

A CROSS-BORDER CAREER: GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS BETWEEN  
WALES AND ENGLAND

Norman conquest and settlement in Britain perpetuated and intensified Anglo-Welsh warfare, an aspect of Anglo-Welsh relations amply attested from the seventh century onwards. But Norman ambition resulted in more than the continuation of cross-border troop movements: it also led to the creation of new links between Wales and England. This was true in two respects in particular. The first concerned secular landholding. Norman lords held estates both in Wales and in England (as well as, in some cases, Normandy).<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, it was on a journey from England, where he held the substantial honour of Clare in Suffolk, to his lands in Ceredigion in west Wales, granted him by King Henry I, that Richard fitz Gilbert was ambushed and killed by the Welsh in the vicinity of Abergavenny in April 1136.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, from the late eleventh century some members of native Welsh princely dynasties were granted estates by English lords or kings in the border counties of England, although such cross-border landholding was insignificant by comparison with that of members of the Scottish royal family and aristocracy.<sup>3</sup> Second, the subordination of the Welsh bishoprics to the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury and the establishment of Benedictine priories and cells dependent on English monasteries forged closer ecclesiastical ties than had existed before 1066.<sup>4</sup> These connections, together with others they brought in their wake—notably a quickening of trade—increased the opportuni-

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales 1063-1415*, Oxford 1987, pp. 84-5; I. W. Rowlands, *The Making of the March: Aspects of the Norman Settlement in Dyfed*, in: R. Allen Brown (ed.), *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, III, 1980, Woodbridge 1981, pp. 144-5, 148-50. For land held by Giraldus's father in Devon, see below, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Brewer, James F. Dimock and George F. Warner (eds.), *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, 8 vols. (Rolls Series), London 1861-91, 6 pp. 47-8. Henceforth *Giraldus, Opera*.

<sup>3</sup> For Welsh examples, see J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 3rd edn, 2 vols., London 1939, 2 pp. 398, 496, 553, 616-17; below, pp. 49-50. For Scotland, see K. J. Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon 1152-1219*, Edinburgh 1985, pp. 177-211. Cf. also Robin Frame, *Aristocracies and the Political Configuration of the British Isles*, in: R. R. Davies (ed.), *The British Isles 1100-1500*, Edinburgh 1988, pp. 144-6, 150-2; R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 54-5.

<sup>4</sup> Davies, *Conquest* (as n. 1) pp. 179-94.