderlands around and within Anglo-Saxon England, from a range of historical, archaeological and linguistic perspectives. The speakers achieved this goal admirably and it proved a stimulating event.

For the purposes of this special issue, the conference title has been altered to 'Borders in Early Medieval Britain', which was felt to convey more accurately the resulting contents after some of the original speakers decided not to publish their papers in this context. All the papers published in this issue began as presentations at the conference, with the exception of the excellent 'response' by Dr Lindy Brady which was commissioned to accompany the collection and provides reflection on it. I am grateful to Dr Brady for rising to the challenge and writing a thoughtful piece.

In addition to the contributors, I would like to thank the speakers at the conference whose work is not represented in this issue, but who made such insightful contributions to the event: Dr Ben Allport, Dr Robert Gallagher, Dr Charles Insley, Dr Tom Lambert, Jacob O'Neill, Dr Richard Purkiss, Dr Rebecca Thomas, Dr Alex Woolf, and especially Dr Chris Lewis, who delivered a fascinating plenary lecture on 'England's boundaries 1066–1086 and the Limits of Domesday Book'. I would also like to express thanks to my fellow co-editors and especially Professor Howard Williams, who initially agreed to take on the project and who has been a fantastic collaborator throughout its production. It is a privilege to be able to publish work like this in the *Offa's Dyke Journal*, which maintains the rigorous standards of academic publishing while remaining freely accessible to the public. I am deeply indebted to Robinson College, and particularly the Senior Tutor, Dr David Woodman, for supporting the research that underlies my contribution to this issue as well as providing financial backing for the conference itself. Lastly, I am very grateful to my wife, Dr Rose Guy, for teaching me how to use Zoom in Spring 2020 and for acting as a moderator during the event.

Cambridge, 17 August 2022

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The Fluidity of Borderlands

Lindy Brady

This introduction to the special issue considers the central themes raised by the volume's contributions as a whole, focusing on their collective interest in the political and cultural — as opposed to geographical — fluidity of borderland zones in early medieval Britain. To highlight these important points, two case studies from the Anglo-Welsh border region are discussed: the Old English legal text known as the Dunsæte Agreement or Ordinance concerning the Dunsæte and the tradition preserved within some Welsh law texts that legal reforms were enacted by the Welsh ruler Bleddyn ap Cynfyn (king of Gwynedd from 1064 to 1073), both of which underscore the fluidity of frontiers on a political level.

Keywords: boundaries, borderlands, early medieval Wales, medieval Welsh Law, Cyfraith Hywel, Dunsæte Agreement, Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, *professiones iuris*

Introduction

Two examples from medieval Welsh legal texts illustrate a standard narrative of how boundaries and borderlands are most commonly understood to have functioned in early medieval Britain. The first reads: *Os avon avyd not yrôg tired deudyn adygôydaô derôen ar traôs yr auon perchenn ytir ytyfuo yprenn ohonnaô bieiuyd yprenn ac a berthyno y wrthaô* ('If a river be the boundary between the lands of two persons, and an oak should fall across the river; the owner of the land out of which the tree grew has a right to the tree with what may pertain to it', AL: DC II.xxiii.41). This elegantly practical solution to what could clearly otherwise have been a common and divisive genre of dispute between neighbours reflects the perception that boundaries in the early medieval period were largely immutable, drawn from fixed features in the landscape — rivers, lakes, swamps, mountain ranges — that naturally divided stretches of land, whether family estates, or distinct political (e.g. kingdoms) or 'ethnic' (e.g. *gentes*) entities from one another.

Another representative mention of boundaries in the Welsh legal material likewise envisions them as fixed lines in the landscape, but alludes to their dangerous potential for manipulation in cases where they are not enforced by geographical features as above. This text refers to one of *tri gôeithret yssyd ar braôf* ('three deeds that rest upon proof') as *llafur kyureithaôl neu aghyureithaôl ar tir megys torri ffin neu wneuthur ffin neu lauur arall* ('lawful or unlawful work upon a land, such as the breaking of a boundary, or the making of a boundary, or other work', AL: DC II.viii.81). Here too a boundary is understood to be a line of demarcation between properties, but the possibility that such boundaries could be illegally altered to the advantage of one party has clearly been taken into account. Elsewhere in the corpus of Welsh legal texts, mentions of physical boundary markers

(*AL*: GC II.xxxii.4) or the testimony of witnesses about land divisions (*AL*: DC II.viii.66.) convey the same impression. By and large, this has been the primary understanding of boundaries and borders in the early medieval period: whether they were fixed or fluid, the concept has largely been viewed through a geographical lens. Although recent scholarship has carried out an evolving and increasingly nuanced conversation about the varied and multifaceted forms that frontiers and borderlands across the early medieval world could take (Anzaldúa 1987; Bartlett and MacKay 1989; Baud and van Schendel 1997; Power and Standen 1999; Abulafia and Berend 2002; Power 2004; Curta 2005; Klusáková and Ellis 2006; Muldoon 2009; Katajala and Lähteenmäki 2012; Brady 2017), the discussion has still largely been framed in terms of geographical regions and the shifting nature of boundaries or borderland zones within them. In other words, boundaries themselves may have moved, but the entities demarcating them are perceived to have remained the same: an individual border could shift when the territory associated with a particular family or kingdom contracted or expanded due to its changed fortunes.

The articles in this special issue take the conversation in a different direction, offering a fresh approach to how we think about boundaries and borderlands in early medieval Britain. Rather than a primary focus on their precise geographical limits, these studies explore the shifting political associations of borderlands and frontier zones, whose identities and affiliations are seen to fluctuate with the passage of time and alongside changed political circumstances. Rory Naismith's '*Bigge Habban*: An Introduction to Money, Trade and Cross-Border Traffic' examines the realities of cross-border trade in early medieval Britain and on the Continent, surveying a wide range of evidence to conclude that practicality, rather than politics, was the driving force behind cross-border trade, with borders themselves being negotiable and porous. Neil McGuigan's article 'Donation and Conquest: The Formation of Lothian and the Origins of the Anglo-Scottish Border' provides an exhaustive examination of the evidence for the emergence of the border region known as Lothian, claimed at various points to be part of England, Scotland, and an ancient British kingdom. Oliver Padel's contribution on 'King Æthelstan and Cornwall' 'provides a study in miniature of a region which became a border area and then ceased to be one' (Padel, this volume, 66) as the British border kingdom of Cornwall was absorbed into Anglo-Saxon England during the tenth-century reign of King Æthelstan.

The volume's focus then shifts to early medieval Wales. Ben Guy's study of 'The Changing Approaches of English Kings to Wales in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries' explores the ways in which politically savvy families in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands exploited allegiances for personal gain, shifting power from centralised governmental policy to individual families and thus forming an important precursor to the post-Conquest March of Wales. David N. Parsons's investigation of 'Place-names and Offa's Dyke: The Limits of Inference' examines place-name evidence to conclude that the area surrounding Offa's Dyke can best be described as a mixed Anglo-Welsh zone on either side, with evidence that individual locations shifted from Welsh to Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Saxon to Welsh, with no consistent patterns of takeover from either east or west. Keith Ray's article,

'The Organisation of the Mid-Late Anglo-Saxon Borderland with Wales: Two Cases with Clues to Frontier Depth, Breadth, and Communications', takes the same region as its focus from an archaeological perspective, compiling evidence that the area around Offa's Dyke was a militarily managed frontier zone. Finally, Rachel E. Swallow's 'Shifting Border, Shifting Interpretation: What the Anglo-Norman Castle of Dodleston in Cheshire Might Be Trying to Tell Us About the Eleventh-Century Northern Anglo-Welsh Border' re-examines an older archaeological survey of Dodleston Castle to draw fresh conclusions that this fortification's identity shifted from British, to Anglo-Saxon, to Norman control.

The bulk of these articles focus on the Anglo-Welsh frontier zone, with additional contributions exploring the Scottish and Cornish borderlands as well as trade across borders more widely. Despite their relatively focused contents, the theoretical and methodological conclusions elucidated here are applicable to broader studies of borderlands throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. One common issue that emerged strongly from these essays is that the spaces discussed here are best understood not as boundary lines, but as porous and flexible borderlands or frontier zones. The articles stress the multifaceted realities of movement across early medieval borders, from the practicalities of trade, to the shifting nature of political alliances, to the fluid identities of groups living in borderland regions, whose broader affiliations were malleable over time.

The fluidity of these borderland spaces is also reflected in another consistent theme within these papers, namely, the necessity of using comparative evidence to access the realities of early medieval frontier zones. This special issue makes clear that understanding key pieces of information about borderland regions — such as when they emerged as cohesive communities, how they were perceived by their neighbours, and what the realities of daily life within them were like — can prove challenging due to the fact that most surviving written records were produced in the centres, rather than on the peripheries, of early medieval nations and kingdoms. The articles here thus examine as wide a range of source material as possible in reaching their conclusions, drawing together textual, archaeological, linguistic, place-name, numismatic, genealogical, ecclesiastical, legal, and diplomatic evidence from multiple languages and time periods in order to create the most complete picture possible of the borderland zones they study. In doing so, this volume emphasises that the most important factor in defining borderlands in early medieval Britain was not geography, but identity. The same physical region could be considered British, Anglo-Saxon, or a borderland depending on the given political circumstances and chronological background. All of the pieces in this collection reflect the shifting nature of boundaries in early medieval Britain. But these shifts were not physical, as in our earlier example from Welsh law of someone illegally moving boundary markers to their own advantage. They were shifts in identity, as a given group's affiliation was transposed from one allegiance to another.

The fluidity and mutability of boundaries and borderlands across the early medieval world has come under increasing attention in recent studies (E. Roberts 2018; Insley

2021; Heath *et al.* 2021). To illustrate some of the key themes raised throughout this volume in a focused way, I will consider two brief case studies from the Anglo-Welsh border region. The first is an Old English legal text known as the *Dunsæte Agreement* or *Ordinance concerning the Dunsæte*, which is also discussed in the articles by Guy, Naismith, and Ray. The second is a tradition preserved within some Welsh law texts that legal reforms were enacted by the Welsh ruler Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, who became king of Gwynedd in 1064 and died in 1073. (He also features in Guy's contribution.) The passages discussed here underscore the extent to which the frontiers of early medieval Britain shifted on a political, as opposed to geographical, level. The *Dunsæte Agreement* evinces flexibility over time in the political and administrative affiliations of Anglo-Saxon peoples and kingdoms. References to Bleddyn's reforms in the Welsh legal material suggest that individual parties could choose the system under which they wished to be judged, reflecting not only regional variation in Welsh law but also flexibility in the legal alignment of individuals with broader regional identities.

The 'Dunsæte Agreement'

Fairly little can be stated with certainty about the text known as the *Dunsæte Agreement*, which appears to be an unofficial memorandum of understanding drawn up within a community rather than an official royal law code. This document is usually referred to as the *Dunsæte Ordinance* or *Ordinance concerning the Dunsæte*, but I am calling it the *Dunsæte Agreement* because 'Ordinance' gives the impression of an official law code when this was actually a memorandum of understanding drawn up within a community. It is written in Old English and preserved in one copy in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383, an important early twelfth-century compilation of Anglo-Saxon legal material, and it later became one of the many Old English legal documents translated into Latin as part of the *Quadripartitus* (Wormald 1999: 228–244). This brief document outlines a series of mutually agreed-upon procedures for addressing cattle theft and its aftermath¹ in a community comprised of an ethnically mixed Welsh and Anglo-Saxon population, through which a river ran. The *Dunsæte Agreement* was dated to the first quarter of the tenth century by Felix Liebermann and most subsequent scholars (Wormald 1999: 232–233, 381–382 and 388; Foot 2011: 163–164), but George Molyneux has recently argued for a late tenth- or eleventh-century date instead (Molyneux 2012). The approximate location of the territory of the *Dunsæte* can be narrowed down to the region west of the River Wye between Monmouth and Hereford from the *Agreement's* final clause (*Duns.* 9,1), which I shall discuss further below (Charles-Edwards 2007: 53; Gelling 1992: 112–119; Lewis 1988; Lewis 2007).² Michael Fordham,

¹ Carole Hough notes that procedures for cattle-tracking are also outlined in the Anglo-Saxon law codes II Edward 4, V Æthelstan 2, III Edmund 6 and VI Æthelstan 8,4, with further continental parallels (Hough 2000).

² Margaret Gelling's discussion of the geography of this territory concludes: 'The district, place, or natural feature called *Dun*, from which the *Dunsæte* took their name, has defeated all attempts at identification. It is not likely to be the Welsh word meaning 'fort', as that would have given **Din*. It is most probably the Old English word *dun*, modern down, perhaps used in the sense 'mountain'; but it would be very difficult to identify a suitable mountain' (Gelling 1992: 118). However, C.P. Lewis has suggested a link between the *Dun* element and the hundred of Dinedor in south-western Herefordshire (Lewis 1988; Lewis 2007).

Tom Lambert, and I have all considered the ways in which this unique text reflects both shared legal obligations and a series of practical steps to keep the peace within a borderland community (Fordham 2007; Brady 2017: 1–6 and 16–19; Lambert 2018).

The final clause of the *Dunsæte Agreement* states that: *Hwilon Wentsæte hyrdon into Dunsætan, ac hit gebyrēð rihtor into Westsexan, þyder hy scylan gafol and gislas syllan. Eac Dunsæte beþyrfan, gif heom se cyning an, þæt man huru friðgislas to heom læte* ('At one point the *Wentsæte* belonged to the *Dunsæte*, but that territory [that of the *Wentsæte*] belongs more rightly to the West Saxons. They [the *Wentsæte*] ought to give tribute and hostages there [to the West Saxons]. Even so, the *Dunsæte* think it necessary — if the king will grant it to them [the *Dunsæte*] — that at least hostages for peace [from the *Wentsæte*] may be permitted to them [the *Dunsæte*]', *Duns*: 9,1). The *Dunsæte Agreement* clearly states at several points that this territory contained a mixed Anglo-Welsh population — e.g. *Pis is seo gerædnes, þe Angelcynnes witan and Wealhþeode rædboran betweox Dunsetan gesetton* ('this is the agreement which the advisers of the English and the counsellors of the Welsh put in place among the *Dunsæte*', *Duns*: Prologue) and *XII lahmen scylon riht tæcean Wealan and Ænglan, VI Engliscne and VI Wylisce* ('twelve lawmen shall proclaim what is just for Welsh and English: six Englishmen and six Welshmen', *Duns*: 3,3) — and as noted above, this document has therefore been much-discussed as a reflection of the borderland community that produced it.

What I would like to focus on here is another group of people — the *Wentsæte* — mentioned in this text, who have been less frequently characterised as a borderland kingdom, but whose representation in the *Dunsæte Agreement* illustrates the fluid nature of frontier zones that has been so comprehensively elucidated by the articles in this volume. As the *Wentsæte* are described in the *Dunsæte Agreement*, their territory and identity as a people have remained unaltered, but their wider political allegiance has shifted. Formerly, we are told, the *Wentsæte* were considered part of the territory of the *Dunsæte*, but now they 'more rightly' (*rihtor*) belong to the West Saxons, to whom their tribute and hostages must be sent. The case of the *Wentsæte* in the *Dunsæte Agreement* is a perfect illustration of a borderland that shifts not geographically, but politically.

Almost every study to examine the *Dunsæte Agreement* in depth has understood the *Wentsæte* to be the people of Gwent, including most recently Guy's article below. (Although, as Margaret Gelling has pointed out, '*Wentsæte* has been interpreted, reasonably, as meaning "people of Gwent". It could, however, be "people whose territory adjoins Gwent"', Gelling 1992: 118). Following the consensus view that the *Wentsæte* are indeed the people of Gwent pushes these conclusions even further because Gwent was a Welsh kingdom (Aldhouse-Green and Howell 2004). In other words, the Welsh *Wentsæte* have not only switched from one over-lordship to another, they have also shifted from being a client territory of a mixed Anglo-Welsh territory (the *Dunsæte*) to a client territory of an Anglo-Saxon one (the West Saxons), illustrating the fluidity of political identity that this volume has emphasised within borderland regions. The *Wentsæte*, within living memory of when the *Dunsæte Agreement* was written, shifted their

broader political affiliation from belonging to the territory of the *Dunsæte* to that of the West Saxons.

This article's larger argument that early medieval boundaries were as rooted in politics and identity as they were in geography is further underscored by the fact that the language of the *Dunsæte Agreement* assimilates the Welsh kingdom of the *Wentsæte* to an Anglo-Saxon naming pattern. If the existence of Gwent was not known from other sources, there would be no way to tell, from the way that the *Dunsæte Agreement* is written, that the *Wentsæte* were actually a Welsh kingdom. The lessons of the *Dunsæte Agreement* offer an important illustration of how the ethnic and political divisions that we have in mind when we imagine the past are conditioned by medieval languages of power and authority, as well as by our modern presuppositions about how the geographical and political landscape of early medieval Britain may have looked.³

Legal reforms of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn

My second case study comes from the corpus of Welsh law texts. A substantial amount of vernacular legal material survives from medieval Wales. All extant Welsh legal manuscripts post-date the Norman Conquest; nonetheless, 'they together constitute almost all the information we have on native law in Wales before the Conquest' (Stacey 2010: 1182). There is good evidence that the surviving Welsh law texts are an extension of an earlier tradition (Charles-Edwards 1989), but that tradition was a living one: as Robin Chapman Stacey writes, 'they were teaching texts, composed by and for lawyers and judges, rather than laws issued by kings...most of all they are literary compositions rather than legislation or objective accounts' (Stacey 2010: 1182). Although the Welsh law texts appear very different from Anglo-Saxon legal material like the *Dunsæte Agreement*, there are also significant parallels in how these documents can be interpreted from a modern perspective. Both the Welsh law manuscripts and the *Dunsæte Agreement* are texts that represent an idealised vision of how laws and legal agreements ought to work in the societies that produced them. In both cases, it is impossible to tell whether or not the conditions described in principle within these texts were adhered to 'on the ground' in early medieval society. But the Welsh law texts, like the *Dunsæte Agreement*, do tell us something about how people within the cultures that produced these documents understood or imagined the law to function. That, in turn, can tell us something about how borderlands were perceived, when they are the subject of the legal texts in question.

Some Welsh law texts preserve a tradition that legal reforms were enacted by the late eleventh-century ruler Bleddyn ap Cynfyn. References to these reforms appear to suggest that individual litigants could choose the legal system under which their case would be judged. This reflects both regional variation in Welsh law and flexibility in the alignment of individuals with wider political identities, again emphasising that

³ I am grateful to Ben Guy for articulating this point.

the fluidity of borderland zones did not always materialise in a geographical sense. Welsh ruler Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, alongside his brother Rhiwallon, was a major driving force behind the Anglo-Welsh borderland rebellions of 1066 to 1073. Within Wales, Bleddyn and Rhiwallon were sovereign kings who had no need to rebel against anyone, but they lent significant support to rebellions within England after the Norman Conquest, particularly in the borderlands region (Brady 2017). After his death, Bleddyn was remembered also as a reformer of Welsh legal tradition. As Sean Davies, who has written the most recent and comprehensive study of Bleddyn's reign and achievements, notes: 'the codification and standardisation of [Welsh] law is traditionally attributed to Hywel Dda (d. 950) and Bleddyn is one of only two rulers associated in the lawbooks with changes, the other being the twelfth-century ruler of Deheubarth, Rhys ap Gruffudd (the Lord Rhys, d. 1197)' (S. Davies 2016: 41). Davies also argues that references to Bleddyn's legal reforms are likely to be legitimate, because 'linking legal reforms to Bleddyn would not have redounded to the glory of the later Gwynedd dynasty, increasing the likelihood that they were included when Llyfr Iorwerth was compiled because they could be reliably attributed to him' (S. Davies 2016: 43). (However, as Ben Guy has noted, there is good evidence that Llywelyn Fawr emphasised his descent from Bleddyn and the Powys family on his mother's side in court poetry and genealogies, Guy 2020: 202–203 and 215.)

We do not know the full extent of Bleddyn's legal reforms because they are only mentioned sporadically in surviving Welsh legal manuscripts. Medieval tradition credited the codification and standardisation of Welsh law to Hywel Dda in the tenth century, but there is no definitive evidence for this attribution (Charles-Edwards 1989; Stacey 2018; S.E. Roberts 2022). The texts of medieval Welsh laws are preserved in lawbooks — working copies used by medieval Welsh lawyers — whose manuscripts survive from the thirteenth century onwards (Jenkins 2000). The Welsh laws (known as *Cyfraith Hywel*) are preserved in five Latin versions and three Welsh redactions, known as *Cyfneth*, *Blegywryd*, and *Iorwerth*. References to Bleddyn's role as a reformer of the laws are preserved in five sections of *Llyfr Iorwerth*, which is regarded as 'the most developed form of the laws that is associated with thirteenth-century Gwynedd' (S. Davies 2016: 43). Most references to Bleddyn's reforms occur offhandedly and sporadically, and the reforms themselves appear largely as alterations to the amount of compensation or punishment due in certain types of cases (particularly, theft and land/agriculture). These mentions of Bleddyn are so irregular that it is difficult to understand the comprehensive agenda, if any, that stood behind them. However, Davies has argued that the details of Bleddyn's reforms which do survive paint a picture of a ruler with a 'reputation as a merciful reformer' (S. Davies 2016: 46).

Although a comprehensive enumeration of Bleddyn's reforms does not survive, what does is a statement that these reforms were significant enough that litigants were given the choice between the pre- and post-reform legal systems. A passage in *Aberystwyth*, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 35 (G), which dates from the mid-fourteenth century,

states: *O deruyd y dyn dywedut bot due kyfreith, kyfreith Hywel, a kyfreith Bledyn agal6 o hona6 am y neill, abarnu or ygnat herwyd y llall; ef aeill rodi y gystyl yn erbyn yr ygnat barnu cam o hona6 can enwis ef y kyfreith, abarnu o hona6 herwyd y llall* ('If a person say that there are two laws, the law of Hywel and the law of Bleddyn, and call for one of them, and the judge adjudge according to the other; he can give his pledge against the judge as judging wrong, since he named the law, and he [the judge] adjudged according to the other', *AL*: CC.viii.xi.4; *LC*: 30–31). The ability for a litigant to select their preferred (presumably more favourable) legal system can be understood in light of this volume's discussion of the fluidity of political identities in early medieval Britain. This reference to the laws of Hywel and Bleddyn indicates that the choice between the two belonged to the litigant and was not dictated by either their political affiliation or the location where the proceedings took place.

Additionally, our understanding of this reference to Bleddyn's reforms is dependent on thinking about borders due to his strong affiliation with north Wales and Hywel Dda's equally strong affiliation with the south. Bleddyn was king of Gwynedd and Powys, and as noted above, surviving references to his legal reforms are preserved in northern recensions of the Welsh laws. Hywel Dda, a powerful king in the first half of the tenth century, was strongly identified with the southern Welsh kingdom of Deheubarth because while he would eventually come to rule over almost all of Wales, it was there that his reign began (Carr and Jenkins 1985). Therefore, a litigant's choice between the legal systems of Bleddyn or Hywel would also appear to be a choice between two regional variations of law, a northern and a southern. An argument for a distinction — or, that is, a perceived distinction — between northern and southern Welsh legal traditions has also been made by J. Fife in the context of the deer-hunting scene that opens the First Branch of the *Mabinogi* (Fife 1992). He argues for the presence of regional legal differences in this text, which may allude to 'a possible on-going rivalry between the Northern and Southern tradition' (Fife 1992: 78). The legal systems associated with Bleddyn and Hywel, then, were not only perceived as being distinctive from one another, but they also appear to have had regional affiliations with northern and southern Wales, respectively. However, a litigant could choose which system of law was applicable to their case, regardless of where they lived or where their case was being judged — another illustration of the fluidity of borderlands in early medieval Britain. When it came to choosing between two legal systems, the border between 'northern' and 'southern' Wales was not a geographical one, but rather, a choice of individual identity.

Conclusions

A similar legal flexibility is evident in one of the best-known frontier zones in medieval Britain, the post-Conquest March of Wales (Lieberman 2010). The most important defining feature of this region was its recognised status as legally exceptional (R.R. Davies 1970; R.R. Davies 1987: 285) — even in Anglo-Norman literature, as Ralph Hanna has recently noted, the March is depicted as 'cowboy country' not because of lawlessness per se, but because of its 'specific unique legal status' (Hanna 2011: 338).

Clause 56 of the Magna Carta famously states that 'English law shall apply to holdings of land in England, Welsh law to those in Wales, and the law of the Marches to those in the Marches' (MC: (56)). Yet what defined 'the law of the March', in turn, appeared to be legal flexibility (R. R. Davies 1970). As R.R. Davies has written, 'marcher lordships were frequently divided into Englishries and Welshries, into areas of English and Welsh land tenure, into communities of those under the Welsh tongue and those who were not, into districts under the jurisdiction of English courts and Welsh courts. Nor was this division purely one of racial origin, for Welshmen could and did acquire English status and English land and thereby claimed the benefits of English law' (R.R. Davies 1970: 25).

References to the option for litigants to choose between Bleddyn's laws and Hywel's laws are notable because they mirror the legal peculiarity evident in the post-Conquest March of Wales, which has been widely discussed as a borderland or frontier zone. But the March of Wales was the frontier between Wales and England, whereas the division between the laws of Hywel Dda and Bleddyn ap Cynfyn's legal reforms was a regional one, between southern and northern Wales. By and large, borders, borderlands, and frontier zones have been understood as 'external' to a given people or region, and the focus of most studies of these areas has been centred upon locations where two peoples were perceived to come together. Yet as the case of Bleddyn's reforms illustrates, spaces within the same kingdom or territory, but with different cultural norms, could also function as borderlands. As the articles in this volume attest, flexibility of identity was one of the most important defining characteristics of borderlands in early medieval Britain.

Yet such fluidity of identity was by no means unique to early medieval Britain, as continental parallels illustrate that a similar degree of flexibility was evident elsewhere across the early medieval world. In the case of Bleddyn's legal reforms, legal cultures that were understood to have bases in different territories could nevertheless coexist within a single judicial system, such that a single litigant, in a single place and time, could choose one or the other. In the March of Wales at the time the Magna Carta was written, on the other hand, a single judicial system was now identified with a single territory (the March) that had a single law, even if the latter was in practice flexible and hybrid.⁴ These examples, especially that of Bleddyn's reforms, chime notably with developments in parts of continental Europe where *professiones iuris* — the statement by a litigant of the (ethnically-labelled) law by which she or he wished to be judged — appear extensively in the documentary record, particularly in Italy (Faulkner 2016: 11–13; Esders 2018: 329). There, explicit professions of ethnic law that had formerly — and counter-intuitively — been rare, became much more common in the documentary record from the late tenth century onwards (Bougard 1995: 295; Ascheri 2013: 94). As in late eleventh-century Wales, in the tenth- and eleventh-century Italian kingdom a single judicial system had potentially to cope with more than one (in Italy, multiple)

⁴ R.R. Davies makes it clear that there was no single 'law of the March', but that its sole defining feature was its distinction from Welsh and English laws (even though in practice, it encompassed varying degrees of both) (R. R. Davies 1970).

sets of legal norms, and individual litigants were given the flexibility to declare which of these legal systems they understood to be fitting to their circumstances.

The articles below underscore the mutability of boundary spaces in early medieval Britain, but the issues raised here are profitable for thinking about similar regions across the early medieval world as a whole. Recent scholarship on boundaries and borderlands has shifted away from the ‘frontier-as-barrier’ concept and towards an understanding of frontiers as important zones of cultural exchange (Curta 2005: 1–9). It has emphasised that these regions help us to better understand the individual cultures that populated them, as we can see what is emphasised or ignored when two or more peoples come into contact with one another. These essays shift the conversation forward by demonstrating the degree to which the concepts of identities and territories were flexible in the first place. They have ranged from the practical reality that traders would always permeate boundaries (Naismith), to the fluid political identities of individual territories (McGuigan, Padel, Parsons, Swallow), to the shifting nature of political alliances (Guy), and the practical logistics of managing daily life in a frontier zone (Ray). This special issue underscores the role of boundary spaces and borderlands carving out flexibility and negotiability for territories and identities.

Acknowledgements

My thinking on this topic was enriched by a resident fellowship at the DFG-Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe 2496, ‘Migration und Mobilität in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter’ at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, and I am grateful to the project leaders, particularly Prof. Dr. Steffen Patzold, for their hospitality and for a stimulating research environment.

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Bigge Habban: An Introduction to Money, Trade and Cross-Border Traffic

Rory Naismith

This short survey examines issues in early medieval cross-border trade, particularly with reference to England, but also drawing comparisons with mainland Europe and other regions of Britain. Three themes are considered: tolls charged on traders and travellers; the vulnerability of traders and the importance of building trust and familiarity; and the practical challenges of moving between different means of exchange.

Keywords: trade; tolls; exchange; money.

In the years since the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union in 2016, borders and their impact on trade have stormed back into public consciousness. 'Hard borders' have sprouted up again like long, tangling weeds. This development is a powerful, painful reminder that borders do not help the movement of people or goods. Barriers that are costly and slow to negotiate might be enough to steer traders in a different direction, or cause extra expenses that have to be passed on to the customer. But these developments also underline the fact that borders can and do change. They can mean everything or nothing, and vary depending on whether one thinks of the movement of goods, people or money, and might vary significantly from one frontier or community to another. All depends on the societies that dwell either side of the border and the circumstances in which they live.

It is telling that cross-border trade as such has received relatively little attention from early medievalists. Borders simply have not seemed to matter, being either accepted as a fact of life or brushed aside as insignificant. Interest instead has tended to fall on transnational links and long-distance communication (Scales 2022) and, in economic contexts, on the break between long- and short-distance trade. Both kinds of exchange were of course essential and important in their own ways. Quantitatively there is no doubt that local, intra-regional exchange was more significant, especially in the economically straitened world of post-Roman Europe (Wickham 2005: 693–824). Long-distance trade took several forms. At one extreme was the movement of rare luxuries like pigments, spices or silks over vast distances, servicing only elites. But there were also long-distance networks of production and distribution that may have been indirectly supported by elite patronage, yet involved (and perhaps benefited) a wider range of participants; one thinks of the series of trading 'emporiums' on either side of the North Sea in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries (Loveluck 2013: 178–212). In the context of the Roman Empire and even, to a lesser extent, the Carolingian Empire, large

political units smoothed out some of the kinks that complicated any and all kinds of long-distance exchange, including borders, and thereby stimulated interregional, long-distance exchange (Dopsch 1937: 339–357; Bruand 2002; Verhulst 2002: 85–113). As always, exchange was not just about economics, and all these structures – local, and long-distance of either bulk goods or luxuries – were tightly intermeshed with networks of communication and cultural exchange (McCormick 2001; Frankopan 2015).

The small role assigned to frontiers reflects an implicit sense that early medieval borders were weak and permeable. And on the whole this impression is right, even if it is not quite the whole point. Travellers generally did not pass under the watchful eye of West Saxon or Mercian security guards, at least not at the point of entry. The outer borders of Anglo-Saxon England were highly porous. Actually crossing them seems to have been relatively easy, and there is precious little evidence for traders being stopped at borders. One of the first viking forays into England is an exception that proves the rule. Sometime in the reign of Beorhtric of Wessex (786–802), three ships of Norwegian vikings landed at Portland in Dorset. Beaduheard the king's reeve set out from Dorchester to meet these unexpected visitors, thinking them to be traders whom he should lead to the *regiam villam*. The vikings had other ideas, and killed him. Poor Beaduheard's fate reflects that traders might show up anywhere on the coast, but perhaps not that they did so regularly, since the reeve was based ten miles inland. Indeed, the vikings presumably kept the peace for at least a day, since it would have taken that long for Beaduheard to be informed of their arrival and make his way to Portland. Maybe they actually turned up with the intention of trading peacefully, and things only soured when they could not do so on their own terms (*Æthelweard, Chronicle, temp. Beorhtric; EHD: 180*).

The reeve of Dorchester had intended that he should conduct the viking traders to Dorchester, a royal estate. That plan was characteristic of early medieval handling of new arrivals. Alfred's laws state that traders were meant to present themselves to the king's reeve at a public meeting before heading into the country (*Laws of Alfred, c. 34: Gesetze der Angelsachsen, vol. 1: 68–69; EHD: 413*). If tolls were to be taken, and checks or other controls conducted, they did not take place at the border itself, but in settings like this: foci of institutional authority, or places where people stopped to meet and do business (the two often being one and the same). Towns were not the only such places, as Alfred's law implies, but more is known about them. These were complex locations where several interests came together. London in the seventh and eighth centuries illustrates what might have been going on. The king of Kent made special arrangements for visitors from his kingdom who did business in the city, which suggest that they had difficulty pinning down trading partners from afar who might not be able to come and vouch for a questionable deal (*Laws of Hlothhere and Eadric, c. 16–16.3: Gesetze der Angelsachsen, vol. 1: 10–11; EHD: 395*). An added complication was that the king of Kent was probably not the dominant power in London (Naismith 2018: 62–71 and 84–95). That position belonged at this stage to the rulers of the Mercians, and it was in their name that tolls were charged on incoming ships. These are only known because

Æthelbald, king of the Mercians (716–757), bestowed exemption from them to various churches (Kelly 1992; Adam 1996; Stoclet 1999; Middleton 2005). There is no indication that ships from Francia or Frisia were more liable to tolls than those from East Anglia, Northumbria or indeed from London itself. Anyone who used the port facilities at London seems to have been liable.

Paying for access: tolls

As well as being diagnostic of trade that crossed from one jurisdiction into another, tolls were an important source of income and a visible statement of authority. How much was charged by the king in London during the eighth century is not clear (ten per cent was a common rate elsewhere in Europe: Middleton 2005: 329–330), and it is not possible to gauge the overall yield for the king, but the fact that exemption was sought by leading churches and granted in the form of a diploma normally used to concede landed property speaks to the value of tolls (Kelly 1992: 3–5; Maddicott 2006: 24). It is also worth stressing that conceding exemption from tolls seems to have been a short-lived experiment: surviving examples largely come from the time of Æthelbald, with a couple of later examples that explicitly copy or renew his grants.

But the radio silence does not mean tolls had gone away. Other rulers were simply much less willing than Æthelbald to let go of rights to toll, which is generally the only time they impinge on the written record. When kings did concede rights to take toll, or exemption from paying, they did so on a limited scale. London's waterfront continued to be a major source of tolls: Æthelred II granted a wharf and adjacent property in the city to a royal priest named Wulfstan, along with the toll deriving from them, and around 1010 these were bequeathed by Wulfstan to the monastery of Chertsey (Sawyer 1968: no. 940; *Charters of Chertsey Abbey*: no. 10). Importantly, entering a new jurisdiction by overland travel could also incur a toll. At Worcester in the late ninth century, reorganisation of the town and concession of selected privileges to the cathedral meant that tolls on one of the most essential and widely distributed commodities of the Early Middle Ages, salt, briefly came into view. The local rulers — Ealdorman Æthelred and his wife Æthelflæd, with Alfred the Great — granted rights to most fines, rents and other dues from the newly established town at Worcester, but retained the tolls charged on wagons or animals laden with salt (the 'wagon-shilling' and 'load-penny') (Sawyer 1968: no. 223; *Cartularium Saxonicum*: no. 579; *EHD*: 540–541).

The richest but bittiest collection of information on tolls, Domesday Book, refers to tolls being taken in at least twenty locations in eleventh-century England (Figure 1). These references are undoubtedly far from complete, and several are incidental, only occurring in the context of disputes, or among lists of customs. It is likely that most or all towns in the kingdom charged a toll on sales in their market, as did markets outside towns. Typically, the proceeds went to the king and the earl, though again the exceptions to that rule tend to be better recorded. Other tolls targeted stopping points on routeways.



Figure 1: locations with references to tolls in Domesday Book

An Old English account of the archbishop's customs in York, composed around the time of the Domesday survey, refers to tolls being taken on every road leading to the town (Peacock 1905: 413–414; Palliser 1990: 25). In Lincolnshire, a series of new or enlarged tolls had sprung up along the coast, targeted at ships plying the route between northern and southern England: the locals testified that no fewer than twenty-four ships from Hastings had paid toll at Saltfleet or Saltfleetby and its environs (GDB 375r), and the area remained an important market centre into the later Middle Ages (Sawyer 1998: 21–22; Hines 2017: 124–125).

Who paid toll, and how much, depended on several factors: the commodity in question; whether it was being transported by ship, by wagon or by horseback; and, crucially, on who was bringing it. Several of the Domesday tolls targeted 'external' (*extranei*) people or merchants. This should probably not be read as 'foreign' in the modern sense of the word; rather, it meant anyone from outside the local jurisdiction (Rothwell 2010). Whether they came from overseas was immaterial. At Northwich in Cheshire — a major centre of salt production — the benefits for the locals are especially clear. Those who came from other shires had to pay 4*d.* per cart or 1*d.* per horse, but the people of Cheshire paid only 2*d.* or a halfpenny (?*minutam*) respectively. But this was apparently more to support domestic needs than to give the locals a strong commercial advantage, for they were liable to suffer a hefty fine if they spent more than three days on the journey to and from Northwich (GDB 268r).

Borders, within or between polities, in themselves mattered less than oversight of the places those traders were likely to be heading for, or of the traders themselves and the routes they travelled. That is to say, tolls and controls focused less on political borders and more on bridges, gates or ports, and applied to some commodities more than others. They were as much internal as external. To use a military analogy, controls on trade were a matter of defence-in-depth instead of holding a continuous line (Brookes 2013: 44–45). New or stringent local controls could take as much effort to negotiate as long-distance ones. This point is highlighted by the final provision of a treaty between Alfred and Guthrum (written between 878 and 890), which relates to a border — probably of fairly recent creation — between the two kings' territories that cut diagonally through the south midlands (Alfred-Guthrum treaty, c. 5: *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1: 128–129; *EHD*: 417). The treaty says that commerce in cattle or goods (*mid yrfe [ond] mid æhtum*) was only allowed between the people either side of the border if hostages were given as a gesture of goodwill. Had this provision applied to any and all commerce, it would have been a cumbersome imposition, and should probably be read as a baseline that could be adjusted for people who were known and trusted, potentially family and friends who had done business with neighbours for years, but who now happened to find themselves cut off by a new border. Strikingly, there is no mention of any toll. Established relations of this kind are also implied in one of the other legal texts concerning cross-border relations, that known as the ordinance of *Dunsætan*, which implies that the two groups were selling goods to one another (Ordinance of *Dunsætan*, c. 8–8.1: *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1: 378; Noble 1983: 108). This only came up through the possibility of

vouching for warranty — that is, needing to vouch for a contested purchase — which perhaps suggests that by and large the rules for cross-border commerce worked and did not need extensive elaboration (Molyneaux 2012: 269–270).

How these specific, compartmentalised controls and charges on trade fitted together as part of a larger whole is more difficult to divine, at least from Anglo-Saxon England and its neighbours within Britain. The surviving information is simply too fragmented. A comparative glance at other regions of central and western Europe is therefore instructive. Two points stand out. First, as hinted at in relation to Domesday Book, there could be an awful lot of tolls and charges, their landscape changing in response to new personalities, power configurations and trading routes (McCormick 2001: 640–647; Ganshof 1959a and b; Stoclet 1999). Already in the reign of Charlemagne (768–814), there were ropes being drawn across waterways and watchmen scanned rivers for boats passing under bridges so that tolls could be exacted on bridges and rivers as well as from markets (*Capitulare missorum* of 805, c. 13: *Capitularia, tomus primus*: 124). At Ribe and Southampton, and perhaps at other specialised trading sites, ditches that were too small for defensive purposes may have been dug in order to funnel visitors into selected points of entry, where tolls could be levied more easily (Garner 1993: 121–122; Feveile 2012: 119–120). Not surprisingly, people took measures to try and get around these widespread tolls. English merchants travelling through Charlemagne's kingdom incurred the king's wrath for masquerading as pilgrims so as to escape paying tolls (Alcuin, *Letters*: no. 100; *EHD*: 848). An unknown English king negotiated a reduced, collective payment for English merchants going to Pavia, in lieu of the invasive and unwelcome search procedures at toll stations (*clusae*) (*Honorantie civitatis Papie*: 18–19). It is likely that tolls became even more numerous in the tenth and eleventh centuries as aristocrats in many parts of Europe sought to solidify their grip on land and its inhabitants. In Ottonian and Salian Germany it was common practice for grants of rights over towns or markets to include a *teloneum* or toll, for the benefit of the patron. In Normandy in 996 an assembly of peasants got together to discuss ways to circumvent tolls or blocks on woods and rivers, but their gathering was violently dispersed by the duke's men before it could get anything done (Gowers 2013). It may well be that the growth and formalisation of towns in late Anglo-Saxon England also triggered the proliferation of tolls.

The second point is the division that could arise from the complicated network of tolls, which encoded differences between groups. Exemption was granted to just a select few. Merchants who did not enjoy that privilege could factor in the expense by charging more for their wares — potentially a substantial mark-up in the case of merchandise brought over a long distance, through numerous tolls. But the rural population also had to travel extensively to fulfil obligations to lords and to use markets, probably frequently, and in the process would have been subject to any and all tolls charged on intervening routes. Erecting new tolls affected both the dedicated merchants and those who travelled or traded on a more local basis. These two constituencies and their different rights were one of the concerns behind an inquest on tolls carried out on a section of the Danube and its environs at some point between 903 and 906 (*Capitularia, tomus secundus*: 249–252;

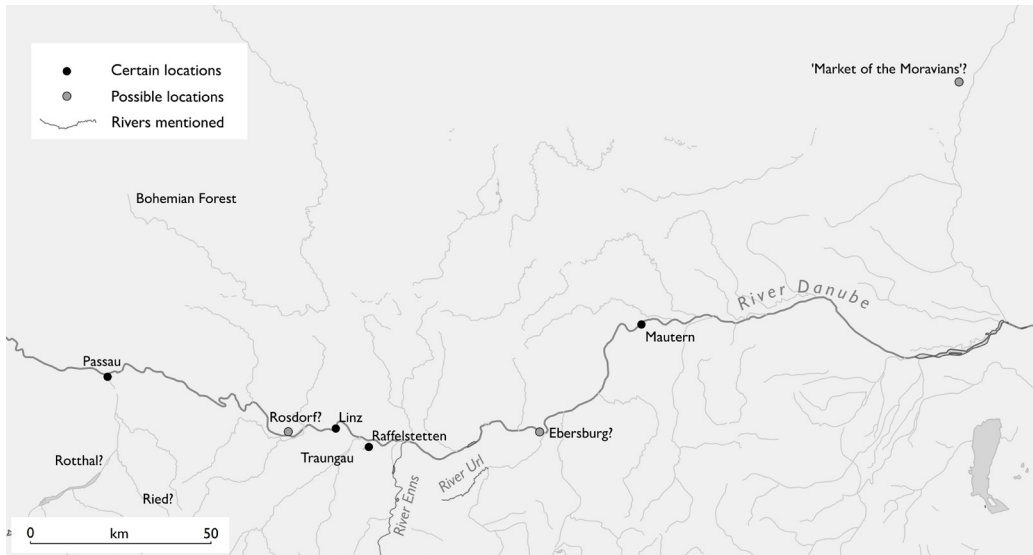


Figure 2: the region of the Raffelstetten toll inquest. Rivers named on this map are referred to in the text. 'Certain locations' refer to places named in the text and identifiable with confidence; 'possible locations' refer to places named in the text that are more tentatively identifiable.

Jarrett 2016) (see Figure 2). The inquest had arisen at the request of the Bavarians, who felt that they were weighed down by unfair tolls: the result, as it survives, represents what the king's appointed investigators had decided should be acceptable, looking back to precedents from the ninth century (Adam 1996: 31–34 and 121–125; Johaneč 1991; Ganshof 1966). Not surprisingly, it shows considerable favour to Bavarians, and especially to free Bavarian peasants and landholders who engaged in trade on the rivers and roads of the region. Those who bought salt for domestic needs were exempt from all toll, for instance. Slavs living in the three counties covered by the investigation were also relatively favoured, though not quite to the same degree as their Bavarian counterparts: it was only Bavarians from the Traungau who were exempt from paying toll on the River Url, for example. Unfree denizens of Bavarian territory engaged in trade too, though suffered harsher penalties if they were caught breaking the rules. Outsiders had a harder time. Slavs from Russia or Bohemia were liable to limitations on where they could trade, and had to pay a fixed, higher rate of toll. Those with the hardest lot of all were professional merchants, some of them Jewish: 'let merchants ... wherever they should come from in this country or other countries, pay the just toll as much for slaves as for other goods' (*Capitularia, tomus secundus*: 252; Jarrett 2016).

The dangers of cross-border trade

Along the Danube, tolls could be a reflection of privilege in ethnicity, geography and status. The situation along this stretch of river and its neighbouring lands was of

course the product of distinct local developments between various communities, but in addition it points to tolls being an economic manifestation of tensions that could well have been found in many places, including England. Balancing the power differential of distinct communities presented a constant challenge, and *Dunsæte* and the Alfred-Guthrum treaty, along with the treaty of the 990s between the English and the viking army known as II Æthelred (*Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. I: 220–227; *EHD*: 437–439), imply simmering tension, and efforts to contain conflict between people either side of the border. Traders, professional or otherwise, who crossed over put themselves in the firing line. Trading by definition involved moving between communities, at a time when familiarity and local knowledge were key to getting by. Outsiders stood at significant risk simply by virtue of being foreigners, here meaning not just foreign by virtue of coming from what would now be considered a different country, but foreign to specific local communities. One did not need to travel far before becoming a foreigner. Two near-identical passages in the laws of Ine of Wessex (688×694) and Wihtred of Kent (695) required travellers leaving the road to announce themselves by shouting or blowing a horn, in order to avoid being seen as a thief, which was the default assumption if one met a stranger skulking about where they should not be (*Laws of Ine*, c. 20; *Laws of Wihtred* c. 28; *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. I: 14 and 98; *EHD*: 398 and 401). Foreigners lived with suspicion and risk. The Frisians who dwelt in late eighth-century Northumbria had to flee the country when the son of a nobleman was killed in a fight with a Frisian merchant, the whole community presumably being liable to wrath and reprisal, perhaps as extended kinsmen, or even a fictive kin-group (Altfred, *Vita S. Liudgeri*, c. 11: 407). This is why the *Dunsæte* and Alfred-Guthrum provisions, along with the English-viking treaty known as II Æthelred, took such care to protect those on either side: the risk of trouble was high. And even with good relations, problems could come from above as well as from dealing with one's peers across a border. Offa and Charlemagne had a dispute over the marriage of their children around 790 that allegedly led to both rulers halting cross-Channel traffic (Nelson 2001: 132–135; Story 2003: 184–187; Keynes 2005: 16–17; McKitterick 2008: 282–284).

Traders had limited protections against such hazards. As seen with the shouting, horn-blowing wanderers of the seventh century, distrust of unfamiliar people was the baseline. One of the tasks of traders who presented themselves to the Alfredian king's reeve in a public meeting was to introduce anyone they were bringing with them; the traders also took responsibility for bringing those men to justice if they misbehaved. These extra men could be slaves for sale, or, perhaps more likely, simply new colleagues who had yet to gain the confidence of the king's reeve and of the community more widely. Fortunately, porous borders meant that those immediately on either side of them would probably have been known to each other. This knowledge mattered because in practice most buying and selling was not done by professional merchants, but by peasants and others who dealt fairly locally. Neither the Alfred-Guthrum treaty nor *Dunsæte* gives any indication of the status of the people involved, but they very probably included regular Welshmen, Englishmen or subjects of Guthrum with goods to sell, and a market or

buyer that happened to live in an area that answered to a different political authority. There would have been familiar faces on both sides, and borders as such mattered little for those who dwelt and dealt along the margins, save perhaps in times and areas of direct military conflict. Professional merchants were in a more challenging position. Generally, they worked far from home; indeed, the Old English wisdom poem *Maxims I* makes a piece of sententious wisdom out of the joy that a Frisian trader's wife felt on his return home, with the cautionary note that she may have been unfaithful to him during the long, cold nights of his absence (*Maxims I*, ll. 24b–35a: 68–69). That imaginary trader's travels might have taken him far and wide, but in practice even journeying from one end of England to the other put merchants at as much risk as going overseas. One of the worst incidents of preying on traders came when a group of York-based merchants landed in Kent and were robbed, prompting King Edgar (959–75) to retaliate brutally against the locals (Roger of Wendover, *Chronicle*, s.a. 974; *EHD*: 284). Other risks were smaller yet still cumbersome. There is also a Frankish capitulary that tries to forbid peasants from over-charging travellers, for example (*Capitulary of Ver*, 884, c. 13; *Capitularia, tomus secundus*, 375).

The way merchants mitigated against these risks was by using well-trodden routes and building up contacts and local savvy along the way. In effect, they got to know the people and places they dealt with. This has been demonstrated very effectively by Søren Sindbæk in relation to Viking-Age Scandinavia, where the distribution of various types of object shows how major arteries of trade flowed from big centres to big centres, not via local ones except as waystations; there were separate capillary networks that took goods out from major centres to the countryside (Sindbæk 2007a and b; 2009a and b). Merchants would, then, have plied certain specific routes, getting to know people and places along the way. Their mental map of England and its neighbours might have looked something like the strip maps created in later times to show the path between key points (MacEachren and Johnson 1987). Once arrived, they might even stay for a good long while and acquire land — partly as a *pled á terre*, and partly as an investment to help business and cement ties to the local community. Frankish traders owned land in eighth-century London (Sawyer 1968: no. 133; *Cartularium Saxonicum*: no. 259), and Welsh sailors as a group rented property in the estate at Tidenham on the Severn Estuary (*Anglo-Saxon Charters*: 204–207). Trust and familiarity were key tools in the merchant's arsenal, and could be built up by long-term residence, or by intermarriage with the local community.

Means of exchange across borders

Crossing borders for trading purposes comes across as commonplace. It involved social and administrative hurdles, but also practical ones, like not being able to use the same money. The means of exchange that was used in these settings carries interest as a proxy for several things: the direction and intensity of travel, oversight of trade and also the different kinds of economy that prevailed. It is also susceptible to close analysis because the available body of evidence is relatively large and can generally be attributed and

dated with a degree of precision. For all these reasons coins will be considered more closely in what follows, even if it must always be remembered that while all coin was money, not all money was coin. There is a further reason why looking at the flows of currency matters. England had native silver sources, though the evidence for their exploitation in the Early Middle Ages is limited (Naismith 2017: 13–17). Where, then, did the silver used in making Anglo-Saxon coin come from? Sometimes there was clearly a vast amount of it on hand. Part of the stock of coin could have come from reminting existing Anglo-Saxon currency, but that could only go so far: a major source must have come from incoming foreign coin. This in turn raises the question of how coin related to cargo. Merchants from ancient times to the present have tended to set out from A to B with commodities that are available at A and desirable in B — but after doing their business, they would then stock up with goods that are available in B but desirable in A, essentially reversing the process (perhaps with intermediary stops), and reducing the amount of actual cash that was carried as far as possible (Spufford 1988: 274). This had advantages for traders. Coins were liable to lose a significant amount of value if they had to be melted and reminted, especially multiple times. They were also more easily stolen than many commodities.

If that equation applied to foreign traders active in Anglo-Saxon England — goods > money > other goods — it would be difficult to account for the apparently large inflow of foreign silver. The Frisian traders who came in the seventh and eighth centuries might have come over with wine, sold that wine in London, Ipswich or Southampton (Theuvs 2018: esp. 68–70), then used the proceeds to invest in wool or slaves, for example, to take back with them. That is why another option presents itself: that silver and gold was in itself one of the goods that traders coming from overseas to England trafficked in. Lacking native sources, precious metal might have been in demand in England, and carried enough of a premium to be viable as an import good. This seems to have been the case by the early twelfth century: the miracles of St Mary of Laon, famous for their account of the monks getting into a debate with a Cornish peasant about King Arthur, say that when those monks first travelled to England to raise funds for rebuilding their church, they did so in the company of merchants who were going from Flanders to England to buy wool, armed with big sacks of silver (Hermann, *Miracula S. Mariae Laudunensis*, II.4: *Patrologia latina*, vol. CLVI: cols. 975C–977B). Actual coin-finds in England suggest how this relationship worked in practice, though their testimony needs to be read with care, because coins are at the end of the day just lumps of metal. They do not tell us who used them or how. Moreover, as pieces of metal, they could easily be melted down into something else, such as other (English) coins — so the possibility exists that some or most coins moving between distinct polities would be turned into the local currency. In other words, it is necessary to think of the metal as well as the coin.

The issue boils down to two questions: were people required or encouraged (for instance by preferential pricing) to use a particular kind of coin for some or all purposes; and (if so) when and how did they exchange others for the acceptable kind? So far,

the emphasis has fallen on coin coming in from overseas, from mainland Europe, but there was also extensive traffic between separate kingdoms within England in the period down to political consolidation in the tenth century. In principle the movement of coin from one Anglo-Saxon kingdom to another should have been treated in the same way. Yet finds of coins paint a more integrated picture. In the period from the late sixth century to the later eighth, it is difficult to see much evidence of any coin, English or foreign, being systematically reminted. Merovingian gold *tremisses* were probably the main source of gold for early English gold shillings (the latter minted after about 620), yet the two circulated side by side and have been found together in at least one hoard (Crondall, Hampshire: Sutherland 1948). Some incoming *tremisses* must therefore have been melted down, but not all of them, and not because there was a hard and fast rule against using them. Frankish coins were no longer brought to England in large quantity after the mid-seventh century, the principal source shifting north-eastwards to Frisia. This realignment relates to wider reorientation of English political and cultural relations eastwards (Platts 2021: 169–177 and 277–278). Frisian coin issues of the late seventh and early eighth centuries grew to account for a large proportion of finds of relevant coins found in England (about a quarter) (Naismith 2017: 87–91; though cf. Theuws 2018), and are likely to have been an important source for the silver of many English pennies. Again, however, the coins were not all reminted: many circulated in their original state.

This begs the question of what was happening in England. Why was it that only some Frankish gold coins were remade into Anglo-Saxon ones, and a larger (but still far from complete) share of Frisian silver pieces turned into Anglo-Saxon pennies? One factor was surely the huge diversity of early Anglo-Saxon coinage. Minting simply does not seem to have been a matter of large-scale territorial jurisdiction. Instead, minting should be attributed to smaller, probably more personalised forces that followed a more selective logic than blanket bans on outside coins. Some coin issues might have been driven by what we might call social or political motives, such as when a major patron wanted to make an expenditure in cash for military, building or other purposes. Others could have been driven by economic forces, as when a king or other powerful agency demanded that tolls, church-scot or other dues had to be paid in a certain kind of coin, which would have required anyone liable to them to obtain the appropriate kind of coin. In other words, it was crossing personal and social boundaries that affected the manufacture of early coins, the number and complexity of these mounting as the more accessible silver coinage proliferated.

The middle part of the eighth century was a watershed in the mobility of money. Kings started to put their names on coins, and in short order also oversaw the creation of spheres of monetary circulation that corresponded to political dominance. In the English context this was a new development. Firewalls sprang up between neighbouring coinages, and the assumption is that people were now expected to use only the permissible currency when dealing in that kingdom. These did not change the fundamental shape of the monetary economy, in that finds remain overwhelmingly concentrated in the same eastern area as before. Rulers could not call into being a radical redirection of coin to

politically significant regions like northern Northumbria or western Mercia. Even so, a seismic shift was taking place in the level of intervention rulers claimed within these limits. Its impact can be seen in surviving coin finds, which no longer show extensive circulation of outside currency (Naismith 2012a).

Northumbria was the first to move in this direction, probably in the 740s, and set itself up as a self-contained and increasingly idiosyncratic monetary zone. For the next century, circulation within the kingdom was dominated by local coin. The south was more complicated. Offa dominated England south of the Humber when (around 780) he brought in the first controls over circulation, which essentially targeted Frankish and Frisian coin. One aim of the closely parallel currency reforms of Charlemagne (768–814) and Offa in the early 790s was to distance their respective coinages in terms of weight, making it harder for them to circulate side by side (Garipzanov 2016). Within England south of the Humber, though, a sort of Anglo-Saxon 'Eurozone' emerged: people could use coins from Kent or Wessex in East Anglia or Mercia, or in any combination (Naismith 2012b: 203–218). This monetary entente began as an outgrowth of the political dominance of Offa and Coenwulf (796–821), and subsequently the rulers of Wessex, but survived various conflicts between individual kingdoms. That cooperation took more overt form in the 860s when Wessex adopted the same coin-type as Mercia, and laid the basis for the alignment of Mercian and West Saxon coinage that prevailed through the later ninth and tenth centuries, recognising the same king from Alfred's time onwards. But even if people could use coin from multiple kingdoms within Southumbrian England, they generally did not use coins from mainland Europe. Instead of about a quarter of all finds from England around 700 being made in Frisia, Francia or Jutland, only about one per cent of finds in the later years of Offa came from the Carolingian Empire (Naismith 2012b: 205–207). Metallurgical analysis nonetheless suggests that foreign silver remained the key contributor to Anglo-Saxon pennies, just in reminted form (Naismith 2012b: 157–161); a rare example is known of a coin from Cologne in the years around 900 that was re-struck in England a few years later, in this case without having been melted down (Blunt 1981). Current research into the metallurgy of English coinage also suggests that the turnover of bullion was fairly rapid, meaning a continuous, healthy stream of silver. Exactly where that stream came from (save when local coin was reminted) remains to be discovered.

So, two kinds of policy prevailed in the eighth century and after. One related to mainland European coin, and was on the whole a hard and effective barrier. People did not use Carolingian coin in England, but their actual exchange did not happen at or even near borders: it probably occurred wherever traders happened to go. The second related to internal political borders. North and south mattered here. Northumbria went its own way internally, though its debased ninth-century coins circulated on a surprisingly significant scale in southern England and a few have been found much further afield: specimens have surfaced in Scandinavia, Poland, Germany, Italy and Spain. Whether this circulation was driven by its economic attractions as a low-value

coin, or by other factors remains unclear, and while some finds might fit into known Scandinavian networks, others do not. The southern kingdoms, meanwhile, occupied a shared monetary space. There is also no indication that later internal borders within the larger kingdom of England, such as those that emerged between shires or ealdormen's territories, affected the circulation of coins or other means of exchange.

A third and final kind of frontier also needs to be considered: those which separated one kind of economy from another. That includes how coins were handled. There might be subtle gradations in what they meant to people in different areas or social contexts. In late-seventh-century England, coins circulated quite widely, but they were generally only put in burials in coastal regions of the east and south-east. This could well suggest that the handling of coined money carried a stronger, more widely understood social significance in the latter regions, perhaps tied in with a generally higher degree of autonomy in economic and other spheres; autonomy that extended beyond the elite, and that was expressed differently for men and women (Scull and Naylor 2016: 227–230). An even starker division emerged later between the English and groups to their west and north: vikings, Picts, Britons, Gaels and others. These operated beyond a different kind of border — not just political but economic, with fundamentally different approaches to means of exchange and their regulation on either side. Coined money was used on a much smaller scale in these regions, and was not sanctioned and supported by royal command. That said, 'border' may not always be the right word here. Some regions of Britain and Ireland outside England had very developed monetary economies. Dublin in particular was for a time at the end of the tenth century closely integrated into the English monetary system, to the extent that it used dies from England and some moneymen in England even used dies cut in Dublin. Geographical and political boundaries had little obvious impact, though that changed in the eleventh century as Dublin's monetary economy became more distinct (Naismith 2017: 331–332). Other differences developed gradually, and the western and northern regions of England most exposed to the Irish and Welsh kingdoms and to north Britain had limited circulation of coin, especially before the tenth century. They may not in practice have been so different to their neighbours beyond English dominion, meaning that there was a softer and more gradual shift away from coin-based exchange as one moved west and north.

The most visibly different monetary practice in the regions under viking dominance was the extensive use of cut and weighed precious metal in exchange contexts (Graham-Campbell 1995; Williams 2015; Kershaw 2017). Both bullion and coin relied in different ways on precious metal, so need to be seen as points along a continuum rather than binary opposites. Bullion-based systems also used coins, and coin-based ones allowed for some use of gold and silver objects in exchange — and both existed as part of a more complex array of commodity monies. Even within the eastern part of England, gold and silver objects, as well as other commodities such as livestock and grain, were used to settle debts in land transactions (Naismith 2013: 312–313), and no laws mandated the use of coin to the exclusion of other media. Conversely, in the area that probably lay under the authority

of Scandinavian rulers based in York, several different circuits of exchange media can be identified: one based on local coin in York itself and the immediate environs; and another based on hack-silver (but also admitting a wider range of coin) in rural Yorkshire (Kershaw 2020). Further work might reveal even more layers and patterns, just as it has become apparent how permeable and durable the use of uncoined metal was in lowland Britain. Scattered finds from across English territory of bullion point to viking-style handling of silver by people travelling well away from borders (Kershaw 2015), while in Yorkshire and the East Midlands circulation of bullion on the viking model continued for at least a decade after English political takeover, albeit probably losing ground in favour of coin (Williams 2020a: 135–136). These finds need not all represent the proceeds of peaceful trade, but nor can they all be explained away as the losses or deposits of raiders and soldiers. They add up to a more fluid picture of exchange across borders and between economic systems. Passing from one region to another meant moving, by degrees, from one set of preferences and cultural norms to another — not crossing a hard and fast line beyond which coin or bullion was no longer acceptable. Law was only part of the picture. The decision to use one medium or another, be it coin, bullion or something else, most likely reflects who one was dealing with. Hoards like those from the Vale of York or Glenfaba on the Isle of Man, both of which contained several kinds of coins alongside whole silver objects, ingots and pieces of hackmetal, should be seen as a sort of economic menu, something like a modern-day wallet with small change, notes, a giftcard and several credit cards, all to deal with different situations and constituencies (Bornholdt Collins *et al.* 2014; Williams 2008; 2011). Silver pennies within England had the advantage of fungibility: others were obliged to accept them. Prices may well have varied depending on means of payment, with bullion or commodity prices perhaps being higher unless the deal was between friends or driven by factors of honour, prestige and tradition. Those benefits extended, in a looser fashion, to other parts of Britain and Ireland, where English coin circulated and was imitated. It was probably not mandated in Alba or the Welsh and Irish kingdoms as it was in England, but the stability and predictability of Anglo-Saxon pennies, and the ease of using them if one wanted to do business in England or its neighbours, probably meant that individuals had a vested interest in using them where possible.

Conclusion

It should not be seen as a disappointment to end by reiterating that borders as such meant little in relation to exchange and movement of people. Or, at least, borders in the sense of national or regnal divisions mattered little: passage between jurisdictions of people and goods mattered a lot, with the important caveat that internal borders and barriers were no less important than 'external' ones. That in itself is interesting. Traders and other kinds of travellers could move about with relative impunity as long as they were prepared to pay the price that any travel entailed. Tolls were one aspect of this: a recognition of authority and, often, a significant source of income. One suspects that they are little known not because they were scarce, but because they were

commonplace. What is clear is that they were as much internal as external. Coined money reflects another of these potential controls; potential in that it simply did not always play this role. As with tolls, they reflect a layered picture of exchange. Not all coins were exchanged at ports of entry; indeed, canny merchants probably engineered their transactions to involve as little exchanging of coin as possible. They would probably only bring coin in bulk when silver was itself a desirable commodity; otherwise, they brought goods, sold them, and used the proceeds (coin or otherwise) to purchase other goods for the next leg of their trip. Nonetheless, means of exchange including coins highlight other kinds of border, taken in a looser sense — between areas where coins are used extensively or not, controlled by ruling authorities or not, or used more as pieces of silver bullion. Often it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where such a border lay, and only sometimes would there have been a hard and fast line, which itself could easily shift.

Bigē habban, ‘to do business’, across long-distance borders was difficult more for practical than for legal or jurisdictional reasons; in effect, it was difficult because of physical distance and the many local hurdles that had to be negotiated along the way. Yet people still did it. The nature of surviving sources means, if anything, that trade is mostly known either from the physical remains of very select goods (above all ceramics, but also coins and other metallic objects) or from written references to attempts to control it. These predispose historians to look at less personal aspects of the process: the goods involved, and the institutional dimensions of trade. What these leave out is the human picture. The English pilgrim who took pride in pulling a fast one on the local authorities in eighth-century Syria by smuggling a calabash full of balsam past the inspectors of goods (Huneburg of Heidenheim, *Hodoeporicon: Scriptorum*: 101), or the Irish merchants who took umbrage in tenth-century Cambridge after the cloaks they had brought to sell were stolen by a nefarious local priest, who then had to get the support of the townspeople for his protection (*Liber Eliensis*, II.32: 107). Trade, local and long-distance, meant people dealing with people, with all the complications and benefits that followed. And, as has been noted already, exchange was never just about economics.

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Donation and Conquest: The Formation of Lothian and the Origins of the Anglo-Scottish Border

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Various 'donation' accounts of the twelfth century attempted to explain Scottish rule of 'Lothian' as the outcome of grants from English rulers to Scottish kings. Until relatively recently historians of both Scotland and England tended to accept these accounts. However, 'Lothian' was a politically sensitive topic in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the value of these accounts for an earlier period is low. There is a variety of evidence of better value, and although the guidance of strictly contemporary sources is very poor prior to the later eleventh century, continuous Scottish rule south of the Forth cannot be traced prior to the reign of Máel Coluim III (r. 1058–1093), and in the case of some areas David his son (r. 1113/24–1153). It is suggested that the emergence of 'Lothian' as a jurisdiction is a response to the political changes of that era, an important development in its own right but also a critical intermediate development for the emergence of the familiar Anglo-Scottish border.

Keywords: Anglo-Scottish, Bamburgh, Cumbria, Lothian, Strathclyde

Introduction: appearance of an Anglo-Scottish border

On 24 August 1093 the court of William II Rufus (r. 1087–1100) at Gloucester was visited by a Scottish embassy, possibly invited earlier in the year when illness had threatened Rufus' life. The Anglo-Normans facilitated the Scottish king's personal presence by sending hostages to Scotland, but as things transpired Máel Coluim III (r. 1058–1093) departed with renewed resentment. As part of the fallout, the Scottish ruler led a winter invasion that got him killed in a skirmish at Alnmouth (Northumberland) (ASC, MS E, s.a. 1093: 103; ASC: 170). Rufus himself appears to have been annoyed at Máel Coluim's refusal to do homage anywhere but 'on the frontier of their kingdoms where Scottish kings had done in the past, and in accordance with the judgement of the chief men of both realms' (*Chron. ex chron.*, vol. 3, s.a. 1093: 64–65). Among the 1093 entries of *Chronicon ex chronicis* (now associated with 'John of Worcester'), this passage seems to be one of the two earliest references to something we might properly call an Anglo-Scottish frontier — that is to say, reference to a place where the frontiers of the English and Scottish kingdoms met. *Chronicon ex chronicis* is in part a Latin translation of a variant of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that for the second half of the eleventh century is often superior in detail and integrity to the surviving vernacular alternatives. Although the precise boundary is not stated explicitly in the 1093 account, we have a good general idea where earlier Scoto-Norman summits had occurred. The Scots and Anglo-Normans had assembled together at Falkirk, near the Forth, in 1080 (*HR*, s.a. 1080: 210–211); and the two armies met again nearby when

in 1091 Máel Coluim led his forces 'out of Scotland into Lothian in England', and met the Norman forces led by Robert Curthose and William Rufus (ASC, MS E, s.a. 1091: 102; ASC: 169). Since 'Lothian' appears as the name for the southern side of the Forth, it is another suggestion that the frontier lay along that body of water.

The significance of these passages has not been widely recognised because scholarly engagement with the pre-twelfth century Scottish border has tended to consist of little more than brief discussion of two short accounts from twelfth-century sources, part of a general tendency to see the Scottish and Northumbrian past through a twelfth-century lens. In what follows I will discuss these accounts, before setting out a broader picture of the evidence. I will try to explain how the twelfth-century accounts fit into the picture presented by the best, and most contemporary evidence. I suggest that the accounts are probably best understood not as a reliable record of the 'Viking Age' past but as an expression of twelfth-century Anglo-Scottish relations. From this point of view, it is the emergence of 'Lothian' itself that is significant, coinciding with the beginning of continuous, documented Scottish overlordship south of the Forth.

Donations

In several twelfth-century sources the Scottish king's control of Lothian is explained as the outcome of single-transaction gifts by English rulers. For clarity of analysis, I have named the two most influential 'donation' accounts 'Edgar's Beneficence' and 'Eadwulf's Cowardice' (for reasons that will become apparent). The former appears within a foundation legend of the earldoms of Northumbria in a tract commonly today called *De primo Saxonum adventu* (sometimes also called *Libellus de regibus Saxonis*), seemingly produced at Durham between 1123 and 1128 (DPSA: 381, 384; Rollason 2000: lxxix; Kennedy 2010). It relates how the former Northumbrian kingdom was divided between two earls, Eadwulf Evil-Child receiving the north and Oslac the south; we are subsequently told that:

These two earls along with Ælfsige (who was bishop of St Cuthbert) conducted Cinaed, king of the Scots, to King Edgar. And when he had done homage to him, King Edgar gave him Lothian; and with great honour sent him back to his own.¹

The episode is included in the annals associated with Roger of Wendover, added to King Edgar's obit s.a. 975 (RW, vol. 1, s.a. 975: 416). In the work of John of Wallingford, c. 1220, the account is significantly elaborated, either using *De primo Saxonum adventu* itself or common source material (*Chron. Wall.*: 55). The same Northumbrian earldom foundation legend without 'Edgar's Beneficence' occurs in the Anglo-Latin annals

¹ *Isti duo comites cum Elfsio, qui apud Sanctum Cuthbertum episcopus fuerat, perduxerunt Kyneth regem Scottorum ad regem Eadgarum. Qui, cum illi fecisset hominum, dedit ei rex Eadgarus Lodoneium, et multo cum honore remisit ad propria* (DPSA: 382–383; SAEC: 77).

known as *Historia Regum* (or sometimes *Historia de regibus Anglorum et Dacorum*), with an ‘interpolation’ entered *sub anno* (s.a.) 1072.²

We owe the other ‘donation’ narrative, ‘Eadwulf’s Cowardice’, to a separate Durham tract, *De obsessione Dunelmi et de probitate Ucthredi comitis* (‘On the Siege of Durham and on the prowess of Earl Uhtred’). Although Eadwulf Evil-Child is not mentioned, we are given stories about his successors, i.e. Earl Waltheof of Bamburgh and his sons. We are told how one son, Earl Uhtred, vanquished the Scots in battle; but that:

After [Uhtred’s] death, his brother Eadwulf, known as ‘Cuttlefish’ (*Cudel*), a very lazy and cowardly man, succeeded to the earldom. Fearful lest the Scots whom his brother had slaughtered as aforesaid would avenge these deaths upon him, he ceded to them by treaty the whole of Lothian to make amends. In this way Lothian was joined to the kingdom of the Scots.³

Geoffrey Barrow noted that Scottish historians tended to prefer ‘Eadwulf’s Cowardice’, English historians ‘Edgar’s Beneficence’ and explained the difference as national vanity (Barrow 2003: 121).

Historiographic reaction

English historical luminaries like Edward Freeman (1867–79, vol. 1: 133–139), and in Barrow’s own day Frank Stenton (1971: 370) and Dorothy Whitelock (1959: 77) did rely on ‘Edgar’s Beneficence’ for their understanding of the issue, ignoring ‘Eadwulf’s Cowardice’.⁴ By contrast, ‘Eadwulf’s Cowardice’ was the main explanation for George Chalmers, W.F. Skene and E.W. Robertson, authors of perhaps the three most important nineteenth-century works on early Scotland (Chalmers 1807–24, vol. 1: 369; Robertson 1862, vol. 1: 95–96; Skene 1876–80, vol. 2: 336–337). Scottish historians were also keen to link ‘Eadwulf’s Cowardice’ to the battle of Carham, with Robertson claiming that it is ‘impossible to doubt that the cession of Lothian by Eadwulf Cudel was the result of the battle’ (Robertson 1862, vol. 1: 96). Marjorie Anderson (1960), seemingly in reaction to English scholarship, published ‘Lothian and the Early Scottish Kings’ and attempted to reconcile the two traditions. She was willing to admit the credibility of ‘Edgar’s Beneficence’, but suggested that a known Scottish defeat in 1006 (*AU*, s.a. 1006.5) allowed Uhtred to retake the province, subsequently reversed after the earl’s death; and thus, she declared, ‘there seems... to be no external reason why we should not accept as valid... that Lothian had passed (permanently) into Scottish hands after the death of Earl Uhtred’ (Anderson 1960: 111).

² The tract, *De omnibus comitibus Northimbrensis*, is interpolated in *HR*, s.a. 1072: 196–198.

³ *Quo occiso, frater ipsius Eadulf, cognomento Cudel, ignavus valde et timidus ei successit in comitatum. Timens autem ne Scotti mortem suorum, quos frater eius, ut supradictum est, occiderat, in se vindicarent, totum Lodoneium ob satisfactionem et firmam concordiam eis donavit. Hoc modo Lodoneium adjectum est regno Scottorum* (DOD: 218; Morris 1992: 3).

⁴ This is despite the fact that it had been circulating since at least the early eighteenth century (Collins 1714: 243; Hutchinson 1785–94, vol. 1: 92; Palgrave 1832: 477). Incidentally, it was also known to Scottish historians of the era, or at least to Pinkerton (Pinkerton 1789, vol. 2: 208).

Commentators like Anderson and Stenton were concerned with some of the potential weaknesses of these sources, but not to the extent we might expect today.⁵ For 'Edgar's Beneficence', as we have seen, our passage is first evident in a text composed only in the 1120s. There is an outside possibility that *De obsessio Dunelmi* might date as early as 1073 (Meehan 1976: 18–19; Morris 1992: 7–10), but such an early date is very unlikely and the possibility of a date as late as the 1160s has recently arisen (MacLean 2012: 674–675). There is also no clear sign of reliable underlying source material. In 'Edgar's Beneficence', we are presented with a series of synchronisms that despite some potential can be explained reasonably without relying on early material.⁶ At surface level, *De obsessione Dunelmi* is much less credible still, a highly confused account even by twelfth-century standards. For instance, the tract's author provides an AD date of 969, but the English hero of the siege is Earl Uhtred, whose career was in the first two decades of the eleventh century; and the 'siege' itself was probably that led by the Scottish king Donnchad I in 1039. The text's author was less interested in sieges than fabricating historical evidence in pursuit of estates that the church of Durham sought to 'recover' from rival post-Conquest landlords (Woolf 2007: 233; McGuigan 2022: 18–19). Ironically perhaps, the poor historical judgment of its creator may actually lend credibility to 'Eadwulf's Cowardice', as it means we can probably be quite confident that the story came from some earlier tradition — but how early is no clearer.⁷

Perhaps the most influential discussion of the twentieth century was G.W.S. Barrow's study of the pre-thirteenth-century Anglo-Scottish border (Barrow 1966, reprinted Barrow 2003: 112–129). In a four-page consideration of the pre-twelfth-century 'east march' Barrow conjectured a very early chronology for Scottish expansion south of the Forth. On analogy with the expansion of Alfred the Great further south, he suggested Viking attacks (on Northumbria) as the cause. Cinaed mac Ailpín's attacks on Dunbar and Melrose, reported in the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* (CKA: 148, 152–153), were

⁵ Anderson did think that twelfth-century writers would be interested in the status of Lothian, and identified anachronisms in the account but nonetheless was still 'inclined to think that there was a written source' behind it (Anderson 1960: 106). Stenton noted that 'Edgar's Beneficence' is not supported by any contemporary sources, but set this source of scepticism aside because the account was 'set down as a simple matter of fact', because the names within it 'raise no chronological difficulties' and because it 'ignores the historical significance of the grant' (Stenton 1971: 370). Although Freeman did not dispute the accuracy of the grant, he is open to the possibility that the king behind it was different (Freeman 1867–79, vol. 1: 138).

⁶ It was not immediately obvious how an Anglo-Norman writer could have synchronised Cinaed with King Edgar the Peace-maker or with the earls and the bishop of the foundation legend, synchronisms that are plausible. But Cinaed's synchronism can be explained by the widespread availability of information recounting his appearance at Chester with other Insular rulers during Edgar's reign (*Chron. ex chron.*, vol. 2, s.a. 973: 422–425; WM, GRA, vol. 1, §148: 238–241; for the episode in question, see also Thornton 2003; Williams 2004; and Barrow 2001). It should be noted that Cinaed's appearance is not entirely unproblematic. The issue is that Cinaed may not have succeeded until after 977, but this depends on the reality of the kingship of his kinsman Amlaíb (for argument, see Duncan 2002: 21–22; discussed also by Woolf 2007: 205–206). Amlaíb does not occur in the king-lists and I am not convinced by Duncan's argument (McGuigan 2021: 56, n. 24).

⁷ One point worth reflecting on is that the two Bamburgh 'earls' involved were called Eadwulf, which might have caused confusion at some part of the process by which these 'donation' accounts were formulated.

signals of the ‘pressure’ that led to such territorial change in the mid-ninth(!) century. Barrow selected and interpreted every other piece of evidence in a way that favoured his chronology, and so the ‘donation’ accounts discussed above were at best long-overdue diplomatic acknowledgments of a *fait accompli*. Relying on Edmund Craster’s (then-recent) theory about an ‘early core’ of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* composed c. 945 (Craster 1954: 177–178ff.; see also Rozier 2020: 50–62), Barrow cited as supporting evidence a reference to the Scots ‘cross[ing] the Tweed’ during a conflict with the ninth-century Anglo-Danish ruler Guthred (d. 895). This idea is very problematic to say the least,⁸ and some of Barrow’s other ideas have become even more difficult today. His view of the ‘west march’ was based on the ‘Fordunian’ model of Strathclyde history that has since been discredited, and for the ‘east march’ he relied on speculation and narrative-making (Hudson 1988; MacQuarrie 1998; Broun 2004; Edmonds 2015).

Although expressed early in Barrow’s career, because the subject was not revisited in any depth for the rest of the century his remained a default position for many commentators. For instance, it was echoed by his compatriot Archie Duncan (Duncan 1975: 94–98; Duncan 2002: 24–26). David Rollason also followed Barrow (Rollason 2003: 274–282), even suggesting that the Scots held the whole Forth-Tweed area *before* 914 (Rollason 2003: 276). With that said, opinions on the matter became more diverse towards the end of the century. Benjamin Hudson in 1994 saw the reign of Ildulb mac Causantín as the beginning of Scottish expansion beyond the Forth, first into East Lothian and further still after the battle of Carham (Hudson 1994: 89–90, 100–101). Oram in 2002 thought that Carham had seen the Scottish expansion to the Tweed, but also conjectured that the area south of the Lammermuir was temporarily lost in the time of Siward and only recovered in 1061 by Máel Coluim III (Oram 2004: 21–22).⁹ There was also increasing unease at the low quality of the source material discussed above, which came to the fore in 2007 with Alex Woolf’s volume in the *New Edinburgh History of Scotland*. Woolf (2007: 232–240) argued that theories about significant pre-eleventh-century expansion ran against the evidence, and pointed out that the attested movement of relics in either the 1020s or 1030s from places like Tynninghame, Coldingham and Melrose to Durham (*LDE* iii.7: 162–167) seemed to suggest Northumbrian continuity far into the eleventh century — though he also saw the 1010s as an era of ‘opportunity’ for Scottish expansion.

⁸ The text in question is *HSC*, §33 (pp. 68–69). The Tweed appears as a geographical reference point, possibly mentioned as a border of a local ecclesiastical jurisdiction or perhaps as an indication that the army was bearing down on the island; but there is no claim that it is a political frontier, and indeed the text elsewhere takes the territory of the church to the mouth of the (East Lothian) Esk. Another point is that *HSC*, as a whole, dates to the eleventh century, perhaps even as late as 1100; and Barrow fails to note that the extract in question, what Ted Johnson South called ‘King Guthred’s Dream’ (South 2002: 116), was not part of Craster’s ‘early core’ of the 940s, but what Craster regarded as an interpolation dating ‘probably quite late in the eleventh century’ (Craster 1954: 199).

⁹ His argument is not explained in detail, nevertheless he has recently relied upon it (Oram 2020: 3–4); it may be inspired by a similarly very speculative argument presented by Kapelle (1979: 91–93; on which see also McGuigan 2021: 210, 213–214).

'Lothian': etymology and origin

It is worth pointing out that there is a third 'donation' account explaining the cession of Lothian. The author in question is the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical historian Orderic Vitalis. In his description of the negotiations between Máel Coluim III and Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, in 1091 he puts into the Scottish king's mouth the following words:

I acknowledge that when King Edward gave me his great-niece Margaret in marriage he gave me the country of Lothian. King William later confirmed what his predecessor had given me, and required my fealty to you as his first-born son. What, therefore, I have sworn to you I will honour, but I have promised nothing to your brother and owe him nothing. No man, as Christ says, can serve two masters.¹⁰

One of the few to notice the account, Marjorie Anderson, dismissed it on the grounds that it was 'chronologically difficult to explain' and because the other accounts were 'earlier' (Anderson 1960: 98–99). Since none of the three accounts can be dated with confidence, her assessment of the relative dates is more questionable; but Anderson's first point stands, the difficulty being that Edward had died at least two years before Máel Coluim and Margaret were married. What we can say with certainty is that 'Margaret's Dowry' presents the smallest documentation gap between description and event. It was probably written in the 1130s, but in theory any time between 1114 and 1141 is possible and so, theoretically, it may also be the earliest of all the 'donation' accounts (Hingst 2009: xix; Rozier *et al.* 2017: xiv). There are even ways to rationalise the chronological problem (McGuigan 2021: 393–394).

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the term 'Lothian' was used very fluidly, and could denote several jurisdictional units. The largest was the 'justiciarship', which covered the whole region south of the Forth under Scottish control except, apparently, the region we might think of as 'Greater Galloway' (see below). By 1141 there was the archdeaconry of Lothian, the diocese of St Andrews lying south of the Forth (*Chron. Holyrood*: 142; *SEA* i: no. 133; Watt and Murray 2003: 399).¹¹ Within the archdeaconry, a smaller rural deanery sharing the name is attested by 1186, encompassing parishes north of the Lammermuir, bordered to the south by the deanery of the 'Merse' (Watt and Murray 2003: 413).¹² 'Lothian' was also used, at least by one writer, to refer to the honour

¹⁰ *Fateor quod Rex Eduardus dum michi Margaritam proneptem suam in coniugium tradidit Lodonensem comitatum mihi donavit. Deinde Guillelmus rex quod antecessor eius michi dederat concessit et me tibi primogenito suo commendavit. Vnde quod tibi promisi conseruabo sed fratri tuo nichil promisi et nichil debeo. Nemo ut Christus ait, potest duobus dominis seruire* (OV, HE, vol. 4: 268–271, passage at 270–271).

¹¹ See also *Melrose Lib.*: no. 52 (1173×77) for the 'clergy of Lothian'. For this last, see PoMS: <https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1500/> (accessed 29 July 2021).

¹² The twelfth-century deanery included Tynninghame (East Lothian), but it is possible that there was another deanery further west encompassing Linlithgow. See also Barrow 1985: 141–148; and McNeill and MacQueen 1996: 348, for a cartographic representation of these units in the Middle Ages (at time of writing, July 2021, this was online at <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/published-gazetteers-and-atlases/atlas-scottish-history-1707/atlas-scottish-history-1707/370>).

that historians usually call the ‘earldom of Northumbria’ (Torigni, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, s.aa. 1153, 1157: 174–175, 202–203).¹³

The etymology of ‘Lothian’ is, unfortunately, less than clear. Something along the lines of ‘marshy land’ was a possibility suggested by the German philologist Max Förster, reflecting the Celtic root **lutā* > *lotā*, ‘mire’ or ‘swampland’ (Welsh *llaid*, Old Irish *loth*) (Förster 1922: 225–230).¹⁴ Barrow accepted a similar ultimate origin, but thought that the province had taken its name from a small watercourse known as the ‘Lothian Burn’ (Barrow 1985: 145).¹⁵ A number of scholars have taken up the idea that ‘Lothian’ originates in a personal name, including Egerton Phillimore, William Watson and, more recently, John Koch (Phillimore 1890: 50–51; Watson 1926: 101–103; Koch 1997: 131). A reasonable proportion of traditional provinces in northern Britain do seem to originate in personal names, probably ancestors of locally dominant kin-groups; examples include Gabrán (Gowrie), Áengus (Angus) and (possibly) Coel (Kyle) (Watson 1926: 112, 186). The same type of name appears in Welsh cantrefs like Meirionydd and Edeirnion, and are also common in Ireland, for instance Cenél Conaill (Donegal) and Tír nEógain (Tyrone). Because of the high number of vernacular sources, historians have a good sense of how kinship-based local kingdoms emerged from Iron Age tribal confederations in Ireland; and so, we have to be open-minded about this possibility for Lothian, even though early local vernacular sources are absent.

The personal name theory would harmonise with some twelfth-century evidence. In the *Vita Kentigerni imperfecta* we are introduced to the legendary *Leudonus*, ‘a half pagan man’ (*vir semipaganus*), king of *Leudonia* (VKI, §1: 125).¹⁶ The king’s significance is that he is the father of *Thaney*, a girl raped by the son of a British king, *Ewen filius regis Ulien*. Subsequently, *Thaney* gives birth to Kentigern and entrusts his care to St Serf (VKI, §§1–2, 8: 125–127, 131–133, 245–247, 250–252). *Leudonus*’ kingdom seems to encompass Traprain Law and, probably, Kilduff Hill, both in East Lothian.¹⁷ This Anglo-Latin material is not proof of the name theory, it is relatively late and unreliable in that regard. In terms of the value of possible source material, however, it may be significant that a seemingly analogous name, Loth ‘son of Derelath of the Picts’, is attested in the

¹³ Robert says that on David’s death Máel Coluim [IV] received the ‘kingdom of Scotland’ (*regnum Scotie*) and William ‘the earldom of Lothian (*comitatum Lodonensem*); interestingly, the chronicler also seems to have originally included *Castrum Puellarum* among the castles that Henry II demanded from Máel Coluim IV’s regime, s.a. 1157, when the new English king confiscated the earldom.

¹⁴ Förster argued that the double-vowel suffix that should be ancestral to (modern English) Loth-*ian* was a later development, of the twelfth century. See also n. 19 below for changing forms for ‘Mount Lothian’, suggesting that the additional *-i-* may have been a mid-twelfth century development.

¹⁵ Barrow highlights the use of the name in river names elsewhere in Britain from a Celtic root denoting ‘muddiness’ (e.g. rivers named Leadon, Lodden, Lydden and Loddon).

¹⁶ Interestingly, in Jocelin of Furness’ *Life of Kentigern*, the king and his Lothian jurisdiction go unnamed (JF, VSK, §1: 162).

¹⁷ *Dumpelder* (VKI, §7: 249) appears as *monte de Dumpeldar* and *landis of Traperne Dupender* in documents from the reign of David II (RMS, vol. I: App. i, no. 117; App ii, no. 855); by the time of the 1654 Blaeu map, it has the name *Dunpendyrlaw* (see <https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000395>, accessed July 2021). For Kepdud as Kilduff Hill adjacent to the Chesters (*pace* Jackson 1958: 289–293), see *Chrs David*: no. 194; see also Dunshea 2018: 66–67.

eighth-century Irish text, *Audacht Morainn* ('Testament of Morann'). In the latter, the eponymous Morann is described as the 'son of the daughter of Loth', interestingly the same genealogical relationship given for *Leudonus* and Kentigern (*Audacht Morainn*, §1: 2–3). On the other hand, *Leudonus* may be a recently contrived personification of Lothian, and indeed the era of the Kentigern material is the age of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Geoffrey's *De gestis Britonum* features a ruler called Loth of Lothian, but also similar personifications like Brutus of *Britannia*, Albanactus of *Albania* (Scotland), Camber of *Cambria* (Wales) and Locrinus of *Loegria* (England) (GM, DGB: 188–189, 202–207, 234–235 for Loth; and 30–35 for Brutus and his sons).

There is no secure attestation of the name 'Lothian' before the 1090s, and if there is any hope of understanding earlier usage of 'Lothian' in Celtic vernacular(s), place-names might be our best bet. For instance, Torlothane, seemingly 'Lothian mound', looks to be what the locals called the base of Melville Castle (Midlothian), which lies between the Lothian Burn and the River Esk (*Dunferline Reg.*: no. 299, at p. 190; Barrow 1985: 145). The name confirms that the region had a defined identity by the twelfth century.¹⁸ To the south on the edge of the Pentland Hills we have the name Mountlothian (Midlothian), seemingly a British- (or at least a Celtic-) language construction signifying 'Lothian moor'.¹⁹ There is also Barrow's Lothian Burn in Midlothian, which runs from Caerketton Hill in the Pentlands entering the Forth roughly half-way between the Edinburgh (as opposed to East Lothian) Peffer Burn and the River Esk, and is used today as a boundary between the city of Edinburgh and the post-1996 Midlothian council region. Names of burns do often indicate boundaries of the relevant area (e.g. the Gowrie Burn west of Dundee), and if that is the case here it would mean that 'Lothian' either to its west or east (Barrow 1985: 145). So, in a best-case scenario where one of 'Edgar's Beneficence' or 'Eadwulf's Cowardice' mirrors a contemporary source, we would not know how the early source understood 'Lothian'. Even if, for instance, 'Edgar's Beneficence' reflected an early source, the source in question may have been referring to a very small area, entailing very limited rights, perhaps nothing more than the tribute from some Britons living on the shore of the Forth.

Lothian: the jurisdiction

What is important to understand about all the 'donation' accounts is that Lothian was a significant and potentially sensitive concept in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

¹⁸ For date (c. 1178) and brief discussion, see PoMS <https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5669/>, viewed 1 July 2021.

¹⁹ *Montleuen* and *Montlothien* 1165×73 (RRS, ii: no. 61), *Muntlauthian* 1161×73 (*Newbattle Reg.*: App. no. 1), *Montlouthen* c. 1210 (*Newbattle Reg.*: no. 31), *Mundelouen[es]* 1223 (*Newbattle Reg.*: no. 127), *Monte Laodonie* 1240 & 1268 (*Holyrood Liber.*: nos. 76–77), and *Montlauthian* 1251 (*Holyrood Liber.*: no. 75); see also n. 14 above. No obvious French 'mount' stands out in association with the location. There is a curious reference to *illam terram quam Tyhoc de Monte Laudonie tenuit*, where *Tyhoc* looks curiously similar to the Welsh word *taeog*, 'peasant proprietor'; for this see *Midlothian Chrs.*: no. 22 and <https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5842/> (viewed 1 July 2021). The charter dates c. 1280, but *Tyhoc* seems to have been a generation before, perhaps showing the survival of 'Cumbrian' customs in Midlothian in the mid-thirteenth century!

Despite falling under ‘Scottish rule’, it remained administratively and ideologically distinct from ‘Scotland’ (Latin *Scotia*, Gaelic *Alba*), the polity that gave their common ruler his royal title (Broun 2017: 31–85). Although governed by the king of the Gaelic-speaking Scots, in heritage and ethno-linguistic identity it could be conceived of as ‘English’ or ‘British’. In the twelfth century Lothian became the major centre for migration and cultural change, of new towns (burghs), ‘knightly settlement’ and reformed religious houses, boosting the region’s immediate value beyond the usual limits set by demography and geography. An important feature of Lothian’s identity in the era was the ‘justiciar of Lothian’, who supervised local governance and legal administration on behalf of the king, paralleled north of the Forth by the ‘Justiciar of *Scotia*’ (Taylor 2016: 212–244; Barrow 1971).²⁰ Indeed, despite a common ruler and the contiguous territory, ‘Scotland’ and ‘Lothian’ would remain distinct until at least the later thirteenth century (Broun 2018). Twelfth- and thirteenth-century ‘historical’ claims about Lothian and its relationship to Scotland or England touch on legal norms of lordship and tenure and reach to the heart of how Britain was proportioned and governed. The three claims about single-act ‘donations’ are not likely to be, then, the products of fleeting instances of innocent curiosity. Perhaps this is best highlighted in John of Wallingford’s version of ‘Edgar’s Beneficence’, where he specifies legal rituals associated with the grant and adds information about the conditions of tenure that Cinaed agreed to:

[H]e did homage accordingly to King Edgar, and further was obliged to promise under pledges, in solemn form, that he would not deprive the people of that region of their ancient customs, and that they should still be allowed to use the name and language of the English. These conditions have been faithfully observed to the present day; and thus was settled the old dispute about Lothian, though a new ground of difference still often arises...²¹

Here we are offered commentary on the significance of the relationship in the early thirteenth century. Indeed, whenever we get any clues about the stance of the government in England, it is Lothian’s controversial, less-than-settled status that becomes apparent.

In the middle of the same century Alexander III (r. 1249–1286) and a large section of the Scottish elite travelled to York to attend the marriage of their new king to Margaret, daughter of King Henry III (r. 1215–1272). With both kings in each other’s presence for the first time, Alexander proceeds to make his inaugural homage to the king of England, which Matthew Paris related as follows:

So the king of Scotland did homage to the king of the English, by reason of the possessions which he holds of the lord king of the English, to wit

²⁰ MacQueen 1993: 58–66, tackles the justiciarships later in the Middle Ages and shows that although ‘Scotland’ became ‘north of the Forth’ in the fourteenth century, ‘Lothian’ was still used for the southern official until the 1360s (see also Walker 1988–2004, vol. 1: 212–223).

²¹ Text is...*fecitque regi Eadgaro homagium sub cautione multa promittens, quod populo partis illius antiquas consuetudines non negaret, et sub nomine et lingua anglicana permanerent. Quod usque hodie firmum manet. Sicque determinata est vetus querela de Louthian et adhuc noua sepe intentatur* (*Chron. Wall.*: 55; *CHE* ii.2: 555).

in the kingdom of England: namely for Lothian and the other lands. And when in addition to this the king of Scotland was required to do homage and fealty with allegiance to his lord the king of the English by reason of the kingdom of Scotland, as his predecessors had done to the English kings, according as it is clearly written in the chronicles in many places, the king of Scotland replied that he had come thither in peace and for the honour of the king of England, and by his command, to wit to be allied to him by mediation of a matrimonial alliance, and not to reply to him about so difficult a question.²²

Matthew is taking a tendentious line about the Scottish king's traditional legal arrangement 'for Scotland', and historians of Anglo-Scottish relations who have considered this passage have tended to be dismissive.²³ It is worth pointing out, however, that Matthew's Scots opposed English claims of overlordship over Scotland itself, the kingdom north of the Forth. Within the same passage the Lothian matter seems to be incidental and, by contrast, is not recorded as a point of contention. On the other hand, might Matthew have put Lothian among what the Scottish king held 'of the king of the English' because of earlier St Albans traditions about 'Edgar's beneficence'? This is not impossible. Whatever the case, it remains an important piece of evidence on the matter, and is difficult to dismiss.

Back in 1174, two generations before, the Scottish ruler William grandson of David I was captured at Alnwick (Northumberland), conducting an expedition nominally on behalf of the rebellion of Henry the Young King. William was subsequently forced to agree the 'Treaty of Falaise', by which he formally acknowledged the king of England as overlord 'for Scotland'. In 1189, however, Henry's successor Richard I (r. 1189–1199) sold the concession back to the Scottish king, resulting in the so-called 'Quitclaim of Canterbury'.²⁴ In later years the aftermath of Alnwick was well remembered, even though detailed knowledge of the treaty was not. Gerald of Wales, writing c. 1200, noted that Scots would take issue with claims that William had conceded his kingship:

The Scots, however, say, and for the honour of their land positively assert, that their prince, [after] his capture at Alnwick, and his liberation, did [homage] to the king of the English for the land that is called Lothian only, as far as to the Firth of Forth, which from ancient

²² *Fecit igitur rex Scotiae regi Anglorum homagium ratione tenementi, quod tenet de domino rege Anglorum, de regno scilicet Angliae, Laudiano videlicet et terris requis. Et cum super hoc conveniretur rex Scotiae, ut ratione regni Scotiae faceret homagium et fidelitatem cum ligantia domino suo regi Anglorum, sicut fecerunt praedecessores sui regibus Anglorum, prout evidenter in cronicis locis multis scribitur, respondit rex Scotiae, quod pacifice illuc venerat et pro honore regis Angiige et per ejus mandatum, ut videlicet mediante copula matrimoniali ipsi confoederaretur, et non ut ipsi de tam ardua quaestione responderet* (MP, CM, vol. 5, s.a. 1252: 268; SAEC: 365–366).

²³ One recent exception seems to be Oram (2011: 124, n. 42; see also Duncan 2002: 154 and Robertson 1862, vol. 2: 428).

²⁴ See n. 25, below.

times has separated Scotland (making it almost into an island) from the English kingdom; with the three noble castles that are contained in it — Roxburgh, [Berwick, and Edinburgh] —, at that time rendered up. But it seems to be truer, and much more probable, that their prince, having been captured in battle, and imprisoned, could have been forced to submit to any decision whatsoever, or even, by law of war, [to accept] the misfortune of any kind of servitude, in order to be released from iron chains, and the darkness of prisons.²⁵

There are numerous interesting points here, but for our purposes it is significant that these defensive Scots seem to have conceded, incidentally, that ‘Lothian’ was part of the kingdom of the English; or at least, they were prepared to admit that the Scottish king had recognised the English king’s superior lordship in ‘Lothian’ to deflect more significant claims over ‘Scotland’. As it happens, we do have the text of Falaise in transcriptions available in a number of reliable sources (ASR: no. 1), although the original may have been surrendered to the Scots when the terms were sold back (ASR: no. 2). So we know that Gerald’s Scots were wrong about ‘Scotland’. On the other hand, they were correct that the Scottish king ceded the major castles of the region to Henry II, the treaty naming Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Edinburgh and Stirling.²⁶

Henry’s confiscation of these castles may also reveal the English government’s position on Lothian’s tenurial status. After his accession it became Henry’s policy to confiscate major castles in regions controlled by his barons in ‘England proper’, and extending this programme into Lothian could be read as a sign that he regarded Lothian as an extension of it rather than a sub-division of a subordinate dominion, at least as an aspiration. By the 1170s, Scottish royal dynasty in Lothian was entrenched and English kings do not seem to have been interested in confiscating or reassigning lordship of the region, but that does not mean that they would willingly surrender credible claims. Perhaps a sign of the flexibility of the attitude on both sides comes from the Saxon marriage proposal from Richard’s time, when they sought to marry William’s daughter to Richard’s nephew, Otto of Brunswick (d. 1218), son of Henry the Lion, the illustrious duke of Saxony. According to Roger of Howden the proposal was that:

²⁵ Text reads: *Dicunt tamen Scoti, et propter honorem terre sue assertiue proponunt, quod princeps eorum tantum de terra que Leonis uocatur usque ad mare Scoticum, quod Scotiam propemodum insulam factam ab Anglicano antiquitus regno discriminavit, cum tribus castellis egregiis in ea contentis, Rocheburch (Berewic et Geddewrde) tunc redditis, regi Anglorum primo captivum apud Aunewic et liberacionem hominum fecit. Verius autem et longe uerisimilius esse uidetur, quod princeps eorum bello captus et incarceratus, ad cuiuscunque discriminis subieccionem aut eciam belli iure seruitutis cuiuslibet incommodum, ut solueretur a uinculis ferreis et carcerum tenebris, arctari posset* (GW, DPI, ii.1: 442–445).

²⁶ Roxburgh and Berwick were still held by Plantagenet garrisons in 1189, but according to Roger of Howden Henry II gave Edinburgh back to the Scottish king on the occasion of his wedding to Ermengarde de Beaumont in 1186 (RH, *Gesta Regis*, vol. 1, s.a. 1186: 351). The overlordship north of the Forth may be glimpsed in the survival of a writ by Henry II for Dunfermline Abbey, 1178×88 (Barrow 1957).

[T]he king of Scotland should give to the aforementioned Otto his daughter Margaret as wife, with the whole of Lothian; and that the same king of England should give to Otto and to the daughter of the king of Scotland and their heirs the whole of Northumberland and the county of Carlisle: and that the king of England should have in keeping the whole of Lothian, with its castles; and the king of Scotland should have in keeping the whole of Northumberland and the county of Carlisle, with their castles.²⁷

William's wife soon became pregnant, leaving less incentive for the future German emperor to marry Margaret, and as Howden goes on to say Richard was reluctant to agree to the surrender of his castles. Nonetheless, the proposal does seem to reveal the flexibility of attitudes on both sides when it suited their interests.

Beyond the donations

The accounts discussed above are *explicitly* trying to tell us how Lothian passed out of English jurisdiction and fell under the rule of the kings of the Scots. That, alone, should immediately raise suspicions, particularly for the reasons discussed in the section above. But it is also important to stress that we do have other twelfth-century texts about the preceding centuries, the 'Viking Age', that offer information that is more implicit and therefore potentially more reliable. That is to say, if the historian is open to explicit attempts to narrativise a 'donation of Lothian' in twelfth-century sources even when we cannot demonstrate earlier source material, accounts with implicit information should be *at least* as attractive. The evidence raised by Woolf is a good example. We are told by *Libellus de exordio* that the sometime *thesaurarius* of Durham, one Ælfred of Hexham, son of Westou, relocated the bodies of major Northumbrian saints to Durham from Coldingham, Melrose, Tynninghame, Jarrow, Tynemouth and Hexham. These translations, Symeon learned, had happened during the episcopate of Bishop Eadmund, i.e. sometime between c. 1020 and 1040 (*LDE*, iii.7: 160–167).²⁸ The account comes from the first decade of the twelfth century, seemingly from the living memory of native informants and if true would suggest that land as far north as East Lothian was still 'Northumbrian', or at least subject to the power of the 'Northumbrian' church, as late as c. 1030 (Woolf 2007: 235–236). Evidence of similar value can also be found in the Northumbrian earldom foundation material common to *De primo Saxonum adventu* (DPSA: 382) and John of Wallingford (*Chron. Wall.*: 54). In the account about Edgar's division of Northumbria, the northern limit of the territory governed by Eadwulf Yvelcild is described as *myreforth*, usually (and probably correctly) identified with the Firth of

²⁷ The text is: ...*rex Scotiae daret praedicto Othoni Margaretam filiam suam in uxorem cum toto Loennais; et quod rex Angliae daret Othoni, et filiae regis Scotie, et haeredibus eorum, totam Northymbriam et comitatum Carleoli; et rex Angliae haberet in custodia totum Loennais cum castellis suis; et rex Scotie haberet in custodia totam Northymbriam et comitatum Carleoli cum castellis suis* (RH, *Chronica*, vol. 3, s.a. 1194: 308; trans. based on SAEC: 315–316).

²⁸ As Rollason pointed out (Rollason 2000: lxxvi) information about Ælfred son of Westou appears to have come to the author of *Libellus*, at least in part, from a native English monk named Gamel.

Forth (McGuigan 2018: 110–111; Taylor, with Márkus, 2006–13, vol. 1: 44).²⁹ In contrast to Edgar and Cinaed, the synchronisms of Oslac, Eadwulf and Edgar are difficult to explain without access to a reliable tradition, especially because Eadwulf's only other appearance is as a charter witness (*Sawyer*: nos 766, 771, 779, 806; Keynes 2002: table 56; McGuigan 2018: 143–144).³⁰

Then there are sources that may pre-date the twelfth century. Other than the two major 'donation' narratives, the most commonly used source for understanding the problem is probably the annotated tenth-century king-list commonly today called the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*. A number of points of potential significance can be found there. The most important is a passage relating to the reign of Ildulb mac Causantín (reigned 954–962), a note specifying that 'in his time Edinburgh was vacated, and right up to the present day left to the Scots' (*in huius tempore oppidum Eden uacuatum est ac relictum est Scottis usque in hodiernum diem*; CKA: 151, 159). The passage has probably done the most to encourage the idea that the Scottish king had managed to enter Midlothian prior to, at least a decade before, the events of 'Edgar's Beneficence'.³¹ But as Alex Woolf pointed out in 2007, and he seems to have been the first to notice, the passage demonstrably includes an interpolation, interrupting and disrupting the grammar of earlier material, the core tenth-century annotated king list (Woolf 2007: 193–195; Dunshea 2018: 60–62).³² While it is theoretically possible that the interpolation was created later in the tenth century, it is *at least* as likely that it entered the tradition when the Scottish collection witnessed by the Poppleton manuscript was compiled. The writer refers to the Scots as if he himself were not one, something that looks twelfth- or thirteenth-century, rather like the non-Scot who composed the first of the Poppleton Scottish tracts, *De situ Albanie*.³³ The historicity of the note seems to be undermined a few sentences later in the chronicle, when we are told that after his invasion of *Saxonia*, c. 980, Cinaed mac Mail

²⁹ I proposed that *myre* represents Gaelic *muire*, hence 'Forth Sea', but note the appearance 'c' in one of the manuscripts (hence *myrcford* in the Magdalen College MS) that might point to the Old Norse name for the estuary, *Myrkvafjörðr*. Because of its use as a boundary, the second element has sometimes been interpreted as 'ford', and associations with fords on the later Anglo-Scottish border conjectured: Duncan (2002: 24) the Solway and Barrow (2003: 123) the Tweed. Anderson (1960: 105) suggested the Lothian Esk. Barrow thought the standard 'Forth' interpretation contradicted the Lothian grant in 'Edgar's Beneficence', but in fact (even assuming it is reliable) it would be entirely in keeping with a Bamburgh frontier along the Firth of Forth and a smaller 'Lothian' to the west.

³⁰ It should be acknowledged, also, that Oslac and Eadwulf appear in the same charters, twice next to each other, and that Eadwulf does not appear in any with his nickname.

³¹ Barrow did mention this text, but the lateness of Ildulb's reign did not sit particularly well with the rest of his argument, which probably explains why he presented it in narrative form as 'between 954 and 962 the fortress of Edinburgh was laid waste, and thereafter this key position remained in Scottish hands' (Barrow 2003: 122).

³² In the related king-list material, Ildulb's reign is summarised with reference to his year length and his death at the hands of Scandinavians, and Alex Woolf therefore concluded that it is likely that the whole CKA passage about Edinburgh, not just *ac relictum est Scottis*, originated in the same interpolation (Woolf 2007: 193). Incidentally, Hudson suggested that the *Prophecy of Berchán*, a twelfth-century pseudo-prophecy and metrical chronicle drawing on a lost Scottish king-list, may refer to territorial additions made in Ildulb's reign (Hudson 1996: 88 and n. 97).

³³ At DSA: 242 we learn that he had a 'Scot' as an informant, Bishop Aindreas of Caithness. There is the obvious possibility that the author of DSA had a major role in the final form of CKA.

Choluim 'fortified the fords of Frew' on the river Forth (CKA: 151, 161). The implication seemingly is that he was expecting a punitive expedition from the ruler of Bamburgh, which does not stand well with the idea that Cinaed occupied Edinburgh (or indeed received a grant of 'Lothian' from Edgar); and it certainly makes it difficult to imagine an earlier reign as the beginning of continuous Scottish lordship there.

Another potentially informative source is a poem from the mid-eleventh century recounting the travels of six Pictish brothers who fled from Thrace to Ireland, via France (where they founded *Pictavis*, Poitiers). It recounts how they subsequently conquered Scotland (*Alba*), 'from the border of Cat [Sutherland] to the Fords of the Forth', with no mention of anything else to the south (Van Hamel 1932: 14). The potential here is limited, however, because 'Scotland' was still conceived in these terms two centuries later. Then there is *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, yet another potentially pre-twelfth-century source of information. This work gives an account of the overlordship of the church of Lindisfarne in which it includes the *parochia* of the church of Tynninghame and its lands as far west as the River Esk (HSC, §4: 46–47.). The fullest version of the text was not finalised until sometime between c. 1020 and c. 1100, most likely mid-century; lacking knowledge otherwise we would be entitled to assume that the text is a contemporary picture of roughly the mid-eleventh century, although obviously there are other possibilities.³⁴ Another point is worth noting here. Although *Historia* includes Tynninghame's *parochia* within Lindisfarne's oversight, we are not told that St Balthere's lands were the limit of that jurisdiction. We have other descriptions of the diocese of Lindisfarne-Norham, early twelfth-century, where we find encompassed not only Tynninghame but also Edinburgh and Abercorn, as well as Melrose and Jedburgh (HR, s.a. 854: 101; RH, *Chronica*, vol. 1, s.a. 882: 45; Woolf 2018).

Chronological map

The above evidence is of interest, but can be argued away by any skilled historian so determined. Instead of pushing specific conclusions where none are certain, our priority should be to understand the limits and possibilities of our evidence. In Figure 1, I have included a regional chronology map, illustrating the dates at which we can begin to track continuous lordship of the region by the Scottish royal family.³⁵

Region 1 (West Lothian and Midlothian): Were it reliably early, the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* passage relating to the reign of Ildulb would trace Scottish control of Edinburgh to 954–962, but lacking that certainty we are forced to seek a later date range.³⁶ We also have what purports to be a charter of Máel Coluim III to Dunfermline in regard to lands in Midlothian, but it is preserved only in an early modern 'copy', possibly a forgery, of a twelfth-century 'memorandum' (ESC: no. 10; McGuigan 2021: 375, n. 11, and 378). However, because control of this region was probably necessary for 'outer' provinces,

³⁴ The most obvious, following Craster, is that it was composed in the 940s.

³⁵ For a similar discussion with a different emphasis, see recently McGuigan 2021: 372–380.

³⁶ See above, pp. 48–49.

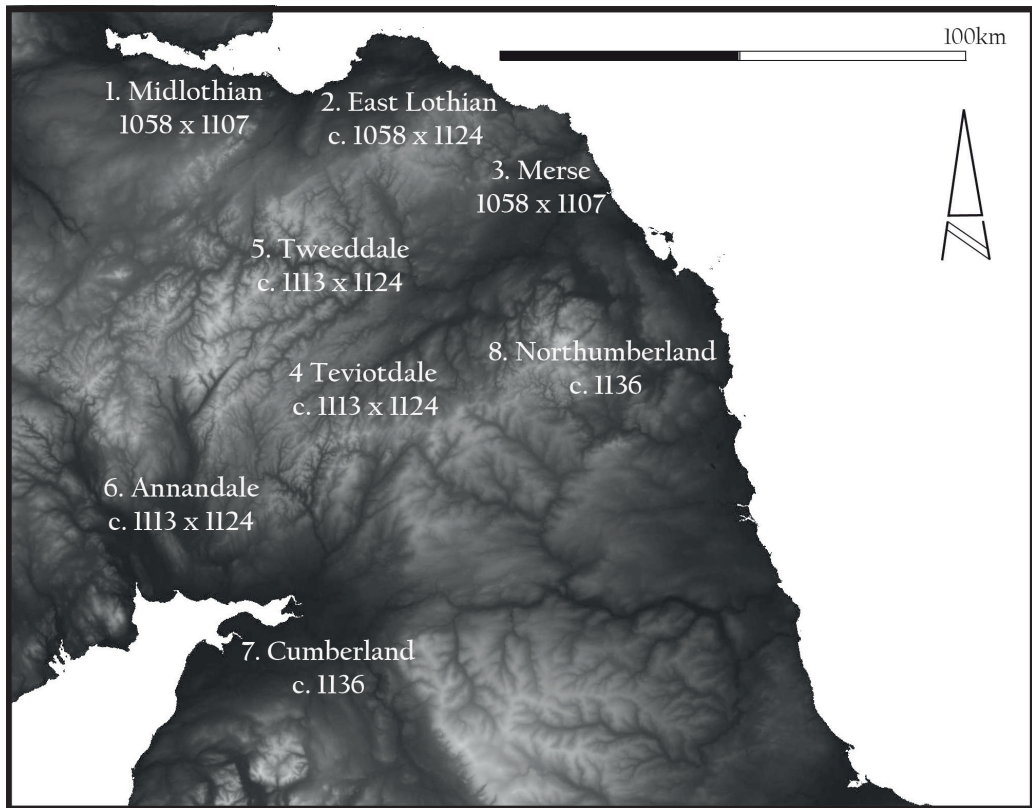


Figure 1: Scottish expansion into Northumbria (dates taken by the earliest evidence for Scottish authority)

the earliest range for the latter allows us to admit the range 1058×1107, the accession of Máel Coluim III to the death of his son Edgar, for region 1.

Region 2 (East Lothian): A date-range set by the reign of Máel Coluim III is suggested by a charter in the archive of Durham that refers to the tenure of Tynninghame (East Lothian) by Fothad, a bishop of St Andrews who died in 1093 (*AU, s.a. 1093.2*). The document is a grant of the church and its dependencies by Donnchad [II] mac Maíl Choluim (d. 1094), and Fothad's tenure is the reference point for Durham's newly acquired rights. Durham did not hold on to Tynninghame, and perhaps lost it in the civil strife that led to Donnchad's own demise. The document appears to be an 'original' with cross autographs by the witnesses, but it is not without controversy, and there remains the possibility that it is a copy or 'forgery' from the first decade of the twelfth century (*ESC: no. 12; Duncan 1958: 119; Donnelly 1989; Duncan 1999*). Because the transfer of property recorded by the charter turned out to be, in the medium term, ineffective, Donnchad's control of the region cannot be established with certainty. Information about the fate of the region to the south means we can be reasonably confident that it fell under the effective lordship of Edgar and was under members of the Scottish royal family thereafter — although

not absolutely as Dere Street, the main route from Midlothian into the Tweed basin, bypasses it. It is also worth noting that we have a twelfth-century annal claiming that Máel Coluim III had granted Dunbar (East Lothian) to Gospatric son of Máel Doraid, though since Gospatric was earl of Bamburgh, the claim if it has any factual basis may be an attempt to account for a switch of overlordship (*HR*, s.a. 1072: 199; *RH*, *Chronica*, vol. 1, s.a. 952: 59; McGuigan 2021: 384).

Region 3 (Merse/Berwickshire): We seem to have an original charter from the time of Donnchad's brother Edgar including a grant of the church of Coldingham (Berwickshire) and its *mansiones* to Durham that refers to the rights that his own father held (*quas pater meus habuit*). This suggests that c. 1100 people had grounds for believing Máel Coluim had control of Coldingham's *mansiones* (*ESC*: no. 19). It would also allow us to conclude with reasonable confidence that, at the very least, Máel Coluim at some point during his reign had been able to exert effective political control as far as the Merse and so also further north on the coastland of 'Lothian proper'. This and other Durham charters of his reign prove conclusively that Edgar exercised lordship in the Merse, and the territory remains in the control of the Scottish royal family (if not always the king himself) afterwards (*ESC*: nos 12–22).

Region 4 (Teviotdale/Roxburghshire): David, son of Máel Coluim III, appears exercising power in Teviotdale by the early 1120s, and had probably done so from about 1113. In the 1070s the Southumbrian 'reformer' Ealdwine began a monastic enterprise at Melrose. The twelfth-century *Libellus de exordio* claimed that Ealdwine and his acolyte Turgot left Teviotdale when Máel Coluim began claiming the territory and a right to their oaths (*LDE*, iii.22: 208–209). The last certain member of the Eadwulfings of Bamburgh, Eadwulf Rus, seems to have been buried at Jedburgh sometime after 1080, which could suggest that any overlordship Máel Coluim imposed was very loose and based on oaths of allegiance and tribute (cf. Scottish rule over Galloway in the twelfth century) (*HR*, s.a. 1072: 198; *RH*, *Chronica*, vol. 1, s.a. 953: 58). There is evidence that Henry I of England settled Flemings around Melrose in the first decade of the twelfth century, but they were moved to Wales about 1109, before the arrival of David (McGuigan 2021: 388, n. 63). The region was certainly part of the diocese of Durham prior to c. 1100 (*EEA*, v: no. 6), and the continuator of *Libellus de exordio* says that the bishop of Durham Ranulf Flambard was stripped of Teviotdale by Henry I, which fits well chronologically with David's takeover (*LDE*, Appendix B: 266–311, at 274–275). Continuous control by the Scottish royal family is not evident until the arrival of David c. 1113 (*Chrs David*: nos 10–11, 14–15). It is not certain that the region would have become 'Scottish' if David had not succeeded to the Scottish throne, but Alexander I's death in 1124 led to that occurrence; the date range 1113×24 is therefore fairly secure.

Region 5 (Tweeddale): The date range here is identical to Teviotdale. Charters confirm that David, son of Máel Coluim III, was able to exercise some sort of lordship in the region before he became king, and the 'Glasgow Inquest' suggests that he himself established control of the region at the same time as Clydesdale (*Chrs David*: no. 15, which names Traquair and Peebles).

Region 6 (Annandale): The date range here would also be identical to Teviotdale. The Scottish kings do not appear to have controlled this region directly, but David's vassal Robert de Brus seems to have taken control of Annandale sometime before 1124 (*Chrs David*: no. 16). Presumably this happened between 1113 and 1124, but there is also a reasonable possibility that in the aftermath of the conquest of 'English Cumbria' in the 1090s (Sharpe 2006) locally organised Normans carried out a private conquest only subsequently brought under David's overlordship, presumably at Henry I's insistence.

Region 7: Cumberland: The Scottish king's expansion into the 'English' county of Cumberland can be traced to 1136. After the death of Henry I and accession of Stephen, David invaded England's northern countries in support for his niece Matilda. He supported her claim to the throne of England, but also sought to advance his son's claim to the earldom of Northumbria. Contemporary sources show that he was able to occupy the region, and in 1139 his son's control of the earldom (and thus David's *de facto* lordship) was recognised by King Stephen.³⁷ David cultivated Carlisle as something close to a *de facto* capital and passed it all to his heirs in 1153 (his son Henry having died in 1152, these were his grandsons). However, the gains were reversed in 1157 by Henry II.

Region 8: Northumberland: As above; the treaty of 1139 initially left Bamburgh and Newcastle in the hands of King Stephen, but they were under Scottish control again by c. 1141 (Oram 2020: 158).

The detail offered above provides reasonably reliable 'latest possible date(s)' for specific regions but these should not be interpreted as 'earliest date(s)', especially as the later eleventh century represents a major horizon of evidence. Nonetheless, documentary production and the type of administrative technology needed to control new territories are not independent. As we have seen, trying to lay the groundwork for a chronology of the familiar Anglo-Scottish border's emergence is difficult. Just as important and just as difficult is trying to formulate mechanisms of expansion. Robert Bartlett observed back in the 1990s that the expansionary capabilities of the Scottish kings was probably severely constrained until technologies of control improved in the twelfth century, when the Scots began castle building and founding burghs (Bartlett 1993: 80). Early medieval polities like Scotland and its immediate neighbours were held together by the consensus of the warrior class, shared experience of political participation, of customs, law, ethnicity, ancestry and identity. Yet, the people south of the Forth do not seem to have identified as 'Scottish' until the mid-thirteenth century (Broun, 1998: 9; Broun 2007a: 24–26). The Scots could have dominated hostile population groups, but without the infrastructure and ideology this domination would have to be confined to tribute and punitive expedition or exercised through manipulation of a political office, establishing a dependent client ruler for instance. Anything else would require colonisation and fortress building, the evidence for which is limited and probably post-dates the eleventh century (McGuigan 2021: 517–520).

³⁷ Chronicle texts (the most important being Richard of Hexham), in translated form, are gathered in SAEC: 170–215 (see also Oram 2020: 142–143).

Partition, settlement, what if

This is the point where it is crucial to stress that in the tenth and eleventh centuries the Scottish and English realms were separated by intervening polities — something generally ignored until recently by Scottish and English historians alike. The most important of these are the ‘Cumbrian’ realm of Strathclyde and the ethnic English people ruled from Bamburgh, both of which as far as we can tell still had their own rulers in the mid-eleventh century. *Chronicon ex chronicis*, translating a lost version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, tells us that a ‘son of the king of the Cumbrians’ named Máel Coluim was installed on his father’s throne in 1054 (*Chron. ex chron.*, vol. 2, s.a. 1054: 574–575). It is not until the 1110s that we get our next attestation of a Cumbrian ruler, and this is a member of the Scottish royal family, David mac Máel Choluim, (the future) David I of Scotland: an important point to which I will return below. To the east was the ‘earldom’ governed from Bamburgh. At its peak Bamburgh’s territory stretched from the Forth to at least the Coquet, if not the Tyne (McGuigan 2018: 108–121). The last certain ruler of Bamburgh seems to be Gospatric, who died while Ealdwine and Turgot were in his territory, most likely in the second half of the 1070s (RH, *Chronica*, vol. 1: 59; McGuigan 2021: 278–280). Although Gospatric is named in contemporary annals, our information about his position and background depends on material from twelfth-century Durham that is sometimes very confused and misleading. The main issue is that there is an attempt to present the ‘earldom of Northumbria’ as a single historical entity, merging (and thus confusing) the successions of Bamburgh and the vice-regal ealdordom of Northumbria (McGuigan 2018: 128–129). Although we can be sure that Gospatric served as ‘earl’, we cannot be sure that he was the last ruler of Bamburgh. He may have been succeeded by his son Dolfin. In 1092, a ‘great army’ raised by William Rufus ejected Dolfin from Carlisle, and it is about this time that we see Normans in the territory of the old Bamburgh polity for the first time (ASC, MS E, s.a. 1092: 103; ASC: 168–169).³⁸

Thus, the descriptions of the 1090s may reflect the recent demise of Bamburgh and the attempt of both the Normans and Scots to partition its territory. Four years later, the region appears in charters issued by William Rufus and Máel Coluim III’s son Edgar. The latter describes himself as ‘Edgar son of Máel Coluim king of the Scots possessing all the land of Lothian and the kingship of Scotland by the gift of my lord William King of the English and by paternal inheritance’ (ESC: no. 15). The phraseology was read by Duncan to suggest that Edgar was claiming ‘Lothian’ by William’s gift and [was about to claim] the kingdom of the Scots based on his paternity (Duncan 1999: 32–33; Duncan 2002: 56; Oram 2004: 46; Broun 2018: 41). The ambiguity of the syntax appears to be carefully constructed to leave the status of Scotland ambiguous, but William’s overlordship in regard to ‘Lothian’ is still clear and explicitly recognised by the aspiring Scottish ruler — perhaps mirroring the English view of the relationship in the next two centuries. Scottish attempts to control the earldom may have gone back to 1067/8, with the death of Earl Oswulf and the accession of Gospatric. If we

³⁸ For the Norman horizon beyond the Tyne, see McGuigan 2021: 317–323.

can trust the relevant passage of the Durham earl list, Oswulf was the last native English ruler of the ‘Eadwulfing’ line, and Gospatric the son of an outsider, Máel Doraid or Maldred, connected only via the female line. Although it is not absolutely certain, Gospatric appears to have been Máel Coluim’s cousin, and it may have been on Gospatric’s death in the later 1070s that Máel Coluim began attempting to rule directly, if perhaps unsuccessfully (McGuigan 2021: 74–75). There is some evidence that even under Máel Coluim’s son Edgar the Scots may have had problems controlling the region, which would explain why they were so willing to introduce Frenchmen and Southumbrians there.³⁹

The success of the partition must be explained by combined efforts of the Scottish and English kings to assert sovereignty over lesser potentates, but also to measures taken on the ground to ensure effective control and integration. The classical West Saxon ‘English state’ of the tenth century was a collection of ‘shires’. The king’s domination of southern Northumbria had been secured back in the 950s, and even though Northumbria had its own ealdorman by the mid-960s, Yorkshire was still the only Northumbrian region organised as a shire at the time of *Domesday*. Although the rulers of Bamburgh were north of the ‘shired’ region, in the first decade of the eleventh century one of their number, Uhtred son of Waltheof, was married to the king’s daughter and given the ealdorship (McGuigan 2018: 129–132, 146–148). That would, in a new sense, have extended the kingdom of England right up to the Firth of Forth. This was the era of the Danegeld, which Uhtred would have been able to impose in the lands of Bamburgh as well as in the core territory of the ealdorship further south (McGuigan 2021: 221). We know that one of Uhtred’s successors as ealdorman, Tostig, tried to collect it in the north, and the existence of the custom in the county of Northumberland seems to be attested in the reign of Henry I (*Pipe Roll 1*: 27–28).

The Normans and Scots expanded the West Saxon-style shire system after the settlement of the 1090s. A list of provinces of Britain composed 1086×1130 includes Northumberland and Lothian (*loðen*) along with *westmara-lond* and *cumberland* as unshired provinces,⁴⁰ but by the 1120s the ‘shire’ system had been extended from Yorkshire to the Firth of Forth (Taylor 2016: 192–210; Reid and Barrow 2002: 13, 28, 30, 32, 37, 40; Sharpe 2006: 5–21, 30–33; Green 1990: 31, 65–66). By the time David became king of the Scots in 1124, he seems to have founded the region’s first towns and shire centres at Berwick and Roxburgh (possibly also Edinburgh), as well as the first reformed

³⁹ The story is that Edgar franchised land ‘in Lothian’ to Robert son of Godwine, who began constructing a castle but was soon ‘made captive by the local inhabitants and finally the barons of Durham at the instigation of Ranulf Flambard’ (*Scotichronicon*, vol. 3: 98–101). The core of the story would appear to come from a collection of potentially, but not certainly, early material at Dunfermline (McGuigan 2021: 389; Hooper 1985: 210; Taylor 2009: 228–252).

⁴⁰ ‘There are thirty-two shires in England. And Northumberland is without, [as is] Lothian, Westmorland, Cumberland and Cornwall. In Cornwall there are seven little shires. And [so is/then there is?] Scotland and Wales and Wight.’ (...xxxij. schiren. syndan on englonde. And Norphumbre [...] is wiþ-vtan. And loðen. and westmaralond. and Cumberlond. And Cornwale. On Cornwale syndan .vii. lutle schire. And scotlaund. And Brutlaund. And wyht.): *OE Miscellany*: 145–146.

Benedictine monastery (Selkirk), franchising many of the outer regions to Norman warlords.⁴¹ These developments were among the most important in marking the beginning of the end for the intermediate zone between England and Scotland: 'middle Britain'. Nonetheless, in the short term, what we see is the emergence of 'Lothian' as a new intermediate jurisdiction, not the appearance of an Anglo-Scottish border on the Tweed. As one of the contributors to *Historia Regum* in the 1120s put it, the Tweed lay on the borders of Northumberland and Lothian (...*fluvium Twedam, qui Northymbriam et Loidam disternat*), not Scotland and England (*HR, s.a. 1125: 278*).

At the heart of this is the principality created for David son of Máel Coluim III in the 1110s. Its creation meant here was a real chance that 'Lothian' would likely have become a satellite polity between Scotland and England, perhaps something like the earldom of Orkney between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries ruled by 'Scottish' families but under the 'sovereignty' of Norway. In the foundation charter for Selkirk, David is said to have made the grant (*Chrs David: no. 14.*) with 'King Henry ruling in England and King Alexander in Scotland' (*Henrico Rege regnante in Anglia et Alexandro Rege in Scotia*). Likewise, in the hagiography of Bernard of Tiron, written 1114×47, David is described as *dux Lothoniensium* ruling the region between 'Scotland of the Gaels' (*Scotorum Albaniam*) and 'Northumbria' (*VBB: cols 1426A–1426B; Cline 2009: 107*). David's principality had its own bishopric, 'restored' at Glasgow in the same era, the seat eventually given to David's chaplain John. Just a year after David's accession as king of Scotland, John makes his first appearance in a vernacular text, where he is named 'John bishop of Lothian' (*se biscop of Lohene Iohan; ASC, MS E, s.a. 1125: 127; ASC: 192*). As it happened, the new polity lost its independence with David's accession to the Scottish kingship in 1124. Only from 1124 can we be sure that a king of the Scots held both regions unequivocally. And so, it may only have been then that English writers would have had the interest in formulating 'donation' accounts that explained the region's domination of the Scots while reserving for their own king the underlying 'sovereignty'.

But we are still left to explain why it was 'Lothian' and not the 'Cumbrian' polity in Strathclyde that came to be so significant for the twelfth century. Why was the 'Scottish-ruled' territory south of the Forth not just called *Cumbria* or Strathclyde? Strathclyde/*Cumbria*, after all, had been the base of an established kingship. And why would a bishop based in Glasgow on the river Clyde be called 'bishop of Lothian'? This is trickier to answer, but it may not be beyond us. Above (pp. 42–43), we discussed the appearance of a King *Leudonus* in the Kentigern material, where 'Lothian' is described as 'a province ... in', literally, 'northern Britain' (*provincia... in Brittannia septentrionali*). Here, we have to forget about the fact that 'Strathclyde' is the dominant historiographic name for the British polity of the greater Clydesdale region. In Northumbrian Old English the terms *Cumere* or *Cum[b]erland*, 'Cumbrians' and 'Cumberland', were used, and in Gaelic *Bretain* or *Bretain*

⁴¹ Much of this is dependent on the veracity of the content of the Selkirk foundation charter (*Chrs David: no. 14*), which survives only as a transcript in the fourteenth-century cartulary of Kelso Abbey (analysed in Smith: 2011).

Tuaiscirt, ‘Britons’ or ‘Northern Britons’ (Edmonds 2014: 208; McGuigan 2021: 37). So, it is reasonable to conclude that the early Kentigern material is framing East Lothian as part of *Bretain Tuaiscirt*, especially as Jocelin of Furness himself claimed to have been able to draw upon pre-existing ‘Scottic’ sources for the saint’s life (JF, VSK, prologue: 160). It is perhaps possible that *Leudonus* really had been an apical ancestor of a group of East Lothian Britons, or possibly even (assuming they were different) the ruling dynasty of the eleventh-century Cumbrian polity; but it is perhaps more likely as Ben Guy (pers. comm.) has suggested that they were trying to invoke an imaginary ancient, pre-English political order.

Here it is worth looking at how David is titled in surviving sources. David’s realm lay between two political systems,⁴² and in all of his charters where the recipient is a part of the English political system, he is styled simply *comes*, presumably reflecting a claim to the *eorl-cunte* hybrid office of Norman England (*Chrs David*: nos. 1–14, 263; *ESC*: no. 33). However, in the single document issued outside this region, to a ‘Cumbrian’ recipient, he is *Cumbrensis regionis princeps*, ‘ruler of the Cumbrian province’ (*Chrs David*: no. 15; cf. *ESC*: no. 50). One of the oddities relating to the Irish annals that seems to be little noticed, or at least under-emphasised, is that of all Scottish kings David *alone* is given titles other than ‘king of Scotland’. In the *Annals of Boyle*, he is *ri Alban & Bretan*, the latter (in northern Britain) a clear statement that he was king of Strathclyde (*AB*, s.a. 1153). The title is repeated in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ‘king of Scotland, Wales and the borders of England’, where ‘Wales’ is almost certainly the early modern translator’s rendering of *Bretain* (*AClon*: 204). Neither annalist records the term ‘Lothian’, a term that today only exists in Gaelic as a borrowing from Scots/English, despite its likely Celtic origin (MacInnes 2006: 37; Watson 1926: 102). The closest the annal gives us is ‘borders of England’, perhaps rendering something like *Crích Saxan*, ‘borderland of England/Northumbria’.⁴³ This might suggest that David’s regime only adopted the ‘Lothian’ identity in English and French, for a jurisdiction framed as an extension of ‘England’; but leaned on a ‘Strathclyde’ identity in Gaelic, something suggested elsewhere.⁴⁴ Since David’s principality seems to be the hotchpot creation of the Norman regime of England in collaboration with the Scottish ruling dynasty, the obvious explanation for the difference is to avoid perpetuating the legacy of the old rulers of Bamburgh and thus

⁴² The two political systems not only had different ways of describing political identity, but different elite vernacular languages for doing so: Gaelic in the Scottish system, French in the Anglo-Norman system. In our region, the two meet on top of vernacular traditions of Northumbrian and British origin!

⁴³ In this scenario, ‘Lothian’ may reflect the territorial name of a Cumbric region between the Lammermuir and the Forth. The Scots simply extended its identity southwards to include what later became Berwickshire, perhaps something like the extension of Sibir, further east to all of Russian Asia. The new region, not part of the Cumbrian realm but the northern part of the heartland of Bamburgh earldom, was the odd bit out, perhaps the ‘borders of England’. Is it coincidence, then, that later in the twelfth century the region begins to be called ‘Merse’, or ‘borderland’? Could this be a reflection of something like *Crích Saxan* behind the Clonmacnoise entry? Note, however, that the location of Flodden, the battle of 1513 fought 3 miles into Northumberland, would be described similarly (*crích t-Shaxan*) (*AU*, s.a. 1513.14).

⁴⁴ This could also explain another legal oddity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this period, there are several pieces of evidence suggesting that for the purposes of customary law the people south of the Forth might be presented as ‘Britons’ (McGuigan 2021: 164, n. 101).

claims to territorial authority further south. The accommodation may have arisen in one of the various treaties between Máel Coluim III and the Normans, or with one of his sons. The Cumbria-Lothian principality never evolved into a permanent independent polity, but that seems to have been a side-effect of Alexander I's unexpected death in 1124, and not something envisaged in the preceding decades.

To recap, in the later eleventh century we see the simultaneous appearance of Lothian and an Anglo-Scottish frontier, the latter on the Forth rather than the Tweed. The most prominent scholars have struggled to contextualise these developments, partly because they have relied on a series of 'donation' accounts composed in the twelfth century to explain the extension of the Scottish king's power to the Tweed. In terms of contemporary sources, there is no clear evidence for 'Scottish' royal power beyond the immediate vicinity of the Forth until the 1090s, or at least the 1070s, when seemingly the Scots and Normans carved up the polity of Bamburgh. In the aftermath of the Scoto-Norman accommodation, we see the 'shiring' of the Forth-Tyne region and emergence of 'Lothian' as a familiar jurisdictional concept. This is what Adam of Dryburgh would describe in the later twelfth century as 'in the land of the English and in the kingship of the Scots' (*in terra Anglorum et in regno Scottorum*),⁴⁵ not a linear border but a middle zone between 'England-proper' and 'Scotland-proper'.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank Kimm Curran, Fiona Edmonds, Alex Woolf and the peer reviewers for reading and commenting upon drafts, and for this and other diligence and encouragement, the editor Ben Guy.

⁴⁵ The famous quote is from Adam of Dryburgh's *De tripartito tabernaculo*, quoted and referenced in Broun 2007b: 184, n. 18.

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- VKI *Vita Sancti Kentegerni imperfecta auctore ignoto*, ed. and trans. Forbes 1874: 123–133, 243–252.

WM, GRA William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, with R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom), two vols, 1998–99. Oxford: Clarendon.

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King Æthelstan and Cornwall

Oliver Padel

During the three centuries from about AD 700 to 1000, Cornwall became a border area through the anglicisation and absorption into Wessex of its neighbour Devon, then ceased to be one when it was itself fully absorbed into the newly-formed kingdom of England. The particular focus here is on the reign of Æthelstan (924–939). Four events relating to Cornwall are considered in detail, including William of Malmesbury's twelfth-century account of Æthelstan's treatment of the Cornish. His statement that Æthelstan 'expelled the Cornish from Exeter', if accepted, refers not to native Devonians but to economic migrants from Cornwall itself.

Keywords: Cornwall; England; tenth century; place-names; borders

The history of how Cornwall was incorporated into England provides a study in miniature of a region which became a border area and then ceased to be one. Cornwall gained a border with Wessex when its neighbour, Devon, became anglicised in the seventh to eighth centuries. By the late eleventh century, as seen in Domesday Book, Cornwall was no longer a border area but was fully incorporated as a county of England, albeit one with distinctive features, some of which endured. The ninth and tenth centuries are thus the period when Cornwall made the transition, and the reign of King Æthelstan, 924–939, is crucial for understanding that transition.

How and when Cornwall came to be incorporated into the nascent kingdom of England, and also its administrative assimilation, are necessarily part of wider questions concerning the formation of England itself from its component Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and also the standardisation of its administrative systems. These both took place during the tenth century, with Æthelstan the first king who controlled most of the later kingdom of England, including Cornwall, but not some of the northernmost counties. However, George Molyneux (2015) has suggested that it was not until the reign of Edgar (959–975) that England's administrative structures became fully standardised, rather than under Æthelstan as had often been suggested previously (for example, Loyn 1974: 3–6).

In order to understand the events of Æthelstan's reign, we need to recall the earlier background. Three aspects are important here. First, under the Roman empire Cornwall was evidently part of the *civitas* of the *Dumnonii* with its capital at Exeter, *Isca Dumnoniorum*. Although the **Cornowii* are never named, it is very likely that the boundary within 'greater *Dumnonia*' at this period and in the following centuries between the *Dumnonii* themselves and the sub-tribe of the **Cornowii* was always the River Tamar, which runs almost from coast to coast, cutting the south-west peninsula

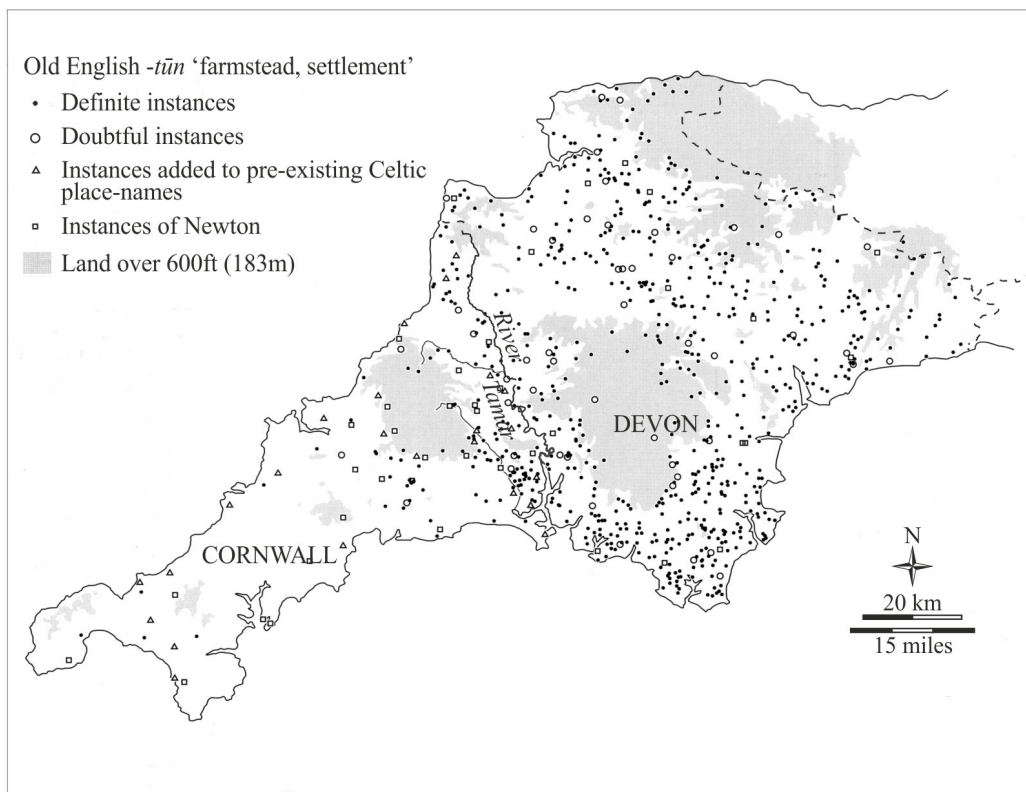


Figure 1: English *-tūn* in place-names in Cornwall and Devon (from Padel 2007: 220)

into two unequally-sized parts (see Figures 1–3). The names of the pre-Conquest and subsequent counties, Cornwall and Devon, stand as the best available indicators to the former territories of those two tribes.

Second, maps showing the distributions of place-names of English and Brittonic origin in the two counties indicate that the Saxon takeover of the two regions differed greatly in kind. Devon had been rapidly and thoroughly anglicised well before Æthelstan's time. There was some extension of similar Saxon settlement into two small areas of east Cornwall, with accompanying loss there of Cornish-language place-names; but apart from those two areas the River Tamar formed a linguistic and cultural boundary as well as an administrative one (see Figures 1–3 and Padel 2007; also Probert 2007). The question is when this change took place. In the first half of the eighth century, the control of Wessex over parts of western and mid-Devon is seen in two grants made by Æthelheard, king of Wessex (726–740): a lost one dated 729 in which he granted land in the valley of the River Torridge (north-west Devon) to Glastonbury Abbey (Sawyer no. 1676), and another dated 739 granting land at Crediton (mid-Devon) to Forthhere, bishop of Sherborne (Sawyer no. 255; and see Figure 4, below). A generation later Cynewulf, king of Wessex in 757–786, was said retrospectively to have 'often fought against the

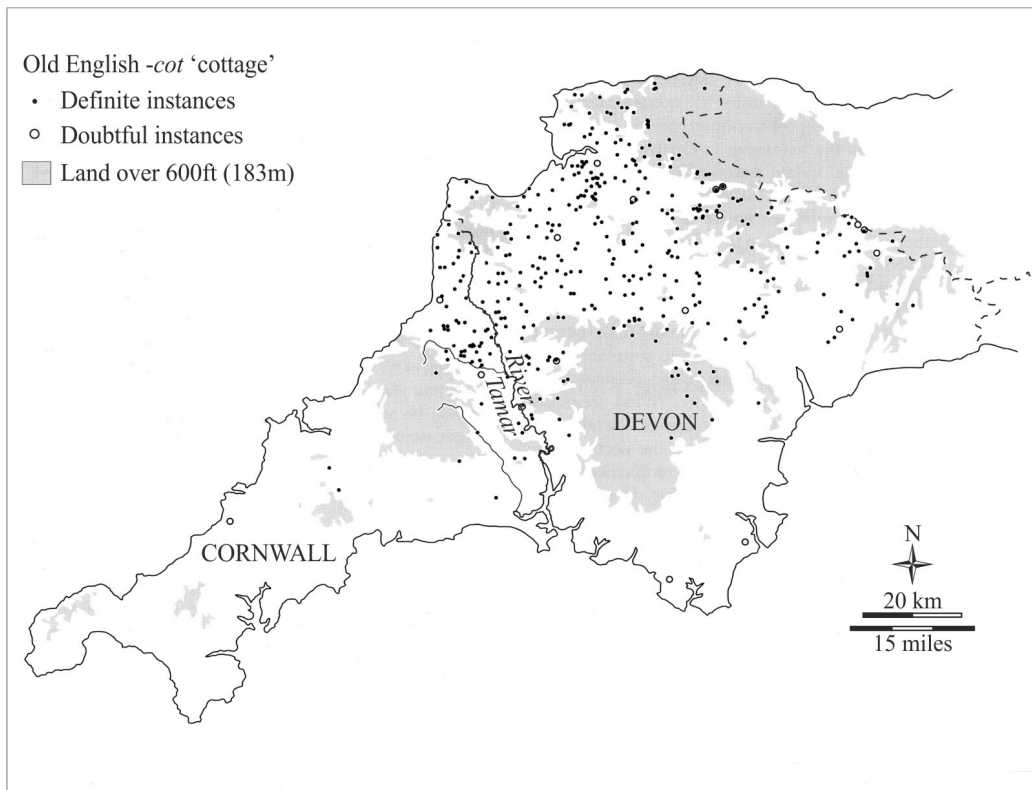


Figure 2: Old English *-cot* in place-names in Cornwall and Devon (from Padel 2007: 222)

British in great battles' (*oft miclum gefeohtum feaht uuip Bretwalum*, Bately 1986: 36, under the year '755'.) The vague term *Bretwalas* used in the Chronicle gains greater precision from the wording of a land-grant which he made to one of his minster-churches in about 770, partly in atonement for 'certain harsh treatment of our enemies, the race of the Cornish' (*pro aliqua vexatione inimicorum nostrorum Cornubiorum gentis*: Sawyer no. 262). Since the choice of name implies people living west of the River Tamar, his regret may give a clue to the start of the process which caused the thorough replacement of Cornish-language place-names by English ones in these two areas of east Cornwall; the implication may also be that much of Devon was by that date under the control of Wessex.

In the ninth century there is fuller information concerning the more northerly of the two areas. Ecgbert, king of Wessex a century before Æthelstan, granted the estate of Kilkhampton there to Sherborne at some date during his reign (802–839), and when Æthelstan's grandfather Alfred drew up his will probably in the 880s, his properties included the nearby estate of Stratton, the administrative centre of the area (see below, and Figure 4). These two facts make it likely that in this area, at least, the anglicisation shown in the place-names was in progress before the end of the ninth century, though Cynewulf's reign may provide an even earlier context for its start.

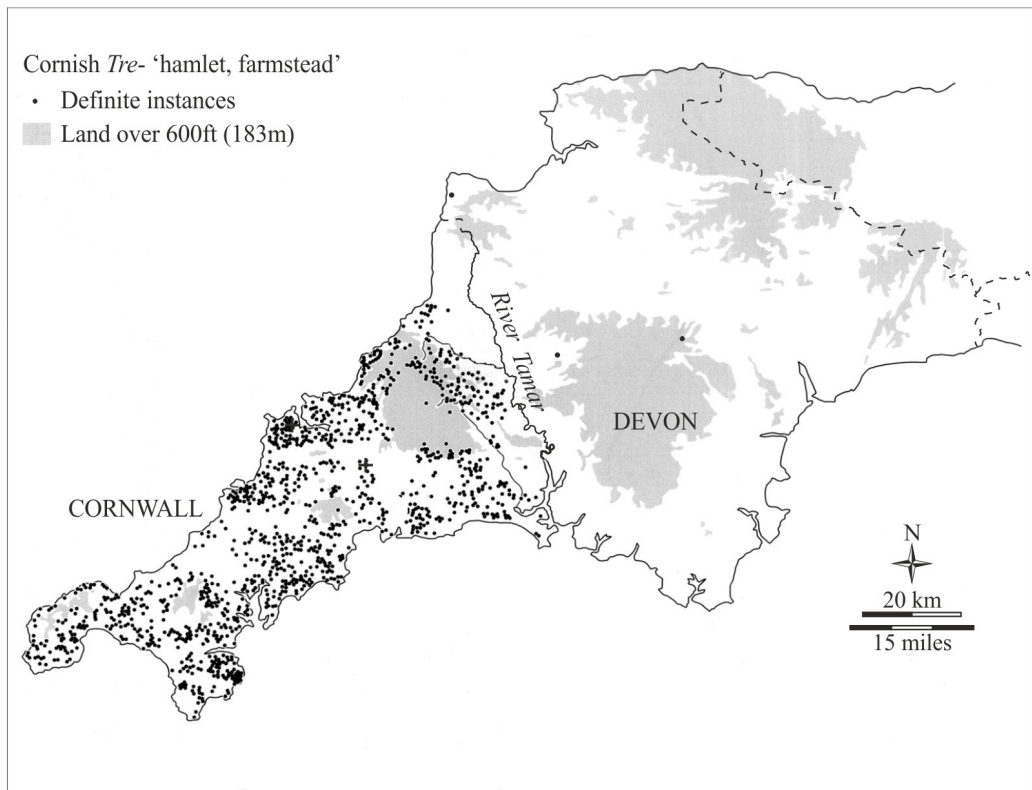


Figure 3: Cornish *Tre-* in place-names in Cornwall and Devon, from Padel 2007: 216

The third background point is the question of when Cornwall itself came under the rule of Wessex. Cornwall's first known appearance is as *Cornubia* alongside *Domnonia* in a poem of Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and later bishop of Sherborne, written around the year 700 (Lapidge *et al.* 2010). At about the same time Aldhelm also wrote a letter to Gerent as king of *Dumnonia* urging him to bring the Church in his kingdom into line with standard Roman practice (Probert 2010, and references). After that date the disappearance of *Dumnonia* and appearance of Cornwall in the historical record are symptoms of Devon's increasing incorporation into the English kingdom of Wessex, which left Cornwall as the remaining non-English region in the south-west. Reading between the lines of Aldhelm's 'Letter to Gerent', as Duncan Probert has done, shows that *Dumnonia* (including Cornwall) was already subject at least to pressure from Wessex: Gerent as its king was treated politely but with perhaps veiled threats of consequences if he did not ensure that the Church in his kingdom conformed to standard practices (Probert 2010: 115–119).

With the absorption of *Dumnonia* into Wessex in the eighth century, as shown in the reigns of Æthelheard and Cynewulf (above), Cornwall thus had a brief separate existence, until it too was brought under the rule of Wessex a hundred years later by Ecgbert

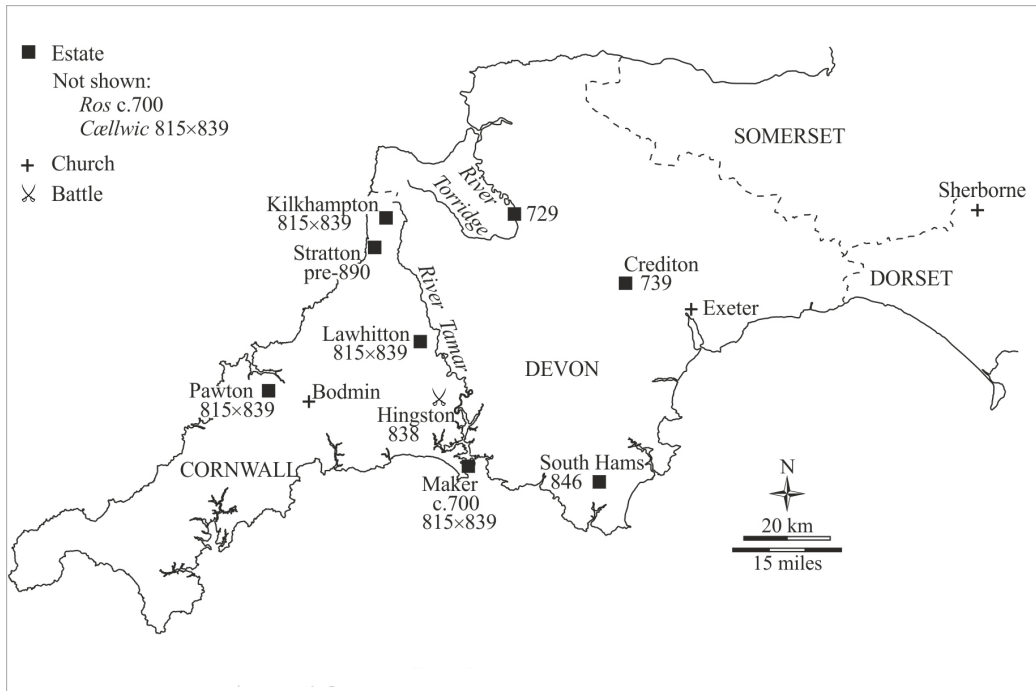


Figure 4: Cornwall and Devon: eighth and ninth centuries

king of Wessex (802–839), Æthelstan’s great-great-grandfather, in a series of conflicts recorded in the Chronicle in 815 and 825 and culminating in the battle of Hingston in 838 (Bately 1986: 41 under the years ‘813’ and ‘823’, and 42–43 under the year ‘835’). Four strands of evidence make it likely that this last known battle between Wessex and Cornwall marks the date from which Cornwall was increasingly under the overall rule of Wessex. First, before his death in 839 King Egbert was able to grant or confirm to Sherborne minster several estates in Cornwall, mostly near to its eastern edge, but also one in the middle of the county (Figure 4: Pawton; also Lawhitton, Kilkhampton and Maker). Second, at some time in the mid-century a Cornish bishop acknowledged to Ceolnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, his supremacy in ecclesiastical matters (Birch 1885–99, vol. 2: no. 527; less accurately, Richter 1973, no. 27). This submission can be dated only by Ceolnoth’s own long archiepiscopacy (833–870), so it may have occurred around the time of the battle of Hingston or up to a generation later, but anyway before Alfred succeeded to the throne of Wessex in 871.

Third, several events during Alfred’s own lifetime suggest a region increasingly under the control of Wessex: his visit to Cornwall during the 860s while still in his teens for the purpose of hunting; his gift to Asser before about 890 of the church of Exeter ‘with all the territory which belonged to it in *Saxonia* [= Devon] and *Cornubia*’; the three Irish pilgrims who drifted ashore on the Cornish coast in 891 ‘and then went straight away to King Alfred’; and his bequest of private estates in Cornwall in his own will (Keynes and

Lapidge 1983: 89 and 254–255, hunting in Cornwall; 97 and 254–255, Exeter; 113–114 and 282, Irish pilgrims; and 175, 317 and 321, Alfred's will; and Padel 2011, Exeter). These events all suggest a degree of overlordship by Wessex over Cornwall.

Fourth, the subdivision of the see of Sherborne early in the tenth century (about 909) shows an appreciation of the need for greater episcopal provision by Wessex for both Devon and Cornwall, implying the ecclesiastical incorporation of Cornwall which had taken place by that date (Robinson 1918: chapter 2, 'The subdivision of the Wessex dioceses'; Sawyer no. 1451a; Keynes 1991: no. 9). The cumulative evidence is thus that when *Dungarth*, the last (indeed the only known) king 'of Cornwall', died in 875–876 (Dumville 2002: 12), his role was that of a sub-king to Wessex; so the Cornish bishop's submission to Archbishop Ceolnoth occurred either during *Dungarth*'s reign or earlier. Some degree of dominance had been hinted at 175 years earlier in Aldhelm's letter to Gerent of *Dumnonia* and was evidently thoroughly established after the battle of Hingston in 838. Some 60 years later even the Welsh kings were to become subject (if only nominally) to Æthelstan (compare Charles-Edwards 2013: 431 and 494).

But although Cornwall was under the rule of Wessex from the mid-ninth century, it was probably administered in what we might consider a 'colonial' manner initially. Its full administrative assimilation is visible in the reign of Edgar (960–969), when clauses within his charters granting lands in Cornwall imply that normal administrative structures were in place by that date (Sawyer nos 684, 755 and 770). These clauses comprise both exemptions from worldly burdens on the land (implying that those burdens would be in place unless exempted), and also the standard three exceptions to those exemptions (military service and construction of fortifications and bridges). AD 960 is therefore the date by which English county administration, needed to impose these burdens (both exempted and retained) upon lands, was in operation even in the far west of Cornwall. It may have been operating earlier too, but we have no information, because of the lack of surviving charters.

The creation in about 909 of the see at Crediton, serving both counties of Devon and Cornwall, was itself over-ambitious, for the diocese was still impracticably large. That difficulty was to be remedied by Æthelstan less than a generation later. A narrative of this subdivision, written later in the tenth century, claimed that unorthodox practices were still being followed in Cornwall as late as that date: ... *ad exprimendos eorum errores. Nam antea in quantum potuerunt ueritati resistebant et non decretis apostolicis oboediebant* ('... to eradicate their erroneous practices; for hitherto as much as they could they resisted the truth and failed to obey papal decrees') (Robinson 1918: 22–23). The truth of this assertion, or the extent of the errors, may be doubted: it may be that a situation which had obtained much earlier (in the eighth century?) was wrongly extrapolated into the early tenth century in this historical narrative. If there was any truth in the statement then full conformance with standard practices will have come at latest by the time of Æthelstan's creation of a separate bishopric.

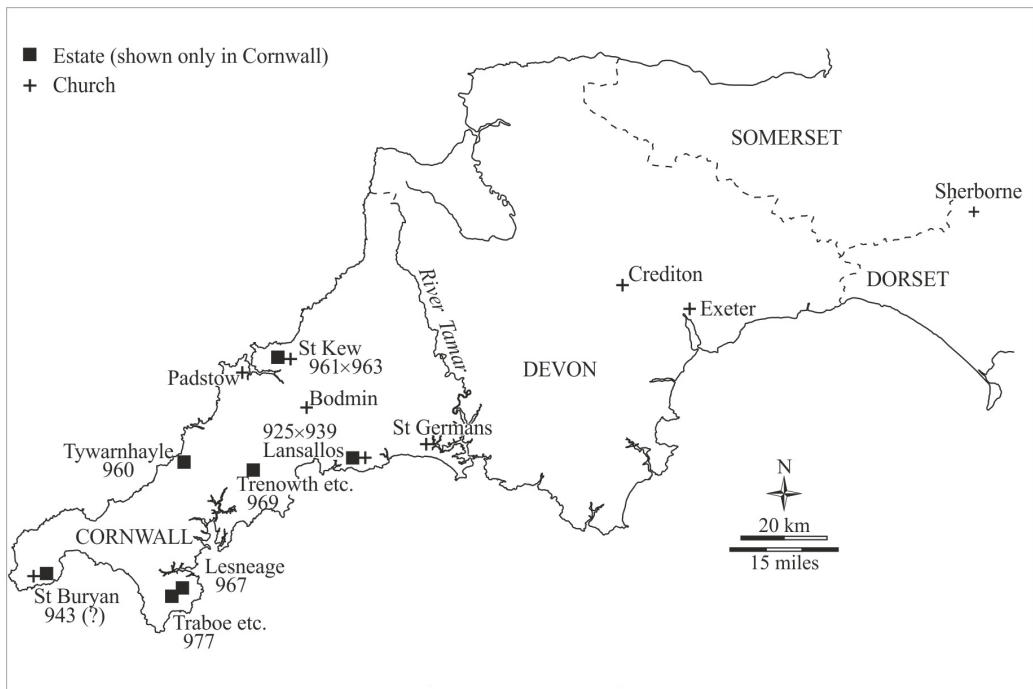


Figure 5: Cornwall and Devon: tenth century

Æthelstan's reign, compared with that of his grandfather Alfred, is less well documented as regards Cornwall: a symptom partly of the value of Asser's *Life* in giving us a glimpse of the process during Alfred's reign, and through Welsh eyes at that, but also a symptom of how much the influence of Wessex increased in Cornwall at that period. During Æthelstan's reign there are only two Cornish events of which we have definite documentation, one major and one minor; there are also two other events with less-secure documentation. Of the two certain events, the major one has just been mentioned, namely the reinstatement of a Cornish bishopric, located now at St Germans (see Figure 5.). This occurred officially in 936, though the bishop who was then confirmed in place had been witnessing charters at Æthelstan's court since 931, so the grant of privileges in 936 was presumably an affirmation rather than an installation (Padel 1978; compare Insley 2005: 21).

The name of Æthelstan's bishop, Conan, shows him to be either a Cornishman or a Breton, which is itself notable for the time. We need not suppose that Æthelstan created this see, and made this appointment, out of tenth-century political correctness. There were probably practical reasons which made it advisable. These could have included the unwieldy size of the new diocese of Crediton created by Æthelstan's father, even though it was only a portion of the former diocese of Sherborne; and its cultural diversity, a complication that was to recur in the fourteenth century, long after the two sees had been merged again (Padel 2002: 338–339); and possibly a recognition of Cornish cultural distinctiveness, perhaps in exchange for greater conformity of practice: any or all of these factors are possible motives. At any rate the net result was that for the

next hundred years Cornwall had its own diocese again, thanks to Æthelstan. After the sees were re-merged at some date shortly before 1027 in the person of Lyfing, bishop of both Cornwall and Crediton, and then officially merged and moved to Exeter in 1050, Cornwall did not regain its separate ecclesiastical identity until 1877.

The minor event that belongs securely in Æthelstan's reign also involves a charter and a church. It is a grant by a layman, Maenchi *comes* son of Drehguoret, giving nearby land to a local Cornish saint, *Heldenus* (later *Hyldren*), whose body is later known to have lain at Lansallos, a minor church in mid-south Cornwall (Figure 5; Padel 2005; also Padel 1978). The text states that he made this grant at the monastery of Athelney, in Somerset, during the reign of Æthelstan. The implication of the wording within the grant itself and of its preservation at Athelney is that Maenchi made it with the approval of the Anglo-Saxon authorities. He was either a Cornish nobleman, or possibly one of the Breton exiles who were in England during Æthelstan's reign (Brett 1991: 45–48): such a man might have been granted land in Cornwall because of the cultural and linguistic links of his homeland with that part of Æthelstan's realm. Maenchi's title *comes* would normally in Anglo-Saxon England mean 'ealdorman', but no such person is otherwise known. Some 25 years later, in 958–960, a Breton called *Menki*, styled *vicecomes*, witnessed a charter in eastern Brittany (de Courson 1863: no. 305; Tanguy 2004: 99b). It would be conceivable for this to be the same man (if so, using a lesser title in Brittany than in England); but it was not a rare Breton name. The name of the father of the Cornish grantor, *Drehguoret*, also appears in Brittany as *Dreuuoret*, but in the previous century, in 848–875 (de Courson 1863: nos 78, 99, III; also as *Treuuoret*, no. 243; Tanguy 2004: 78a).

The important point about the grant for present purposes is that it demonstrates the use of Æthelstan's authority to endorse an essentially Cornish transaction of a minor kind, namely the granting of Cornish land to a very local, typically Cornish, church and its saint. It also suggests that such approval was necessary or at least desirable for the grant, indicating the extent to which Cornwall was now administratively part of the English kingdom. (However, Æthelstan is not stated to have confirmed Maenchi's charter, as has been claimed: Insley 2005: 20 and 27; his name was used only to locate the grant, territorially and chronologically.) But the fact that Maenchi, in his charter, used some words and phrases which are typical of Welsh and Breton charters, and of a few other Cornish ones including that of Æthelstan to St Germans, but not of Anglo-Saxon charters (Davies 1981: 260, 270 note 41, and 272; Padel 1978), indicates that Maenchi also followed Cornish or Breton cultural practices, albeit under Saxon auspices. Presumably a representative of the community at Lansallos church would also have been present at Athelney, to receive the donation.

The two events of Æthelstan's reign that are securely documented thus provide a consistent and positive picture of the attitude of Anglo-Saxon governance at that period to the Cornish church, on both a local and a county-wide scale. The church would also have been the sole repository of written learning in the Cornish language

at this time; so such remains of the Cornish language as survive from this period may be owed partly to Æthelstan's encouragement of these institutions. The evidence, as far as it goes, suggests that St Germans, a house favoured by Æthelstan, was more of a Cornish-language cultural centre than Padstow, which we do not know to have been so favoured by him, and where the learning was more anglicised by the mid-tenth century (Padel 2009; Padel forthcoming). Later, perhaps in the mid-twelfth century, it seems likely that St Kew, a third monastic house in east Cornwall, was responsible for the Old Cornish Vocabulary, which was written under English cultural influence and which by that date unsurprisingly shows numerous English loan-words into Cornish (Lewis 2017; Padel 2014a).

Before turning to less-certain pieces of evidence, it is useful to mention the cult of King Æthelstan, which seems not to have received significant scholarly attention in its own right (though see Foot 2011: 228–234 and 243–245). By 'cult' I do not mean a coherent narrative, but rather that it became commonplace, in the south-west and elsewhere, to credit Æthelstan with the foundation of churches and other benefactions. William of Malmesbury claimed in the 1120s, *uix aliquod in tota Anglia uestustum [scil. monasterium] fuerit quod non uel ediftiis uel ornamentis aut libris aut prediis decorauit* ('there was scarcely any ancient house in all England that he did not adorn with buildings or ornaments, books or estates') (Mynors *et al.* 1998–99, vol. 1: 206–207). Beverley Minster, in Yorkshire, made such a claim in the fourteenth century with a remarkable forged charter, and Bodmin, Padstow and (truthfully) St Germans all made such a claim at later dates. Exeter seems to have been one of the strongest and earliest centres of this practice, and by the mid-eleventh century, soon after the merged see of Crediton and Cornwall was moved there, the king was already a favoured person claimed as founder or benefactor. Some such claims were true, but some of them were blatant lies, in particular the five Exeter charters, Sawyer nos 386, 387, 388, 389 and 433, all written in the middle or second half of the eleventh century, four of them in the same hand. The fifth (Sawyer no. 388) portrays a grant in favour of St Petrock's minster at Newton St Petrock (Devon), while the other four are all in favour of the church which had become Exeter cathedral by the date of writing. All five grants are ascribed to Æthelstan but are dated AD 670! In the mid-eleventh century that date was evidently considered important in the history of the church in Devon, but Æthelstan's name by then carried sufficient aura to override the anachronism of ascribing to him so early a grant.

The first piece of evidence for Cornwall uncertainly ascribed to Æthelstan's time may partly represent a legendary claim of that kind. The church of St Buryan, in the far west of Cornwall (Figure 5), its parish including Land's End itself, was one of Cornwall's distinctive small geld-free monastic churches appearing in Domesday Book. In the thirteenth century the then bishop of Exeter, William Briwer, rededicated the church and confirmed its privileged sanctuary, which by that date had become one of the four distinctive chartered sanctuaries attached to churches in Cornwall, two of which claimed Æthelstan as benefactor (Olson 1989: 72, 79 and 107). In the process of

rededication, the text of the Anglo-Saxon charter granted to the church was copied and so preserved. This charter, which is shown by some of its name-forms to contain local pre-Conquest material, presumably of the tenth century, purports to be a grant made by King Æthelstan to the church; but unfortunately it is dated, by detailed clauses, to 943, four years after the king's death (Sawyer no. 450; Hingeston-Randolph 1894–99, vol. 1: 84–85). Given the claims already attached to his name in Exeter diocese, it is more likely that Æthelstan's name had been inserted into a charter genuinely dated 943, than that the date 943 had been inserted into a charter of Æthelstan; this donation may have been made by his successor and younger half-brother, Edmund, rather than by Æthelstan himself. In its present form the charter is a witness to the continuing strength of Æthelstan's legend in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, at Exeter or in west Cornwall or both. Since the charter was in favour of a local Cornish saint, if it was actually granted by King Edmund in 943, he may have been following the example set by his older brother in recognising distinctive attributes of the church in Cornwall.

The likely date of 943 fits well with other evidence showing that it was in the mid-tenth century that the English kings had sufficient control over all of Cornwall to make grants of lands in its westernmost reaches. This charter to St Buryan, if accepted, would be the earliest such known, though not by many years. It is followed by five grants of 960–977, all but one of lands in the western half of the county (Sawyer nos 684, 755, 770, 810 and 832; and Padel 2014b for no. 684).

The second piece of doubtful evidence for Cornwall during Æthelstan's reign is of later date and is also the best known: the narrative given by William of Malmesbury, writing in the 1120s, as part of his biography of the king which takes up eleven pages of his *Gesta Regum*. The sources and reliability of this biography have been much discussed, especially so since it contains a considerable amount of information not found in earlier sources. William used a copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but also oral tradition, both at Exeter (as he specifically states) and from elsewhere, including no doubt his home town of Malmesbury where Æthelstan lay buried; and he also used a written encomium in rhyming hexameters, from which he quotes. This poem is now thought to date from the early twelfth century, only slightly earlier than William himself (Lapidge 1993). The reliability of all this material is unclear, so everything said about it is prefaced by a caveat, 'If William's account is to be trusted'.

William's description of Æthelstan's treatment of the Cornish follows his account of the king's aggressive policy towards the Vikings of York, the Welsh and the Scots (Mynors *et al.* 1998–99, vol. 1: 206–207), telling how he had expelled the Vikings by means of pitched battles; and it comes straight after his narrative of how Æthelstan subjected the Welsh to pay tribute (Mynors *et al.* 1998–99, vol. 1: 216–219), the situation which *Armes Prydein* has sometimes been considered to reflect from the point of view of those Welsh who disliked Hywel Dda's policy of cooperation at this period (Charles-Edwards 2013: 519–535; Dumville 1983).

Inde digressus in Occidentales Britones se conuertit, qui Cornwalenses uocantur quod in occidente Britanniae siti cornu Galliae ex obliquo respitiant. Illos quoque impigre adorsus, ab Execestra, quam ad id temporis aequo cum Anglis iure inhabitabant, cedere compulit, terminum prouintiae suae citra Tambram fluum constituens, sicut Aquilonalibus Britannis amnem Waiam limitem posuerat. Urbem igitur illam, quam contaminatae gentis repurgio defecauerat, turribus muniuit, muro ex quadratis lapidibus cinxit. Et licet solum illud icinum et squalidum uix sterile aenas et plerumque folliculum inanem sine grano producat, tamen pro ciuitatis magnificentia et incolarum opulentia, tum etiam conuenarum frequentia, omne ibi adeo habundat mercimonium, ut nichil frustra desideres quod humano usui conducibile existimes. Plurima eius insignia tam in urbe illa quam in finitima regione uisuntur, quae melius indigenarum ore quam nostro stilo pinguntur.

Setting forth from there [*scil.* Hereford] he addressed himself against the West Welsh, called *Corn-Welsh* because, living in western Britain, they look sideways towards the horn of Gaul. Having attacked them vigorously, he forced them to leave Exeter, where until then they had dwelt under equal law with the English, setting the boundary of their territory on this side of the River Tamar, just as he had fixed the River Wye as a boundary for the Welsh. Having thus cleansed that city by the removal of the filthy race, he fortified it with towers and surrounded it with a wall of squared stones. And although the soil there is thin and stony, scarcely producing barren oats and mostly empty ears lacking grain, yet judging by the splendour of the city, the wealth of the inhabitants, and also the throng of strangers, every merchandise is so plentiful there that you would request nothing in vain that you might think suitable for human convenience. Very many reminders of him are seen both in the city and in the surrounding region; they are portrayed better by the speech of the locals than by my pen. (Mynors *et al.* 1998–99, vol. I: 216–217; translation adapted)

William's detailed discussion of Æthelstan's supposed treatment of Cornwall and the Cornish thus forms part of his account of what the king did for the city of Exeter, virtually a foundation-legend of the city, since it has little recorded history before his time. William's account of Exeter here contains four elements for our purposes: first, that he expelled the 'filthy race' of Cornish from the town, 'which hitherto they had inhabited under equal law with the English'; second, that he established the boundary of Cornwall at the River Tamar, on the Devonshire side (implicitly allowing Cornwall rights over the river itself); third, that he fortified the town by means of a building-programme; and fourth, the result in William's day was that Exeter was a prosperous mercantile centre. As can be seen, William specifically refers to oral tradition in the area in relation to his account (*melius indigenarum ore quam nostro stilo* 'better by the speech of the locals than by my pen'). The third and fourth elements of this account do not concern us closely, being about Exeter alone; but they provide the context for the first and second elements, and perhaps hint at the source of at least the first one.

The unpleasant wording of the first element speaks of attitudes in William's day, the 1120s, and in Exeter itself, rather than ones in the tenth century or at Æthelstan's court. Æthelstan himself will have been well aware of the close kinship between the Cornish within his own kingdom and the Bretons to whom he was so welcoming as they dispersed in the face of Viking attacks on their homeland (Brett 1991; Brett 2022: 182–86 and 278–79). By contrast, the racial tension which William's wording seems to imply at Exeter may well have played a part in shaping the oral account which he obtained from townspeople in the city.

There is much uncertainty how far the narrative given by William can be trusted for events 200 years before his time. But it is worth considering what the account means if we do choose, for the sake of discussion, to credit it, taking the elements in turn. Whom did William intend to be understood by Cornish people living in Exeter 'under equal law with the English'? Obviously not native Devonian British, since they would not have been called 'Cornish'. William seems precise in his terms, and in his Latin he followed Old English usage: he called the Welsh themselves *Britones Aquilonales* or *Northwalenses* (Old English *Norðwealas*), also *Britones* simply, a term which he could also have used for the Cornish or for native Dumnonians had he wished to be imprecise. Since he used here the more precise terms *Occidentales Britones* (translating Old English *Westwealas*) and *Cornwalenses* (Old English *Cornwealas*), he evidently meant specifically the Cornish, that is the people of the region west of the River Tamar. Both of William's terms were restricted in Old English to the Cornish themselves: *Westwealas* in the Chronicle is used of the Cornish, not of Devonian British, except that the northern 'D' version of the Chronicle used the term once, in error, of the South Welsh ruled by Hywel Dda, *Huwal Westwala cyning* (Keynes 2014: 79; Cubbin 1996: 41). William's terminology is unequivocal that, if we trust the passage at all, or even if we ask only whom William in the 1120s intended by these words, these 'Cornish' in Exeter were people from west of the River Tamar, who had come to dwell in their nearest large mercantile centre, presumably as tradesmen or for other kinds of work.

There are further reasons why we cannot think of these people as native Devonian British. First, the fact that they were said to be living *aequo iure* 'under equal law' with the English. The law-code of King Ine, two hundred years before Æthelstan, had specified that the surviving British of Wessex were not equal under the law to the English, and that code was, in principle, still valid in the tenth century in Wessex (Charles-Edwards 2013: 422). So the phenomenon that William describes was evidently something different, presumably a more recent occurrence which the earlier laws were not constructed to cope with. In addition, Exeter as a town, not counting its church and monastery, may not have been a great deal older than Æthelstan's time. The town is first documented in the 870s, and in the 890s it gained a mint and is attested as a *burh* (Carroll and Parsons 2007: 134–139). It rather looks as if the growth and prosperity of Exeter were a comparatively recent phenomenon in Æthelstan's day, which would explain why the status of immigrant Cornish tradespeople might not have been settled. Second, the linguistic situation

which had existed in Devon for long before Æthelstan's time meant that there was not much likelihood of native Devonian British being identifiable in Exeter by his day, two and a half centuries after the Anglo-Saxon settlement of the area. The boundary-clause of the South Hams charter (Sawyer no. 298, dated 26 December '847' meaning 846; Hooke 1994: 105–112) delineates a large extent of land in mid-western south Devon. The names of its detailed boundary-points are entirely in Old English except for one river-name (*on Afene* 'Avon'; for the boundary-point *odencolc*, formerly thought to be Brittonic but now considered Old English, 'threshing-floor hollow', see Padel 2013: 95 and notes 72–74). This boundary-clause shows a landscape which had already been populated and farmed by English-speakers for long enough to have implanted upon it their own oral history, as well as their own personalities and their observations of the wildlife. It is not one perceived by administrators grabbing an alien territory, but one described through the eyes and mouths of people occupying and farming it. English-speaking settlement at the peasant level had evidently preceded the administrative act of 846 by some years. The very different linguistic situation portrayed in the boundaries of the tenth-century charters of west Cornwall, and to a lesser extent by the eleventh-century ones of east Cornwall, serves to emphasise the difference in this Devon charter (Hooke 1994: 22–52 and 55–64). The implication of this charter-boundary is that this part of south-western Devon not only was thoroughly English-speaking by the mid-ninth century, but had been so for at least a generation, probably rather longer.

For a variety of reasons, if we trust William's account at all, then the Cornish whom Æthelstan expelled were people who had crossed the Tamar and come to live in this economic centre, presumably to trade, and who were perhaps resented by the Anglo-Saxons there — like some economic migrants today, though they would hardly have thought of themselves in those terms. In the following century there is evidence of Cornish-speaking in the city again, for a man appears there with the delightful name *Ælfric maphappes*, 'Ælfric son of Chance', containing Cornish *map* 'boy, son' and Middle English *hap* 'luck, chance' (Warren 1883: 1a; Orchard 2002, vol. 2: 1, no. 4). Overlooking his doubtful parentage, this man not only provides the sole instance, anywhere, of a Cornish patronymic name formed with *map*, 'son' (for the Bodmin Manumissions do not offer any, nor do later records within Cornwall), but he also suggests that migrants from Cornwall continued to come to Exeter after Æthelstan's putative expulsion in the 920s or 930s. Such activity continued in the post-Conquest period. In the thirteenth century and later Cornishmen, sometimes revealed as such by their toponymic surnames, continued coming to Exeter, now their diocesan centre, for economic or career reasons. So if William's account can be trusted, that activity provides a natural explanation for any Cornishmen who may have been resident in Exeter in Æthelstan's reign, and the only one that fits with his actual wording.

But we have no means of telling whether it can be trusted. Since William had oral information from inhabitants of Exeter, and since the assertion comes in the context of other claims of what Æthelstan did for the city, it is doubtful whether much historical faith can be placed in it. As seen earlier, Exeter was already making false claims about

benefits derived from Æthelstan in at least the mid-eleventh century, some seventy years before William wrote his account. Given that Cornishmen were coming to reside in Exeter in the eleventh century and later, there may well have been racial or linguistic tensions at that period; so it would not be surprising if one of the claims made in the 1120s for Æthelstan, alongside the assertion that he fortified the city and set it on its road to prosperity, was also an attempt by him to solve any racial tensions (even if it was evident, in William's day, that the situation had returned). Crediting the claimed benefactor with the foresight to envisage and forestall a present-day problem would be a plausible origin of the assertion reported by William of his 'cleansing' of the city.

The second element of William's narrative, that Æthelstan set the River Tamar as the boundary of Cornwall, carries more conviction. In creating a diocese for Cornwall within the English church system, as he certainly did, Æthelstan would necessarily also have had to define its ecclesiastical boundary, if that had not already been done for secular-administrative purposes. George Molyneux has pointed out that Cornwall would thus have fitted into a pattern of linkage in Wessex between the areas covered by ecclesiastical dioceses and secular shires (Molyneux 2015: 163–164). By the time of King Edgar, 959–975, Cornwall was fully incorporated as a county, as noted above from the evidence of his charters; but its hundredal divisions, seen in Domesday Book and later, remained anomalously large by normal English standards, because they perpetuated pre-English administrative areas (Padel 2010). It may also have been Edgar rather than Æthelstan who standardised the county administration in England generally, as argued by Molyneux, particularly in extending the southern system of shires and hundreds into northern regions; but Wessex itself had shires (whatever their functions) at an earlier date, and his point concerning the linkage between shires and dioceses in Wessex allows for the establishment of Cornwall as a shire within Wessex already in Æthelstan's time, if not earlier.

William of Malmesbury also mentions, as a parallel process, Æthelstan's supposed establishment of the River Wye as a boundary for the Welsh. The use of that river seems partly to follow the limit of Saxon settlement in the southern Welsh marches, and there is no suggestion that it was making encroachments onto Welsh-speaking territory at the time; rather it was formalising what was already established. We may safely assume that that is what Æthelstan did for Cornwall, or someone else at about that time; but at its eastern fringe there was an important ethnic anomaly.

In terms of its ethnic make-up by the tenth century the northernmost part of Cornwall, the area around Bude and Stratton, would more naturally have been included in Devon. As already seen, it is thoroughly English in its toponymy (Figures 1–3), and it is likely that the change took place, or at least was under way, before the end of the ninth century, having started perhaps as early as the mid-eighth (above). But although the population of that area of north Cornwall is likely to have been thoroughly Devonian in character by Æthelstan's time, administratively it had intrinsic and ancient links with the area

to its west. Historically and geographically it was unequivocally in Cornwall. It had formed the northernmost third of the administrative district later called *Trigerschir* or *Tryger*, within which King Alfred's manor of Stratton lay. The very name of that district implies that it was a 'threefold region'. In Domesday Book (1086) this large region, a sixth of the county, was still treated as a single administrative hundred, named from its chief manor of Stratton, although it must already have had unseen subdivisions. Its threefold unity reappears as late as the thirteenth century, when its middle subdivision was referred to as 'Middle *Trygershire*'; but thereafter its three sections are found as entirely separate hundreds, called Trigg, Lesnewth, and Stratton. This region is mentioned not only in King Alfred's will (*Strætneat on Trico[n]scire*, Birch 1885–99, vol. 2: no. 553), but even earlier in the First Life of St Samson of Dol (c. 700), as *quendam pagum quem Tricurium uocant* 'a certain region which they call *Tricurius*' (Flobert 1997, 216–217; Olson 2017, especially 15–16 for the date). Its name shows it to be an extremely ancient administrative unit: it means 'the triple tribe or army', and its closest onomastic parallel is with the Gaulish tribe of the *Petrucorii* ('fourfold tribe or army'), who gave name to the Périgord region of France (Padel 1985: 64–65). Since the name is obviously pre-English, and is unlikely to have been created during the Roman period or the immediately post-Roman centuries, there is every reason to think it was a pre-Roman tribal name and district. The unity and persistence within Cornwall of this administrative area provide, incidentally, an additional argument for seeing its eastern limit, the River Tamar, as the ancient boundary of Cornwall itself (Padel 2010).

That being so, there were historical and administrative reasons why it probably seemed right to include this northernmost portion of *Trygershire* within Cornwall when the counties and hundreds were fixed, even though its population was by then probably Devonian-English in character, in contrast with the rest of the county. But it would have been this anomaly which made it a necessity for the border to be defined, since it was an area in which historical and ethnic allegiances pulled in conflicting directions. So whoever it was in the tenth century, Æthelstan or another king, who confirmed the Tamar as the county boundary, he followed an ancient, pre-Roman line, acknowledging the force of history and perhaps of Cornish sentiment. Although in ethnic terms it was by that date an act of generosity to the county, it was doubtless done for pragmatic reasons. On the one hand it ensured that Cornwall, having already been part of the kingdom of Wessex for a century, became fully incorporated into the English administrative system, in ways which it had not yet been by Æthelstan's father, Edward the Elder, in drawing up the Burghal Hidage, which covered Devon but not Cornwall; and the specific context of making a recognised boundary will have served to provide a secular administrative structure of shire and hundreds, alongside the ecclesiastical structure which we know Æthelstan created. But on the other hand, the choice served to retain the distinctive and historical identity provided by the clear and ancient boundary, even though that meant including within Cornwall a region which now looked naturally to Devon, as it still does today.

Is that true, and was it Æthelstan who confirmed the boundary in that way? Again, we cannot say; but this part of William's narrative is more likely to be historically true than the expulsion from Exeter. For one thing, it is less likely to have come from oral tradition in the city since it has little to do with Exeter itself. Second, the fact that William, in the same breath, also mentions the fixing of the Wye as the border of Wales suggests a different source for these assertions: a claim about the king's national administrative achievements. Third, it fits with his known establishment of a diocese for the county, and the resulting need to clarify the boundary. For several reasons it is easier to credit the assertion that Æthelstan formally established the county boundary than his supposed expulsion of Cornish tradesmen from Exeter.

There may also have been another consequence of this administrative absorption. The situation shown in Figures 1–3 implies a further question. The linguistic boundary which they show implies that the absorption of Devon into Wessex was of a different kind from the later absorption of Cornwall. Whatever process had caused the Brittonic place-names which must formerly have existed all over Devon to be so thoroughly replaced, it evidently stopped at the River Tamar, such that the native place-names have survived to this day throughout most of Cornwall. The replacement in Devon seems to have been remarkably rapid, since the charter evidence suggests that the linguistic replacement was complete by the mid-ninth century, at least in the South Hams. Such detailed evidence from the ninth century is lacking elsewhere in Devon, but in the tenth century the same is true everywhere else in the county too (Hooke 1994: 117–184.) If, as the evidence seems to require, there was a considerable influx of Anglo-Saxon farming settlers, who either replaced or assimilated (or both) the native British in Devon, it is reasonable to deduce that this was the process which stopped at the River Tamar, except in those two areas of east Cornwall where the toponymic replacement was as thorough as it had been throughout Devon. Depending upon the date that we ascribe to that replacement, it would be reasonable to wonder whether it was Cornwall's administrative incorporation into the kingdom in the tenth century, and hence the regularisation of land-tenure, which prevented that movement of farming settlers from proceeding further. If so, then it may have been the legal and administrative incorporation of Cornwall into England which thus saved the Cornish language from dying out westwards at that early period, as thoroughly as it had done in Devon.

However, there was another aspect to this territorial generosity. The Cornish situation was unlike that of King Ine 200 years earlier, who had, in his law-code, made surviving Britons in Somerset and Devon into second-class citizens; and unlike Wales 350 years after Æthelstan, where a kind of apartheid was created after the conquest in 1282, with Welsh and English living side-by-side under different legal systems, albeit with the provision for a Welshman to change his status and become 'English' for legal purposes; and unlike Scotland in 1707, where the Scottish legal system has remained in place to this day. Contrary to those earlier and later attempts to merge two ethnic identities, in the tenth-century law-codes there is no hint of a separate legal status, let alone a

separate legal system, for the Cornish. It would be unrealistic to suppose that they had previously had a fully-codified legal system equivalent to that created by Hywel Dda, assuming that it was he who codified Welsh law in the tenth century.

But if the Cornish in Exeter in Æthelstan's day were living *aequo iure* with the English, as asserted by William of Malmesbury 200 years later, then either the provisions which made native Britons second-class citizens were being ignored by that date, or the Cornish were treated differently from any native Britons who were still identifiable as late as that. In fact, both may be true, since it is likely that the native British population of Devon and areas further east had by the tenth century become assimilated, so those provisions of Ine's laws may well have fallen into desuetude. Within ten years of Æthelstan's death in 939, we find the Cornish being treated on an equal footing to the English in the Bodmin Manumissions. So we may suppose that fixing the county boundary of Cornwall also marked the full incorporation of the Cornish as equal citizens of England. This worked both ways: they did not have their own separate legal status, but neither were they second-class citizens, as their Dumnonian cousins had earlier been. By the mid-tenth century, then, soon after Æthelstan's death, the Bodmin Manumissions show us Cornwall and the Cornish fully incorporated into the kingdom of England – administratively, legally and economically – albeit with their own historical and linguistic identity within it; and that is what the establishment of a recognised boundary, whether by Æthelstan or another ruler in the tenth century, really signified.

To sum up Æthelstan's relations with the Cornish, as far as the evidence goes: he inherited a situation where Cornwall had been under English rule for about a century, but its position within the kingdom had not been formalised. My own understanding of its condition during that intermediate period would be that it was something akin to what we might recognise as colonial rule at a much later period. He was supportive towards the church, which had already come under the authority of the archbishops of Canterbury some sixty to eighty years earlier. This support may also have entailed the church in Cornwall losing any remaining vestiges of non-Roman practices (if they survived at all at that late date) and accommodating itself to standard English ones. His approach will have helped the preservation of a Cornish identity within the English kingdom, and also may have encouraged Cornish-language written activity. The supposed expulsion of the immigrant Cornish from Exeter may well be a later legend, but, even if it happened, it did not have a long-lasting effect. And if it was also he who confirmed the boundary in its ancient, but by then anomalous, course, he was generously acknowledging the force of history and Cornish sentiment, while at the same time ensuring that Cornwall became, in administrative terms, a regular part of the kingdom of England.

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The Changing Approaches of English Kings to Wales in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

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This article examines how political relations between England and Wales evolved during the tenth and eleventh centuries. During this period, the newly enlarged English kingdom ruled by Alfred the Great's descendants became more sophisticated and better able to exploit its inhabitants. At the same time, Wales came to be dominated by a smaller number of more powerful and wide-ranging kings. The combined effect of these changes was a move away from the complete domination over Wales sought by English kings of the earlier tenth century to a pattern of more sporadic intervention exercised through client lords active in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands.

Keywords: early medieval Wales; Anglo-Welsh border; Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Gwent

Introduction

During the tenth century, the English-dominated lands south of the River Tees underwent two fundamental transformations, each with wide-reaching consequences. The first was the emergence of political unity under King Alfred's immediate descendants, a process that led to the West Saxon dynasty accruing unprecedented power to itself. The second was the extension of an increasingly sophisticated system of governance across this new vast territory. Although the chronology of this latter process is difficult to discern in detail, most of the structures of authority that characterised Domesday England in 1086 (shires and hundreds, a coordinated network of mints, etc.) can be seen to emerge in surviving written sources by the end of the tenth century (Molyneux 2015). These processes inevitably had a profound impact upon relations between the emergent 'kingdom of the English' and its neighbours to the west and north. Not only was the English king able to position himself with increasing dominance at the apex of an island-wide political hegemony, but there also came to be a sharpening distinction between the nature of the intensive domination exercised by the English king within the English kingdom and the extensive domination exercised outside it (Molyneux 2011b). Probably between 888 and 892, Anarawd, king of Gwynedd, had submitted voluntarily to Alfred, by now king of the West Saxons and Mercians, on the same terms as Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians (Asser: chap. 80; cf. Charles-Edwards 2013: 493–494; Thomas 2020a: 584–585); but by 1064, when Edward the Confessor appointed Bleddyn and Rhiwallon to rule Wales in the place of their vanquished half-brother Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, there could be no question that the relationship between the king of the English and the new Welsh rulers would work in the same way as that between Edward and his earls. Manuscript D of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

reports Edward's arrangement as follows (ASC (D), s.a. 1063; translation adapted from Whitelock 1961, s.a. 1063 (D); cf. manuscript E, which emphasises Harold's role):

se kyng Eadward betæhte þæt land his twam gebroþran Bleþgente 7 Rigwatlan, 7 hig aþas sworon 7 gislas saldan þæm cyngre 7 þæm eorle þæt heo him on allum þingum unswicende beon woldon, 7 eighwar him gearwe on wætere 7 on lande, 7 swylc of þam lande gelæstan swylc man dyde toforan ær oþrum kyngre.

And King Edward entrusted the country to his [Gruffudd's] two brothers, Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, and they swore oaths and gave hostages to the king and the earl, promising that they would be faithful to him in everything, and be everywhere ready on water and on land, and likewise would pay such dues from that country as had been given before... *oþrum kyngre*.

Bleddyn and Rhiwallon swore oaths and gave hostages; they promised to be faithful to Edward and provide military support; and they promised to pay customary dues. Unfortunately, the ambiguity of the phrase *oþrum kyngre* (either 'to any other king' or 'to the other king') clouds our understanding of whether such dues were fixed by reference to a specific previous English king. Still, this is a far cry from the enormous power that the English king, by the mid-eleventh century, exercised over his earls, whose comital lands were loaned to them by the king and could, in theory, be revoked at any moment (Baxter and Blair 2006; Baxter 2007).

This article asks how the approach of kings of the English towards Wales changed during the tenth and eleventh centuries to reflect these evolving circumstances. It is argued that initial efforts to dominate Wales gave way to more granular and regional approaches aimed at management and containment. This was achieved by English kings and lords sponsoring local aristocratic families in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, who in turn could alter the balance of power within Wales in favour of the English. This is exemplified by three case studies, concerning the families of the Welsh kings Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, and Rhydderch ab Iestyn. Explanations for this shift in approach might be found within both England and Wales. In England, the political urgency of island-wide imperial domination was gradually eroded by the growing sophistication of systems of exploitation within the kingdom of the English, which provided more enduring means of upholding the power and wealth of English kings. In Wales, the increasing regularity with which Welsh kings could exercise power across all Wales outside the south-east posed greater challenges for English kings who sought direct domination over them, causing the English to look instead to intervention into the more easily manageable border districts as a means of exerting wider influence in Wales. The complex interaction between English and Welsh authorities in these largely Welsh-speaking border districts forms an important precursor to the later March of Wales, even though the piecemeal conquests of Norman lords carved out a new and wider space in which such interaction took place (cf. Brady 2017: 15–16).

Background: Patterns of Domination

During the early decades of the tenth century, the West Saxon dynasty of King Alfred (d. 899) gradually extended its sway over Southumbrian England, broadening the concept of the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' that Alfred had bequeathed to his son Edward. From the 880s to the 920s, this was largely a matter of rebranding and securing Alfred's double kingdom of Wessex-Mercia, but Æthelstan's conquest of southern Northumbria in 927 heralded another ideological shift: from now on, Æthelstan and his successors presented themselves as 'kings of the English', claiming paramount authority across the English people. It is in the triumphalist context of the post-927 kingdom that one finds the clearest evidence for these same kings also seeking regular domination over the greater kings of Wales. This is demonstrated most forcefully by two notable groups of English royal diplomas: the charters of 'Æthelstan A' and the so-called 'alliterative' charters (Keynes 2014, with earlier references cited therein). The two agencies responsible for these documents regularly saw fit to notice the presence of Welsh kings at the English royal assemblies where the grants recorded in the charters were enacted. The surviving charters of Æthelstan A were produced between 928 and 935, and the surviving alliterative charters between 940 and about 955. During this time, all the major Welsh kings are attested: Hywel Dda, king of Dyfed 909–950 and Gwynedd too from 942, appears as premier Welsh ruler from 928 to his death in 950, and his son and successor Owain appears in 955; Idwal Foel, king of Gwynedd 916–942, appears from 928 to 935, and his son and successor Iago appears in 955; and Morgan ab Owain, king of the south-eastern kingdom of Glywysing c. 930–974, can be seen rising up the pecking order of Welsh kings between 931 and 955. Other minor rulers appear too, including Tewdwr, king of Brycheiniog, in 934, and a certain Gwriad in 928 and 932. These Welsh kings attended English royal assemblies at locations right across southern England, from Exeter in the South West to Nottingham in the East Midlands. Two charters imply that Hywel, Idwal, and Morgan accompanied Æthelstan on his expedition to attack Causantín mac Áeda, king of Alba, in 934. Such activity no doubt underscored the claims of Æthelstan and his immediate successors to be not only 'kings of the English', but even, on occasion, 'kings of Britain', as is so vividly encapsulated by the title disseminated on Æthelstan's coins after 927: *rex totius Britanniae*, 'king of all Britain' (Molyneux 2011b: 60).

The position of the Welsh kings after Eadred's death on 23 November 955 is unclear. One further charter in the alliterative sequence (S 633), apparently issued in 956 by Eadwig, includes *Morgant regulus* in its witness list. The document was adapted in the eleventh century, though it seems likely that this detail derives from an authentic exemplar (Tinti 2002: 253–254; cf. Snook 2015: 138–143). Either way, with the cessation of the alliterative charters, Welsh rulers disappear from English royal diplomas. This creates a conundrum for the historian: did Welsh kings stop attending English royal assemblies, perhaps due to a slackening of domination over them during the difficult years of Eadwig's reign, or is this a mirage conjured by the changing nature of the evidence? The answer may lie somewhere in between. It is highly probable that some visits by Welsh kings to English

royal assemblies are hidden from view by the less inclusive approach to the construction of witness lists adopted by other agencies of charter production (Roach 2013: 39). On the other hand, it is notable that several northern rulers, who, like the Welsh kings, were active outside of the English king's direct sphere of authority, appear sporadically in King Edgar's charters: Eadwulf *Yvelcild*, lord of Bamburgh, four times between 968 and 970, and Máel Coluim, probably king of Strathclyde, in 970 (McGuigan 2018: 127; Keynes 2002: table 56; curiously, Máel Coluim appears in S 779, the 'Ely foundation charter', the authenticity of which has yet to be determined with certainty). One might have expected the presence of Welsh kings to receive occasional notice in the same way if they had indeed been present.

However regularly we might imagine Welsh kings to have attended English royal assemblies after 955, English kings of the second half of the tenth century were certainly employing imperial imagery that was intended to conjure a vision of hegemony over other rulers in Britain, most notably in the case of Edgar, self-styled *basileus* of Albion (Crick 2008). Edgar's image of power was reinforced by the famous proceedings at Chester in 973, when several kings from northern and western Britain and the neighbouring islands were compelled to commit themselves to a military alliance headed by him (cf. Barrow 2001, who underestimates the significance of Chester as a centre of English royal power: Molyneux 2011b: 66–67; Roach 2013: 52–53). The names of these kings are recorded in twelfth-century sources, and although there is reason to doubt the extant lists, they probably provide a reasonably reliable guide to the likely attendees (Williams 2004). Among them were Iago ab Idwal, king of Gwynedd, who had previously attended a royal assembly of Eadred in 955, as well as Iago's nephew and later successor Hywel ab Ieuaif (Thornton 2001: 67–68; Charles-Edwards 2013: 543–545). Yet the dramatic nature of this event, resulting in much comment from contemporary and later chroniclers, might suggest that such meetings were no longer routine in the way that they had been in the first half of the century. Instead, relations between English and Welsh leaders during Edgar's reign seem to be characterised by regular but petty military interventions. Ælfhere, ealdorman of the Mercians (956–983), ravaged Iago's kingdom of Gwynedd in 967, while in 983, possibly as a consequence of the alliance established at Chester (Williams 2004: 239–240), Ælfhere supported Iago's successor Hywel in an attack on Brycheiniog and other lands in south Wales (Charles-Edwards 2013: 539 and 548–549; for Ælfhere, see Williams 1982). However, only two years later Hywel himself was killed by the English. This type of factionalism, encouraged by English lords, seems to reveal a lack of political will (or perhaps ability) on the part of English kings to maintain direct domination over the greater kingdoms in the west of Wales.

The other significant factor in this relationship was the changing situation in Wales itself, where political structures by no means remained static. Ninth-century Wales was a land of many kings, as Asser attests; eleventh-century Wales, much less so. This was a result of conquests by the sons and grandsons of Rhodri Mawr (d. 878), culminating in Hywel Dda's rule over all Wales (outside the south-east, which retained its independence)

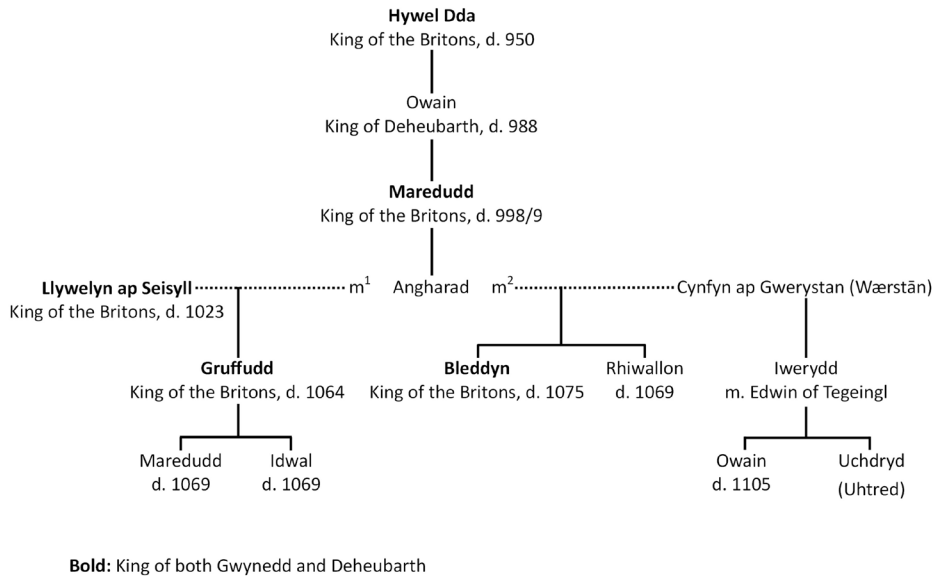


Figure 1: Kings of Gwynedd and Deheubarth, 942–1075

from 942 to 950. This process fundamentally reconfigured the geopolitical dynamic of Welsh politics (see especially Davies 1990: 41–44). With the exceptions of Glywysing and Gwent in the south-east, most of the earlier, smaller kingdoms fade from view. In their place, one finds an increasingly coherent political realm divided into a northern half, usually called Gwynedd or simply ‘North Wales’, and a southern half, which came to be known as Deheubarth (literally ‘the southern part’). Sometimes, these halves were ruled separately, as in the years immediately following Hywel Dda’s death; but at other times, they were ruled together, as during the reign of Hywel’s grandson, Maredudd ab Owain, from 988 to 998/9 (Thornton 1997; cf. Russell 2017: 21–24), and later the reign of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn’s father, Llywelyn ap Seisyll, until his death in 1023. The new political dispensation is strikingly reflected in the annals. On Llywelyn’s death in 1023, the Cottonian chronicle comments, without further specificity, that *Rederch regnum dextralium Britonum tenuit* (‘Rhydderch held the kingdom of the southern Britons’, AC: c346). When Rhydderch died ten years later, the same chronicle states that *Iacob et filii Eruin [recte Eduin], id est Howel et Maredut, tenuerunt regnum* (‘Iago and the sons of Edwin, namely Hywel and Maredudd, held the kingdom’, AC: c356). Even when divided into two halves, with Iago ruling Gwynedd in the north and the sons of Edwin ruling Deheubarth in the south, this domain was increasingly being perceived as a single *regnum*. Thus, in the eleventh century, English kings were generally required to deal with Welsh rulers from the west of Wales who wielded greater power, and ranged over wider territory, than their ninth-century predecessors. While Alfred extended his lordship across

Wales through complex negotiations with as many as six named kings, Edward could reconfigure Welsh politics at a stroke by killing and replacing a single opponent, albeit one who could be defeated only by a large-scale military campaign (cf. DeVries 2001; for the date, see Hudson 1994). During the intervening years, English kings had been required to find new methods for exerting power in Wales.

Case-study I: Bleddyn and Rhiwallon

The first case study concerns the family of the brothers Bleddyn and Rhiwallon. Why did Edward choose them as Gruffudd's successors? As Gruffudd's younger half-brothers, sharing the same mother, it is likely that Bleddyn and Rhiwallon had been important members of Gruffudd's household. Gruffudd's mother, Angharad, had probably remarried shortly after the death of Gruffudd's father, Llywelyn ap Seisyll, in 1023 (Davies 2016: 10–11). Presumably her new husband, Cynfyn ap Gwerystan, the father of Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, was a powerful lord at that time. Through Angharad, Bleddyn and Rhiwallon could claim royal status of the highest order: Angharad was the daughter of Hywel Dda's grandson, Maredudd ab Owain, who, as mentioned above, had ruled across much of Wales between 988 and 998/9 (cf. Guy 2020b: 41–42). From one perspective, Bleddyn and Rhiwallon may have seemed the natural successors to Gruffudd, even within Wales.

But this was almost certainly not what Gruffudd had intended. Gruffudd had two sons of his own, Maredudd and Idwal, who had reached maturity by no later than 1069, when they appear in the annals as challengers to Bleddyn and Rhiwallon (*AC*: b1091/c392).¹ During Gruffudd's lifetime, Maredudd appeared alongside his father in a surviving charter of privileges for the episcopal church of Llandaf. The charter is preserved in the Book of Llandaf, and it seems likely that it reproduces at least some matter from an authentic document (*LL*: 269–270; Davies 1979: 129; doubts are expressed by Maund 1991: 202–203, who nevertheless accepts the likelihood of an original eleventh-century source text). Encouragingly, one interpolation in the text is fairly obvious, suggesting that a twelfth-century editor based his work on an earlier source. When Gruffudd is first mentioned, he is called *Grifudi regis Britannie, & ut sic dicam totius Gualie* ('Gruffudd king of *Britannia*, and thus as I should say of all Wales'): this is probably a twelfth-century gloss on an original eleventh-century text, since *Britannia* was a typical term for Wales in Gruffudd's time, whereas *Gualia* came into fashion among Welsh writers only in the time of the Book of Llandaf (Pryce 2001: 777–781). In the witness list of this document, the first two lay witnesses are listed as *rex Grifud* and *Margetud filius eius* ('King Gruffudd' and 'Maredudd his son'). Given that Maredudd is always named before his brother in the annals, he was probably the eldest son, and this witness list may imply that he was Gruffudd's designated heir.

¹ Note that both versions of the vernacular *Brut y Tywysogyon*, alongside the closely related *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, name Gruffudd's second son as Ithel, rather than Idwal: *BT* (PRS), *s.a.* 1069 (I refer to Jones's corrected dates throughout this article). In this instance, it is probable that the two Latin chronicles preserve the form of the underlying eleventh-century St Davids annals more accurately than the vernacular chronicles.

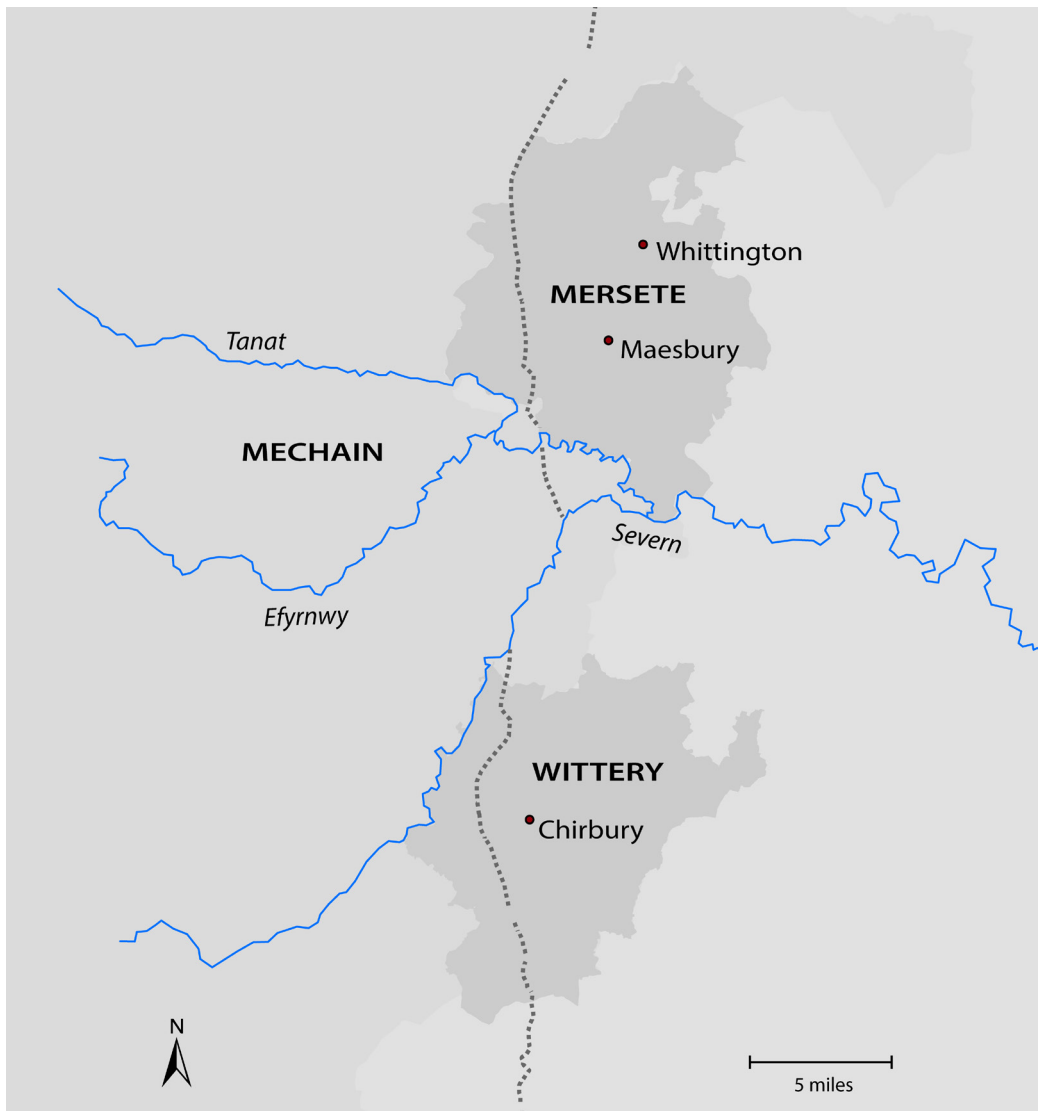


Figure 2: Merseyte hundred, Wittery hundred, and Mechain, contextualised with rivers, Offa's Dyke and the modern English-Welsh border

By appointing Bleddyn and Rhiwallon to succeed Gruffudd, Edward was clearly disrupting the legacy of his defeated rival, as one would expect; but again, why Bleddyn and Rhiwallon? A hint of an answer might be discovered by considering the family's background. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Bleddyn's sons and grandsons were major political actors on the Welsh stage, and their activities are amply evidenced by the fulsome account of the contemporary chronicler at Llanbadarn Fawr, whose work is preserved in *Brut y Tywysogyon* (Stephenson 2007: 183–189; 2016: 25–28; Jones 2014; Guy 2020a: 98–100). Although Bleddyn's foremost heir, his son Cadwgon,

ranged widely across Wales during these years, and established his primary court in Ceredigion, it is clear that Bleddyn's sons had inherited, and divided between them, a patchwork of lands centred on the mid-Wales territories of Powys (Stephenson 2016: 33–35). Bleddyn's family may indeed have originated in this area, considering that, when the sons of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn challenged Bleddyn and Rhiwallon in 1069, the resulting battle was fought in Mechain, a territory located in the heart of Powys immediately adjacent to the English border, roughly between Oswestry and Welshpool (cf. Stephenson 2016: 28–29; see Figure 2). Perhaps Cynfyn ap Gwerystan had been a prominent lord in or around Mechain at the time that he married Angharad after Llywelyn ap Seisyll's death in 1023.

There is another indication of growing Welsh power in this area around the time of Cynfyn's marriage to Angharad. A note in Domesday Book recalls that the three manors of Chirbury, Maesbury, and Whittington in Shropshire had paid half a night's farm during the reign of King Æthelred (*DB Shropshire*: 253c; for the 'night's farm', a render notionally to support the king and his household for a single night, or an equivalent commuted monetary payment, see Stafford 1980; Lavelle 2003). All three manors were located adjacent to the Welsh border: Chirbury was the head manor of Wittery hundred, Maesbury was the head manor of Mersete hundred, and Whittington was another important manor in Mersete hundred (for Mersete hundred, see Lewis 2007: 134–136, and Parsons elsewhere in this volume). Not only that, but all three manors lay immediately to the east of Mechain. Domesday Book shows that these manors had ceased to generate revenue between Æthelred's reign and 1066: by the latter date, they were deemed to be 'waste'. It is possible that the organisation of these manors for the provision of the night's farm, uniquely in north-western Mercia according to Domesday Book, was related to Æthelred's visit to Shropshire in mid-Winter in 1006, where he is said to have taken his *feorme* (*ASC (C)*, s.a. 1006; cf. Whitelock 1961, s.a. 1006 (CDE)). If so, it may have been in the troubled later years of Æthelred's reign, or shortly thereafter, that these estates stopped generating revenue for the king. This circumstance has been attributed to the vicissitudes of border warfare (Darby 1986: 267; *DB Shropshire*: note to 4,1,12), and it has even been suggested that the Welsh acquired these lands during Æthelred's reign (Charles-Edwards 2013: 555 and n. 94, referring to Lewis 1985: 147–149). Given that Mersete hundred lies immediately to the east of Mechain, and that Cynfyn seems to have risen to prominence at exactly this time, it is likely that his family should be implicated.

The position of Cynfyn's family as powerful border magnates was probably a key factor influencing Edward's decision to entrust royal power in Wales to Bleddyn and Rhiwallon in 1064. One might even push it further. If the brothers were indeed influential in Chirbury, Edward's attitude towards them might have been shaped by the deeper association of that place with English efforts to manage border affairs. As early as 915, Æthelflæd had established a *burh* at Chirbury (Blake and Sargent 2018: 129–130, 133, 136, and 138). Provisions for the organisation of this *burh* might indeed

explain why Chirbury was grouped with Maesbury and Whittington for the purposes of royal exploitation by Æthelred's time. Considering the next case-study, one might even speculate that Cynfyn's family had been associated with this *burh* prior to c. 1023. The fact that Cynfyn's father bore the English name *Wærstān* (rationalised in later Welsh sources as 'Gwerystan': Thornton 2007: 149) might suggest that the family had previously straddled Welsh and English interests.

Case-study 2: Gruffudd ap Llywelyn

Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's family first emerges into view in c. 1017, when his father Llywelyn killed a certain Aeddan ap Blegywryd and his four sons (AC: b1039/c341; BT (PRS), s.a. 1018). This incident has been identified as the subject of an early Welsh poem called *Echrys Ynys*, which concerns the death in battle of a certain *Aedon*, a lord from Anglesey (Charles-Edwards 2013: 665–668; for text and translation, see Gruffydd 1999). The poem suggests that *Aedon* met his death at the mouth of the River Conwy facing an enemy coming from the east, seemingly placing Llywelyn ap Seisyll in north-east Wales. It is usually thought that this event marked Llywelyn's first acquisition of power over the kingdom of Gwynedd, just as his defeat of Rhain the Irishman at Abergwili in 1022 is thought to represent his first acquisition of power in Deheubarth (Charles-Edwards 2013: 555–556). The evidence, however, is ambiguous; Llywelyn could conceivably have ruled in both the north and the south prior to 1017 (cf. Maund 1991: 59–60).

Further support for the idea that Llywelyn's powerbase lay in north-east Wales can be found in English accounts of Harold Godwinson's campaign against Llywelyn's son Gruffudd in 1063–1064. Harold is said to have set out from Gloucester to attack Gruffudd in Rhuddlan, in north-east Wales, after Christmas 1063 (Whitelock 1961, s.a. 1063 (D); John of Worcester, vol. 2: 592–593; for the contrasting presentation of this and other events of Gruffudd's reign in Welsh chronicles, see Thomas 2020b: 290–297). Harold presumably knew that Gruffudd would be celebrating Christmas and New Year at Rhuddlan, implying that Rhuddlan was one of Gruffudd's chief courts (Charles-Edwards 2013: 555 and 566). Gruffudd, like his father, may have had his primary powerbase in north-east Wales, perhaps specifically in Rhuddlan. As at Chirbury, a *burh* had been founded at Rhuddlan in the early tenth century, and this may hold the clue to the origins of Gruffudd's family. According to an annal in the 'Mercian Register', Edward the Elder established a *burh* at *Cledemutha* in 921, and this has generally been understood to refer to Rhuddlan, near the mouth of the River Clwyd, since Wainwright first proposed the identification in 1950 (Whitelock 1961, s.a. 921 (Mercian Register); Wainwright 1950; for the Mercian Register, see Stafford 2008; 2020, chap. 4). Excavations at Rhuddlan have revealed activity in the tenth century, though there is little firm evidence for any tenth-century burghal defences (Quinnell and Blockley 1994: 209–213; Griffiths 2001: 171–174).

After 1066, Rhuddlan remained significant as a western outpost of English power. All of the unhidated land, north-west of Wat's Dyke, pertaining to the Cheshire hundred of Ati's

Cross was grouped together as a part of a large manor centred on Rhuddlan: this territory was called 'Englefield' (Welsh 'Tegeingl'). By 1086, the manor of Rhuddlan was divided between Hugh, Earl of Chester, and his cousin Robert of Rhuddlan, who functioned as Hugh's deputy in Wales. Rhuddlan was the base from which Robert extended his dominion across North Wales, forming what Chris Lewis has aptly termed the 'Norman principality of Gwynedd' (Lewis 2019). After Robert's death in 1093, this broader principality seems to have been assigned to Earl Hugh, who granted lands in it as far afield as Anglesey to his new Benedictine house of St Werburgh's in Chester (*Chart. St. Werburgh*, vol. 1: no. 3; *Charters... Earls of Chester*: no. 3). But even after a Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd had been re-established under Gruffudd ap Cynan in the years after 1099 (Lewis 1996: 72–73), Rhuddlan and its hinterland continued to adhere to the Norman administration in Chester. In the wake of Robert's death, it seems that political leadership in Chester's Welsh hinterland of Englefield passed to the family of Edwin of Tegeingl. Edwin should most probably be identified with the Domesday tenant of the same name who held land in Ati's Cross and Exestan hundreds in 1066, and who still held one hide at Coleshill in Ati's Cross in 1086 (Harris and Thacker 1987: 315 and 322; Thornton 2007: 146 and 164). By the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Welsh families claiming descent from Edwin emerge in record evidence as some of the most important landholders and administrators in the newly formed county of Flintshire (Carr 1979: 141–145; 2003; 2017: 49–50, 65, 82–84, and 124–125). Earlier, in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Edwin's sons and grandsons were significant political players in North Wales, where they usually acted in concert with the Normans. In 1098, Edwin's son Owain guided a Norman expedition to Anglesey, though he apparently later turned against the Normans and led a rebellion of the men of Gwynedd (so *BT* (PR), *s.a.* 1098; *BT* (S), *s.a.* 1098 claims, quite plausibly, that Owain was installed as ruler of Gwynedd by the Normans prior to the rebellion; the underlying Latin source may have been ambiguous). More striking is an incident twenty years later. In 1118, Hywel ab Ithel, Lord of Rhos and Rhufoniog, supported by Maredudd ap Bleddyn and his relatives, fought a battle against Owain's sons, themselves supported by their uncle Uchdryd (OE 'Uhtred') and the 'French from Chester' (*BT* (PR), *s.a.* 1118; Uchdryd's sons are implicated in *BT* (S), *s.a.* 1118). The battle was fought in the territory of Dyffryn Clwyd, immediately to the south-west of Englefield. Although Hywel and his allies won the battle, the *Brut* recounts that 'Maredudd and the sons of Cadwgan returned home without daring to take possession of the land, because of the French, even though they had obtained the victory' (*BT* (R), *s.a.* 1118). This is a strong indication that Edwin's family held land and authority, probably in Englefield, under the lordship of the earls of Chester.

It is usually thought that 'the Welsh' took Rhuddlan from the Mercians at some point between 921 and 1063/4, explaining why Gruffudd ap Llywelyn came to be holding court in a former Mercian *burh* (or perhaps before *c.* 1017, if Llywelyn ap Seisyll already held it by that date) (e.g. Lewis 1991: 3–4 and 14; 2007: 137; Griffiths 2001: 181; Charles-Edwards 2013: 565–566). However, considering the post-1066 history of Rhuddlan and its lords, another possibility suggests itself: that Gruffudd's family originated as English royal

agents associated with the *burh* at Rhuddlan. The immediate hinterland of Rhuddlan would have been predominantly Welsh in language and culture at this date, despite the presence of English place-names to the north-west of Wat's Dyke by 1066 (for which, see Owen 1997). It might have been considered appropriate to entrust the management of this borderland zone to a family of mixed Anglo-Welsh background, as with the family of Edwin of Tegeingl by 1098. This may explain why Llywelyn ap Seisyll was able to acquire such power within Wales by c. 1017 from an unlikely base in the north-east, which was not a traditional centre of Welsh political power. Initially, this arrangement may have worked to the advantage of the English, even if circumstances then worked against them during the reign of Llywelyn's son Gruffudd.

One might compare this hypothesised scenario with the situation of Archenfield, now in south-western Herefordshire, by 1066. Archenfield, another territory that was predominantly Welsh in language and culture, had been annexed to Herefordshire but remained separate from it administratively, even in 1086 (Lewis 1988: 8–9; 2007: 132–133; *DB Herefordshire*: note 1). In 1066, most of Archenfield remained in the hands of Welsh landowners, including such prominent individuals as the 'Cadian' who held the extensive territory of Kilpeck (Baxter and Lewis 2017: 358); he should almost certainly be identified as the 'Cadien Ddu' associated with Kilpeck in a Book of Llandaf document concerning churches in Archenfield consecrated by Herewald, Bishop of Llandaf, in the period 1056–87 (*LL*: 275–278; *DB Herefordshire*: note to 1,53; Thornton 2007: 160–163). According to the customs of Archenfield recorded in Domesday Book, it was customary in 1066 that the men of Archenfield should form the vanguard of English armies advancing into Wales, and their rearguard on the return (*DB Herefordshire*: 179b). Presumably, prominent landholders like Cadien Ddu would have led the men of Archenfield in such situations. A comparable arrangement with the Welsh of Englefield may well explain why the Norman army of Earl Hugh of Chester and Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury was led to Anglesey by Edwin's son Owain in 1098. Did Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's family play a similar role in Englefield in the late tenth or early eleventh centuries? If so, it complicates our understanding of 'Welsh' and 'English' interests in this area. It would have been useful, perhaps essential, for the English kings and earls to exert their power in this district through the intermediary of a family of Welsh border magnates; in turn, initial English support in this Mercian outpost may have been the decisive factor in the rise of Llywelyn and his son to power in a Welsh context. At first, Llywelyn's rise may have been seen as advantageous among the English, even if events transpired otherwise thereafter.

Case-study 3: Rhydderch ab Iestyn

The third and final case study concerns Rhydderch ab Iestyn, who ruled South Wales, and possibly much of North Wales too, for a decade following the death of Llywelyn ap Seisyll in 1023. It seems that Rhydderch hailed from Gwent in south-east Wales, where two of his grandsons, Caradog ap Gruffudd and Rhydderch ap Caradog, ruled a patchwork of small territories during the reign of William I (*LL*: 278–279; Charles-

Edwards 2013: 557–558). Rhydderch ab Iestyn is the first known member of his dynasty, and, just as with his predecessor Llywelyn, his sudden rise to a position of dominance across at least half of Wales requires some explanation. A coincidence of events might suggest that he had the backing of Cnut and his earls in the east. In 1022, the year before Llywelyn's death and Rhydderch's rise to power, one of Cnut's earls launched a raid into south Wales. This was Earl Eilifr, who attested Cnut's charters between 1018 and 1024 and who may have been responsible for a part of Mercia roughly equating to Gloucestershire (Keynes 1994: 59). Annals maintained at St Davids report that Eilifr ravaged Dyfed in the west and violated St Davids itself (AC: b1043/c345; BT (PRS), *s.a.* 1022). The same incident seems to be recalled in a posthumous miracle story added to Lifris of Llancarfan's *Life of St Cadog*, written about 1100 (*Vita sancti Cadoci*: §40; cf. Emanuel 1952: 219–220; Brooke 1986: 86–87 and n. 164). According to the story, Eilifr came with his followers to plunder Morgannwg, whereupon the clergy of Llancarfan fled with Cadog's shrine and other relics. Curiously, they fled eastwards for safety, to the monastery of Mamheilad in Gwent Uwch Coed. It seems likely that, in 1022, Gwent Uwch Coed was ruled by Rhydderch ab Iestyn, perhaps indicating that the clergy of Llancarfan expected Eilifr and Rhydderch to be on friendly terms. In the event, a certain *predonum multitudo Dacorum atque Anglorum* ('horde of plunderers, Danes and English'), of uncertain affiliation, did indeed seek to steal Cadog's shrine in Mamheilad, but they failed to anticipate the dire consequences that await those who rouse Cadog's posthumous wrath.

It would be possible to read these events as being connected, and to speculate that Earl Eilifr attacked Dyfed (then ruled by Llywelyn ap Seisyll) as well as Morgannwg in order to prepare the way for Rhydderch ab Iestyn of Gwent to take control of the south. At first sight, this is no more than speculation, but the proposition gains credence when one considers the other evidence for the relationship between Gwent and the English kingdom in this period. Foremost among such evidence is the Old English legal text known as the *Ordinance concerning the Dunsæte*, which has been dated convincingly to the late tenth or eleventh centuries (Molyneaux 2011a). The text concerns the regulation of relations between English and Welsh communities living either side of a river (cf. Lambert 2018; for a useful introduction to the text, see Brady 2017: 1–6). Although the text may be read as indicating that the Dunsæte comprised either both parties or the Welsh party only, there is a case to be made in favour of the former interpretation (Guy forthcoming; see also Brady this volume). Either way, the Dunsæte appear to have dwelt in a territory adjacent to Gwent in south-east Wales (most probably a portion of south-western Herefordshire centred on the hundred of Dinedor; cf. Lewis 1988: 7; 2007: 142). This is strongly implied in the following statement:

Hwilan Wentsæte hyrdan into Dunsætān, ac hit gebyrēð rihtor into Westsexan; ðyder hy scylan gafol , gislas syllan. Eac Dunsæte beþyrfan, gif heom se cyning an, þæt man huru friðgislas to heom læte (Duns 9–9.1).

At one time the Wentsæte belonged among the Dunsæte, but that district belongs more justly to the West Saxons; they [the Wentsæte] should deliver tribute and hostages there. The Dunsæte also consider it necessary, if the king will grant it to them, that at least peace-hostages [of the Wentsæte] should be given them (adapted from Charles-Edwards 2007: 59).

The term ‘Wentsæte’ refers to the people of Gwent, who, according to the text, were habitually subordinated to the West Saxons. The arrangement, whereby the people of Gwent regularly rendered tribute and hostages to the West Saxons, is reminiscent of the terms of submission imposed on Bleddyn and Rhiwallon in 1064 in the context of defeat. Nevertheless, that the people of Gwent maintained an independence of action within this relationship is implied by the continued threat that they posed to the Dunsæte, who required peace-hostages from them. This relationship between Gwent and the West Saxons could conceivably have endured from the 880s, when the brothers Brochfael and Ffernfael, kings of Gwent, submitted to Alfred (Asser: chap. 80).

It is instructive to place the *Ordinance* alongside the witness lists of the Llandaf charters. Recent work has continued to uphold Wendy Davies’s thesis that the majority of the Llandaf charters reliably preserve the core elements (and especially the witness lists) of authentic documents dating from between the seventh and eleventh centuries (Sims-Williams 2019; Guy 2020c). A striking but understudied feature of the witness lists is the distribution of English names in them. In ‘Sequence III’ of the charters, dating from the mid-ninth to the late eleventh century, English names at first appear only sporadically: thus, a certain *Edilfred* is found as a clerical witness to the only charter of bishop Gwyddloyw in the mid-ninth century (LL: 168–169; Sims-Williams 2019: 168–171), while a certain *Dunna* appears in the entourage of Hywel ap Rhys, king of Glywysing, around 872 (LL: 227–228; Davies 1979: 121). But the incidence of English names markedly increases from about the second quarter of the tenth century, during the time of Bishop Wulfrith, the first bishop in south-east Wales with an English name (cf. Sims-Williams 2019: 173, n. 117). The tendency is especially noticeable in the charters of a local royal dynasty associated with Gwent that emerges in the middle of the tenth century, beginning with one Nowy ap Gwriad. For example, the lay witness list of one of Nowy’s charters reads: *Nougui rex, Guoraul filius Brechiaul, Edilhirth* [OE *Æthelheard?*] *filius Edrit* [OE *Eadred*], *Mailseru filius Duta* [OE *Dudda*]’ (LL: 217–218, dated c. 960 in Davies 1979: 120). Similarly, the lay witness list of a charter of Nowy’s son, Arthfael, reads: ‘*Arthmail filius Nogui, Nogui filius Guriat, Merchiaun filius Riderch, Brichmar* [OE *Beorhtmær*], *Gurci filius Gurcimanu, duo filii Albrit* [OE *Ælfred*] *Sigrit* [OE *Sigered*] *et Hiucid* (LL: 244–245, dated c. 980 in Davies 1979: 125). These charters attest to an elite culture in tenth-century Gwent that looked to the onomastic repertoires of both Welsh and English for its name forms. Changes went in both directions: the *Ælfred* of the last-named charter had sons called *Sigered* and *Hyfaidd*, while a clerical witness to the first-named charter is called *Osulf filius Cinuelin* (‘Oswulf son of Cynfelin’). The regular dominance over Gwent exercised by the West Saxons, as described in the *Ordinance concerning the Dunsæte*, could plausibly explain the emergence of this situation during the tenth century.

Like the secular rulers of Gwent, there is good evidence that the local bishops maintained close relations with the English kings. The episcopal church of the tenth-century bishops attested in the Book of Llandaf, including Bishop Wulfrith, was arguably located at Llandogo in Gwent during this period (Charles-Edwards 2013: 594–595; Sims-Williams 2019: 173–174). When one of the bishops, Bishop Cyfeillig, was captured by viking raiders in 914, it was Edward the Elder who ransomed him back for £40 (Whitelock 1961, *s.a.* 914 (ABCD)). The Canterbury list of Llandaf episcopal consecrations credibly claims that Bishop Cyfeillig, who appears in late ninth-century charters, had been consecrated by Æthelred, Archbishop of Canterbury (870–889) (Davies 1974–6: 62, with text at 70; Sims-Williams 2019: 171). Some of Cyfeillig's successors may similarly have been consecrated by English archbishops, as the various consecration lists claim. The Book of Llandaf's notice of the death of Bishop Gwgon in 982 is accompanied by a description of his consecration at Edgar's court by Archbishop Dunstan, which, remarkably, preserves an entirely credible English witness list of four bishops, two abbots, and three ealdormen, who can be dated as a group to 963–72 and who all witnessed charters of Edgar together in 968, 969, and 970 (LL 246; Davies 1974–76: 62–63 and 67–68; Keynes 2014: 112). This witness list may well derive from a contemporary record of the consecration. Strikingly, Ælfsige, bishop of St Cuthbert's community, made a comparably rare appearance at the court of the southern English king in 970 (S 781; McGuigan 2018: 130 and 143).

Against this background, the possible scenario outlined above, which posited that Earl Eilífr's raid on South Wales in 1022 was intended to facilitate Rhydderch's rise to power, seems highly plausible. There is every chance that Gwent's habitual relationship of subordination to the English kings continued into the early eleventh century, to Rhydderch's own time, and perhaps beyond (compare the relationship between the Welsh rulers of Gwent and Earl William fitz Osbern and his son Roger: Crouch 2008: 1–6). Rhydderch, as a ruler of a partially anglicised territory subjected to the English king, would have been an ideal candidate for English support in the competition for power further west in Wales; this, in turn, may help to explain how Rhydderch was able to rise to power so dramatically from a position of relative obscurity. Rhydderch may be an example of a petty Welsh king who was helped to gain wider power by his English overlord as a means for that overlord (in this case, Cnut) to achieve a greater degree of influence in Wales than would otherwise have been possible. The ruler whom Rhydderch replaced, Llywelyn ap Seisyll, may have begun his career in a similar position in Rhuddlan. During the course of Rhydderch's reign, from 1023 to 1033, his actions may have tended away from English interests, perhaps explaining why Cnut attacked Wales in 1030 in alliance with Sihtric Silkbeard of Dublin (AT, *s.a.* 1030.11; cf. Downham 2003: 63–64). Nevertheless, a memory of Rhydderch's former cooperation with Cnut's regime may have influenced the form of Rhydderch's alleged charter of confirmation for Bishop Joseph of Llandaf, which, despite showing signs of twelfth-century fabrication, may be based on an authentic document (Davies 1979: 126; Davies 2003: 17–18; cf. Maund 1991: 188–189, who is more sceptical). According to the text, the grant was made *ammonitione*

Ælnoð archiepiscopi Cantuariensi simul cum litteris commendatiis Cnut regnantis Angliam ('with the advice of Æthelnoth archbishop of Canterbury as well as with a letter of commendation of Cnut ruler of England', LL: 253–254).

Conclusion

The three case studies examined above seem to suggest a pattern in the approach of English kings towards Wales between the late tenth century and 1064. During the first half of the tenth century, English kings deemed it important to maintain direct domination over the greater kings of Wales. The impetus for this may have been eroded thereafter, and such regular relationships become more difficult to discern outside of one-off spectacles like the Chester event of 973. In its place, a more granular and regional approach to Wales, focussed on the borderlands, emerges into view. In the south, Gwent assumed the status of a discrete client kingdom, ruled by its own Welsh kings but obliged to recognise the authority of English kings. This situation may have encouraged Cnut and Earl Eilifr to support Rhydderch ab Iestyn's bid for the kingdom of Deheubarth in 1022–1023. By contrast, the Welsh district of Englefield in the northern borderlands, centred on the *burh* of Rhuddlan, was not a discrete client kingdom, but was instead annexed to Cheshire, much as Archenfield came to be annexed to Herefordshire. English interests in North Wales could be pursued through intermediary border magnates holding power in this area. The power of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's family may have originated in this context, just like Edwin of Tegeingl's family during the Norman period. Against this background, King Edward's selection of the border magnates Bleddyn and Rhiwallon to replace Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1064 would have seemed natural, especially if the same family had become dominant in the former Mercian border *burh* of Chirbury. Edward might have assumed that Bleddyn and Rhiwallon could be more easily controlled than other candidates whose centres of power lay deeper within Wales. It would be misleading to claim that there was deliberate 'consistency' in this new approach to Wales, especially since English authorities intervened in Wales only sporadically and for specific purposes, but it remains instructive to recognise the contrast in approach by comparison with the earlier period.

The same idea may have held sway during the first years of Norman rule in England. In 1069, following Bleddyn ap Cynfyn's narrow victory over Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's sons in Mechain, a certain Maredudd ab Owain ab Edwin took control of Deheubarth. Maredudd's uncles had previously held the kingship of Deheubarth between the death of Rhydderch ab Iestyn in 1033 and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's decisive seizure of power there in 1044. However, Maredudd's family had also held lands in Herefordshire since the early eleventh century, and it may have been from there that he launched his bid to conquer Deheubarth in 1069 (Thornton 2007: 157–160). According to Domesday Book, William fitz Osbern, earl of Hereford (d. 1071), had given the two manors of Lye in Herefordshire to Maredudd when the latter was king, presumably between 1069 and 1071, and King William remitted the land's geld to him (*DB Herefordshire*: 187c). Did Maredudd seize power in 1069 with the support of William fitz Osbern and William I? If so, he may have been the last Welsh ruler to benefit

from this policy. In subsequent years, the Normans' approach to Wales would rapidly turn to outright conquest, overturning the unspoken pre-Conquest consensus about dominating Wales via Welsh intermediaries. The 'borderlands' would be extended and transformed into a new political space that came to be known as the March, ruled by quasi-independent Norman marcher lords (Lieberman 2010). Yet, there was an Anglo-Welsh march before the March, and it was arguably a central factor in the approach of English kings towards Wales during the late tenth and eleventh centuries. This earlier march consisted of disparate, Welsh-speaking territories ruled by minor Welsh kings and lords who were obliged to maintain varying relationships of subordination with the English kingdom. Sometimes they would be promoted by the English as candidates for the emerging bipartite *regnum* of North and South Wales to the west. In this way, English manipulation of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, though partial and discontinuous, profoundly affected the development of dynastic politics in Wales in the century before the advent of the Normans.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Rebecca Thomas and Rory Naismith for kindly commenting on earlier drafts of this article, David Parsons for creating the excellent map, and Robinson College for supporting my work on the Anglo-Welsh borderlands through a research fellowship.

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Place-names and Offa's Dyke: The Limits of Inference

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This chapter examines English and Welsh place-names along the line of Offa's Dyke. It is divided into three sections, each concentrating on a separate area and each given a rather different focus. First, names either side of the dyke passing through the hundred of Clun in south-west Shropshire are examined to show the nature of the evidence and some of its complexity, as well — it is hoped — as some of its interest. The second section reconsiders some specific arguments about the dating of English names lying to the west of the dyke in modern Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire. Finally the third section, in rather speculative vein, attempts to co-ordinate a 'reading' of the place-name evidence in Oswestry hundred, north-west Shropshire, with the different lines indicated by Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke and various types of historical evidence. It is suggested, on one hand, that a cultural boundary visible in the later medieval period may have roots deep in the Anglo-Saxon period, but also that this line was probably always only one element in a complex skein of boundaries that made up the Anglo-Welsh frontier.

Keywords: place-names, linguistic history, language contact, English, Welsh, Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke, Shropshire, Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire, borders

For Offa, a most mighty king of March ... caused a very deep ditch with an exceeding high wall to be made ... about an hundred miles long ...

And all the towns and villages almost which be on the east side therof have their names ending in these terminations, *-ton* or *-ham*, whereby it appeareth that the Saxons sometime dwelled there. Howbeit, now the Welshmen in all places beyond that ditch towards Lloegr [England] have planted themselves.¹

Although Humphrey Llwyd's pioneering work represents a significant early recognition that surviving place-names could help throw light on this aspect of Britain's early medieval past, it must be said that his observation is true only at a rather low resolution. The pattern of naming along both sides of Offa's Dyke nowhere shows a very tidy divide between common English types on one side and Welsh formations on the other. Even allowing for the areas to the east in which Welsh populations thrived in later periods, as Llwyd recognised, it is far from straightforward to construct a detailed account of the history of the border by correlating name-evidence with the line of Offa's Dyke. That is not to say, however, that the attempt is not worth making, nor that both types of evidence do not have valuable information to offer.

¹ Humphrey Llwyd, *The Breviary of Britain*, trans. Thomas Twyne (1573). The quotation is taken from the recent edition by Schwyzer (2011: 98–99).

This article has the limited aim of discussing the relationship between place-names and the line of Offa’s Dyke along some fifty miles of the frontier between Chirk in the north and Radnor in the south. This is not a comprehensive study: that would be a much larger work, for which much of the groundwork — in terms of the collection and interpretation of medieval and modern documentary name-forms — remains to be done. Rather it is arranged as three separate reflections on the partial materials currently existing. Two of these sections, on the hundreds of Clun in the south-west and Oswestry in the north-west of Shropshire, are in a sense progress reports on ongoing work to complete the English Place-Name Society’s survey of that county, begun by the late Margaret Gelling.² The other section, taken in second place below, briefly reconsiders the significance of a number of English place-names lying west of the dyke in the east of modern Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire. Not tackled here is the stretch of border running further south, through Herefordshire and on to the confluence of Wye and Severn, nor the situation to the north in Flintshire, where Offa’s Dyke is not firmly identified.³

The three reflections approach the material in different ways. The first, on Clun, introduces the kind of material offered by medieval place-names, a rich resource for studying Anglo-Welsh contact in what has clearly long been a border zone; it does not seek to make any general historical argument about conditions in the time of Offa. The second, in contrast, examines some influential arguments that have been advanced about the significance of a number of English place-names lying to the west of the dyke in modern mid-Wales. Although it finds those arguments wanting, the final reflection, on Oswestry, suggests some new possible correlations that might inform historical debate, albeit that the more substantial part of this proposal involves not Offa’s but Wat’s Dyke, a little to the east.

Clun: characterising names on the border

The complexity, challenge and interest of place-names at the linguistic border is well illustrated in the hundred of Clun. Here, in an area neatly bisected by Offa’s Dyke, there is a rich mix of English names, Welsh names and names shaped or reshaped by give and take between the two languages. Compounds with common English generics include

² The first published volume, the fruit of decades of preparatory work, was Gelling 1990. Gelling published five subsequent volumes, the last appearing posthumously. Since then additions to the series have been made by John Baker, Jayne Carroll and Paul Cavill; Oswestry hundred will be Part 10 (Parsons forthcoming) and Clun will follow in Part 11 (Carroll and Parsons forthcoming) completing the material of the survey. A twelfth and final volume will contain introduction and apparatus.

³ In fact the stretch examined here constitutes almost the whole undisputed length of the dyke given that Hill and Worthington (2003) argue that sections in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire are not part of the same construction. Ray and Bapty (2016) strongly disagree with this view, though they accept that the line and intermittent nature of the earthwork in Herefordshire suggests a different kind of cross-border relationship in the eighth century to that implied further north (2016: 272–274). More recently Delaney (2021) has argued that the dyke did indeed run continuously as far as the Wye, and that the apparent gaps are due to later loss.

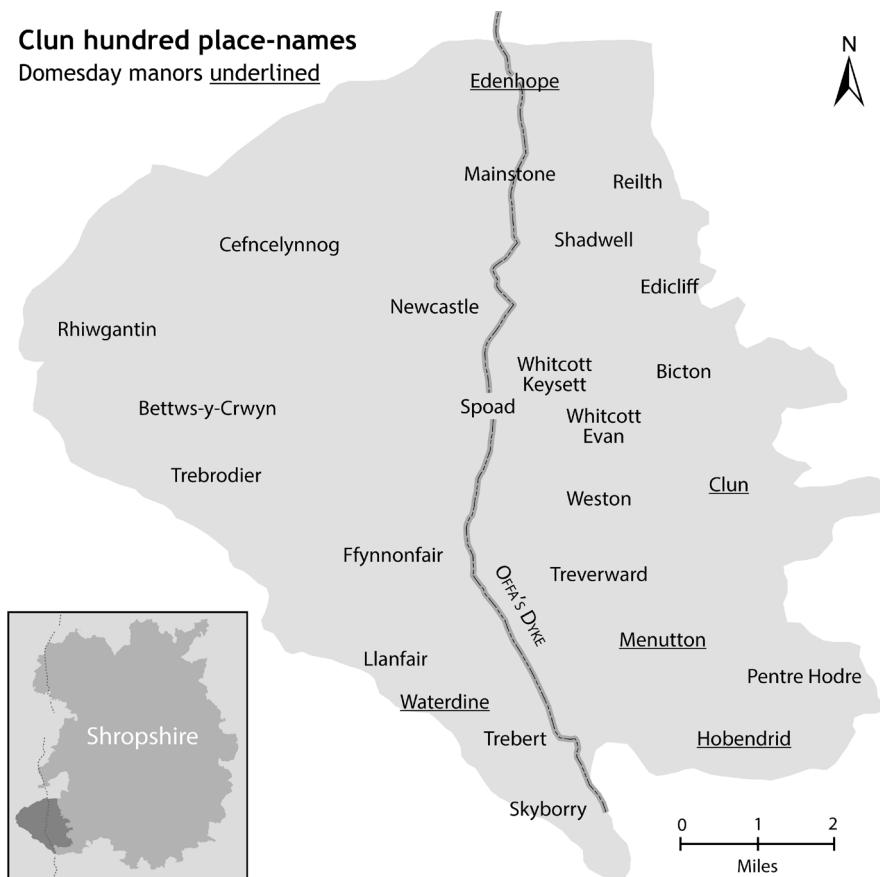


Figure 1: Clun hundred place-names

Weston (Old English [hereafter OE] *tūn* ‘settlement, estate’), Bicton (OE *tūn* or *dūn* ‘hill’), Whitcott (OE *cot* ‘cottage’), *Edicliff* (OE *clif* ‘cliff, steep slope’), Edenhope (OE *hop* ‘secluded valley’) and Shadwell (OE *welle* ‘spring, stream’).⁴ Wholly Welsh names include *Ffynnonfair* (Welsh [hereafter W] *ffynnon* ‘well, spring’ + *Mair*, the W form of Mary), *Cefncelynnog* (W *cefn* ‘back, ridge’ + *celynnog* ‘growing with holly’), *Skyborry* (W *ysguborau* ‘barns’) and *Pentre Hodre* (formerly *Perthrodry*, with W *perth* ‘hedge, thicket, copse’ and perhaps the personal name Rhodri; W *pentref* ‘village, hamlet’ has been substituted, since at least the seventeenth century, as first element).

⁴ The details of all the place-names mentioned in this section will be treated in Carroll and Parsons (forthcoming). In the meantime most are discussed by Gelling (1990) and/or Morgan (1997). The six names listed in this sentence are all certainly or probably wholly English formations: Edenhope, Whitcott and perhaps *Edicliff* are likely to contain OE personal names, Bicton probably involves **bica* ‘beak, promontory’ and Weston is west of Clun. Shadwell is an example of a recurrent compound meaning ‘boundary stream’ (see Smith 1956, vol. 2: 99 [*scēad* ‘separation’]), though it is not clear which of various possible streams is meant, nor whether the boundary would have been one of any great cultural or political significance. Note that italicised head-names, as *Edicliff*, are no longer current.

Also ultimately Welsh (or ‘British’, since it is probably older than the separation of Brittonic languages into the medieval survivors of Welsh, Cornish and Cumbric) is the *caput*-name Clun, which is an adoption of the river-name that became Colunwy in Welsh.⁵ Such a transfer of an early river-name to a settlement-name used by the Anglo-Saxons is widespread across England, of course. More distinctive of the border, as a name-type, is probably Menutton. Here the qualifier is, or derives from, W *mynydd* ‘mountain, (large) hill, common grazing’. Whilst this could be another fairly common type in England, in which OE *tūn* is added to the Welsh name (or a part of the Welsh name) for a local feature, it is more likely in this instance that the Welsh term has been borrowed into local usage. English is generally resistant to the adoption of loanwords from Welsh, but in the case of *mynydd* > Middle English [hereafter ME] *munede* there is persuasive evidence that the borrowing occurred in several border regions, including south-west Shropshire. This name — like the now-lost *Wolstanmynd* (Cavill 2020: 24; Morgan 2001: 169–170) and *Munetun* some fifteen miles to the north in Chirbury hundred (Cavill 2020: 116–117) — is likely to contain the loan, perhaps in the particular sense ‘upland common grazing’.⁶ The much more common opposite phenomenon of an English loanword into Welsh is found in the parish-name Bettws-y-Crwyn, where the generic element is W *betws* ‘chapel’ < OE *bed-hūs* ‘prayer-house’.⁷

Another of the modern parishes, Llanfair Waterdine, combines two separate names, one from each language: the Welsh ‘St Mary’s church’ is distinguished from other instances of Llanfair by the addition of an English topographical name ‘water valley’, with OE *denu*. Ecclesiastical place-names with secular affixes — sometimes, as here, topographical names denoting the ‘same’ place or a broader unit where the church is situated — are a common type in Wales.⁸

A number of further names in the hundred appear to be English in origin, but to have been greatly altered in the mouths of Welsh-speakers. Hobendrid represents Domesday Book’s

⁵ The relationship between Welsh Colunwy and the borrowed monosyllabic Clun has been explained as suggesting early versions of the river-name with different suffixes (Ekwall 1928: 87–70; Jackson 1953: 309, 382, 688; Parsons 2013a: 113).

⁶ See MED *mōunthe* n., with examples of the form *munede* from the south-west midland author Lazamon. Morgan (1997: 39) cites an instance from the Clun medieval court rolls of the holding of a *menede* where men burnt turves. Instances of *mynd* used as a generic in English-structured minor names abound in the hundreds of Purslow and Munslow which neighbour Clun to the east: examples are given by Baker and Carroll (2020: xiii, 274, 340, 359, 384–387, etc.). For a comparable use and (probably independent) borrowing in the Forest of Dean, see the evidence for *meend* < ME *munede* discussed by Smith (1964: 218; 1965: 19, 26, 157, etc.). In this context its application is to ‘a piece of open ground or waste in the forest’, the link presumably being through common grazing or pasture, senses also perhaps consistent with the turbarry implied above. ‘Common grazing’ would appear to fit Welsh usage; see also Barrow (1998: 62–66) for judicious discussion of the Brittonic term in Wales and Scotland.

⁷ Morgan’s suggestion (1997: 17), based on the form *Rhyd y Crwyn* 1622, that the chapel was built at ‘the ford of the skins’ (W *crwyn*, plural of *croen*) — where hides may have been washed — is probably the best available explanation of the qualifier. For *bed-hūs* and *betws* in English and Welsh names see Parsons and Styles (1997: 70) and Owen (2013: 335).

⁸ For numerous comparable formations involving Mary and Michael churches, as e.g. Llanfair Clydogau, Ceredigion, and Llanfihangel Nant Melan, Radnorshire, see Owen and Morgan (2007: 242–251); also Richards (1968).

Edrethope, with the OE personal name *Ēadred* + *hop* 'secluded valley'. It has been assimilated to Welsh patterns, in that the generic element has moved to first position and its final /p/ has been voiced to /b/.⁹ Something similar has apparently happened with Trebert, which is found in the early thirteenth century as *B'ton*'. This seems to be an example of a common English name-type — probably Burton, but just possibly Barton — which has been 'cymricised' by the inversion of elements and the replacement of *tūn* by *W tref*, of similar meaning.¹⁰ A third example is very probably Treverward, though in this case there is no direct evidence of the original English form. First recorded as *Treboreward* in 1284, this surely belongs to the set of names incorporating an OE *burh-ward* 'fort guardian' which cluster in the border counties of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire. It seems very likely that this place-name should be regarded as originally identical with Burwarnton, some twenty miles east (Gelling 1990: 67–68), and with a lost Domesday *Burwardestone* in Cheshire (Dodgson 1972: 1).¹¹

It is worth pausing to consider the processes lying behind these transpositions. They do not seem to be wholly consistent. Treverward might be seen as a full assimilation of an English **Burhwardestūn* — and could have first been current when the concept and role of the putative *burh-ward* were still understood. Trebert, on the other hand, would be a very 'unsatisfactory' form of Burton or Barton: neither *bwrt* nor *bert* probably ever meant anything to anyone, while the preservation of /b/ — as opposed to the regular lenition to /v/ seen in Treverward — represents a failure to assimilate the name fully into Welsh. The structure of the name, with generic *tūn* in final position, was clearly understood, but the significance of the name as a whole was not appreciated — Morgan (1997: 53) aptly called it a combination of *tref* and 'undigested *Burt*'. Whether *Edrethope* made much sense to the Welsh who first turned it into *Hobendrid* is also unclear. While *hop* might have been understood and even adopted very locally as a loanword into Welsh, since

⁹ Gelling (1990: 152–153) felt the identification of DB *Edrethope* with *Hobendrid* was not certain, but the equation of the names is highly probable, even if the rather large Domesday manor may have encompassed a wider area than the later township. Thorn and Thorn (1986: note to 4,20,23) are surely mistaken in equating the Domesday name with *Lurkenhope*. Both Gelling and the Thorns were also probably misled by the 1066 holder, Edric the Wild, into suggesting Edric as the personal name element: OE *Ēadred* suits the forms better, as Morgan (1997: 32) observes. *Ēadred* was presumably a somewhat earlier holder of the manor. On *hob* for *hop* see n. 12 below.

¹⁰ Gelling (1990: 41) includes the name in her discussion of Burton-names (see further below p. 115–116), with the comment that it is 'an obvious Welsh rendering of Burton'. Early forms like *Trebert* 1284, *Trefburt* 1345 tend to support that interpretation, though the earliest form so far collected, *B'ton*', might equally — perhaps more straightforwardly — represent *Berton*', OE *beretūn* 'barley farm, grange', which would regularly develop to a modern Barton; a possible association with the barns of neighbouring *Skyborry* is then attractive. It is not clear how much weight to assign to the apparent vowel-quality in the reordered and Welsh-influenced *Trebert*.

¹¹ On the group see further below, p. 116. As noted by all commentators, *Burgward* could alternatively be a personal name in any or all of these names, but the recurrence and the distribution favour the interpretation as an administrative official. It is tempting to compare the later Marcher evidence for the service of castle-guard, and perhaps also for the Welsh-named office of the *ceisiad* 'sergeant of the peace'; it is intriguing that the latter term is the affix in *Whitcott Keysett*, three miles north of Treverward. On castle-guard at Clun see Lieberman (2010: 177). On *ceisiad* and similar Welsh terminology in the March see Lieberman (2010: 203–205); also Rees (1924: 103–106).

it a very frequent generic in the region, there is no evidence for its independent use in surviving records of the language. The shift of the word to initial position here could alternatively be an unconscious reflex stemming from an appreciation of the relative shapes of English and Welsh names.¹²

One last name to be considered neatly sums up the dints and bruises that place-names passed to and fro between languages can receive. Reilth is in origin simply the Old English word *hyll* ‘hill’ (itself a remarkably understated choice in a very hilly landscape). Local Welsh-speakers adopted it and – doubtless with understanding, though without choosing to translate it into an equivalent term like *bryn* or *rhiw* – added the Welsh definite article *yr*, giving ‘the hill’. They also assimilated the word-final /l/ to the characteristic Welsh lateral fricative /ɬ/, as in *llan* ‘church-enclosure’ or *pwll* ‘pool’, a sound ‘sharp in the hissing’ as Humphrey Llwyd described it (Schwyzer 2011: 52). Later generations then attached the *r* of the article in *yr Hyll* to the root of the name, and finally English speakers substituted /θ/, *lth*, for the tricky /ɬ/.¹³

The discussion so far has focused on the languages and language-contact evident in the place-names of Clun, and has not seriously raised questions of chronology and geography. A consideration of chronology must begin with the dates of record. Five names in the hundred are recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086: Clun, Edenhope, Hobendrid (as *Edretehope*), Menutton and [Llanfair] Waterdine. All the other names marked on Figure 1 are first found in the thirteenth century, most of them in either 1272 or 1284.¹⁴ The primary point that needs emphasis, therefore, is that any use of this material to investigate the Anglo-Saxon period requires caution. There is no reason to doubt that many of the township-names were coined before the Norman Conquest, but not all were. Newcastle is one evident exception, clearly a late name with the Norman French *castel* and probably with reference to a Norman-period motte.¹⁵ The referent in Skyborry is also likely to be post-Conquest. The place was the property of the Cistercian

¹² Shropshire and Radnorshire examples of *-hop* include Edenhope above, Lurkenhope, Wilderhope, Millichope, Evenjobb, Cascob (Gelling and Cole 2000: 133–141, and see further below). However, although instances of simplex Hope in FLI and MTG are assimilated into Welsh to the extent that a Welsh definite article is sometimes provided, as *Yr Hob* (Owen and Morgan 2007: 198), I see no likely examples of thoroughly Welsh formations with the term as generic element, which would more clearly suggest lexical borrowing. The township of Hobarris, which adjoins Hobendrid to the north, is the only probable parallel in which the term appears as generic in first place; the qualifier in that name is quite uncertain, but is not unlikely to be another English personal name and the two adjoining names would then be of the same, ultimately Old English, type. See Parry-Williams (1923: 240–241) on the voicing of the final consonant in English *hop* > Welsh *hob* in a number of these names; the equivalent process voiced final *t* to *d* in Spoad, below.

¹³ The name is a near parallel for the well known Rhyl, Flintshire, though that name did not share the same development of final /l/ (Owen and Gruffydd 2017: 171).

¹⁴ The two key documents of these dates are, respectively, the inquisition *post mortem* of the holdings of John FitzAlan III, Earl of Arundel (IPM 1236–72: 280–281), and a settlement relating to the dower lands of his widow, Isabel Mortimer, which had recently been regained from the Welsh (Close Rolls 1279–1288: 260–262; see further below, n. 20, on the Welsh annexation).

¹⁵ Probably the motte ‘the Crugyn’ at SO 243820: see castlewales.com/crugyn.html and castlesfortsbattles.co.uk/midlands/newcastle_crugyn.html, both viewed 25 May 2022; also Lieberman 2010: 168–169.

monastery of Cwm-hir in Radnorshire, founded in 1176, and the 'barns' may well have been its own grange buildings (Morgan 1997: 50).¹⁶ A third name may be suspected of being late on different grounds. Spoad (*Spoot* 1272, *Spote* 1284) looks very much as if it is English *spout*, a term commonly applied in later Shropshire minor names to springs of water.¹⁷ Since the OS maps mark more than a dozen springs issuing from the slopes of Spoad Hill, which is surmounted by Springhill Farm, it seems very likely that this is the correct origin.¹⁸ Yet the word *spout* is not recorded in English texts at all before the fourteenth century, and it may be a medieval loanword from Dutch or Norse.¹⁹ While it is by no means inconceivable that Spoad in fact preserves a native Old English term cognate with its Germanic cousins, and that the name dates back centuries before its first appearance, it is clearly not safe simply to assume that it does so.

Putting aside the Norman-period Newcastle, and uncertainty about Spoad, there is nonetheless an obvious chronological pattern in Clun hundred to discuss. Four of the five Domesday names are English-language formations (albeit that Menutton contains a Welsh first element, probably as a loanword) and the fifth, a transferred river-name, is a common type in Anglo-Saxon England, as has been noted. More 'actively' Welsh names are not found until the thirteenth century, and much of the reshaping of originally English names discussed above is first evident in documents subsequent to the initial records: *Edrethope* 1086 is first found reversed to Hobendrid in 1272; *B'ton'* 1214–1215 is reversed to Trebert by 1284; Reilth is *Ulle* in 1272 and remains as *Hulle* 1284 and *Hull'* 1336, before the influence from Welsh described above first appears in *Rielt'* 1344. It would seem that the relative strength of English and Welsh languages in the area shifted between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, and in part this has a known context. In the thirteenth century most of the area was attached to the borough of Clun as a 'Welshry', a Marcher term used to define areas with distinctive Welsh legal and tenurial arrangements, and the recorded personal names of local people tend to confirm that the population at this time was substantially Welsh-speaking.²⁰

¹⁶ The township contained the grange of Mynachty-boeth (with W *mynachdy* 'monk-house' plus the qualifier *poeth* 'hot', which may indicate either burning or a warm situation). Possible association with a potentially Anglo-Saxon *bere-tūn* 'grange' in neighbouring Trebert (above, n. 10) might complicate the dating, however.

¹⁷ For instances in nineteenth-century field-names in south-west Shropshire see, e.g. Baker and Carroll (2020: 40, 173, 237, 282). With the last example there, Spouthouse, cf. Spout House in Chirbury (Cavill 2020: 14), also first noted in the nineteenth century, which takes its name from the spring providing a 'bountiful supply of excellent water' that gives the place's Welsh name Llanffynnonwen 'church at a white or holy spring'. Earlier instances of the term in the county appear rare, the first noted being *The Spowte* 1611 (Gelling 2001: 258). For final *-t* > *-d* under Welsh influence see n. 12 above.

¹⁸ The springs are best shown on the modern OS 10,000:1 sheet. It should be noted that the *spring* in Springhill could alternatively denote a 'young wood, coppice' (Smith 1956, vol. 2: 140), but in the context springs of water are evidently to be preferred.

¹⁹ OED 3rd ed., *spout* n. As noted there, and by Smith (1956, vol. 2: 139), thirteenth- and fourteenth-century instances in minor names in Cumberland and the West Riding of Yorkshire are likely to derive directly from the Old Norse word. That is most unlikely to be the case in Shropshire.

²⁰ See Lieberman 2010: 46–47. It may have been the perception that the land was essentially Welsh which encouraged the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to occupy a significant part of the hundred

A conventional reading of these facts — in line with Llwyd’s sixteenth-century assessment — might suggest that English control and settlement, established during the Anglo-Saxon period, had been overlain, perhaps in the twelfth century, by immigrant settlers from Wales, reintroducing their language to borderland that had adopted English speech centuries before.²¹ If this were the case, then a number of the Welsh names, and the cymricised name-forms, that have been discussed here would probably be no older than 1100. There is, however, an alternative possibility — explored at greater length below in the comparable case of Oswestry — that while Anglo-Saxon control and lordship produced predominantly English place-names at the higher, administrative level, much of the farming population of Clun hundred may have remained Welsh-speaking throughout the Early Middle Ages; in this case the Welsh-language influence which is first apparent in the record in the thirteenth century may have been present, but largely invisible, for a very long time.

With regard to geography, given the appearance of Edenhope and Waterdine in the Domesday Book, the western boundary of English-controlled territory here in the later eleventh century presumably reached, and probably passed beyond, the line of Offa’s Dyke, in much the same way as the modern border does. It must be uncertain where the most westerly parts of the modern hundred, and especially the later parish of Bettws-y-Crwyn, stood — with regard to English administrative control or settlement — at this time.²² There are however tantalising hints, in the forms of some of the names, that early English settlement may at some stage have extended, like the modern frontier, up to the Kerry ridgeway and close to the source of the Teme. The evidence for this comes from two of the township-names in Bettws: Trebrodier, which survives attached to a farm, and *Rhiwgantin*, now lost (Morgan 1997: 53, 48). The etymology and development of neither name is wholly clear, but both could suggest underlying English formations. Beside Trebert and Treverward, Trebrodier (*Trebrother* 1284) perhaps represents an original ‘Brotherton’ with the Old English personal name *Brōðor*: as in the case of Trebert, a failure regularly to lenite /b/ to /v/ after feminine *tref* rather counts against a wholly Welsh name with *brodyr*, the plural form of *brawd* ‘brother’.²³ In *Rhiwgantin* (*Rouganton*

in the second half of the thirteenth century, and the occupation itself must have reinforced the status of the language locally. It is evident from the phrasing of the documents, and especially the 1284 Close Roll, however, that the concept of the Welshry antedated Llywelyn’s involvement, and some of the Welsh and Welsh-influenced place-names — including Pentre Hodre and the reversed Hobendrid — lie in the east of the hundred and outside the area annexed by Llywelyn.

²¹ Lloyd (1941: 53), for instance, observed that the Teme valley shows ‘a mixture of English and Welsh, which suggests an original English settlement, with a later tide of Welsh settlement’. For Smith (1997: 15) ‘Llywelyn ap Gruffudd occupied, albeit temporarily, the western parts of the lordship of Clun, an area long subject to alien rule and colonization but which, as the place-names indicate, had seen extensive Welsh resettlement’.

²² As Lieberman (2010: 194–202) explains, the Marcher lordship — which in the west matches the nineteenth-century hundred of Clun — does not continue the Anglo-Saxon hundredal pattern. In these circumstances it does not feel safe to project later arrangements back and assume that westerly territory not specifically named in Domesday was under English rule in the late eleventh century (see also Lieberman 2010: 29–30).

²³ As a personal name, *Brother* is often derived from ON *Bróðir*, but — as von Feilitzen noted (1937: 208 n. 7) — there is some evidence for equivalent English usage, notably in the name of an early ninth-century

1272) the first syllable either is, or in later forms has been assimilated to, *W rhiw* 'hill, slope', but the last looks very much like OE *tūn* which frequently gives *tyn* when adopted into Welsh.²⁴

Therefore it is possible that, just as clearly Welsh names stretch across the hundred from *Cefnclynnog* to *Pentre Hodre*, so English place-names, or traces of them, might be discerned from east to west. There is no sharp correlation with the line of Offa's Dyke down the middle of the hundred: rather the place-names, first and foremost, give a unique insight into aspects of what was clearly a border zone of long standing, over many centuries.²⁵

It is more difficult to come to firm conclusions about detailed matters of chronology. Of the putatively English names west of the dyke, *Trebrodier* and *Rhiwgantin* are too uncertain of derivation to bear the weight of any chronological deductions. *Waterdine* is of a type – a topographical name with *denu* 'valley' – that Gelling and Cole (2000: xvi–xviii) have taught us could be early, and it is certainly plausible that it might date from the earliest years of Anglo-Saxon settlement in this area. But it does not indicate that date to us and there is the complexity that as a topographical name it was not necessarily at first applied to an English-settled area: the Teme valley to the west could conceivably have been so named by Mercians peering over the dyke!

In the search for chronological indications the most promising of the names west of Offa's Dyke is probably *Trebert*, especially if that represents *Burton* rather than *Barton*. The distribution of names derived from OE *burh-tūn*, literally 'fort-settlement', suggested to Gelling (1990: 40) that in Mercia 'they may refer to a system of defence posts which remained operative until the Danish wars of the late ninth century' (also Gelling 1989; 1992: 119–122), and John Blair (2018: 199–228) has warmly endorsed and extended her interpretation, suggesting that the system had its origins in Mercia between 750 and 850. Although there seems to me some residual room for doubt about the interpretation and the chronology (not to mention the rival etymology in *bere-tūn*), even a tentative dating for *Trebert* to the 'age of Offa' would of course be of considerable interest. Yet even so, it does not answer an obvious question that arises from its position less than a mile to the west of the dyke: was the settlement established before the earthwork was built, or does the name represent English expansion beyond the dyke in subsequent years? Further — as yet unanswerable — questions are raised by *Trebert*'s possible

Northumbrian moneyer (also Smart 1981: 21; North 1994: 71–72).

²⁴ Owen (2013: 350) observes that this treatment of *tūn* is characteristic of Welsh areas of Shropshire and Flintshire. If the first element is originally English we might naturally think of *rūgan*, an inflected form of OE *rūh* 'rough', but there are other possibilities.

²⁵ It might be noted that the impression given by Davies (1978: 20) that Welsh influence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries correlated with the line of Offa's Dyke ('East of Offa's Dyke the lordship became more English in character and population') is true only at low resolution, i.e. as a broad geographical generalisation: no obvious trace of the dyke as a significant and lasting boundary seems to emerge from the later material.

association with Treverward, barely two miles north and equally close to the dyke but on its eastern side. Are the (putative) *burh-tūn* and the *burh-ward* related, and how do they relate to the great earthwork?²⁶ Although Gelling and Blair associate the two name-types in their discussions of early Mercian defences, examples elsewhere are not generally closely paired like this and nor – despite a weighting of instances towards Shropshire and Cheshire – are any others, of either type, sited so close to the dyke. If the group does represent a system of defence, it seems to be one independent of Offa’s Dyke.

Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire: beyond the pale

Previous generations of scholars have been less inclined to shilly-shally about the significance of English place-names to the west of Offa’s Dyke, and their views seem to be reflected in the recent comprehensive archaeological and historical review of the earthwork by Keith Ray and Ian Bapty who suggest (2016: 216) that it ‘seems probable from place-name evidence ... that [when it was constructed] there were English communities on both sides of the Dyke in several areas’. Ray and Bapty (2016: 269) go on to explain that some names west of the dyke ‘are seen by some scholars to belong to the earliest stratum of English place-names’, though they at once add that ‘on present evidence it is not possible to distinguish between settlements that originated before or after the eighth century’. Whilst their rider may be directed at present *archaeological* evidence, it is – in my view – a wise reservation that should apply to the place-name material too. This second section re-examines some of the suggestions that have been made about the chronological implications of early English names lying on the Welsh side of the modern border.

For much of the last century the authoritative opinion on this matter was that of Sir Frank Stenton (1947: 212–213):

The course chosen for the frontier north of the Wye seems to have meant the abandonment of English territory to the Britons. Villages bearing names which are very unlikely to have arisen after the eighth century occur in this quarter far to the west of the dyke. The name Burlingjobb, borne by a hamlet within the Radnorshire border, is as ancient in type as any place-name in the western midlands.

The closing statement is based on the view that Burlingjobb, *Berchelincope* in the Domesday Book, contains an early Germanic ‘tribal’ or group-name in *-ingas*, such as are widely found in the south and east of England in names like Hastings and Reading, Gillingham and Nottingham. Such group-names predominantly belong to an early

²⁶ Blair takes Trebert and Treverward as one of his case-studies (2018: 207–209) and is convinced that they are related to one another, and that the eponymous *burh* in both is a hillfort at Knucklas south of the Teme. He takes this to demonstrate that ‘the Mercians controlled a border strip, including Knucklas, on the Welsh side of the Dyke’, but does not comment on whether he thinks Trebert was established before or after the building of the earthwork.

stratum of Anglo-Saxon settlement, say between the fifth and seventh centuries: debate has raged as to whether they tend to mark the settlements of immigrant groups fresh from the continent, or 'secondary' colonisers in the generations that followed the initial landings.²⁷ Likely examples of these group-names west of Birmingham are, however, rare — the predominant southern and eastern distribution is a main plank in the chronological argument — and in a paper published in 1982 Margaret Gelling pulled Stenton's suggestion to pieces.

Gelling observed both that the spellings of Burlingjobb do not support an etymology from *-ingas* (which typically leaves forms in *-inge*, derived from Old English genitive plural *-inga*), and that it belongs to a group of seven similarly structured settlement names in the west midlands, which she termed 'The *-inghope* names of the Welsh Marches'. Examples include nearby Evenjobb in Radnorshire (earlier *Emynghop*), and Dinchope, Millichope and Ratlinghope in Shropshire, all well to the east of the border and the dyke. The final element in these names is the OE *hop* 'secluded valley' which we have met in Clun and which is common in the border area. Neither the spellings nor the geographical position of the *-inghope* group speak in favour of Stenton's implied explanation; rather the local parallels are with names like Buttington and Hyssington in Montgomeryshire, and Cardington, Eardington and Rorrington in Shropshire. In these *-ington* names it has long been accepted that *-ing-* is not the plural *-ingas* suffix, but rather a 'connective particle' which has a function similar to that of a genitive singular ending (Smith 1956, vol. 1: 291–298 [*ing^d*]; Gelling 1988: 177–180). There are documented examples in Anglo-Saxon charters which appear to illustrate this, both with *tūn*, as Tredington, Worcestershire, which had been held by a thegn called Tyrdda (Sawyer 1968: no. 55, datable to 757), and with other elements, as *haga* 'enclosure' in *Ceolmundingchaga* in London, bought from one Ceolmund (Sawyer 1968: no. 208, datable to 857). To distinguish this connective from a genitive it has been usual to give a gloss along the lines of 'estate associated with Tyrdda', rather than genitival 'Tyrdda's estate', but the precise nuances of usage are not established and might benefit from further research. In any case, the qualifiers in the *-inghope* names seem also to be personal names, and the group appears to represent a fashion for naming these settlements in enclosed valleys as 'secluded valley associated with *Berhtel*' (Burlingjobb), or with **Rōtel* (Ratlinghope), or with **Emma* (Evenjobb). Gelling's derivation, or some variant of it, has been generally accepted by place-name scholars.²⁸

²⁷ The literature on this question is vast. For the material, and conventional mid-twentieth-century interpretation of it, see Smith (1956, vol. 1: 298–303) and Ekwall (1962). Views since the mid-1960s are briefly surveyed and discussed by Parsons (2013b: 46–52, with references).

²⁸ See relevant entries in Mills (2011); Watts (2004); Owen and Morgan (2007). It is true that Mills and Watts allow an alternative possibility, in which *ing* is a place-name forming suffix, so that Ratlinghope would for instance be 'valley at Rotel's place'. To my mind Gelling's objections to this suggestion (1982: 34) are convincing, but the more important point here is that no modern commentator now accepts Stenton's etymology – which Ekwall (1960) always stuck by – with its chronological implications. It should be noted, though, that Gelling's reading was by no means wholly new; a similar interpretation of the Radnorshire names is offered by Charles (1938: 279).

To the extent, therefore, that Stenton was basing his chronological deductions on Burlingjobb, and presumably Evenjobb — and he does not discuss any other type — those deductions should no longer stand. Gelling, however, did not leave her discussion here, but went on to discuss the likely date of the western names with connective *-ing-*, and she suggested (1982: 35–36) that:

If the two *-inghop* names in Radnorshire, and the two *-ingtūn* names, BUTTINGTON and HYSINGTON, in Montgomeryshire, do belong to an early stage in the evolution of lay landownership in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which lie mainly to the east of the earthwork, then they probably were formed before the building of Offa’s Dyke.

She was keen to emphasise that her vision of Berhtel and Emma ‘as thegns who were given a life tenure of border estates by a king of the Magonsæte’ was quite different from Stenton’s view of them as ‘pioneering English settlers accompanied by bands of followers’, but the chronological relationship with the dyke remained: these appeared to be settlements with English names which antedated the earthwork, granted in the seventh or eighth centuries.²⁹

Margaret Gelling’s interpretation of the chronology of these names deserves respect, but it is not beyond question. Her own work elsewhere indicates that the clear documentary support for the connective *-ing-* comes from eighth- and ninth-century texts. There is perhaps an implication in this pattern of attestation that it is a grammatical construction which more likely belongs to the middle of the Anglo-Saxon period than to its latter centuries, but there appears to be no linguistic reason to prefer, say, the seventh or eighth centuries above the ninth. In an effort to find a rationale for the use of *-ing-*, Gelling (1982: 35) wrote:

it is necessary to consider whether *-ing-* was a straightforward alternative to the device of putting a personal name in the genitive, or whether it indicates a significant difference in the relationship of the person to the estate, such as, for instance, a life tenure rather than one which could be bequeathed. It is possible that the use of *-ing-* in place-names corresponded to a stage in the evolution of lay land-ownership, and that the whole body of names can be assigned to a fairly definite period which is likely to be earlier than the widespread use of personal names in the genitive as the first elements of place-names.

This hypothesis led to the chronological conclusion quoted above. It should be emphasised, however, that positive evidence in its support is extremely thin, and

²⁹ This date is given in the revised account in *The West Midlands in the Middle Ages* (Gelling 1992: 110). This version varies the earlier formulation to suggest that Berhtel and Emma ‘were probably thegns of the Mercian or Magonsætan kingdoms’. More importantly, the 1992 monograph, which will have been much more widely read than the earlier journal paper, gives no indication of the reasoning that led Gelling to stand by a pre-Offan date.

apparently limited to a possible interpretation of the circumstances of the eighth-century grant of Tredington in Worcestershire; there are also instances which, at face value, seem to show *-ing-* used equivalently to genitival constructions, and at a rather later date.³⁰ Both the supposition that the connective particle denoted an especial kind of tenure, and the inference that this might indicate a pre-Offan date, are interesting ideas, but they are quite unsubstantiated and cannot alone bear the weight of the significant conclusion that Anglo-Saxons settlements were established to the west of the line of the dyke before it was built.³¹

In her account of *The West Midlands in the Middle Ages*, Gelling (1992: 106–111) set a brief review of the *-inghope* question alongside a set of maps showing ‘English place-names west of Offa’s Dyke’ in the stretch between Buttington on the Severn in Montgomeryshire south to the cluster containing Burlingjobb and Evenjobb in eastern Radnorshire. The names she marked are reproduced on Figure 2 here, which also introduces a distinction: black triangles for names recorded in Domesday Book, white triangles for those first recorded in later records.³² This map tends to indicate that the western boundary of English-controlled territory in the second half of the eleventh century lay two to three miles or so beyond the dyke along most of this line (with the possible exception of the sparsely populated upland of Clun forest). The later-recorded English names that Gelling maps in this zone sit neatly within the Domesday boundary, and it is probable enough that most or all of them were also pre-Conquest coinages. But the question is: pre-Conquest by how long? Gelling felt that ‘any English names to the west which would on general grounds be considered to originate before the Norman conquest are likely to be pre-Offan’ (Gelling 1992: 106). Yet that is a notable jump across three centuries of essentially undocumented history, and the surviving names may have been coined at various points across a long period.³³ On current understanding, whether the

³⁰ Gelling herself, while she makes the suggestion (1988: 178) that the previous holder of Tredington, Worcestershire, might be seen as a temporary overlord, some time before the mid-eighth century, nonetheless in the same place adds to the example of *Ceolmundingchaga* further ninth-century instances of *-ing-* as a contemporary connective/possessive from Kent.

³¹ It appears possible that despite their reservation about precise datings, quoted above, Ray and Bapty’s reference (2016: 345) to ‘putatively early (?seventh-century) English settlements’ around Walton and Radnor (and Burlingjobb) may ultimately be based on deductions from the place-names.

³² For a fuller context I have also added several additional Domesday names, all of them English in origin, on the line of the dyke. I have omitted the two north-westerly English-language names from beyond the River Severn – Guilsfield and Welshpool – that Gelling included. Neither of them is recorded before the end of the twelfth century and both appear likely to be post-Conquest coinages which may be based on Welsh originals (Morgan 2001: 95–96, 175–176; Owen and Morgan 2007: 178, 490–491). Without them the implication of the distribution is clearly that the boundary of English-controlled territory at the time of the Norman Conquest extended to the line of the Severn for several miles south from Buttington. It might be noted that for English-language settlement-names included in Domesday Book I assume a degree of ‘English control’ by, and for some unknown period before, the later eleventh century, but that this is not necessarily to be equated with dense or exclusive English settlement — see further below.

³³ At least one Domesday name shown on my map (and not mapped or mentioned by Gelling) presumably post-dates the earthwork: Discoed/Disgoed, Radnorshire (*Discote* 1086, *Dichcote* 1329) combines OE *cot* ‘cottage’ with *dīc* ‘ditch, dyke’ (Morgan 1998: 49; Owen and Morgan 2007: 125–126) and the parish

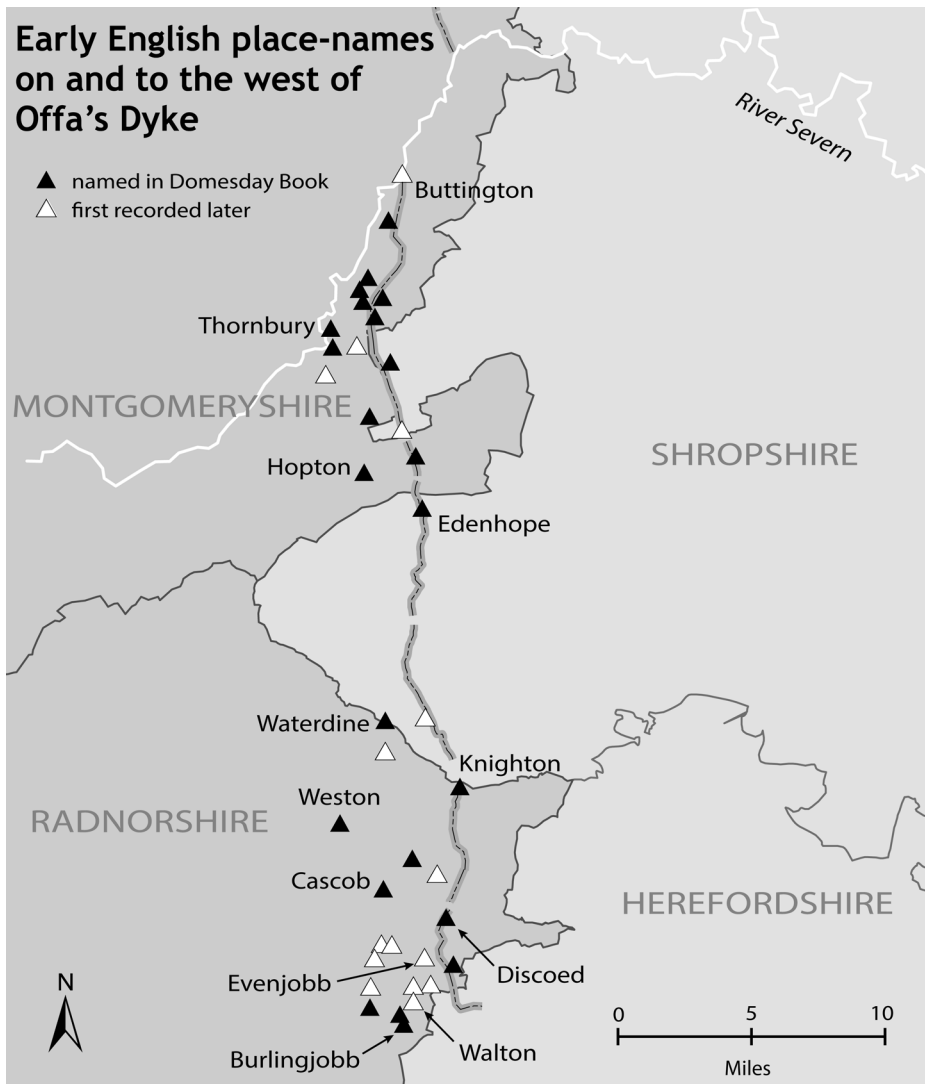


Figure 2: Early English place-names on and to the west of Offa's Dyke

strip beyond it was already in English hands before the earthwork was dug, or whether it represents a later expansion of English territory beyond Offa's line, seems to be a question of historical judgement (or guesswork), and not something to which place-name evidence supplies an answer.

straddles Offa's Dyke. It also seems to me just possible — though Morgan rejects the idea — that Walton in Radnorshire might refer to the barrier: its first element might be OE *w(ē)all* 'wall', OE *welle* or *wælle* 'well/spring/stream' or OE *w(ē)alh* 'Welshman' (Morgan 1998: 93; Owen and Morgan 2007: 488). Although the modern settlement of Walton is centred a mile and half from the dyke, the parish of Walton and Womaston runs up to it.

Oswestry: two dykes and many boundaries

Having declined to offer a chronological narrative for the areas discussed so far, a rather different approach is taken in this third section. The nineteenth-century hundred of Oswestry is crossed not only by Offa's Dyke, but also by Wat's Dyke, which runs parallel with it between two and three miles to the east; in the later medieval period the area was cut by lordship boundaries, diocesan boundaries, linguistic boundaries (of different kinds) and a tenurial boundary between land held according to medieval Welsh practices and that held on Anglo-Norman terms. Any attempt to account for all of these lines in a single historical narrative must embrace hypothesis and uncertainty, and it is in that spirit that the following thoughts are offered on the place-names, the dykes and Anglo-Welsh border(s) before the Norman Conquest.³⁴

As before, the western boundary of the settlements enumerated in the Domesday Book is an obvious place to start. In Oswestry, unlike further south, the most westerly named manors do not lie west of Offa's Dyke but some distance east of it. In fact a line drawn from Molverley, Maesbrook, Morton, Maesbury, Weston Coton to Weston Rhyn – passing through the town of Oswestry (though that is not named in Domesday Book) – traces a course two or three miles to the east of Offa's Dyke. This is intriguingly similar to the line of Wat's Dyke, the southern end of which is to be sought either in Morton or Maesbury, and which passes north through Weston Coton and Oswestry (Figure 3).

There are then a number of reasons encouraging us to explore further an apparent correlation in Oswestry hundred between Domesday Book and Wat's Dyke. As Margaret Worthington Hill has emphasised (2019: 72–74), a related pattern is even more marked along the northern course of Wat's Dyke through Flintshire. Here, Domesday records English settlements either side of the dyke, but consistently indicates a distinction between them: those to the east are hidated, suggesting that they are established English territory, while those to the west are not. Worthington Hill was trying to interpret this pattern within a context where Wat's Dyke tended to be viewed as earlier than Offa's, but more recent archaeological intervention has provided a scientifically grounded date for Wat's Dyke which would place it in the first half of the ninth century, in the generations following Offa's reign.³⁵ It is not for me to pass comment on the reliability of such an archaeological dating, though I would observe that if Domesday Book corresponds more closely with a ninth-century line than an eighth-century one, this might suggest a more straightforward chronological narrative than the reverse.

³⁴ The material in this section is treated more fully in Parsons (2022, particularly Chapter 6, pp. 219–251). Both that work and the present paper draw on material which will be set out in the EPNS volume for Oswestry hundred (Parsons forthcoming).

³⁵ A technique called Optically Stimulated Luminescence, which measures the time elapsed since a surface has been exposed to sunlight, suggested a construction date in the 830s or 840s for a section of the dyke at Gobowen, two miles north of Oswestry (Hayes and Malim 2008; Ray and Bapty 2016: 20, 356–360). It should be noted that Worthington Hill's essay was published earlier, in 1997, and that 2019 is the date of the reprint in the present journal.

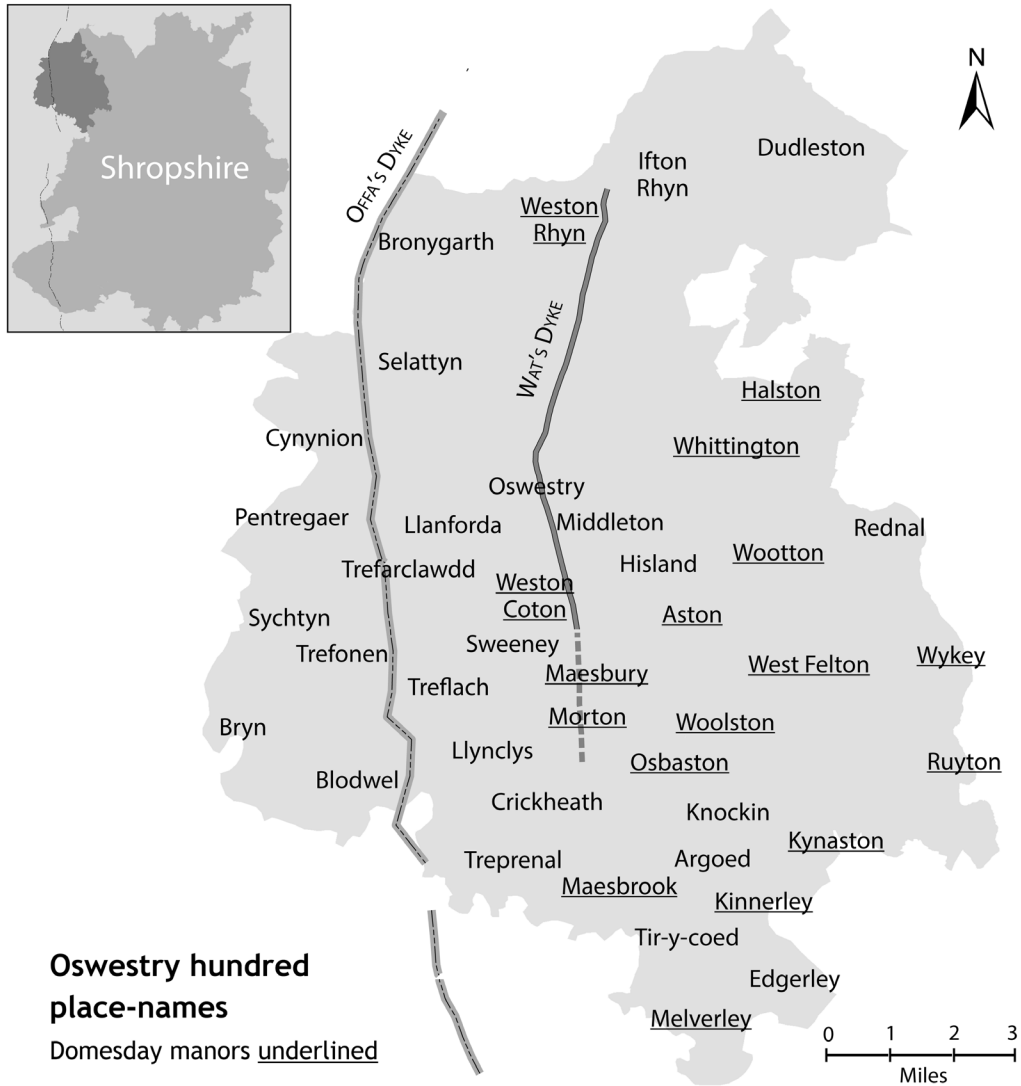


Figure 3: Oswestry hundred place-names

The notion that it might be possible to trace continuity between the line of Wat’s Dyke and the limits of English lordship implied by Domesday Book then gains further traction from several related aspects of later medieval evidence.³⁶ From at least the thirteenth century (and into the early modern period) land-tenure in parts of the Oswestry area employed practices and terminology familiar from medieval Welsh legal texts. The

³⁶ The key material is found in the series of extents and rentals from the lordship of Oswestry published by Slack (1951). See his introduction, especially pp. 21–37, and the pioneering study of the area’s place-names by Charles (1963: 96–109). The Welsh administrative terminology and the strong Welsh character of place- and personal names in the area are common ground between us; for the linguistic distributions and boundaries see Parsons (2022).

population in these parts overwhelmingly bore Welsh personal names and used Welsh names for their tenements and fields. Detailed study of these minor place-names, in use between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, suggests that an interesting linguistic boundary ran through Oswestry hundred. It was not the boundary between English and Welsh, since Welsh seems to have been widely spoken across most of the hundred, but rather a boundary between a zone in which the minor names were wholly Welsh, and a zone in which both English and Welsh names were employed. The western zone, where only Welsh minor place-names appear, correlates very neatly with the townships in which Welsh land-tenure was practised. And the eastern limits of this area follow a very similar line to the named Domesday manors and Wat's Dyke.

There is no mystery about the thirteenth-century context of the boundary delineated in this way by linguistic and tenorial evidence. In the Close Roll of 1272 the territory of the Marcher lordship of Oswestry is first described in detail, and comprised the town of Oswestry and a number of associated townships which made up its *Waleschiria*, or 'Welshry' (Close Rolls 1268–72: 507–511). The Welshry so described included, at its eastern edge, the townships of Maesbury, Weston Coton, Crickheath and Middleton, but did not include the likes of Aston, Hisland, Wootton and Woolston, which only became fully incorporated in the lordship later. It is the early core of the lordship that remained distinguished by its Welsh tenorial customs and terminology, and by an apparent resistance to the English language, for centuries thereafter. The question that then arises is whether it is reasonable to connect the significant cultural and tenorial boundary of the lordship and Welshry with the late eleventh-century arrangements reflected in Domesday Book, and beyond that, just possibly, with an early ninth-century dyke. The lines suggested by the three types of evidence all run similarly north–south, some three miles east of Offa's Dyke, though it should be conceded that the correlation between them is not exact, and that if Wat's Dyke did mark a hard frontier in the ninth century, it had undergone some local adjustment by the thirteenth.³⁷

In these circumstances, the answer to my question will never be more than speculative. It has inevitably to negotiate a range of disparate indications – all of them very partial – and to bridge gaping periods about which historical sources are silent. The following paragraphs develop the case for continuity, and examine the place-name evidence in that light. This is only one of — no doubt — various possible readings of the evidence.³⁸

³⁷ Thus, for instance, the hypothesis would presumably imply that the boundary of the Welshry must have shifted a little to the east to enclose Maesbury itself which, as an Anglo-Saxon royal vill, must have been significantly English-speaking early on. Similarly the town of Oswestry, including the castle and church, was built close to the western side of Wat's Dyke – putatively culturally Welsh territory – though it became of course the Anglo-Norman *caput*.

³⁸ For brevity and clarity various complicating factors are not considered in any detail in what follows. Chief among them is the extent to which annexation by Madog ap Maredudd of Powys, for perhaps a decade or more around the middle of the twelfth century, may have brought about fundamental changes. On this, and other related questions, Parsons (2022) offers fuller consideration.

All the Domesday manors in *Mersete* hundred (which was largely equivalent to the later hundred of Oswestry) bear place-names that are English in origin; their owners bore Anglo-Saxon personal names in 1066 and Norman ones in 1086. However in this area, unusually, the Domesday Book indicates the ethnicity of most of the free tenants, which reveals that a majority of them, across the hundred, were Welsh. Anglo-Norman lordship was here set above a largely Welsh farming population living in villis with English names (Lewis 2007: 132–136), a striking eleventh-century parallel to the situation that persisted throughout the later medieval period.

West of the named manors — the region making up the bulk of the thirteenth-century Welshry — the situation in 1086 is unknown, but when records emerge, from the later twelfth century onwards, they offer some interesting possibilities. Welsh-named townships cluster in the west, especially the south-west, of the hundred, and they appear rather markedly to line up facing the Domesday frontier as defined above. Although there was – from at least the eleventh century onwards, it seems – a significant Welsh-speaking population in parts, and perhaps most, of the east of the hundred, the Welsh-named townships are largely limited to the area of the Welshry.³⁹ Unfortunately, there is little in names like Treflach, Trefonen, Llyncllys or Crickheath that gives any indication as to how old they might be.⁴⁰ Trefarclawdd ‘township on the dyke’ presumably post-dates Offa’s Dyke, while neighbouring Llanforda *could* be a name of great antiquity.⁴¹ The names and status of these lands before the Norman Conquest are unknown. Maesbury, Weston Rhyn and Whittington each possessed a number of unnamed berewicks at Domesday and it may well be that these account for much of the westerly zone of the later lordship and hundred; the possibility that they might have made up an early equivalent to the later Welshry — essentially Welsh townships that rendered their taxes to English manorial centres — is an intriguing one.⁴²

Equally intriguing are the later-recorded English-language township names which lie beyond the named Domesday manors. There are several of these, including Sweeney

³⁹ The exception is the group of three in the centre of the south of the hundred. These can probably be thought of as post-Conquest coinages. Tir-y-coed ‘land of the wood, the wooded land’ and Argoed ‘beside the wood’ or simply ‘wood, woodland’ are first recorded respectively in 1685 and 1583, significantly later than other township-names in the area. Knockin, *W cynyn* ‘hillock’ is found much earlier (1195–1196; Gelling 1990: 168), as befits a place that became a parish and head of a lordship. It may well be, however, as Richard Morgan has suggested (1997: 33), that the name relates not to natural topography, as Gelling proposed, but to the Norman castle-mound.

⁴⁰ For discussion of the names in this section, in advance of Parsons (forthcoming), see Charles (1963: 100–101) and Morgan (1997).

⁴¹ The place-name combines *W llan* ‘church, church-enclosure’ and the river-name Morda. No church is known, and it is uncertain whether a ‘chirch now decayd’ reported by Leland (Toulmin Smith 1906: 76) is a reliable report. It is not, however, inconceivable that Llanforda may preserve a memory of an ecclesiastical arrangement that pre-dated the celebration of the cult of Oswald at Oswestry.

⁴² Cf. Slack (1951: 21): ‘It is possible that this area had never been settled by the Saxons, the original inhabitants remaining undisturbed in their holdings and paying their accustomed renders to the Saxon Lord of Maesbury’.

and Oswestry itself, which lie only fractionally to the west, and essentially reinforce the line of the putative frontier.⁴³ Three further instances particularly catch the eye here, however. Selattyn, which became a parish, was recorded as *Sulatun* in 1254. It is apparently a doublet of Sulton (*Suleton* 1086), some 17 miles east near Wem, both names combining OE *sulh* 'plough', genitive plural *sula*, with *tūn* 'settlement, estate' (Gelling 1990: 258, 275). Selattyn shows the influence of Welsh speech-patterns, throwing stress onto the penultimate syllable in a name that must have been adopted at a relatively early, presumably pre-Conquest, date when the Old English genitive plural inflection, *a*, was still distinctly sounded (Owen 1987: 107–109). The township lies in the north-west of Oswestry hundred, bounded on its western side by Offa's Dyke. Further south, two townships – Sychtyn and Blodwel – apparently also bear names that are English in origin though both lie immediately to the west of Offa's Dyke. Sychtyn (?*Seghom* c.1175, *Sufton* 1272, *Soghton* 1307), is surely another name involving *tūn*; the first element is not certain, but Gelling (1990: 289–290) proposed an OE **sōh*, the etymon of ME *sogh* 'bog'. As in Selattyn the modern form of Sychtyn is cymricised, though in this case spellings clearly indicating Welsh influence are post-medieval. Thirdly, Blodwel looks like 'blood(y) spring/stream', with OE *blōd* and *welle* (Gelling 1990: 178–179). The name has probably been surrounded by mythology ever since it was first recorded, as *Blodwelle* c.1200, in a list of *aquae dulces* 'sweet/fresh waters' in Shropshire. Even though the precise feature to which it relates (a chalybeate spring?) seems not to have been identified, alternative derivations from Welsh appear strained and unlikely (Morgan 1997: 18). It survives in the surviving parish name Llanyblodwel, the 'llan [church-enclosure] in Blodwel'.

As in the other stretches of the border examined above there is no documented context to explain the origin of the English names that push furthest to the west. Whereas further south, however, such names for the most part clearly lie within territory that was English in the second half of the eleventh century, in Oswestry the situation is less clear. Indeed, if there is any merit in the hypothesis sketched above – that a linguistic and cultural boundary visible from the thirteenth century may, to judge by the Domesday evidence, already have existed in the pre-Conquest period — then Selattyn, Blodwel and Sychtyn would represent a distinct phase, an advance of Anglo-Saxon lordship earlier than the middle of the eleventh century. And if there might be anything in the further association of the line of the cultural boundary with that of Wat's Dyke, then these settlements to its west perhaps belong to the earlier years of the ninth century or still earlier. The question of whether or not they predate the reign of Offa still seems to me out of reach, but it certainly appears possible that they might represent an early, and ultimately temporary, westward penetration of English lordship, closely associated with the advance implied by the earthwork. Whether or not this chronology is correct, these English place-names

⁴³ Sweeney is OE *swīn* 'pig' with either OE *ēa* 'river' or OE *ēg* 'island, dry ground in marsh'. Published authorities have favoured the former: Morgan (1997: 51), Ekwall (1960: 456). Oswestry combines the OE personal name *Ōsweald* with OE *trēow* 'tree'. Since at latest the twelfth century the personal name has been identified with Oswald, king of Northumbria, who died at the uncertainly located battle of *Maserfelth* in A.D. 642; see further Gelling (1990: 229–231), Gelling (1992: 74–75), Stancliffe (1995).

beyond Offa’s Dyke and the line of Domesday manors strongly suggest that there was some fluctuation in the control of territory before the eleventh century. It must, however, be uncertain how far the political control which seems to be implicit in the naming of townships necessarily brought with it wholesale linguistic, let alone ethnic, replacement. It seems to me possible that the Welsh-speaking farming population of *Mersete* hundred may have survived throughout the period: just as they demonstrably lived under English-speaking lords for hundreds of years after 1100, so they may have done in earlier centuries.

Two further points deserve discussion. One involves the apparently related names Maesbury (Domesday *Meresberie*) and *Mersete*. Maesbury, now a small village two and half miles south of Oswestry town, was a significant royal manor in the eleventh century and expressly the head of *Mersete* hundred: it was the building of the castle in the north of its estate, shortly before 1086, which led to the post-Conquest change of focus. One factor relevant to Maesbury’s early status was presumably that it lay directly on the line of Wat’s Dyke. For a long time indeed it was believed that the southern terminus of the dyke was at Maesbury, since its last clearly upstanding section survives near Pentrecoed farm in the north of the township (Fox 1955: 251). Although modern investigations now seem to have detected an extension of the dyke’s line one-and-a-half miles further south into Morton (Worthington Hill 2019: 64–67), the suggestion that the River Morda may have been artificially straightened at Maesbury as part of the boundary works (Fox 1955: 251–253; Hayes and Malim 2008: 147–149) would preserve the idea of a particularly significant association between the boundary and the royal manor. Such an association is all the more striking if the place-name is — as is usually believed — to be derived from OE (*ge*)*mǣre* ‘boundary’ in genitival composition with *burh*, dative *byrig* ‘stronghold, fort’. Although other possibilities are conceivable for the first element — OE *mer(i)sc* ‘marsh’ would not be inappropriate — the ‘boundary’ word must be a strong candidate in the circumstances. There is then also the question of the hundred name. *Mersete* is a group-name that has often been understood as the ‘dwellers on the boundary’, although it may alternatively be construed as elliptical for ‘the Maesbury people’. Margaret Gelling (1990: 193) thought the boundary-word was involved but that the reference was to the ‘general concept’ of the borderland at the edge of Mercia, rather than to either of the great earthworks. John Baker (2015) has suggested that ‘boundary dwellers’ is an unconvincing group-name, partly because it is applied to only a relatively short part of the border. Neither discussed the specific association of Maesbury with Wat’s Dyke, nor the possible longevity and significance of the boundary that it delimits. Perhaps this part of the border, and/or the nature of Anglo-Welsh arrangements around it, gave the area a distinctive flavour in the pre-Conquest period, just as it was to have in later centuries.

The second and final point in this section returns us once again to a note of caution, and to the fundamental difficulty of dating the origins of place-names with any precision. It relates to a further indication of Maesbury’s early status given by Domesday Book, which records that it (together with neighbouring Whittington and Chirbury in the south-

west of the county) had contributed to the royal revenue in the time of King Æthelred (d. 1016). It must at that time have been a relatively wealthy centre, though in 1066 it was waste and rendered nothing. The implication may well be that Maesbury, together with Whittington and indeed perhaps the remainder of *Mersete* hundred, was lost to the Welsh for a stretch of the intervening period.⁴⁴ Following from this, Chris Lewis (2007: 134–135) has argued that many of *Mersete*'s recorded English place-names may have been coined, not when the land was first in the hands of the Mercians, but in the eleventh century when it was regained from the Welsh. Such a sequence – whilst unproven – is certainly plausible, and its implications would be thought-provoking: a cycle of gains and losses across the unrecorded centuries could have led to multiple namings and renamings of territory before the surviving documentation. This must complicate further any attempts to draw a chronological narrative from the map of place-names.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the material rehearsed above has illustrated something of the interest and potential of place-name evidence, and the unique insights into language and society along the border that such evidence can offer. It must be conceded, however, that it is a challenging resource for the historian, particularly in that it resists close dating, and previous conclusions regarding the chronological relationship between Offa's Dyke and certain place-names have, to my mind, been expressed too optimistically. The truth, in my view, is that just as over a century of archaeological investigations has failed to produce a secure date for the earthwork (Ray and Bapty 2016: 19), so too the place-names along its line cannot be closely pinned down. It is not impossible that future co-ordination of archaeological and place-name evidence will lead to advances.⁴⁵ In the meantime, however, just as scrutiny of the construction and siting of the monument can inform plausible hypotheses, so careful reconsideration of place-name patterns can suggest new possibilities. In the third section I have advanced one reading of the names in their historical and archaeological context which may be worthy of further consideration. It is probably more important, however, to appreciate that the evidence from Oswestry demonstrates that in the later medieval period the 'Anglo-Welsh border' was a multi-stranded affair in which onomastic, linguistic, tenurial and political boundaries demonstrably followed different lines concurrently. Whatever the value of my specific hypotheses about the pre-Conquest period, it is surely possible that the border was equally complex when Offa's Dyke was built.

⁴⁴ See Guy elsewhere in this publication.

⁴⁵ Ray and Bapty (2016: 273) observe that Bullinghope near Hereford (and east of the line of the dyke) has produced archaeological evidence of seventh-century Anglo-Saxon settlement. They very properly do not leap to any conclusions about the *-inghope* group as a whole – and there is no guarantee that the name was yet current when the datable material was deposited – but one could see that equivalent archaeological discoveries in one or two of the other so-named settlements might begin to suggest a significant pattern. On the other hand, it is rather awkward that Bullinghope is something of an exception in the group discussed by Gelling, since *hop* here appears to mean 'promontory jutting into marsh' rather than the 'remote, enclosed valley' appropriate to all the other instances involving connective *-ing-* (Gelling 1982: 32).

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The Organisation of the Mid–Late Anglo-Saxon Borderland with Wales

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With hardly any written documentation concerning the creation of Offa's Dyke or for the contemporary communities that it affected, the intricacies of how the Mercian-Welsh frontier was organised during the late eighth and early ninth century and afterwards can seem entirely unknowable. This article addresses the question of the likely variable character of the long and undoubtedly complex frontier in reference to some location-specific existing archaeological evidence and close study of the form of the Dyke and other contemporary features in the landscape. One of the key elements of this attempt at detection of early frontier organisation therefore involves looking at the potential role of the inherited Roman road network especially where it runs parallel with the Dyke. Two examples based upon archaeological excavations in Herefordshire are noted here as providing clues as to the diversity of frontier structuring. The first example is the uncovering of a mid–late Anglo-Saxon fortified enclosure at Breinton just to the west of Hereford in 2018 that has at last added some substance to the possibility of the past existence of sophisticated military infrastructure including fortresses close to the Mercian/Welsh frontier. A key factor in the organisation of the pre-Norman frontier at least from the English side could have been the location of 'quasi-military personnel' close to the Dyke and to the inherited routeway system. Certain entries in the county-based Domesday surveys of Circuit V for the border counties are briefly re-examined here to consider the implications of the spatial distribution of a single category of specialised freemen. This highlights the importance of Leintwardine and the Roman road south from Shrewsbury as a key location: a possibility underlined by discoveries made during an excavation in the 1990s.

Keywords: Anglo-Saxon, borderlands, Mercia, Offa's Dyke, Roman roads, Wat's Dyke

Introduction

Offa's Dyke was created as a linear earthwork some 130 miles (210 km) long running north to south and facing westwards into Wales from the lands to the east that were appropriated by the Mercian kingdom from the seventh century AD onwards (Fox 1955; Hill and Worthington 2003; Ray and Bapty 2016). Its attribution to King Offa (reigned 757–796) conventionally dates it to the period of Mercian hegemony within southern Britain in the eighth and early ninth centuries, although some lengths at least may have originated before Offa's reign. The frontier itself has been the subject of recent re-evaluation as a collaborative as well as contested Anglo-Welsh space, based upon new readings of the literary sources (Brady 2017).

In this article, the aim is to focus upon how Offa's Dyke may have related to the organisation (by the Anglo-Saxon political authorities) of a frontier landscape that was likely to have been far from uniform topographically, culturally, politically and in terms

of its inheritance. What is explored briefly here is how archaeological discoveries (and importantly not only on the Offa's Dyke earthwork itself or on Wat's Dyke) may offer novel ways to approach how the frontier was organised both during and after the period of the construction and primary use of the Dyke. The intention is to demonstrate how such clues as are coming to light about key locations may begin (potentially also in conjunction with the limited available documentary evidence) to afford glimpses of the role of certain fortified locations and the disposition of personnel whose extra-farming activities (at least by 1066) may have included militia-style military and security services.

The importance of the inherited Roman road network to communications along the early medieval frontier is highlighted first in reference to the Wye valley west of Hereford, and then to Leintwardine on the border between Herefordshire and Shropshire. Discoveries from excavations other than on Offa's Dyke itself and clues from the Domesday survey as to surveillance and escort duties are used to indicate possible variable depth and breadth of the frontier.

Roman roads and the rear of the Anglo-Saxon and Welsh frontier

The continuing maintenance and use of Roman roads and an inherited network of less formal routes within southern Britain in the early medieval period can in some areas be inferred from surviving Anglo-Saxon land charter evidence. Until recently, the best-documented case in this regard has been the landscape of the diocese of Worcester (including west Warwickshire and north Gloucestershire) in the former kingdom of the Hwicce. Here, the mention for example of *stræt* (Roman road) lengths and salt-ways in such charters has enabled something of the former existence of a road network in the south-west midlands to be reconstructed (Hooke 1985: 58–63 and 120–128).

More recently, research into communications networks has focused upon developments across the later West Saxon landscape from Devon in the west to Kent in the east (for example, Baker and Brookes 2013: 137–213; Langlands 2019). The importance of major inherited routeways has been emphasised in such research, along with more informal trackways. The significance of roads designated as 'army-roads' (for example, *here-paths*) and the various associated terminologies have been explored in some detail (Baker and Brookes 2015b), and the former existence of beacons and (for instance) places of assembly/army mustering has been explored using combinations of onomastic, diplomatic, topographic and archaeological clues (see below regarding fortifications).

Routeways passing through the landscape to link up places of shelter from marauding military groups have been identified as being of especial importance, given the way they linked up former Roman towns and burgeoning royal administrative centres: Winchester being of particular importance in Wessex for this reason. In west-central Britain the Roman road known as Watling Street (the historic A5 trunk road) was a case in point. This road had throughout the Roman period (and probably also for much

of its length thereafter) enabled movements of messengers, troops or supplies between London, the southern midlands, and the Dee valley (towards Ruabon and Llangollen) and Chester. These ‘southern midlands’ regions included the area centred upon Wall (the site of a former Roman posting station, *Letocetum*), Lichfield (the chief Mercian episcopal centre) and Tamworth (the Mercian secular capital) — in other words the very heartlands of the kingdom (White 1998; 2013).

So far, no studies have been made equivalent to those concerning Wessex to try to establish the relationship between defensive systems and routeways in the Welsh marchlands, nor have detailed studies been carried out of how the long-distance Dykes of the Welsh marchlands related to the surviving (and augmented) inherited Roman road system. And yet both east–west and north–south Roman roads situated mainly to the east of the uplands undoubtedly had potential utility for military and civil defensive movements.

If we were to seek to identify the best candidate for a route that could have served to mark the inner limit of an ‘Offa’ frontier zone along a significant part of its course, the most obvious example would be the Roman road known as Watling Street West (Silvester and Toller 2010: 96, fig. 4.3; denoted as RR6a, RR6b and RR6c). This road is currently understood to have extended for at least 95 miles (150 km) from the Wirral north of Chester, southwards to that walled former legionary base, then south to Whitchurch (Shropshire) and thence to Wroxeter (*Viroconium*, another former legionary base). From there it continued southwards to Stretford Bridge (south of modern-day Church Stretton), then south again to Leintwardine (*Branogenium*), and on to Kenchester (*Magnis*) west of Hereford before crossing the Wye and continuing further on south-westwards into the Golden Valley and down towards Abergavenny (*Gobannio*). The northern three-quarters of this route could therefore have been significant to the rearward definition of much of the northern and central parts of the Mercian–Welsh frontier (a point that will be returned to below).

The ‘Offa’s Dyke’ frontier west of Hereford: roads, river crossings and fortifications

In the same way that parts of the River Severn (near Welshpool) and River Dee (near Chirk) and the River Wye south of Hereford were apparently regarded integrally as part of the Anglo–Welsh frontier at least from the eighth century, so too may have been the Wye westwards of Hereford. However, it now seems likely that at some point it was felt necessary to make this to some extent a defensible line. There was until recently no evidence for such a circumstance. However, the discovery and exploratory investigation of a defensive enclosure at Breinton with features that are closely similar to the defences of the well-documented Anglo-Saxon walls and ditches surrounding Hereford itself (and with items present that indicate mid/late Saxon occupation and/or usage) has the potential to radically affect this situation.

In the course of an informal study of some remarkable survivals of evidence for early field systems on the left (north) bank of the River Wye in Breinton parish, the available Lidar



Figure 1: Lower Breinton (Lidar mapping). The inner 'ring' is the (moated) AD twelfth- to sixteenth-century site of the walled summer residence of the Treasurer of Hereford Cathedral; the square enclosure to its east is the redefined nineteenth-century churchyard; the broad ditched feature, over which the twelfth-century church partly stands, is the fortified *burh* enclosure (the excavation site was located on the better-preserved NW inner corner, in the grounds of Breinton House. Mapping: Liam Delaney

data was examined, and a remarkable apparent defensive structure was revealed (Figure 2; see also Delaney 2021). At the centre of this enclosure there was a more pronounced sub-circular ditched mound that previous excavation had established was a medieval residence in the ownership of the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral (Heys 1963). Two features of the larger enclosure however attracted particular attention: the breadth and uniformity of the ditch, and the apparent location of the mid-twelfth-century parish church, which had in part been built over the outer lip of the north-eastern angle of this broad ditch.

This discovery clearly merited closer investigation and a modest archaeological excavation was carried out in 2018 in the grounds of a private residence built adjacent to the north-western angle of the ditch, where the earthwork appeared to be best preserved. This excavation produced unequivocal evidence for the former existence of a stone and turf faced earthen bank and a relatively shallow-profiled but broad fronting ditch. Moreover, the pottery found in bank deposits and in the basal ditch infills close

to the southern edge of the ditch in the 2018 Breinton House excavation was of Hereford form D1 (limestone-tempered Cotswold/Gloucester cooking pots), the date-range for which is thought to extend from the late ninth to the early eleventh century (Vince 1985: 54–55; Boucher *et al.* 2015: 60–62; S. Ratkai in Ray and Delaney 2022).

This fortified enclosure had been carefully positioned on a bluff high above the north bank of the Wye, two miles west of Hereford, and was defended by both a turf-fronted earthen bank originally faced in stone and a broad ditch (Figure 1). The bank was of slighter proportions, but of almost the same width, depth and profile, as the bank and projected mid-/late Anglo-Saxon period ditch around Hereford that was encountered at Victoria Street in the 1960s (Shoesmith 1982: bank with stone wall at 30–35 and 73–74, ditch at 35; and the included microfiche files M1.E1–M1.E7). Thus, the Breinton defensive enclosure has the appearance either of a fort or a defended settlement of similar mid-/late Anglo-Saxon date.

The whole question of the naming of settlements and their history in a marchland that underwent several transformations through the later first and early second millennia AD is inevitably fraught with difficulties (Parsons, this volume). Place-names as they have come down to us today have often been subject to considerable alteration, and may at first seem only poorly comprehensible, if at all. ‘Breinton’ is a case in point. It emerged as a named settlement in the thirteenth century — as, for instance, *Bruntune*, *Breuntuna* (c. 1210), *Brahintone* (1252), and *Broyntun* (1242). Ekwall (1960: 62) deduced that it derived from OE *Brȳning(a)tūn*, the *tūn* of Brȳni’s people. This was on the assumption that it was an *-ingas* placename that just happened not to have been recorded before 1200. Coplestone-Crow (2009: 53) added further documentary references to the name: *Breynton(e)* (1272, 1332, 1316, 1328 and 1341), *Brenton* or *Brounton* (1291), *Braynton* (1375) and *Breyngton* (1377 Poll Tax). One suggestion he then made for its derivation was that it had descended from primitive Welsh *breg* borrowed into Old English as *braeg*, genitive *braegan*, here referencing the ‘brow’ (of a hill). Coplestone-Crow ended his Breinton entry with a dismissal of the main DEPNS entry that has a derivation from *Brȳning(a)tūn* (‘settlement of Brȳni’s people’) because it ‘does not suit the spellings.’

The inspection of the Lidar mapping for the Lower Breinton area (Figure 1) transformed understanding of this site; it showed the extraordinary broad-ditched three-sided fortified enclosure discussed above. Examination of William Rees’s (1933) map of ‘South Wales and the Border in the XIV Century’ indicates that despite all these compiled medieval references, another version again may have been current. Rees marked Breinton as ‘Burgnton’ or ‘Burghton’, which would place it in the ‘Burton’ category, in this case with surely an argument to suggest that it was once either a ‘burh-settlement’ or a fortification associated with one such place (for which, see Blair 2018: 228).

On an estate map of 1783 of Lower Breinton, moreover, the orchard immediately to the north of the enclosure is termed the ‘Burfields Close’ — in this case clearly referring to

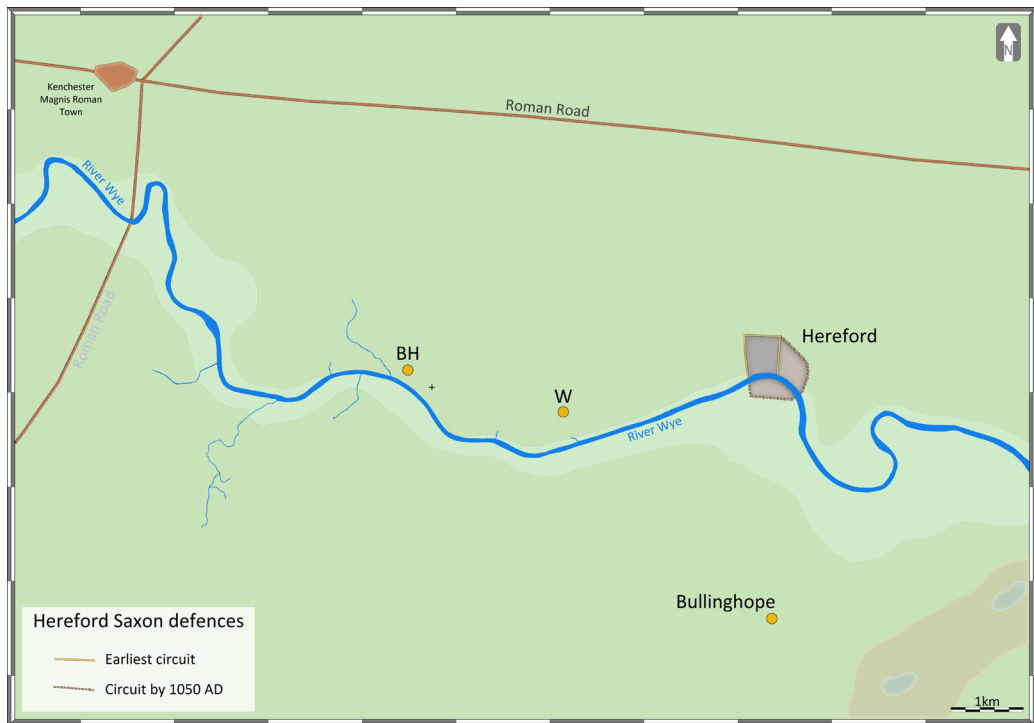


Figure 2: The landscape west of Hereford, showing the relationship of the Roman town at Kenchester, the Breinton House site (BH), Warham (W: mentioned in Domesday Book) and Hereford. Bullinghope has produced what is so far the earliest evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement in the Hereford area

the presence of a *burh* — whatever was signified by this term. It therefore seems likely that there never was a person called ‘Bryni’ who lent his name to this riverside location, and as in so many cases the *-ingas* inference is spurious. Nor, despite its topographical position above the river, was there a derivation from an earlier Welsh form translated into OE to refer to the hill-brow concerned (it is, rather, part of a near-continuous bluff above the river here). Whether or not John Blair (2018: 199–200) is correct in thinking that, where the name occurs, the *burh-tun* refers to the *burh* (fortified settlement) or its watch-place or outpost, the dual place-name and land-parcel naming at Breinton would appear to confirm that the memory of an Anglo-Saxon riverside fortification here persisted into the medieval period (although it must be accepted that the *burh* element can signify a range of kinds of place in Anglo-Saxon England: see Draper 2008; Gelling 1992: 119–122 discussed the occurrence of *burh-tun* or ‘Burton’ names specifically in relation to the possible organisation of frontier defence: see below).

The existence and date of this enclosure serves to emphasise the role of the Wye (flowing west to east in this part of the valley) as the primary defining feature of this part of the frontier across this six-mile span west of Hereford. Moreover, while the presence of mid-/late Anglo-Saxon pottery and clay items demonstrates the *use* of the ‘fort’ in this period,

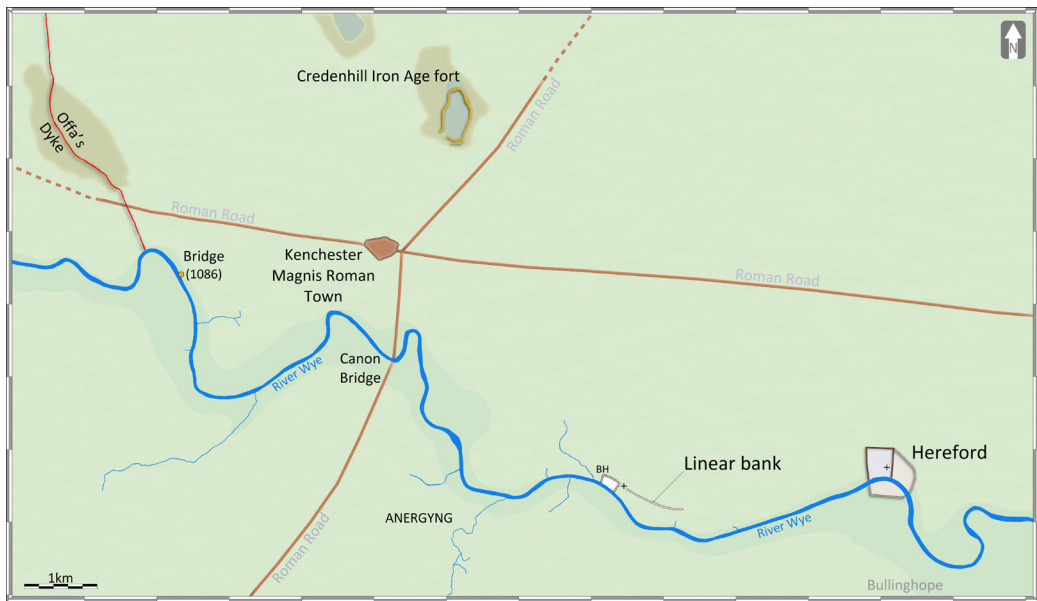


Figure 3: The frontier west of Hereford. This map emphasises the relationship between the north-south course of ‘Watling Street West’, the course of Offa’s Dyke, ‘Bridge’ mentioned in Domesday Book, Breinton House and potentially associated bank (BH), and Hereford. The conjunction of east-west and north-south routeways, at least one bridge (the Roman bridge was located at Canon Bridge was possibly also still in use) and the defensive locations at Breinton and Hereford is clear

it does not automatically date the period of its *construction*. Of the early medieval defences at Hereford, it has been said: ‘The possible time span for the date of construction does not allow the attribution of the defensive work to a particular event or to the reign of an individual king. The likelihood is that it is of pre-Alfredian date and it could be as early as the reign of Offa’ (Shoemith 1982: 77; and see Bassett 2008, although this reappraisal did not materially affect Shoemith’s provisional conclusions as to dating the origins of the defences). As such, the possibility cannot be discounted that the fort at Breinton was first built as part of the original, late eighth-century, scheme for the creation of a Mercian-Welsh frontier – of which Offa’s Dyke was of course the chief component (Figure 2).

There does exist, moreover, a short length of linear earthwork surmounting the bluff on the left (north) bank of the Wye immediately to the east of the Breinton fortification, and this may feasibly have been constructed alongside the fort to reinforce a defensive line hereabouts (Ray and Delaney 2022). What is also to be found nearby, moreover, is a former east-west Roman road (RR63) only a mile and a half (3km) north of Breinton at Stretton Sugwas. This linked Worcester on the Severn with the Roman fort at Brecon Gaer and, passing through the Roman walled town of Kenchester, would have provided a significant route from the Hereford area westwards up the Wye valley. If the river and any defensive works above it served as a defensive system in place of the Dyke alone in the area immediately west of Hereford, the Roman road could be seen to have

defined the rear of the frontier locally (Figure 3). It may also have provided a routeway along which Mercian forces could have travelled (either to and from military campaigns westwards, or in response to potential incursions across the Wye fords from the west or south-west). As such, the road may have been a key element of what might be termed a 'logistics and supply' infrastructure used in support of the military 'hardware' represented by the Breinton fortification and any associated works.

Leintwardine: a communications centre at a key location on the frontier?

Just as the probable frontier line along the Wye west of Hereford may have been backed by the former Roman road running parallel with it, so too did the Roman road Watling Street West trace a course northward from Hereford, by the eighth century therefore parallel with the course of Offa's Dyke. As noted above, the road continued all the way north to Wroxeter. A branch then led north-west to its successor regional centre at Shrewsbury. However, of especial interest here is the stretch between Wroxeter and Kenchester, in part because these former walled towns both appear to have had a continuing existence (if not exactly as flourishing market centres) into the late Roman to early post-Roman periods (White 1998).

Among the places located along this Watling Street West route, Leintwardine seems likely to have had a particularly important strategic role in the mid- to late Anglo-Saxon period (see below, and Figure 4). During the Roman period, it had seemingly operated as a waystation for the imperial post, replete as it was with a colonnaded *mansio* (post-house) and an adjacent bathhouse (Brown 1996). By the mid-eleventh century (and potentially before this), it was a royal manor and had become the head of an extensive tract of land, the Leintwardine hundred (Figures 4 and 5).

The importance of Leintwardine in the early medieval period has moreover been underlined archaeologically, having produced unequivocal archaeological evidence for prestige settlement activity in the later Anglo-Saxon period. Excavations that took place at the site of a modern abattoir located immediately to the west of the High Street in Leintwardine, close to where the Roman road bisected the walled settlement, discovered a post-hole, a well and a gulley on an ancient land surface that was otherwise unremarkable. However, the pottery associated directly with these features was surprisingly (given its location within a Roman period settlement) almost entirely of early medieval date (Brown 1996: 540). There were several sherds of Stafford-type ware (also known as Chester-type ware, named after the place with sites where the ceramics were first recognised in quantity: Ford 2000), a single sherd of Stamford-type ware, and some further sherds of a previously unrecognised ware of early medieval character (Brown 1996).

The floruit of the production and distribution of Stafford-type ware is currently thought to have been between the late ninth and the late eleventh century (Ford 2000; Carver 2010: 102), while Stamford-type ware had a similar date-span for its production. The



Figure 4: Leintwardine from the south, as viewed from Brandon Camp. Roman road RR6c ('Watling Street West') extends up the ridge in the middle distance going northwards towards Wroxeter (and in the direction of Shrewsbury to the left of and past the parish church at right-centre here. Brandon camp is a strong candidate for having been an assembly point and muster location for Leintwardine hundred

key point to emphasise here is that, although Stafford-type ware is present, sometimes in quantity, in the fortified proto-urban centres that became county-towns of the Marches and West Midlands (Chester, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester and Stafford itself), it is extremely rare on rural sites and tends to be found only in high-status places, usually with documented royal connections (Ford 2000).

It was concluded from these finds that 'As a strategic defended site close to the Welsh border, Leintwardine may have been incorporated into the system of border control accompanying the construction of Offa's Dyke', and that, although no indications of the re-fortification of the settlement have yet been found, the presence of slag from early medieval ironworking indicates ongoing activity indicative of a settlement of some strategic importance (Brown 1996: 564).

Leintwardine hundred extended mostly westwards towards, and in some places across, Offa's Dyke – taking in for example manors at both Knighton and Selley that were located on the Dyke itself. Ackhill (a place near Discoed in the same hundred) is meanwhile situated immediately eastwards of the Dyke, overlooking the Lugg valley from the north, and Cascob, located up a Lugg tributary valley (and on the eastern flank

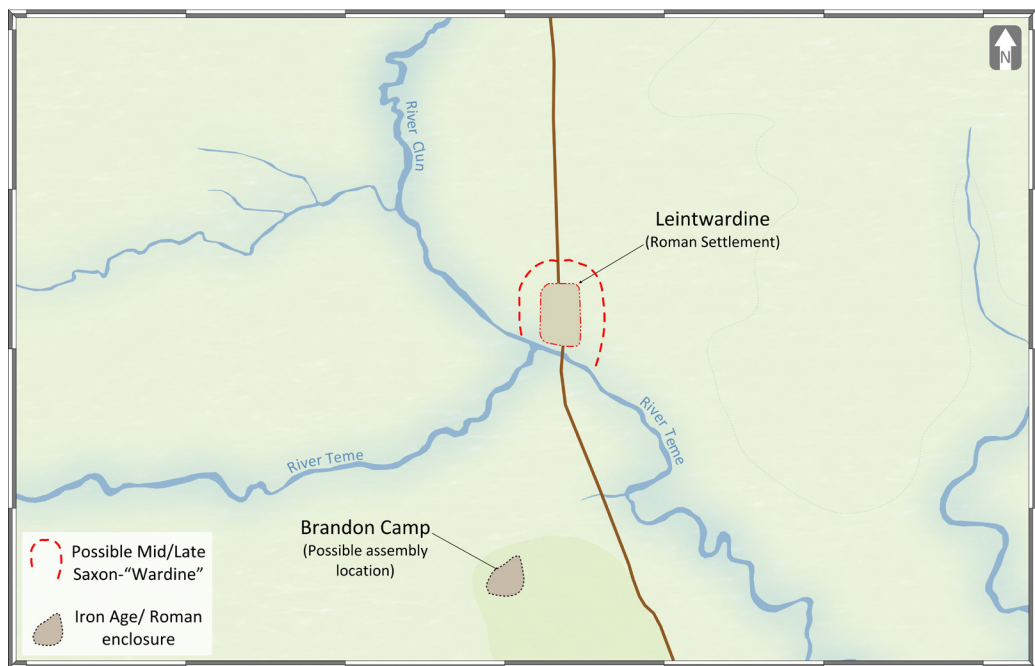


Figure 5: The local context of Leintwardine in reference to the north-south Roman Road ('Watling Street West') and the Iron Age hillfort at Brandon Camp. Aerial photographs and early maps indicate the existence of an outer enclosure beyond the Roman defences, and it may have been this feature that gave rise to the '-wardine' name

of the Radnor Forest massif) lies two miles (4 km) to the west of where the Dyke crossed the Lugg to the west of Discoed (and adjacent to a part of Radnorshire that remained a detached part of Herefordshire until the nineteenth century).

Northwards towards Shrewsbury, Leintwardine hundred also included locations such as Acton (Scott), close to the route of Watling Street West. Although compiled about three centuries after the presumed building of Offa's Dyke in the late eighth century, the Domesday Survey entries may enable us to glimpse something of the way that at least in the late Saxon period the Leintwardine district was organised administratively in part at least to provide communications and military services for the greater lords and the king on the frontier (see Roffe 2007: 147–162 for discussion of the relation of the Domesday Inquest to service arrangements in place during the later Anglo-Saxon period).

In 1086 (*DB Shropshire*: 6,11) Leintwardine had 10 villagers, a reeve, a priest, a church and two 'radmen' (riders, or riding men). The latter are important in this context because *radmanni* and *radchenistri* (the terms were evidently equivalents) appear in 1086 in the Domesday Circuit V (5) entries as a category of freemen (people holding land from a lord as a tenant in return for services) almost exclusively in the frontier counties (Nelson 1966). As with several other categories of freemen, *radmanni* and *radchenistri* were

described as farmers, in many cases being identified specifically as possessing plough-teams. These freemen were listed as *radmanni* in the Cheshire folios (145 individuals) while in Shropshire there were also *radchenistri* (167 *radmanni* and 3 *radchenistri*). Although these two terms were clearly simply equivalents, *radchenistri* was the term more commonly used in the south of the frontier, such that in Gloucestershire 137 *radchenistri* and no *radmanni* were listed. Meanwhile, both terms were used in Herefordshire (30 *radmanni* and 47 *radchenistri*).

Exactly what this class of person represented has long been debated, but it has generally been accepted that they comprised ‘A sub-group of the *liberi homines*, ‘free men’, of higher status than a villager; originally a man who rode with messages, or on escort-duty’ (*DB Herefordshire*: Technical Terms; see, for example, Stenton 1947: 468). The key question is, what were they doing in these counties? The distribution of this category of originally Anglo-Saxon ‘riders’ or horsemen *within* both Cheshire and Shropshire is skewed heavily towards the west and in Herefordshire towards the centre and the north-west. The conclusion that there was a close connection somehow with the way in which the frontier was by then organised appears inescapable. Many of the places in which these farmer-horsemen were based, including Conover (with its three riders), and Dorrington, Pulley (also with three riders) and Meole Brace, just to the south of Shrewsbury near Bayston Hill (respectively, *DB Shropshire*: 4,1,2; 4,15,2; and 6,30), are located on a routeway to that town that links directly southwards to Watling Street West. Another settlement with *radmanni* was Woolston. This is located between Church Stretton and Craven Arms (*DB Shropshire*: 4,20,18) immediately next to Watling Street West itself, and on the way north towards Acton Scott and Shrewsbury. The sense that these farmer-horsemen were integral to the royal administration is also underscored by their association in several manors both with reeves and with clerics (represented by some of the few churches and priests identified in the Shropshire part of the Survey).

The notion that there existed ‘radman villages’ in Shropshire in the mid-eleventh century and earlier, and that these men had some quasi-military role in frontier organisation and communications has previously been suggested (Nelson 1966: 44–46; Atkin 2015). Atkin (2015: 17–18), noted especially the linear distribution of settlements featuring *radmanni* in 1066/1086 and their likely relation to routeways. In reference to the later Castlery of Clun, Suppe noted that ‘There has been considerable debate as to the social position of these radmen and the nature of their duties, but they were probably of some military value in 1086, although the class was well on the way to extinction. Their name appears to imply that they were trained horsemen.’ While suggesting that the district of Clun ‘would appear not to have had any systematic military organisation at this early date (1086)’, he also conceded that this could have been due to the devastation of the area by Welsh raiding in the immediately preceding decades (Suppe 1994: 39).

There is furthermore a unique reference to Leintwardine in the Shropshire Domesday, in the customs pertaining to Shrewsbury (by then the county town). This is found in

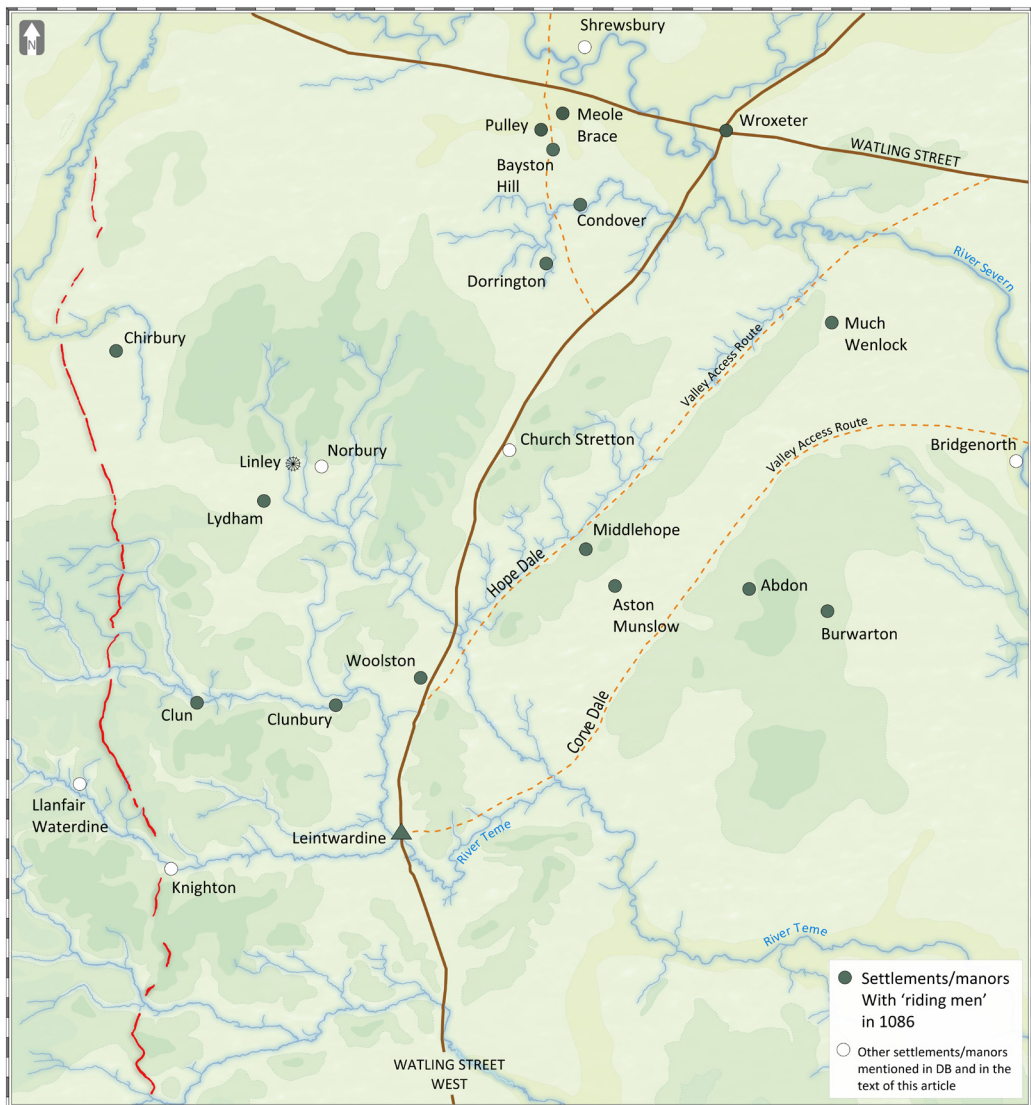


Figure 6: The relationship of the inherited road and routeway network to Offa's Dyke, Leintwardine, and the distribution of 'riding men' mentioned in the Domesday Book in the area between Leintwardine and Shrewsbury

one of the opening sections of the survey (*DB Shropshire: C10*), where it is stated: 'When the King left the City, the Sheriff sent him 24 horses from Leintwardine and the King took these as far as the first manor in Staffordshire.' The journeys concerned would almost certainly have involved travel northwards along 'Watling Street West' to either Shrewsbury or Wroxeter (which itself featured a riding man along with a church and four priests), and then eastwards along the 'midlands' Watling Street towards the Mercian heartlands around Wall in Staffordshire. This surely identifies both horses and their riders as part of a military escort, or bodyguard, ensuring safe passage for the king

on ‘tours of inspection’ of the frontier districts, rather than (although conceivably also as an adjunct to) military expeditions.

If we trace the attested presence of *radmanni* and *radchenistri* elsewhere in this part of the frontier in 1086, other links and patterns emerge. For example, it may also not be entirely coincidental that in 1086 Lydham – located close to a lead-working area at Linley Hill known to have been in operation in Roman times (Mattingly 2007: 409) – featured no fewer than six *radmanni* and a reeve (*DB Shropshire*: 4,1,14). This clearly points to royal interest in, and possible direct control over, the local lead-mining and processing industry (although there is as yet no other specific documentary or indeed archaeological evidence to support the idea of continuity of exploitation beyond the Roman period). It may additionally be significant that further such ‘riding men’ are listed for places situated in valleys leading to and from the line of Offa’s Dyke, or along valleys and routes leading eastwards from Watling Street West (Figure 6). In the former category, there was one rider listed at Clunton in the Clun valley, and two more riders who ‘pay 2 cattle in dues’ at Clun (respectively *DB Shropshire*: 4,20,3; and 4,20,8).

Clun itself lies within sight of (and down the valley from) the point at which, at Spoad (next to the medieval and later village of Newcastle-on-Clun), Offa’s Dyke makes a dramatic north–south crossing of the steep-sided valley. Yet more riding men were to be found along Hope Dale and Corve Dale, eastwards of (present day) Craven Arms, at Middlehope and at Abdon (the latter, *DB Shropshire*: 4,3,7). Along the route from Ludlow to Bridgenorth, meanwhile, another riding man was located at (Aston) Munslow, and yet another at the interestingly named Burwarton nearby (OE ‘burh-guardian’s settlement’; Blair 2018: 207; *DB Shropshire*: 4,11,9).

Albeit that the Domesday Book records a situation about three hundred years after the likely initial phase of use of Offa’s Dyke integrally with the frontier, there may nonetheless be some merit in envisioning a communications and control network based upon (or articulated through) Leintwardine and occupying this part of the Mercian/Welsh frontier with origins potentially going back to the late eighth or early ninth century. In such a scenario, Watling Street West, and its links to Wroxeter and Shrewsbury northwards, could have marked the rear of the frontier zone and provided the means to communicate northwards and southwards within and beyond this part of the frontier. The network that it stood at the centre of also included the provision of horsemen (mounted messengers or fighting men, given that *chenistri* is a word incorporating ‘knights’) along routes leading from the rearward zone of the frontier locally westwards to (and beyond) the Dyke and eastwards into central Mercia (with, for example, another concentration of Shropshire Domesday places with riding men in the Bridgenorth area itself).

In parenthesis, it should be noted that reeves were present in several important manors and settlements both westwards and south from Shrewsbury, and that both *milites* (rendered variously as men-at-arms and mercenary soldiers: see Abels 1988: 142–145) and

men of the status of *cnicht* were also present (cf. Coss 1993: 12: 'The *cnicht*, then (in 1086), was a retainer in the personal service of a nobleman, providing escort, hunting and similar duties... (but) the military side was obviously important and should not be neglected'). So, consequently, the naming of the settlement known as 'Tref-y-clawdd' in Welsh, which is actually sited on Offa's Dyke, could well have been meaningfully (and not coincidentally) named in English 'Knighton' ('the settlement of the *cnichtas*' – see below).

There were yet other named officials potentially operating in the Anglo-Welsh early borderland that are mentioned, if somewhat obliquely, in sources including the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. As well as the familiar ordinary 'reeve' listed for several royal manors in Shropshire, it was for example pointed out by John Earle over a hundred and seventy years ago (Earle 1857: 205–206) that such officials could include people such as one Wulfric, denoted by the term *wealhgefera* or *wealhgerefa*, meaning 'Welsh companion', or 'Welsh reeve', in manuscript A of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (*s.a.* 896). Earle regarded this official as having had specific responsibility under King Alfred for patrols along the Welsh marches, although alternative deductions are possible (see Williams 2009: 47–48; and Ray and Bapty 2016: 226–227 for detailed discussion of this point).

Meanwhile, a charter of 855 in King Burghred's reign (S 207) that specified exemptions from dues relating to military service identified 'those men who in English we call *wahlfaereld*' who were included in a list of soldiers or officials (including mounted 'riders'), whom the charter recipients were excused from feeding and lodging (Williams 2009: 47–48; Ray and Bapty 2016: 226).

If Leintwardine hundred did in this way comprise an identifiable sector of the frontier, we can envisage it possessing (by 1086) a command centre at the former walled settlement at Leintwardine itself, a functioning (and guarded) state-controlled minerals processing location (at Linley Hill, Norbury), and a series of associated outposts, some of which were serviced by a military, communications, and no doubt armed escort cadre of officials termed *radmanni/radchenistri*.

Military organisation, trade and communications

The Dyke itself was a means of intercepting and controlling trade on the frontier, and in particular resources 'on the hoof' eastwards from the Welsh uplands to the (by this time) Mercian-controlled lowlands, thereby providing (via gateways and customs posts) a means to exact tolls. These exactions were most probably taken in cattle (Brady 2017: 85–86) and were only subsequently converted to bullion. As with the Mercian regime's placing of tolls upon continental traders at coastal ports when seeking markets in England (Naismith 2012: 34), this revenue-raising activity provided income directly into the royal coffers, creating an alternative to the more normal raising of cash for example through the commutation of dues for labour-service.

There were undoubtedly some parts of what was an extremely long frontier region that came under significant pressure from attempts to regain control of lands formerly occupied by Welsh-speaking communities. One such area was the Vale of Montgomery and the immediately neighbouring parts of the Severn valley. In support of his ‘Welsh patrol’ thesis, John Earle cited an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (in the C version) for 1053 which recorded the killing by the Welsh of a large number of ‘weardmen’ (which he rendered as ‘watchmen’ or ‘guards’) at Westbury in Shropshire (Williams 2009: 48). The response of the Anglo-Saxons was probably to reinforce defensive places, to which we have several references: for example, Chirbury (*Cyrichbyrig* in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle *s.a.* 914), named as *Ciriberie* in 1086 (*burh* with a church). This was in 1086 a substantial place with 13 villagers, two churches and a priest (*DB Shropshire*: 4,1,10). Moreover, it is surely not surprising by now to note that in this area, too, there is mention of the presence of more riding men. At Alberbury itself, the centre of the hundred within which many of these latter settlements were located (*DB Shropshire*: 4,1,9), only one is listed. However, just to the south of that manor there were another two located in two manors, both of which were (perhaps revealingly) denoted ‘Marche’ (*DB Shropshire*: 4,4,17 and 4,5,10, respectively). Meanwhile, on the other side of the Long Mountain in another potentially weak location, another was located at Trewern in another place that was in a good situation to protect a ‘pass’ towards Alberbury and Shrewsbury south of The Breiddin (*DB Shropshire*: 4,1,8).

John Blair (2018: 198–246) drew out the implications of his own *burh-tun* thesis concerning a network of defensive locations with reference to a series of case-studies. One of these focused upon a set of place-names located close to the frontier near Knucklas in the Teme valley west of Knighton (Blair 2018: 207–209; cf. Parsons elsewhere in this volume). Here, his focus was upon places with names such as Trebert (that is, ‘tref-burh’ or ‘burh-settlement’) and Treverward (*tref-burhweard* or ‘burh-guardian’s tun’), which he considers may be represented by the polygonal ditched enclosure at Treverward immediately to the east of the Dyke and the fortified intervisible sites at Trebert close to Llanfair Waterdine and at Knucklas across the Teme. These could have formed a militarised cluster of strong-points that acted defensively to protect the frontier and the Dyke itself here (Figure 9):

One implication of these arrangements is that the Mercians controlled a border strip, including Knucklas, on the Welsh side of the Dyke. Another is that there was an official called a ‘burh-guardian’ and that his *tūn* – wherever that may have been – was additional and complementary to the *burh-tūn*. This cannot be decoded clearly, and in any case defensive arrangements along Offa’s Dyke may well have been more elaborate than elsewhere. For the present argument, the essential point is that the *burh-tūn* of Trebert was a component in a manifestly purposeful system; the linear and topographically-rational linking of *burh*, *burh-tūn* and *burhweardes-tūn* cannot be coincidence (Blair 2018: 208).



Figure 7: Knucklas in the upper Teme valley, viewed from the north-east behind Offa's Dyke at Cwmsanaham Hill. Llanfair Waterdine is situated nearby slightly higher up the valley off to the right

Greater frontier depth in the north

Further north, the relation of the two long linear dykes that extend over many miles to the north of the middle reaches of the River Severn has of course long been debated. Cyril Fox regarded the relationship to have been solved by his investigations, plumping for an ascription of Wat's Dyke to King Æthelbald (Fox 1955: 273–275). Apart from the question of their dating relative to one another, the precise relationship between Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke has rarely been discussed in print. So, for example, the only discussion of the exact relationship between Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke in all the various publications arising from the 'Offa's Dyke Project' of the late twentieth century (e.g. Hill 1977; Hill 2000; Worthington 1999; Hill and Worthington 2003) was in Margaret Worthington's article specifically on Wat's Dyke (Worthington 1997; republished as Worthington Hill 2019). Here, among other things, she attempted to solve the conundrum of the various past labellings of what would now be regarded as Wat's Dyke as instead 'Offa's Dyke' in the northern lengths of the former in Flintshire south of Holywell.



Figure 8: The panorama westwards towards the Bryniau Clwyd/Clwydian Range from the slopes beneath Moel-y-Gaer hillfort at the south-western end of Halkyn Mountain. The newly-traced line of Offa's Dyke lies in the middle distance halfway between the two areas of upland

The relationship of the two dykes in Flintshire has been the subject of recent discussion following the recognition of lengths of linear earthwork north of Treuddyn that are plausible surviving sections of an otherwise continuous Offa's Dyke work northwards to the Irish Sea between Prestatyn and Gronant (Ray *et al.* 2021). This is not the place to rehearse these relationships, but it does seem possible that in this northernmost part of the frontier there existed a 'neutral zone' between Wat's Dyke in the east and Offa's Dyke in the west (Figure 8). The creation of such a 'buffer' territory could have been the outcome of over a hundred years of disputed control of the area between the Conwy River in the west and the Dee Estuary in the east, fought over by the kingdoms of Gwynedd, Powys and Mercia and their local proxies.

This part of the frontier was also fluid: there may, for example, have been an attempt by Mercia in the ninth century especially to annexe the Vale of Clwyd and dominate Gwynedd politically and turn it into a client state. A key site here was Rhuddlan, with indications of an Anglo-Saxon presence not only in the tenth century (with the establishment of the burh of *Cledemutha* by King Edward the Elder in 921), but also before that, apparently with the presence of both rectangular plank-walled and sunken-featured buildings (Quinnell and Blockley 1994).

Conclusion

The capacity of mid/late Anglo-Saxon rulers to mobilise forces in response to immediate threats has in recent years come under greater scrutiny (see, for example, Baker and Brookes 2015a). The so-called 'burghal hidage' document and the study of its fortifications has quite reasonably been seen as key to an understanding of the thinking behind defensive strategy not only in the later part of the reign of King Alfred in Wessex, but later on during the extension of the network to embrace parts of southern and north-western Mercia (Hill and Rumble 1996). The question of whether the implementation of a system of larger strategic fortifications was supported by the creation of more local networks of purpose-built minor forts has largely remained unaddressed, however.

The discovery of the Breinton fortification in 2018 is potentially transformative of our understanding of how the Anglo-Welsh frontier may have operated in the relevant period more generally. The building of such a fortification at Breinton, located in a strongly defensible position high above the left bank of the River Wye and overlooking a ford across the river, could easily have been in response to the threat of viking military incursions from the ninth century onwards. Its location, however, almost exactly midway between Hereford (to the east) and Bridge Sollers to the west (close to where Offa's Dyke meets the River Wye) does also nonetheless fit well with what we can deduce to have been the scheme for integrating Hereford within the Offa's Dyke frontier. The apparently insecure dating of the Breinton enclosure is potentially troubling in this regard, since it may suggest that the fortification was only built in the tenth century. However, we need to be clear as to what is implied by the items found (pottery and rough clay slabs) amidst the collapsed 'wall' debris. The presence of this material indicates that the fortification was in use (occupation) during this late Saxon period: it does not date its first construction.

It is in this light, also, that we should perhaps review the documentary evidence for military responses to marauding viking armed forces during the ninth century and subsequently in west-central Britain. One familiar entry from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is that concerning an early tenth century attack on the coast of Wales (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle A, *s.a.* 916, Garmonsway 1972: 98; Worcester Chronicle *s.a.* 914, Garmonsway 1972: 99). The entry reads: 'In this year a great pirate host.... sailed west until they reached the estuary of the Severn, and harried at will everywhere along the Welsh coast. They seized Cyfeiliog [*sic*], bishop of Archenfield [on the borders of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire] and took him with them to their ships, but king Edward ransomed him afterwards for forty pounds. Then after this the whole host went inland with the intention of renewing their raids in the direction of Archenfield: they were opposed by the men from Hereford and Gloucester and from the nearest fortresses who fought against them and put them to flight.' This last statement has passed almost without comment, but the assumption (*pace* Whitelock 1961) that it referred to other major regional 'burhs' is not credible, since were these to have included Winchcombe

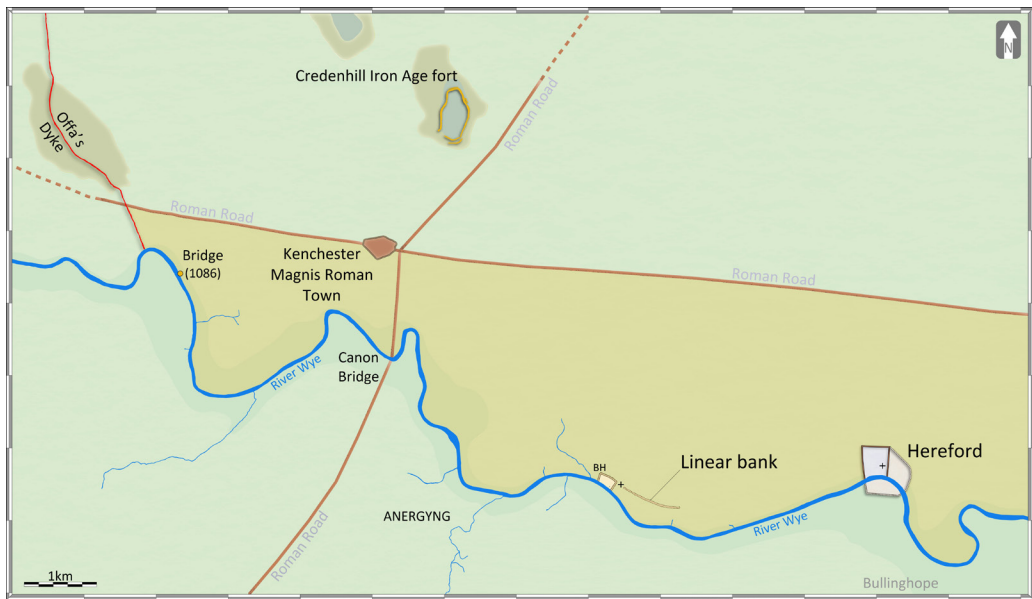


Figure 9 A possible 'control zone' west of Hereford

or Worcester, for example, these surely would have been named. The reference to 'the nearest fortresses' appears more likely, therefore, to refer to more minor sites like that at Breinton that have hitherto remained undiscovered.

The proximity of the Roman road to the north of the River Wye, and the chain of facilities that existed or were created along the north bank of (or over) the river may be coincidental. Nonetheless, the presence of the road would have enabled supplies to be moved and mounted forces to travel relatively easily out westwards from Hereford to both the nearer and the further parts of the frontier. This enabled the creation of a length of the frontier west of Hereford that in breadth in effect spanned both sides of the river, was reinforced on the north bank, and the rearward side of which was marked by the line of the Roman road (which also provided a means of moving forces along the line of the 'control zone') (Figure 9).

The Leintwardine evidence that has been brought into focus here equally serves to reinforce the idea that the Roman road marked a rearward communicative artery supporting what the Mercians could have regarded as the 'forward areas' of the frontier, including the line of Offa's Dyke itself. Moreover, it may have been that, in this area at least, the frontier zone had considerable east-west depth. It is unsurprising perhaps, in this context, that there are hints of the operation between the eighth and eleventh centuries of a system for mounted escort, for messaging and possibly also for patrolling that linked the frontier with the Mercian heartlands.

What these 'case studies' have hopefully demonstrated is something of the potential to bring together disparate clues from archaeology, documentary re-appraisal and place-name studies to try to generate new insights into the operation of a frontier that is in other terms practically undocumented. It is arguably high time that both a more thorough going and more nuanced approach to the archaeology and history of this important early medieval frontier should be promoted and conducted.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Liam Delaney (for co-direction of the Breinton House excavation and help with Lidar mapping and interpretation), Simon Mayes (map figures), and to the editors and two anonymous referees.

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Shifting Border, Shifting Interpretation: what the Anglo-Norman Castle of Dodleston in Cheshire might be trying to tell us about the eleventh- century northern Anglo-Welsh Border

Rachel E. Swallow

This chapter follows on from research and publication by this author on the form and placing of Anglo-Norman castles situated within the northern Anglo-Welsh medieval borderland, recently interpreted and newly termed the Irish Sea Cultural Zone (Swallow 2016). This interpretation argues for the Anglo-Normans' reuse of pre-existing monuments dating from the prehistoric and Romano-British periods for the deliberate placing of their castle builds. Dodleston Castle was situated within the fluctuating borders of this frontier borderlands zone, and, it is argued, played a significant role in the continuity of strategic and commercial movement along the entirety of the Anglo-Welsh border and the Irish Sea Region. Within this context, and taking a cross-period and interdisciplinary research approach to re-examine the earthworks and landscape of Dodleston Castle in more detail than hitherto, the earthworks at Dodleston may reveal a meeting point of significance over millennia. It will be demonstrated, for instance, that Dodleston's earthworks likely represent an Anglo-Saxon assembly site situated at the meeting points of important medieval administrative boundaries within the Irish Sea Cultural Zone. By considering the wider spatial significance of Dodleston beyond the temporal confines of the Anglo-Norman period, it is therefore possible to understand better, and reinterpret, the form of the castle earthworks as they exist in the landscape today.

Keywords: Anglo-Norman; borderland; historic landscapes; Anglo-Welsh; castles

Dodleston Castle was situated within the powerful border earldom of medieval Cheshire, with the county's capital at the borough of Chester, some 9 km to its north-east; the fortification was therefore embedded within the medieval Anglo-Welsh border zone. This position gave Dodleston strategic importance, as well as vital control – and valuable exploitation of a wide economic territory within the frontier county of Cheshire.

As a frontier, Cheshire was liminal: an outer boundary of a core society (Mullin 2011: 5). Cheshire occupied a position at the boundary of Wales and England, and 'by distinction of privilege', according to Lucian in about 1195, was separate from the rest of England (Taylor 1912: 29). Indeed, the name of Mercia, of which Cheshire formed a part during the sixth to tenth centuries in its north-west fringes, means 'the people of the *merc*', or 'boundary' (Bu'Lock 1972: 25; Hill and Worthington 2003: 13). In addition, the later twelfth-century medieval administrative term, March (Latin: *marcha*) (Davies 1978: 15) referred to the border area on the fringes of west Cheshire. This interdisciplinary examination of Dodleston Castle recognises that the cultures of these liminal places were based on past kingdoms, and that the liminal spaces and places of the borderlands

were also focused on areas of influence and regional interaction shaped by geographical, marine and riverine landscapes (Phythian-Adams 1993: 14; Mansfield 2014: 51–52); these in turn formed the county's external and internal boundaries, and a 'geographical expression of social power' (Harvey 2000: 202).

Ideally located where land and river traffic joined the seaborne trade of the Irish Sea routes (Bu'Lock 1972: 62), the importance of Chester's, and thus Dodleston's, position in the land-, river- and seascape of west Cheshire cannot be understated. Dodleston Castle formed a significant link in parallel defensive chains of fortifications focused on the River Dee valley and Roman Watling Street leading to Chester. These defensive chains of castles were intended to protect Chester from attacks from the west from the Welsh, and they also, I suggest, had the time-honoured purpose of overseeing north-to-south routeway, riverine and maritime movement, of people and trade (Swallow 2016). Commercial, social, political and economic factors were prime motives in defending and securing the frontier county of Cheshire, and could give natural rise to Prior's (2006: 127–129) purely military deterministic view of an Anglo-Norman grand strategy of establishing 'pivotal points' in the landscape, all defending sites on the junctions of major rivers and Roman roads. Research by this author has established that the positions of Cheshire's castles were indeed influenced by pre-existing routes of communication and settlements (Swallow 2016); the control of existing infrastructure, trade, administration or religious *foci* would have been targeted by invading forces. Castles tended to be situated close to major roads or river crossings because of this intent to control the wider medieval economy and landscape.

However, to describe the purpose of Cheshire's castles, including Dodleston Castle, as simply border defence, 'misses the importance of borders as lands of opportunity as much as problems in the early Middle Ages' (Stafford 1989: 120–121). From the tenth century onwards, Chester developed connections with Ireland and Scandinavian settlement all around the Irish Sea (Hudson 1999: 40; Lewis and Thacker 2003: 16–33; Swallow 2016). The county's identity would have been shaped by its relationship with not only England, but also Wales to the west, and the Irish Sea Province. This is evidenced by archaeological studies throughout the coastlines edging the Irish Sea (e.g. Swallow 2016; Swallow forthcoming). It is well established that sea zones are permeable, and should not be seen as barriers (Bates and Liddiard 2013: 1–2; Mansfield 2014: 52). The regional identity of a frontier, therefore, was not impermeable to the interaction – and sometimes alliance – of distinct cultures as 'contact zones' within its wider defensive, commercial and cultural land and seascape contexts (Morrissey 2005: 552–554). The influence of these contact zones within the Irish Sea Region, and along the northern Anglo-Welsh border, can be seen in this new interpretation of the form and placing of Dodleston Castle, as will now be demonstrated.

A previously uninterpreted archaeological survey of Dodleston Castle in Cheshire (NGR: SJ 36145 60851; Figures 1 and 2), undertaken by the University of Chester in 1995, prompted a detailed and multidisciplinary study as part of my ongoing research on the castles of Cheshire

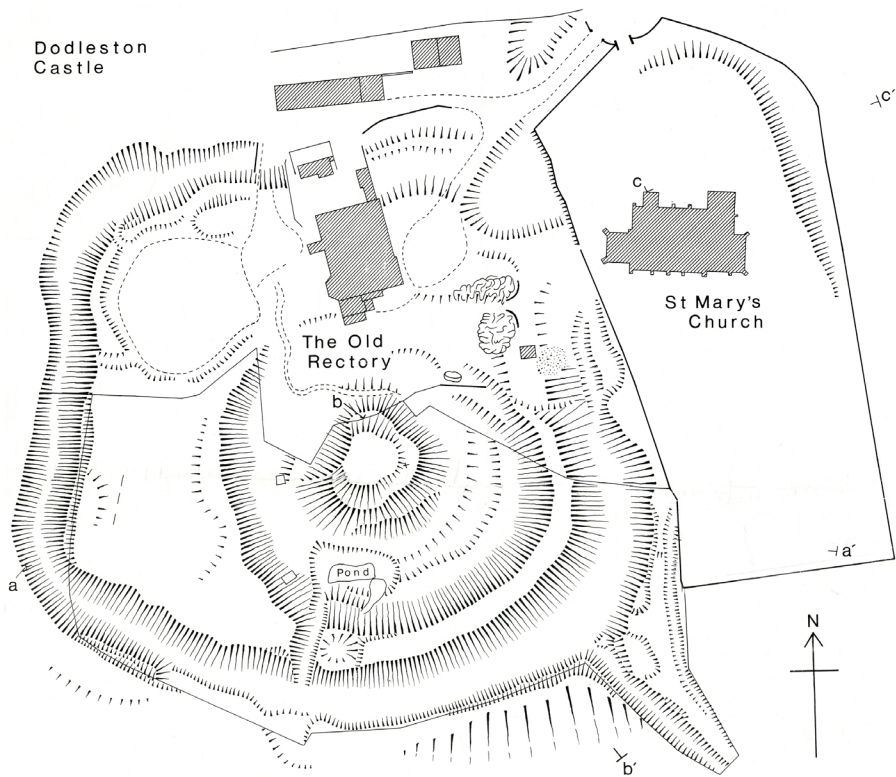


Figure 1: Earthwork Survey of Dodleston Castle, Cheshire, undertaken by University of Chester, 1995

and their landscape settings within the context of the Irish Sea Region. Considering both the conclusions of my 2014 publication (Swallow 2014), and further subsequent research, this chapter more specifically addresses to what extent the earthwork remains of this Anglo-Norman castle site can inform us about the northern Anglo-Welsh border prior to and after the Anglo-Norman arrival in Cheshire in about 1070.

My conclusions call for a revision of the long-held classification (CHER 1978; CHER 1978/2), which was that there was a regular form motte-and-bailey castle at Dodleston. Closer examination reveals that Dodleston was instead a primary ringwork castle, placed within a pre-existing rectilinear feature, and that, sometime later, a motte was inserted into the ringwork castle (Swallow 2014). What is more, this multi-faceted complex is situated within a much larger ring work, not shown on the 1995 survey, and certainly not recognised previously.

This new interpretation indicates that Dodleston Castle was built in a place of prior cross-cultural, secular, ritual and religious significance within this northern border of medieval Anglo-Welsh territory. Forming part of the wider landscape of the Irish Sea Region, archaeological, landscape and to some extent place-name evidence at Dodleston Castle, points to a reused place of significance over time. This reuse, I argue, perpetuated

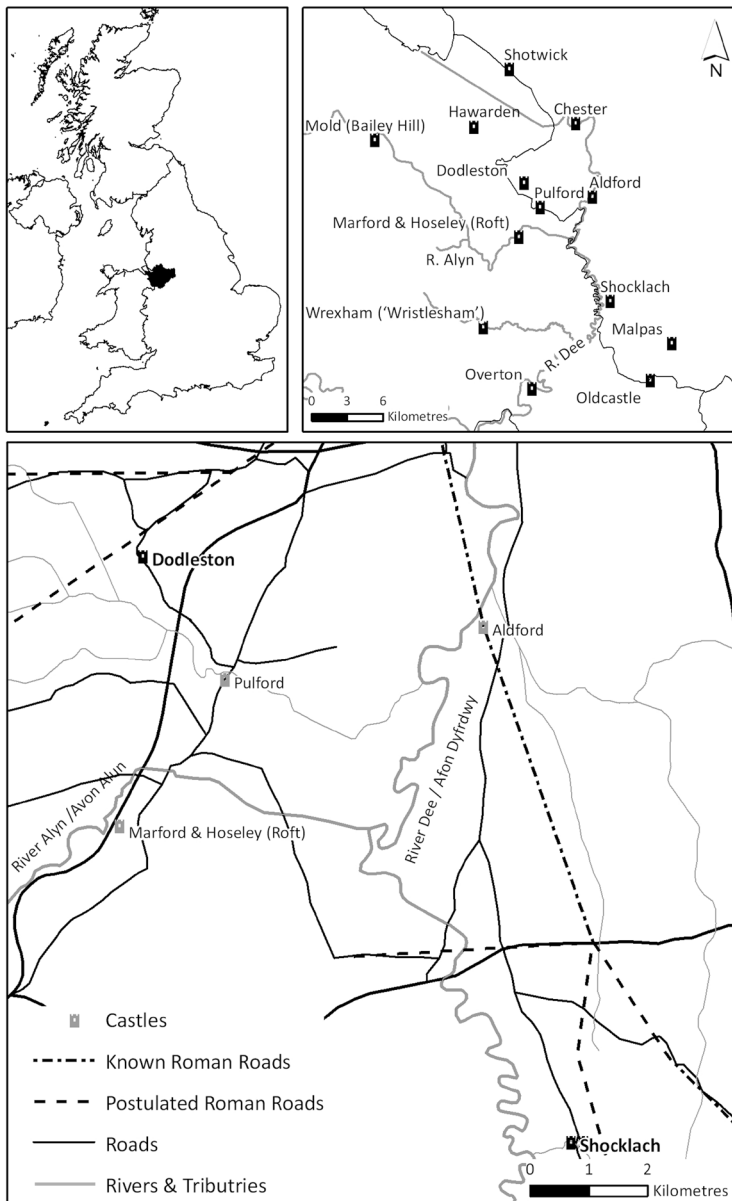


Figure 2: Location of Dodleston Castle, Cheshire. Drawn by R. Edwards. © Rachel E. Swallow

a memory of communication in an early medieval Welsh borderlands landscape, where the confluence of people and ideas was common.

Dodleston Castle was situated within the powerful border earldom of medieval Cheshire (Figure 2). Although the west boundary of medieval Cheshire was fluid over time, the castles in this boundary zone were also situated within the administrative unit of Atiscros

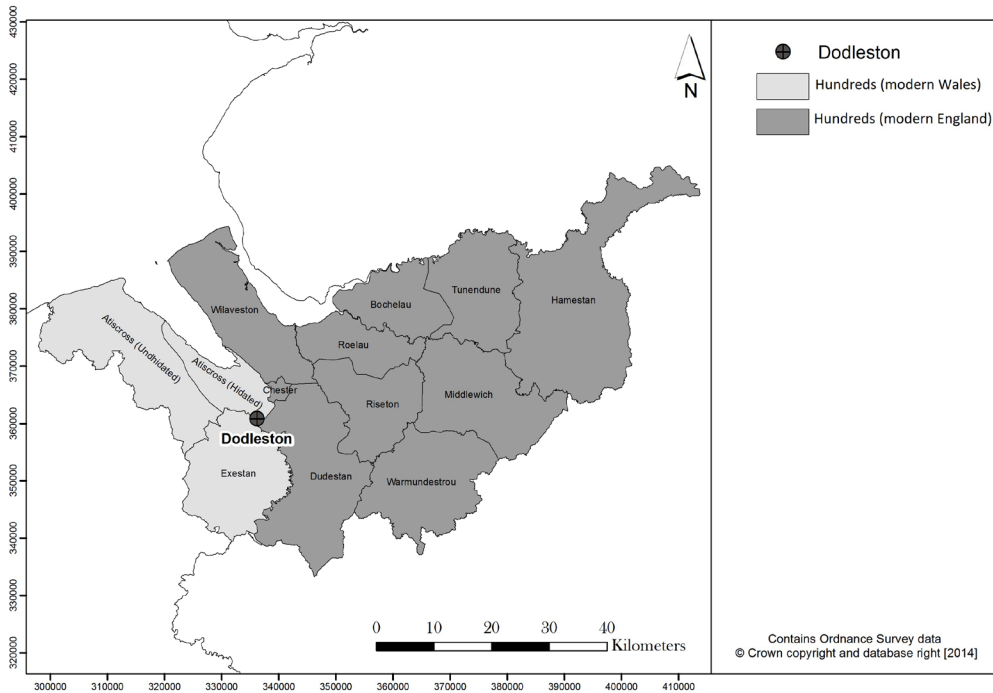


Figure 3: Location of Dodleston Castle (black spot), as positioned within the Hundreds outlined in Domesday Cheshire (c. 1086). Drawn by G. Duckers. © Rachel E. Swallow

Hundred in west Cheshire, as delineated by Domesday Book (Figure 3); during the late Mercian and early Anglo-Norman periods (that is, from the ninth to eleventh centuries), Cheshire extended into what is now north-east Wales, up to the River Clwyd.

In a recent publication, I proposed that Cheshire to the west of the River Dee was for millennia an area of movement and trade via the centrally important ports of Chester and Meols to the rest of the Irish Sea Region (Swallow 2016; Figure 4). What is more, I highlighted that the Anglo-Norman castles to the west of the River Dee and to the east of three Mercian linear earthwork dykes of Whitford, Wat's and Offa's, notably and unusually take one of two forms: mottes without any known evidence of baileys (of which there are nine), and mottes with rectilinear-shaped, rather than the more usual kidney-shaped, baileys (of which there are thirteen). Based on an innovative interdisciplinary research methodology, I proposed the pioneering interpretation that these somewhat unusual forms represent periodic reuse of monuments for the same surveillance purposes of this border territory since the Iron Age and Romano-British periods; this in itself indicates that the beginnings of the medieval Marcher borderlands likely originated in the Iron Age — at least notionally, if not physically (Swallow 2016). This cross-period research methodology has subsequently been adopted for an almost identical study of the Anglo-Norman castle-building reuse of prehistoric and Romano-British sites elsewhere in England (Jamieson 2019), producing remarkably similar results to my earlier study of

what I have termed the Irish Sea Cultural Zone (Swallow 2016). Dodleston Castle appears to take the motte and rectilinear bailey form within this borderland of monument reuse, and the likely origins and reasons for this unusual castle earthworks shape will now be examined in detail (see Figure 1 for the form of the castle).

The Scheduled Monument of Dodleston Castle has never been excavated, and while historical references give some context for the castle, discussion of this site in secondary sources prior to 2014 had been sparse, and often cursory (Bott and Williams 1975: 15; Cullen and Hordern 1986: 10; Salter 2001; Grimsditch *et al.* 2012: 106). Further and ongoing research has been enlightening, however.

The place-name, Dodleston, first appears as *Dodestune* (thus, without the *-l-*) in the Domesday Book Survey of 1086, and is of Old English derivation. It is generally interpreted that Dodleston likely meant 'Dod(d)el's farm' (Dodgson 1972: 156–157), where *Dode*, of the Domesday form, *Dodestune*, was in all probability a scribal error for the personal name *Dodle* or *Dodel*, with the suffix *-tūn* generally meaning 'farm' (Chris Lewis, pers. comm. April 2021). This scribal error is suggested by the fact that every other historical spelling presented for Dodleston by Dodgson (1972: 156–157) includes the *-l-*. Taking note of the fact that a *Dodle*, or *Dodel*, was otherwise unknown in Domesday Cheshire, it is also noted that the Domesday scribe did sometimes mishear, mispronounce, misread, and/or miscopy the entirety or individual elements of place-names (Roffe 2002: 73; Duncan 2021). This seemingly anomalous and presumed scribal error, therefore, is not secure enough evidence to point to an alternative definition of the generally-interpreted 'Dod(d)el's farm' (see below, for further discussion).

Dodleston manor was recorded as being within Atiscros Hundred in Cheshire at the time of the Domesday Survey (Harris and Thacker 1987: 191): that is, Cheshire to the west of the River Dee, where all the unusually shaped castles are sited, these forms being suggestive of periodic reuse of monuments over millennia (Swallow 2016, Figure 4). The castle was positioned adjacent to Pulford Brook, a boundary-marking tributary of the River Dee, and Pulford Castle was positioned to its south; both Dodleston and Pulford castles served to protect the Pulford Pass between them, which gave access across the marshlands from Cheshire, to the Welsh borderlands proper, via The Rofit Castle (Figure 4).

In 1066 in Domesday Book, the manor of Dodleston was held directly by the Mercian Earl Edwin, and so presumably carried some considerable importance in west Cheshire. By 1086 in Domesday Book, Dodleston was the *caput* or head manor of the largely dispersed holdings of the Anglo-Norman Osbern Fitz-Tezzo, who was important enough to have had fifteen burgesses in Chester borough (Lewis and Thacker 2003: 23). At some time during the mid-twelfth century, Dodleston was held by the Boydel(l) family, first by Helte de Boydel (b. c. 1123), whom the Cheshire antiquary, Ormerod (1819, vol. 2: 844), claims to have been a direct descendent of Osbern Fitz-Tezzo, although this cannot be confirmed.

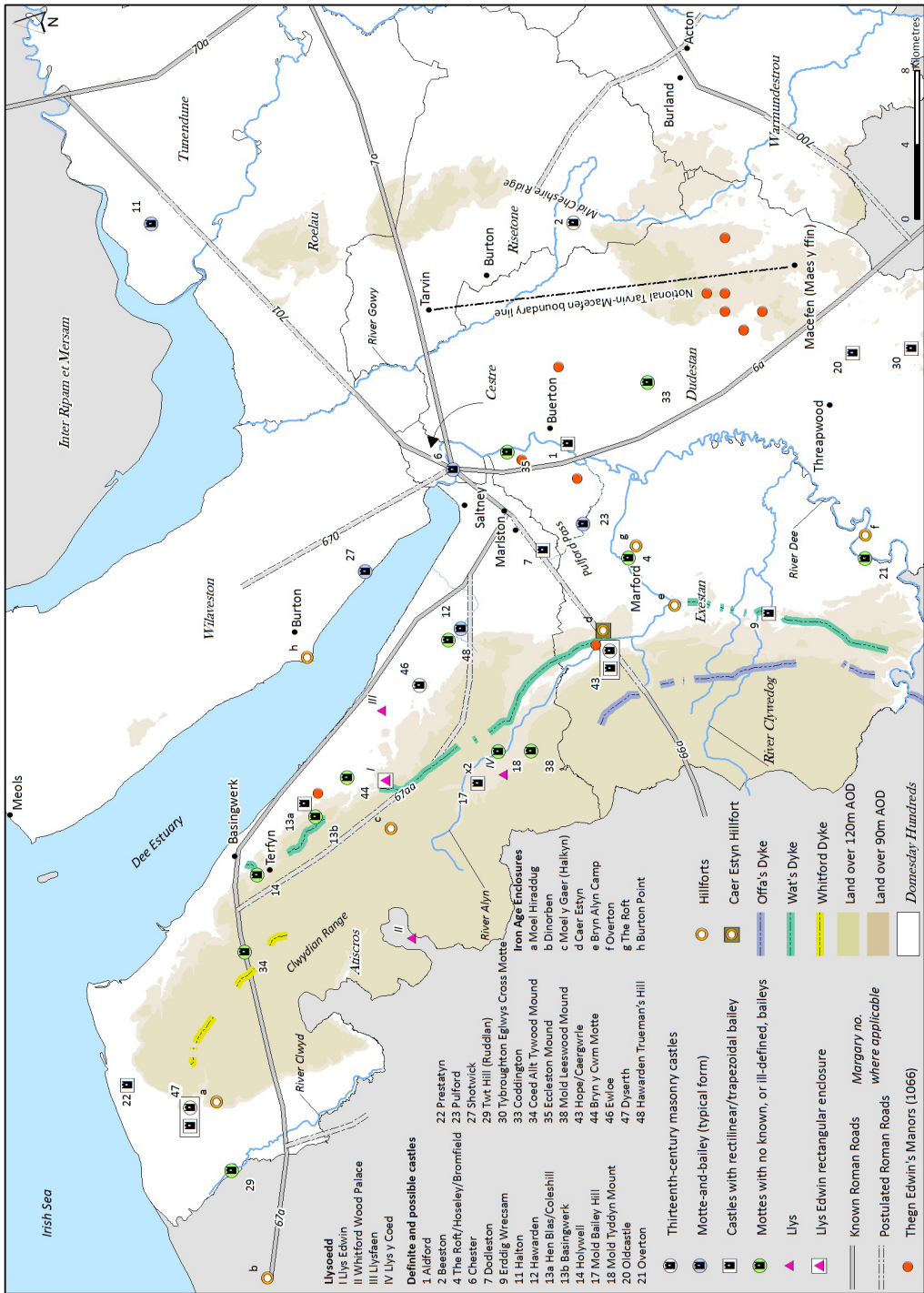


Figure 4: The castles of medieval west Cheshire, c. 1070–c. 1237 (Dodleston Castle at no. 7). Contains OS data @ Crown copyright (and database right) 2015. © Rachel E. Swallow



Figure 5: Tithe Map and Apportionment (c. 1842, EDT 140/1 & /2), with author's annotations (field names). Published with the kind permission of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, Chester

During Richard I's reign (1189–1199), documentary evidence tells us that there was feudal service at Dodleston of 'two armed men ... in time of war for forty days' (Ormerod 1819, vol. 2: 440), and in the late thirteenth century William (c. 1210–1277) and later John de Boydel (c. 1256–c. 1308) of Dodleston manor both held four and a half knights' fees in Cheshire, and Dodleston was also providing the service of one knight's fee to the earl of Chester in time of war (Sharp 1906: 130, no. 213). While these mentions indicate land at Dodleston manor was held in return for service, there is however no known surviving documentary evidence to support the fact that Dodleston Castle was in existence prior to 1277 (Ormerod 1819, vol. 2: 847; Dodgson 1972: 157).

Additionally, in 1401, King Henry IV (1366–1413) called upon the castles in the Welsh March, including Dodleston, to prepare for action against the Welsh leader, Owain Glyndŵr

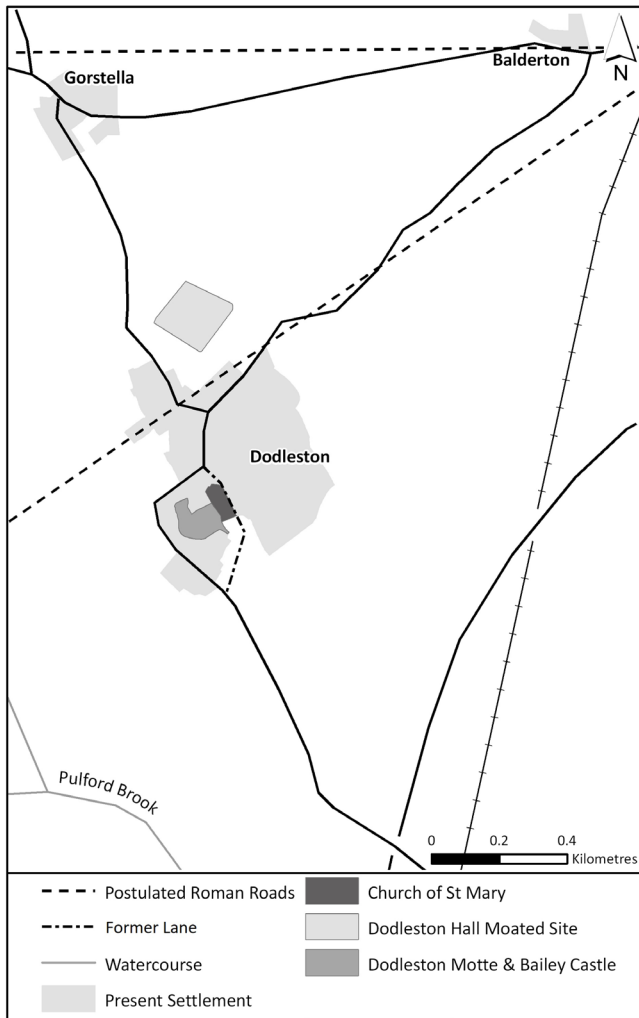


Figure 6: The wider landscape context of Dodleston Castle, Cheshire. Contains Ordnance Survey data. Drawn by R. Edwards. © Crown copyright and database right, 2013. © Rachel E. Swallow

(c. 1350–1415). There is a record of devastation west of the River Dee following Welsh risings in August 1403, when Dodleston was reportedly destroyed (Ormerod 1819, vol. 2: 857).

While existing historical evidence for Dodleston Castle is therefore somewhat limited, other evidence tells us about its foundation, form and position within this Anglo-Welsh borderlands landscape. Following close study of both the 1995 archaeological survey and my site visits, it is notable that the earthworks within which Dodleston Castle are sited form yet another, but larger, ring. Furthermore, two fields encircling the castle earthworks are named ‘The Ring’ on the nineteenth-century Tithe Map and Apportionment held at Chester, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS) (CALS, EDT 140/1 and /2, c. 1842; Figure 5). What seems to

be a concentric outer enceinte of closes has since been built over to a great extent, although respected by the curve of the by-road today (Clark 1889: 201; MacKenzie 1896: 170; King 1983, vol. 1: 67; Hartwell *et al.* 2011: 335; Figure 6). That field called ‘The Ring’ to the west of the castle site is now the site of houses (see Figure 7), and the church of St Mary’s is encapsulated to the east (Figures 5 and 6). The surrounding road probably once circled the whole of the ringwork, indicated by the presence of a holloway to the east of St Mary’s church, now a footpath, which runs towards the south-east of the castle site (Figure 6). ‘The Ring’ at Dodleston is a new observation, and could represent any one, or indeed all, of three features in the Welsh borderlands landscape. These will be considered briefly in turn.



Figure 7: View from the east of the south-west corner of the bailey earthworks at Dodleston Castle, with modern houses in the background, these having encroached upon the original line/earthworks of 'The Ring' (author's photograph)

First, fields called 'Ring' in the neighbouring county Lancashire, for instance, possibly refer to prehistoric circular enclosures, especially to stone circles (Field 1993: 214). This field-name is not unique in Cheshire. Also, within Atiscros Hundred, parallels could be drawn with Maen Achwyfan, Welsh for 'Cwyfan's stone', that is, the Irish St Kevin, which demonstrates influence from Ireland in this northern Anglo-Welsh border area. The stone is an in-situ Anglo-Scandinavian carved stone on the boundary of church lands, set within a circular enclosure, amidst Bronze Age barrows (Griffiths 2006; Edwards 2007: 366–371). Potential contextual evidence for a ritual or burial landscape in the liminal area of Dodleston supports this theory of an early enclosure. For instance, Gorstella, a hamlet within Dodleston, means a mound at gorse hill (Dodgson 1972: 159; see Figure 6), and in 1240, there is documentary mention of a *Hoga de kynarton* 'the mound of Kinnerton' within Dodleston parish; both would have been on the tidal estuary of the River Dee at this date (Dodgson 1972: 160). This observation is significant because crop-mark evidence of late prehistoric or Romano-British oval- or circular-ditched burial enclosures (and, therefore, indicative of former mounds) has been identified at three other similar topographical locations just to the east of the River Dee in medieval Cheshire, all lying on the slope of a low sandstone ridge overlooking the River Dee estuary: Puddington Lane, Burton, Wirral

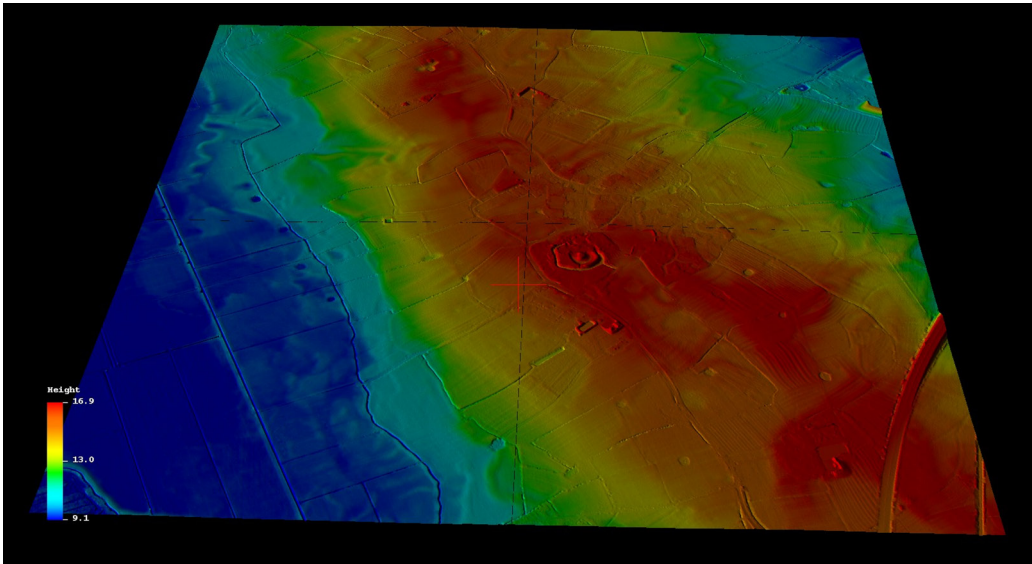


Figure 8: Dodleston Castle on bluff of land (earthworks to centre), with north at the top of the image. Environment Agency LiDAR DTM Height Exaggeration 2.0. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government License v3.0. © Rachel E. Swallow

(Gregory and Adams 2019: 1); Mill Hill Road, Irby, Wirral (Philpott and Adams 2010), and at Farndon in Cheshire (Swallow forthcoming). At all three locations, just as at Dodleston, the sites were well placed to take advantage of the Irish Sea Region’s communications corridor, with the pattern of long-term land use and settlement indicating that the burial enclosures formed part of a landscape more widely and extensively used for settlement and other activities (Philpott nd.; Gregory and Adams 2019: 61).

While there appears to be no further evidence to suggest that the toponymic-evidenced mounds at Dodleston were in fact representative of a prehistoric-to-Romano-British ritual or burial landscape, it is perhaps significant that a likely ceremonial palstave axe was found in about 2009 in Higher Kinnerton that dates from the Middle Bronze Age (1500–1150 BC) (Reavill 2009). However, Dodleston, in comparison to Maen Achwyfan, is missing a carved stone, the absence of which cannot provide evidence of one never having existed, of course.

Second, it is noted that circular and oval churchyards are known in both Wales and elsewhere in Cheshire. ‘The Ring’ at Dodleston, therefore, could refer to an early British or Irish curvilinear churchyard site. The curvilinear nature of ‘The Ring’, which sits on the ridge of compact clay to the west of the River Dee, indicates a probable pre-Anglo-Norman religious use of the site, and is akin to a Welsh or British *llan*-type church siting (Tait 1920–23, vol. 1: 122; Harris and Thacker 1987: 240; Figure 8). A *llan* was an enclosure in early medieval Wales, and indeed, Ireland, for a churchyard, church or monastery (Petts 2009: 123), but the word *llan* could also be used to describe an enclosed cemetery, not necessarily with an associated church structure (Petts 2009: 124).

The curvilinear nature of 'The Ring' is notably similar to that in west Cheshire, recently re-interpreted by this author, within the Anglo-Saxon royal vill of Farndon and its later medieval parish and Aldford Castle (Swallow forthcoming; Figure 4: Aldford Castle at no. 1). About 11 km to the south-east of Dodleston, Farndon's settlement pattern appears to date to the early medieval period: the circular churchyard wall surrounding St Chad's, which is in turn surrounded by a circular outer enclosure (delineated in part by the High Street), is all that remains of what appears to have been an important Anglo-Saxon minster site (Shaw and Clark 2003: 1). The dedication to St Chad is itself indicative of a site of early origin (Harris and Thacker 1987: 265, 269, 271). However, Farndon's concentric plan has been noted to be unique (Shaw and Clark 2003: 1): its closest parallels, it is argued, are 'Celtic' (or early Welsh/Irish) monastic sites and forms which grew from such centres of the wider administrative landscape (Shaw and Clark 2003: 1, referring to Irish archaeology, in Bradley 1990, fig. 2). This additional potential of an Irish link is perhaps indicative of the cross-period influence of Irish Sea Region cultures on the communication corridor of the Welsh borderlands, and this is an often-overlooked influence on the form and placing of the area's monuments (see Swallow forthcoming, for an attempt to redress this oversight).

Comparison with the 'Ring' at Dodleston, however, throws the previously interpreted uniqueness of a concentric plan at Farndon into doubt. The two circular features noted at Farndon certainly have a strong correlation with those newly noted at Dodleston: a ringwork castle, built within an outer 'Ring'. It could well be that the inner circular feature interpreted as a ringwork castle at Dodleston (Swallow 2014) denotes a primary pre-Anglo-Norman build, such as that suggested, for example, for the likely late-Anglo-Saxon ringwork of Sulgrave Castle, Castle Hill, Northamptonshire (e.g. Davison 1968).

Third, it may well be that Dodleston had been an Anglo-Saxon assembly site. This possibility is proposed in the light of the re-interpretation of the earthworks by this author, and has not been pointed to for any reason previously. The majority of tenth-century-dated administrative units of hundreds are named after their assembly sites in Cheshire, and Domesday Book is testament to this. Within this context, could it have been that Dodleston was the assembly site for Dudestan Hundred at the likely tenth-century introduction of the hundredal territorial units in the west of medieval Cheshire?

Dodleston is recorded in Domesday Book as being in Atiscros Hundred, rather than the similarly named Dudestan Hundred, as already noted. The spelling and pronunciation of the place-name of Dodleston at 1086 (*Dodestune*) coincides phonetically to some extent with the 'lost' Old English hundredal name, Dudestan, this latter perhaps deriving from *Dud(d)* (personal name) + *stān* ('stone') according to Dodgson (1972: 1). Despite this observation, Dodgson also states Dudestan Hundred to be 'meeting-place unknown' (Dodgson 1972: 1). The similar-sounding place-names of *Dodestune* and *Dudestan*, both at 1086, are thought to be no more than coincidence, however: the place-name of Dodleston is considered to have been formed of two elements *Dodles-tune* (see above), and this fact

alone would seem to rule out any direct association with the hundred place-name of *Dud(e)-stān* (Chris Lewis, pers. comm. April 2021).

That said, historical context would indicate that it is possible that Dodleston once belonged to Dudestan Hundred, and was divorced from the rest of that hundred, when King Edward granted Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, king of Gwynedd (1039–1064) all of Cheshire west of the River Dee in 1055–1056, as described in Domesday Book (Harris and Thacker 1987: 263). This land had in all likelihood belonged previously to Powys in Wales, before it was seized by the Mercians and held by the Bishop of Lichfield (Morgan 1978: 263a, 264b, 264a, 264b and 264b). Therefore, despite Cheshire later claiming back these lands from Gruffudd in 1064, the earlier transfer of Dodleston to Gruffudd's Atiscros Hundred was still evident – and unchanged – in Domesday Book's depiction of 1086. Dodleston appears to have lost any hundredal identity it might have once had, over about fifteen years or so of border fluctuation.

Archaeologically, too, it is proposed that Dodleston is a contender for a hundredal meeting place, due to its likely former placing within Dudestan Hundred. There is, in fact, no single archaeological signature for an Anglo-Saxon assembly site (Pantos 2004: 157; Baker 2014), although Meaney (1997) describes three categories of Anglo-Saxon hundredal meeting places. The first category is a 'natural meeting place, which includes fords, cross-roads and gaps for crossing ditches or dykes, and bridges' (Meaney 1997: 204; and see Figure 8 for Dodleston Castle's topographical location on a bluff in the landscape). All these features are present within Dodleston's immediate landscape, as I have already outlined.

The second category was for assembly places at naturally occurring landmarks, which included stones (Meaney 1997), possibly like the one at Maen Achwyfan, mentioned above. Notably, Dudestan Hundred means *Dud(d)* or Duda and *-stān* (meaning 'stone'), although, as has been seen, the *-tun(e)* in Dodleston means 'farm' or 'settlement'. Nevertheless, perhaps Dodleston had once possessed a standing stone within the Ring?

The third category of Anglo-Saxon assembly site is manmade structures, such as barrows, where similarities between hundredal meeting-places and pagan shrines existed, both in terms of location and their features (Meaney 1997). Dodleston's prehistoric landscape context of mounds has already been mentioned.

Indeed, Dodleston has a number of features of an assembly site: natural accessibility (Meaney 1997: 204; Pantos 2004: 157); liminality to territorial units (Gelling 1978: 209–214; Pantos 2003: 41 and 45) – these being Chester itself, Wilvestan, Exestan, Dudestan and Atiscros hundreds (Figure 3), notably all within the diocese of Lichfield at 1086 — and Dodleston also has visibility and views (Anderson 1934; Pantos 2002). As a crucial place of judicial, commercial and elite power in this border landscape, the location of Dodleston as a potential Anglo-Saxon assembly place just inside the major territorial boundaries of hundreds, indicates that it may have played a regional — and provincial,



Figure 9: Dodleston Castle motte-and-bailey earthworks, viewed from the west (author's photograph)

within the Irish Sea Region — role, rather than purely a local one (see also Pantos 2003: 47; 2004: 174). This is also important when taking into consideration Dodleston's proximity to a fluctuating border with Wales.

Therefore, given the contextual archaeological and wider landscape evidence, it is probable that the Ring dictated the form of the later Anglo-Norman castle. I suggest that Dodleston was initially a ringwork castle (and possible late eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon structure) built within the earlier outer earthworks of the Ring feature. Dodleston's original ringwork castle form makes it unique within both west Cheshire and what is now north-east Wales — with the notable exception of the Mercian and later Anglo-Norman earls' head manor at Hawarden, also situated to the west of the River Dee in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands area (Swallow 2016: 300, 309, 335); both Anglo-Norman castles were probably built upon prehistoric ringwork sites of significance.

While the conversion of a ringwork to a motte-and-bailey castle (the earthworks of the latter visible in Figure 9) was not unusual in England, the question now arises as to why Dodleston Castle's so-called bailey was rectilinear. The later-added raised corners of the sub-rectangle clearly protrude into the ditch of The Ring, indicating that the rectilinear build post-dates the Ring, so narrowing the ditch and weakening

its defensibility, particularly to the west (Figure 7). This so-called ‘unusual’ bailey appears to be unique within Cheshire to the east of the River Dee, although the form is concentrated in number to the west of the river in the Welsh borderlands, as I have shown (Swallow 2016). It therefore seems logical to not only look to England, but also to Wales for any comparison.

Beyond my own work (Swallow 2016), there does not appear to be any other study on rectilinear castle baileys in general. It is generally known, however, that prehistoric earthwork enclosures and stone-built Roman forts were reused in a military context for the defended settlements and fortifications of burhs during the Anglo-Saxon period (Reynolds 1999: 90). It has also been suggested that certain earthworks of this rectilinear type in Wales should be seen as royal centres of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which mimicked Mercian burhs (Musson and Spurgeon 1988; Laing 2006: 262). In fact, the primary builds of the rectilinear earthworks later used as Anglo-Norman castle baileys could have been Roman (as suggested recently, for example, for Tomen-y-Mur in Ardudwy, Gwynedd: Taylor 2019; and in the Welsh borderlands, for Longtown Castle in Herefordshire: Cook and Kidd 2020), and/or Welsh *llysoedd* (as, for example, at Hen Blas/Llys Edwin, Coleshill, notably also in Atiscros Hundred: Aberg 1985; Swallow 2016: 304, 331), as well as Anglo-Norman and beyond. It is significant that the majority of the rectilinear enclosures were in fact situated very close to the Anglo-Welsh border (Edwards 1997: 62), as are the rectilinear-bailey earthworks of Dodleston Castle.

While Manley (1991: 98) notes that such straight-sided enclosures were all located in Wales to the west of Atiscros Hundred, what does not appear to have been considered prior to my own work (Swallow 2016) is that these enclosures also existed within Atiscros Hundred in Cheshire, and, more specifically, predominantly on or to the east of the Mercian dykes. The subsequent reuse of rectilinear earthworks on the Anglo-Welsh border might have skewed the formal identification of an original rectilinear enclosure, and in turn, resulted in a skewed distribution pattern of rectilinear enclosures previously interpreted, probably incorrectly, as being concentrated to the west of the dykes in Wales (Swallow 2016).

By extending the temporal and spatial consideration of rectilinear earthworks being created and reused as castle baileys, there is a further historical and archaeological argument to be addressed: the potential existence of a castle at Dodleston could be pushed back from the first mention of 1277 to at least the 1140s, when we consider the influence on the medieval county of Cheshire of Madog ap Maredudd (d. 1160), *rex Powissensiu(m)*, the Powysian king (Pryce 2005: nos 480, 680). From the 1140s, Madog had made peace with both King Henry II and Ranulf II (de Gernon), fourth earl of Chester (1099–1153) (Crouch 1994; White 2004). This relationship probably ensured that Madog retained the lands he had gained in the Cheshire hundreds of Atiscros and Exestan on behalf of Powys, both situated to the west of the River Dee (Davies 1987: 4; Maund 2002: 103). It was under Madog that Powys attained its greatest extent, according to Madog’s court poet, Gwalchmai ap Meilyr, describing his realm as extending from the summit of Pumlumon to the gates of Chester, and from

the forested borders of Meirionnydd to the church of Bangor-is-Coed (Stephenson 2008a; 2008b; 2015a: 9; 2016: 23–24). Around the year 1300, the author of Breuddwyd Rhonabwy described the Powysian kingdom in the reign of Madog as having extended from Gwanan in the furthest uplands of Arwystli to Porffordd (Richards 1948: 1; Stephenson 2016: 23–24), the latter (Pulford) being just under 3km to the south-east of Dodleston.

The Middle Welsh prose tale *The Dream of Rhonabwy* was written around the year 1300 (Pryce 2005: 37; Stephenson 2016: 306–310), and it is generally accepted that the *Didlystwn* (or *Dillystwn trefan*) mentioned within the tale, of which Madog is described as being undisputed lord, was the Dudleston in the detached northern part of Oswestry in Shropshire (Richards 1948: 2, note 28). There is an obvious difference in the transcribed spelling of Dudleston in *The Dream of Rhonabwy* and Dodleston in Cheshire, although it is notable that Dodleston in Cheshire was spelled 'Dudleston' a few decades after the prose tale is thought to have been written around 1300 (Dodgson 1972: 156–157).

A coincidence of place-names alone cannot point to Dodleston in Cheshire having been within Madog's then recently acquired and extended Powysian territory, however, which did include the neighbouring castles of Erddig in Wrexham (Pipe Roll 1884: 6 Hen II, 26), Bromfield (also known as The Rofft) (Pratt 1992: 32), and Overton (Ormerod 1819, vol. 2: 848). While there are no extant earthworks for Overton to be examined, it is noted that the form of the rectilinear baileys of both Erddig and The Rofft point very strongly to a prehistoric hillfort or promontory fort origin (Swallow 2016). The contemporary twelfth-century poet, Gwalchmai ap Meilyr, however, certainly describes Madog as holding Powys to the gates of Chester (Lloyd 1939, vol. 2: 493; Caerwyn Williams and Lynch 1994: 73–76; Pryce 2005: 37; Stephenson 2008a; 2008b: 182), as mentioned above, which – while fully acknowledging the argument that the full extent of the boundaries of Powys had been augmented by Gwalchmai 'with only a little poetic license' (Davies 1982: 94, 99–102; Stephenson 2008a: 182; citation: Stephenson 2016: 39) – would nevertheless have firmly placed Dodleston in Cheshire within Madog's newly gained territory.

The argument for an inter-cultural and cross-period influence on the form of Dodleston Castle in Cheshire is clearly tentative. However, archaeological evidence certainly strengthens this possibility. Could it be significant, therefore, that the earthworks of Madog's royal seat at Mathrafal (excavated/surveyed in 1989: Arnold and Huggett 1995; Figure 10), 10 km west of Welshpool, Powys, can also be associated with similar phases of build as at Dodleston, albeit at dissimilar times, but with both sites reusing an earlier oval ditched enclosure? Certainly, Arnold and Huggett (1995) demonstrated that the earthwork mound at Mathrafal could be directly associated with the outer oval enclosure, where the former was also superseded by a rectilinear enclosure, just as at Dodleston. Mathrafal's sub-rectangular bailey is approximately 100 m square, compared to Dodleston's of approximately 125m square — and on the east edge for both, a motte of approximately the same height (4.7m against Dodleston's 3m). The construction of Mathrafal's rectilinear enclosure has been

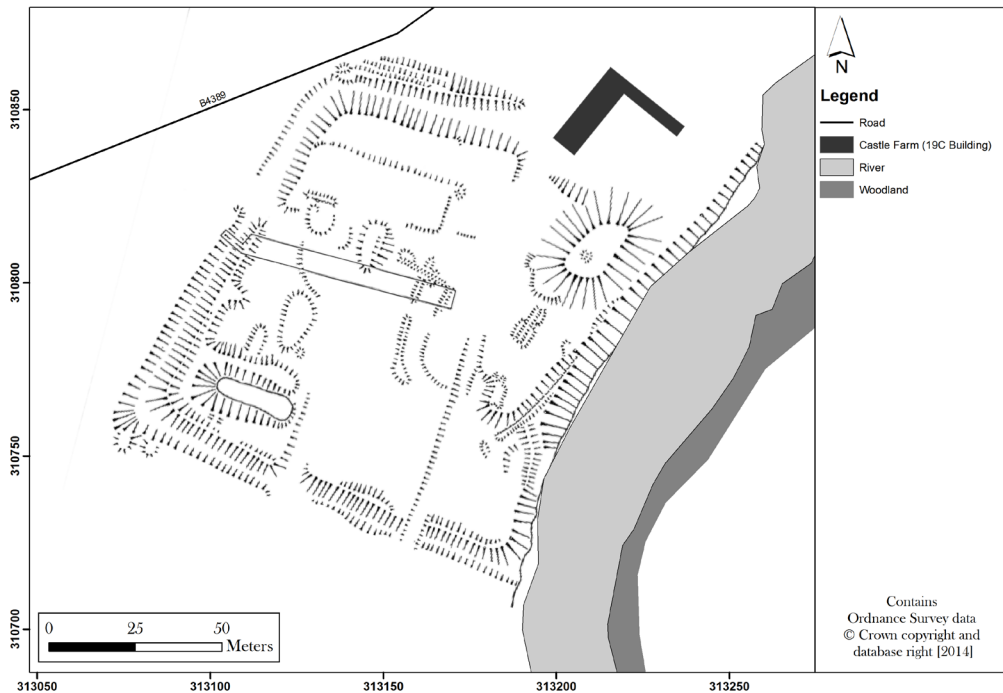


Figure 10: Mathrafal, after Arnold and Huggett 1995. Drawn by G. Duckers. © Rachel E. Swallow

dated to about 1200, which most likely post-dates Madog's death in 1160, and could well be connected with the re-building of Mathrafal carried out within a dozen years of that date, by Robert de Vieuxpont (Thomas 1955: 194–195); it is also highly probable that Mathrafal was built to create a (generally rectilinear-shaped) Welsh manorial/*llys* or Welsh court site after the levelling of the earlier bailey defences (Arnold and Huggett 1995).

It is also perhaps notable that the churches associated with Dodleston and Mathrafal castles were both dedicated to St Mary. Mathrafal is linked to the neighbouring church or *clas* of Meifod, which is described as almost certainly an early foundation. The church contains a cross-slab that was originally interpreted to date to the late ninth or tenth century (Arnold and Huggett 1995: 63; Edwards 2007: 443–446, 467–468), and more recently to the late eleventh or early twelfth century (Stephenson 2015b; Stephenson 2016: 54, 264); it would certainly have been in existence during Madog's lifetime. The church at Meifod was originally dedicated to Gwyddfarch and Tysilio, with Madog's (re-)building creating an improved church with an additional dedication to Mary, or an additional church with a Marian dedication, which Madog consecrated in 1156 (Stephenson 2015b). This clearly indicates the royal importance of neighbouring Mathrafal court to Madog at this time. Madog was buried at the church in 1160 (Stephenson 2016: 58), and it is said that it was the burial-place of kings (Stephenson 2016: 223, n. 45). The link between the outer rings of the two sites of Mathrafal and Dodleston castles, therefore, and with their churches dedicated

to St Mary, at the very least points to inter-cultural and cross-period influences of the form and placing of elite buildings along the northern Anglo-Welsh border.

In this article, I have proposed the new classification — and so a new interpretation — for the initial build of Dodleston Castle in Cheshire: it is a ringwork castle probably built within a possible early medieval-founded assembly site within either Dudestan, or Atiscros, Hundred. We lost the eleventh-century hundredal meeting place of Dudestan, I argue, because of the political shifts of territory in the landscape prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in about 1070. Dodleston may well have assumed a place of continued cross-cultural secular, ritual and religious significance within fluctuating borderland territory, evidenced in the palimpsest of its earthworks today. I have also noted that Dodleston Castle's sub-rectangular bailey is similar to castle earthworks along the northern Anglo-Welsh border, which likely reused sites of former significance and memory within a cultural zone of movement of trade centred on the River Dee, Chester and the Irish Sea Region. Place-name evidence is tenuous, in terms of corroborating this new interpretation. However, archaeological and landscape evidence at both Dodleston and Mathrafal castles is undoubtedly testament to a marriage of cultures and shifting borders in the early medieval northern Anglo-Welsh borderlands east of the three dykes of Whitford, Wat's and Offa's. The shift in interpretation presented here indicates the value, I believe, of ongoing interdisciplinary and cross-period research raising many interesting avenues of enquiry along the entire context of the early medieval Anglo-Welsh border; a cross-period research methodology is vital to examine the wider geopolitical and spatial context of a castle, to better understand its form, placing and purpose.

Acknowledgements

With particular thanks to Dr Ben Guy and the chapter's two anonymous peer reviewers for their valuable comments on this paper, and to Dr Chris Lewis for his significant contribution to my understanding of the place-name Dodleston as it appears in the Domesday Survey.

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