

King John, the Braoses, and the Celtic Fringe, 1207–1216*

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In 1210, King John led to Ireland an army that consisted of the feudal levy of England, mercenary knights from Flanders, and a large force of serjeants and crossbowmen, supported in the course of the campaign by some seven hundred ships. Money paid out for the ships totalled over £3,800, while wages for the crossbowmen and serjeants topped £2,380.¹ The 1210 Irish expedition was an impressive operation and showed Angevin government at its most effective. Modern historians, needless to say, have been impressed by the organisation and scale of the undertaking. What makes John's Irish campaign not only impressive but terrifying was that, in one sense, it was all done to hunt down one man and his family.

The destruction of the house of Braose is one of the most important events of King John's reign. Indeed, Sidney Painter described the quarrel between John and William de Braose as "the greatest mistake John made during his reign," as the king revealed to his barons once and for all his capacity for cruelty.² The reasons for this quarrel will never be determined with complete certainty, but our best chance of an understanding depends upon placing the quarrel in as full a context as possible. The destruction of the house of Braose is instructive in that it shows how a determined Angevin king could destroy one of his greatest supporters. Beyond that, it also is an important event, because John's severity was a cause of later baronial distrust of the king, and because the elimination of the Braoses created a power-vacuum along the March, drawing in the Crown and leading to the short-lived triumph of 1211 in Wales and its reversal at the hands of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth in 1212, a reversal which was quite damaging to the king in the years immediately preceding the baronial rebellion of 1215. Royal policy in Wales was forced to change after the removal of the Braoses in 1208 and the repercussions of that policy were felt beyond the western part of the British Isles.

To establish the context of the quarrel between King John and William de Braose it is necessary to look at the March of Wales in the reigns of John's

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¹Stephen D. Church, "The 1210 Campaign in Ireland: Evidence for a Military Revolution?," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 20 (1998): 51.

²Sidney Painter, *The Reign of King John* (Baltimore, 1949), pp. 249–50.

father and brother. The historical consensus has been that, after his expeditions into Wales and his decision to invade Ireland in 1171, Henry II established a detente with the paramount Welsh prince, Rhys ap Gruffudd, "the Lord Rhys" (d. 1197).³ This detente, in turn, largely closed off the frontier along the March and on the whole effectively halted Marcher expansion. Indeed, on Henry's return from Ireland in 1172 the English king made Rhys his "justice of south Wales," a somewhat ambiguous title but one that W.L. Warren thought made the Welsh prince "a sort of royal proconsul in the south."⁴ This is not to say that conflict between Welsh and Marchers ceased, as the massacre of a Welsh chieftain and his family by the men of William III de Braose at Abergavenny in 1175 shows.⁵ Despite ambushes and vendettas, the scale of conflict was much reduced in the latter part of Henry II's reign, and Marcher lords such as Hugh II de Lacy, lord of Weobley and Ewyas Lacy, turned their attentions to Ireland.

The accession of Richard I to the throne in 1189 heralded a re-opening of the frontier along the March. John Gillingham has recently exculpated Richard from blame for the escalation of conflict along the March in the 1190s, and his argument is persuasive.⁶ Richard's statesmanship aside, what matters is that the general detente of the 1170s and 1180s was at an end. The Crown lost control over the Marcher lords. In the mid-1190s two men in the Middle March took particular advantage of this loss of control, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore and William de Braose, lord of Radnor, Brecon, and Abergavenny in the March. Both men returned to the long-held ambitions of their families, Mortimer launching a drive into Maelienydd while Braose turned to the conquest of Elfael. This activity culminated in the Lord Rhys's last great victory, the crushing in open battle of the army of Roger de Mortimer and Hugh de Sai at Radnor in 1196.

1189 was important for Marcher affairs in another way, for it marked the introduction to the area of the king's brother John, count of Mortain. When Richard I left England on crusade in 1190, John was given a large landed settlement, consisting of the fiefs that he already held, confirmation of his status as lord of Ireland, and a grant of the honour of Lancaster as well as six counties (Nottingham and Derby, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall). Richard originally meant to physically exclude his brother from the kingdom, but his mother Eleanor intervened and convinced the king to release John from the oath. Most

³See W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), pp. 165–69; R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest. Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 289–92.

⁴Warren, *Henry II*, p. 167.

⁵Sir John Lloyd, *A History of Wales*, 2 vols. (London, 1911), 2: 547–48.

⁶John Gillingham, "Henry II, Richard I and the Lord Rhys," *Peritia* 10 (1996): 225–36.

important to the perspective of this article is John's marriage on 29 August 1189 to Isabelle of Gloucester, heiress to the earldom of Gloucester and the lordship of Glamorgan, which made John a Marcher lord.

John already had brief experience of Marcher affairs, having presumably passed through south Wales on his way to Ireland in 1185, and having also been sent with an army following Richard's coronation to deal with the Lord Rhys. As it was, John preferred to make a deal rather than fight with the Welsh leader, and Sir John Lloyd has speculated that the reason for John's inactivity against the Welsh was his concern with his position in England while Richard was on Crusade.⁷ If this speculation is correct, John was looking in any struggle for power partly to fight from his corner in the March. At this time John began to make ties with local men and it is possible to trace some of these connections, which are apparent later in his own reign, to the period of crisis during Richard I's absence in the early 1190s. These early ties help to explain the behavior of local men during the crisis of 1208–10.

The first of these connections was with the Mortimers. According to Richard of Devizes, the conflict between John and Richard's chancellor William Longchamp began when Gerard de Camville did homage to John for Lincoln Castle in early summer 1191. Lincoln Castle was promptly invested, and at the same time Longchamp marched immediately against Wigmore Castle, the Mortimer *caput*.⁸ Richard of Devizes states that Roger de Mortimer was charged with forming a conspiracy with the Welsh against the king and forced into a three-years' exile. The chronicler definitely sees Mortimer as one of John's accomplices, and says that he was blamed by his fellow conspirators for "faintness of heart" (*cordis inopia*). As it was, Mortimer's exile seems to have lasted less than three-years' time, as the account for the defence of Swansea Castle rendered by William Marshal to the exchequer at Michaelmas 1193 has an entry for 10 marks paid to Roger *per breve Regis*.⁹ It should be noted that Roger de Mortimer, despite his son being married to a Braose daughter, would stand to the side in the later crisis between William de Braose and John, and indeed would send knights to serve with the king in Ireland.

It is also possible that Matthew de Gamages, a knight of local importance in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, was also in league with John. Matthew's lands in Herefordshire and Shropshire were taken into the king's hands in the spring of 1194, and were not restored to him until mid-1197.¹⁰ It is tempting

⁷Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2: 575.

⁸*The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First*, ed. with trans. by J. T. Appleby (London, 1963), pp. 30–31.

⁹*Pipe Roll 5 Richard I*, p. 148. All pipe rolls cited are published under various editors by the Pipe Roll Society.

¹⁰Roll of escheats, *Pipe Roll 6 Richard I*, p. 5; *Pipe Roll 9 Richard I*, p. 194.

to associate this forfeiture with John's scheming in 1193. Matthew's younger brother, William, was later to be a knight of King John's household and would serve in Ireland in 1210. It is reasonable to suppose that the family connection dates from the support of his brother Matthew for the rebellious count of Mortain in the early 1190s.¹¹

Finally, William de Braose appears in the witness list of a confirmation of John's as count of Mortain to Margam Abbey of land in Kenfig, dated 4 March 1193 at Cardiff.¹² It is not at all certain whether this William was William III or his son, also named William and often referred to as William *juvenis*. This is, however, the first indication of a link between John and the Braoses.

King Richard, or his chancellor, also interfered in matters in the region, no doubt causing some hard feelings. John would later capitalise on these feelings. Walter I de Clifford, lord of Clifford and Cantref Selyf in Brecon, died in 1190. His heir was Walter II, but Walter II's brother Richard gained control of the family's Shropshire manors of Corfham, Culmington, Clive, and the hay of Ernestou, in return for a 300 mark fine.¹³ The Shropshire antiquarian R. W. Eyton speculated that the reason for the acceptance of Richard de Clifford's proffer lay in King Richard's desire for vengeance upon the Clifford heir, for Walter and Richard de Clifford's sister was the famous Rosamund.¹⁴ The Shropshire manors were an acquisition of the brothers' father, however, so it was within feudal custom for him to settle them upon his younger son. The resulting dispute between the two brothers was re-opened upon John's accession to the throne, when the new king granted the Shropshire manors to Walter in a charter dated at Cambrai on 3 August 1199.¹⁵ This is a very curious charter, as it treats Walter as the heir of Richard, as if Richard were dead. Eyton speculated that there were two Richards, but there is no evidence to support this theory. Richard brought suit against Walter for the lands the following year, with the two men reaching a final concord in Michaelmas 1200.¹⁶ Walter kept the Shropshire manors in return for the grant of the manor of Frampton in Gloucestershire for the service of one knight. Walter paid 300 marks for royal confirmation of his

¹¹Stephen D. Church, "The Knights of the Household of King John: A Question of Numbers," in *Thirteenth Century England IV. Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1991*, eds. Peter Coss and Simon Lloyd (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1992), p. 165.

¹²Robert Patterson, ed., *Earldom of Gloucester Charters* (Oxford, 1973), p. 127 #138.

¹³*Pipe Roll 2 Richard I*, p. 126.

¹⁴R. W. Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire* (London, 1857), 5: 151–52.

¹⁵*Rotuli Chartarum 1199–1216*, ed. T. D. Hardy (Record Commission, 1837) p. 8 (hereafter cited as *Rot. Chart*).

¹⁶*Rotuli Curiae Regis 1194–9*, 2 vols., ed. F. Palgrave (London, 1835) 2: 159, 171 (hereafter cited as *Rot. Curiae Regis*); final concord, P.R.O., CP 25(1)/193/2 #27.

possession of the Shropshire manors.¹⁷ By granting the Shropshire manors to Walter and perhaps getting the parties to reach an agreement, King John secured Walter de Clifford's loyalty. Walter de Clifford (or his son) would serve in Ireland, and his son Walter III would be sheriff of Hereford for a time during the civil war (1215). Walter III and his brother Roger were also knights of the royal household.¹⁸

Upon John's accession to the throne, however, his greatest friend in the Middle March and south Wales was William III de Braose. In 1199 William was lord of the rape of Bramber in Sussex and of the Marcher lordships of Radnor, Builth, Brecon, and Abergavenny. In Normandy Braose held a barony centered on the *caput* of Briouze between Falaise and Domfront on Orne, which accounted for three knights' service in 1172.¹⁹ William and John were both active on the continent in the latter years of Richard I's reign, and their relationship seems to have strengthened in these years. William almost certainly played a role in John's elevation to the throne, having been present at Chalus when Richard I died.²⁰ The Margam Annals credit William and his accomplices with placing John on the throne.²¹ He correspondingly did well for himself and his family under the new king. In 1200 his son Giles was made bishop of Hereford, with its fees and the castle of Bishop's Castle in southern Shropshire. That same year William was given permission by the king to add as much land to his barony of Radnor as he could at the expense of the Welsh.²² In January 1201, in return for a 5,000 mark fine, William was granted the honour of Limerick in Ireland, excepting the city of Limerick and the land of William de Burgh. In 1202 William gained the custody of the Beauchamp barony of Elmley in Worcestershire, and more significantly, the custody of the Marcher lordships of Glamorgan and Gower.²³ As a result of these grants, by the end of 1202 William de Braose and his family controlled a remarkably solid and extensive block of land stretching from southern Shropshire to the Gower peninsula, a block broken

¹⁷*Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 76.

¹⁸Church, "The Knights of the Household of King John," p. 163.

¹⁹*Red Book of the Exchequer*, 3 vols., ed. H. Hall (Rolls Series, 1896), 2: 631. (hereafter cited as *RBE*).

²⁰*Margam annals in Annales Monastici*, 5 vols., ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1864–69), 1: 24.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Rot. Chart.*, p. 66.

²³*Pipe Roll 4 John*, p. 20; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium 1201–16*, ed. T. D. Hardy (Record Commission, 1835), p. 19b (hereafter cited as *Rot. Litt. Pat.*).

only by the Marshal lands in Netherwent. William was now also a major baron in Ireland.

Yet, by 1208 the relationship between John and William had soured. According to Roger Wendover, it was the king's fear of baronial rebellion after the proclamation of the interdict on 24 March 1208, and his subsequent demand for hostages, that led to the rupture between the two men.²⁴ For in 1202 William had captured Arthur of Brittany at Mirebeau and turned him over to the king; William very likely knew that the prince would be killed.²⁵ Thus, Wendover had William's formidable wife Maud turn away the king's men who had come to take her son hostage. She rashly accused the king of having "basely murdered" his nephew, "whom he ought honorably to have kept."²⁶ This was Wendover's explanation for the root of the quarrel. Leaving aside the usual reservations about Wendover, there is reason to see more than a bit of truth to this, as the king's starving to death of Maud and her son William after their capture in 1210 certainly indicates the level of John's animosity, if not fury.

F. M. Powicke, relying on Wendover along with the Margam annals and French royal chronicles, believed that William de Braose's knowledge of Arthur of Brittany's fate, and his wife's threat to divulge that knowledge, was the cause of the downfall of the Braoses.²⁷ But the idea that John moved against the Braoses because Maud threatened to reveal the king's murder of Arthur of Brittany is far-fetched. The disappearance of Arthur must have raised much speculation as to his fate, and the conclusions to be drawn were obvious. Philip Augustus certainly seems to have drawn this conclusion by 1204, meeting John's request for a truce with the request to produce Arthur. Arthur's Breton subjects had also believed him dead. Most of the English baronage must have assumed the same. Those asked, including Robert de Vieuxpont, who had been keeper of Rouen when Arthur was imprisoned there, handed over hostages to the king in 1208.²⁸ So why persecute the Braose family in 1208 to protect what was an open secret?

Sidney Painter saw the events of 1207 to 1210 in terms of John's distrustful nature and a sense of *realpolitik* on the part of the king. According to Painter, the build-up of Braose early in the reign made him a counterweight in the March to that most powerful earl, Ranulf of Chester.²⁹ Because of inheritance disputes

²⁴Although J. C. Holt notes that Wendover's account of a general demand for hostages seems muddled' and is supported by little evidence (Holt, *Magna Carta*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge, 1992], p. 82 n.35).

²⁵Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Series, 1875), pp. 137–38.

²⁶Roger of Wendover, *Chronica*, 3 vols., ed. H. G. Hewlett (Rolls Series, 1886–89), 2: 48–49.

²⁷F. M. Powicke, *The Fall of Normandy* (Manchester, 1913), pp. 467–71.

²⁸For Vieuxpont, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 89b.

²⁹Painter, *Reign of King John*, pp. 25–29.

(over the Roumar inheritance and the honour of Richmond), Chester was in royal disfavor from 1199 until a rapprochement was effected in 1205 (one month after the death of Robert earl of Leicester, to whom Richmond had been awarded); afterwards, Ranulf was to be steadfastly loyal to the king. Thus, after 1205 the need for Braose as a counterweight on the March was lessened.³⁰ Also, this strategy of balancing the two men seems to have caused the king as many problems as it solved. The aims of Braose and Chester in Wales ran directly counter to each other.³¹ Chester's expansion in north Wales was opposed by the princes of Gwynedd, while further south the house of Braose threatened the rulers of Powys and the princelings of south Wales. Therefore it was natural for the two men to seek alliances with the other's enemies in an attempt to play the Welsh against each other. By 14 December 1204 the king had to order a partial distraint upon Ranulf's lands in England and the arrest of any vassals performing him service because Ranulf was allied with Gwenwynwyn of Powys, who had been engaged in a war with the Braoses since late 1202.³² According to Painter, by 1205 William de Braose was too powerful (albeit through the king's favor), and this worked on John's paranoid nature.

W. L. Warren widened the scope of explanation by focusing on Ireland.³³ Warren felt that the loss of Norman estates in 1204 by the Braose, Lacy, and Marshal families led to an increased exploitation of their Irish lands. This exploitation threatened royal policy in Ireland, which relied on the fair treatment of and cooperation with the native Irish. "There were to be no private baronial empires" in Ireland.³⁴ Thus, "John's expedition of 1210 had the two-fold objective of putting the barons in their place and recovering the confidence of the Irish."³⁵ Against this interpretation should be set Sean Duffy's reappraisal of John's 1210 expedition, in which he has shown that John's demand for hostages led to a quick breakdown in relations with the Irish kings.³⁶ In 1210 the king

³⁰Mr. Richard Eales has pointed out to this writer that John's policies in South Wales must have been shaped in relation to Cheshire, where it seems the period 1205–15 was a "critical period" in the formation of the liberties of the later palatinate.

³¹For a differing interpretation see Ifor W. Rowlands, "King John and Wales," in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1999), pp. 275–76. Rowlands sees Chester's real interests as lying elsewhere than along the March. He does, however, brush over the royal order to distraint of 1204, mentioned below. This writ seems to indicate that Chester was up to more than mere "overtures to Gwenwynwyn of Powys" in that year.

³²*Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum 1204–27*, ed. T. D. Hardy (Record Commission, 1833–44), 1: 16 (hereafter cited as *Rot. Litt. Claus.*).

³³W. L. Warren, "The Historian as Private Eye," *Historical Studies* 9 (1974): 1–18.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁶Sean Duffy, "King John's expedition to Ireland, 1210: the evidence reconsidered," *Irish Historical Studies* 30, 117 (May 1996): 1–24.

seems not to have treated the native Irish much better than he did the Anglo-Irish.

There is one other explanation for the king's feud with William de Braose—that made by John himself in a document of 1212.³⁷ In this explanation, John makes it clear that the cause of the dispute was William's tardiness in paying the fine of 5,000 marks which he had made in January 1201 for Limerick. William was indeed delinquent in meeting the terms of his fine; the payments were set at 1,000 marks per annum. William had afterwards received the city of Limerick, which had been excluded from the original grant, for a farm of 100 marks. William had fallen well behind in accounting for the farm of the city as well. John thus portrays his actions against Braose as an action for debt, *secundum consuetudinem regni et per legem scaccarii*. Distrainment was a common Angevin weapon and had been used by John's father and brother before him. Everything that unfolded followed from William's resistance to distrainment. But while many of the details of John's account for the events of 1208 and 1209 can be verified, the initial statement that William removed his English chattels beyond the reach of royal officials beggars belief. Because this is the justification for proceeding to move against William's Welsh chattels, the dubiousness of the first element critically undermines the veracity of what follows, in intention if not fact. It should also be noted that where John mentions the demand for two sons of William de Braose the younger and one son of his brother Reginald, he does not mention the demand for the Braose heir himself, William the younger. This is a crucial omission, as shall be seen.

Stopping for a moment to examine John's *apologia* in the larger context of the financial pressures of his reign also raises a few questions. Holt accepted John's explanation: "the King sacrificed him [William] on the altar of his new financial policies."³⁸ An arbitrary law of the exchequer was used to strike fear into the king's baronial debtors. If viewed from the perspective of Magna Carta with its emphasis on due process, Holt's view makes sense, but he seems to have predated John's financial ruthlessness. T. K. Keefe, by studying proffers for heirs and heiresses, their terms, and the rates of their payment, has shown that while magnate indebtedness increased 380% in the first eight years of John's reign, this was not indicative of John's squeezing his barons.³⁹ The Exchequer

³⁷*Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et cuiusunque generis acta publica*, ed. T. Rymer. Revised ed. by A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Coley, 4 vols. in 7 parts (Record Commission, 1816–69), 1: 108–09. The inclusion of this document in both the Red and Black Books of the Exchequer may be explained by the fact that John's justification, citing the law of the exchequer, was a precedent *par excellence* for future distraints for debt against barons.

³⁸J. C. Holt, *The Northerners* (Oxford, 1961, reprinted 1992), p. 185.

³⁹Thomas K. Keefe, "Proffers for Heirs and Heiresses in the Pipe Rolls: Some Observations on Indebtedness in the Years Before the Magna Carta (1180–1212)," *Haskins Society Journal* 5 (1996): 103–04.

did not try to increase revenue by accelerating payments, for yearly terms and length of pay-off increased little, and inflation negated the increase in levels of proffers and payments. Keefe does not see a change in royal financial policy towards the barons until 1211, when "John foolishly turned patronage management into a weapon."⁴⁰ This is not to say that the attack on Braose could not have been a one-off act of financial policy, only that it does not fit the pattern of the middle years of the reign.

Keefe's findings accord well with the plans of 1211–1212 for a new scutage, a development which Holt pointed to as a prime motivator for the abortive baronial rebellion of 1212.⁴¹ An additional point is that John in the period 1205–1208, did not squeeze the counties either, as he appointed *curiales* as sheriffs at the old county farms for reasons of security, abandoning the custodial experiment of the previous few years.⁴² If John was making a financial example of William de Braose, he did not take advantage of it. Indeed, the king went to much expense to eliminate the Braoses; he appears not to have been a cost-efficient debt-collector. John's explanation, issued well after the fact and at a time of political crisis, must be seen as an impressive example of early-thirteenth-century spin.

There are, however, important elements of truth in Wendover, Painter, and Warren's explanations. Wendover stresses personalities and the issue of hostages; Painter, John's distrust of his barons and the need to prune Braose's power; Warren enlarges the context to include Normandy and Ireland. But, Wendover seems unaware of the territorial implications of Braose's destruction, given the vast lands that came into royal custody as a result. Painter's solid explanation likewise seems to ignore the results of the feud beyond the blackening of John's reputation. Warren, focused on Ireland, ignores Wales and thus William de Braose from 1206 to 1209.

King John was concerned with the structure of power in the west of the British Isles after the fall of Normandy. This is not to say that he was Edward I; his foremost goal was always the reconquest of his continental lands. But, after the loss of Normandy, John was distrustful of the Marshal after that great lord had cut a deal with Philip Augustus in order to retain his Norman lands and then shown a lack of support for the Poitevin expedition of 1205. This distrust extended to the English baronage as a whole. Defeat in war was always the greatest political danger to a king. If disaffection were to become rebellion,

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴¹Holt, *The Northerners*, p. 81 n. 1.

⁴²For the argument that shrieval appointments of these years were related to security, see D. A. Carpenter, "The decline of the curial sheriff in England, 1194–1258," *English Historical Review* 41 (1976): 1–32.

it would be most dangerous if it arose along the Celtic fringe, particularly the Welsh March. Revolts had occurred in the region in 1075 (Roger earl of Hereford, son of William fitz Osbern), in 1087–88 (Roger de Montgomery, Ralph de Mortimer, Roger de Lacy, other Marchers), and in 1095 (Roger de Lacy, with Welsh troops). During Stephen's reign the Marchers and Welsh had reached a *modus vivendi* in 1137, and Miles of Gloucester's defection to the Angevins in 1139 solidified control of the area for the Empress.⁴³ John himself had experience of the usefulness of the March to the potential rebel. The reasons for that usefulness were simple: the honours were compact blocks of land and feudal control was still strong, a military frontier meant that tenants who held by military service were still soldiers, and alliance with Welsh princes would bring troops as well (one thinks of the role played by the Welsh contingent at Lincoln in 1141). By 1206 John may very well have had reason to regret his handling of affairs in the west.

This does not mean that John had a coherent strategy from the beginning for cutting down to size the barons of the March and Ireland. He seems to have moved cautiously, picking his opportunities. In Easter term 1206, the *curialis* Peter fitz Herbert brought a suit *coram rege* against William de Braose for a third of the lordship of Brecon; although this was not made clear in the record of the suit, Peter's claim was through his mother, who was descended from Miles of Gloucester.⁴⁴ For the time being the king stayed the decision of the court in this action, but the timing of the suit and the fact that it was brought by someone close to the king raises suspicion that John was involved. John at times used the *curia regis* to harass his magnates in such a fashion, one example being the suit of the earl of Salisbury against the suspect Henry de Bohun, earl of Hereford, over the honour of Trowbridge in 1212.⁴⁵

More significantly, in February 1207 Braose was stripped of his custody of Glamorgan and was replaced by the redoubtable mercenary commander Falkes de Bréauté.⁴⁶ Then the tide of royal harassment moved to Ireland, as the king's justiciar, Meiler fitz Henry, waged war on the followers of the Marshal and the Lacys during 1207. John was, however, not entirely successful in this, as Meiler was defeated and captured by Hugh de Lacy. Meiler was phased out of office,

⁴³See David Crouch, "The March and the Welsh Kings," in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Edmund King (Oxford, 1994), pp. 276–80.

⁴⁴*Curia Regis Rolls*, ed. C. T. Flower, et al., (London, 1923–), 4: 98–99 (hereafter cited as *CRR*); for Peter fitz Herbert's descent from Miles of Gloucester, see David Walker, "The 'Honour' of the Earls of Hereford in the Twelfth Century," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 79, pt. 2 (1960): 192–93.

⁴⁵*CRR*, 6: 270, 330; for comment, see B. W. Holden, "The Balance of Patronage: King John and the Earl of Salisbury," *Haskins Society Journal* 8 (1999): 87.

⁴⁶*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 68.

but the terms on which the Irish barons held their lands of the Crown were redefined to the advantage of the king. By 1208, the campaign of harassment was turned to the Welsh March and William de Braose. The Marshal had already been stripped of the shrievalty of Gloucestershire on 21 April 1207, and on 5 January 1208 another mercenary commander, Gerard d'Athée, was placed in that office.⁴⁷ The demand for hostages made in spring 1208 came at a very strained time.

It was a particularly sensitive demand to make of William de Braose, for, as demonstrated by Ifor Rowlands, in all likelihood Braose had demised part, if not all, of his English and Welsh lands onto his eldest son, William the younger, by 1203 at the latest.⁴⁸ It was customary for the young sons of Marcher lords to assume some degree of responsibility in the March as a way of preparing them for entry into a violent inheritance. In this case, the evidence for a more formal arrangement is compelling. The demise from Braose father to son was remembered in a now lost cartulary of Neath Abbey in Glamorgan, a house patronized by the Braoses.⁴⁹ Also, the *Chronica de Wallia* refers to the death in 1210 of Maud de Braose and *Willielmus iunior, dominus de Brecheniauc*.⁵⁰

A charter to Brecon Priory refers to William the younger as the lord of the grantor (*domini mei*), with the grant being made at his request. Although the editor of the cartulary believes this to be a reference to William V de Braose (d. 1230), the witness list argues against this dating. William de Waldeboef, a Brecon tenant, is a witness, but he died before 1211, when the scutage return for the forfeited lordship lists his three knights' fees as being held by his "heir."⁵¹ John de Waldeboef had replaced William in a charter of Robert le Wafre, another Brecon tenant, witnessed in the court of Reginald de Braose and dated 1215x1217.⁵² The return for 1243 shows that John de Waldeboef was the holder of William de Waldeboef's lands in Herefordshire, which were held of the honour of Brecon.⁵³

⁴⁷Ibid, pp. 71 (castle), 75 (shrievalty) to Richard de Mucegros, 78b, transfer to Gerard d'Athée.

⁴⁸Ifor W. Rowlands, "William de Braose and the Lordship of Brecon," *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30, pts. 1-2 (1982-83): 123-33 (hereafter cited as BBCS).

⁴⁹F. R. Lewis, "A History of the Lordship of Gower from the Missing Cartulary of Neath," *BBCS* 9 (1937-9): 151.

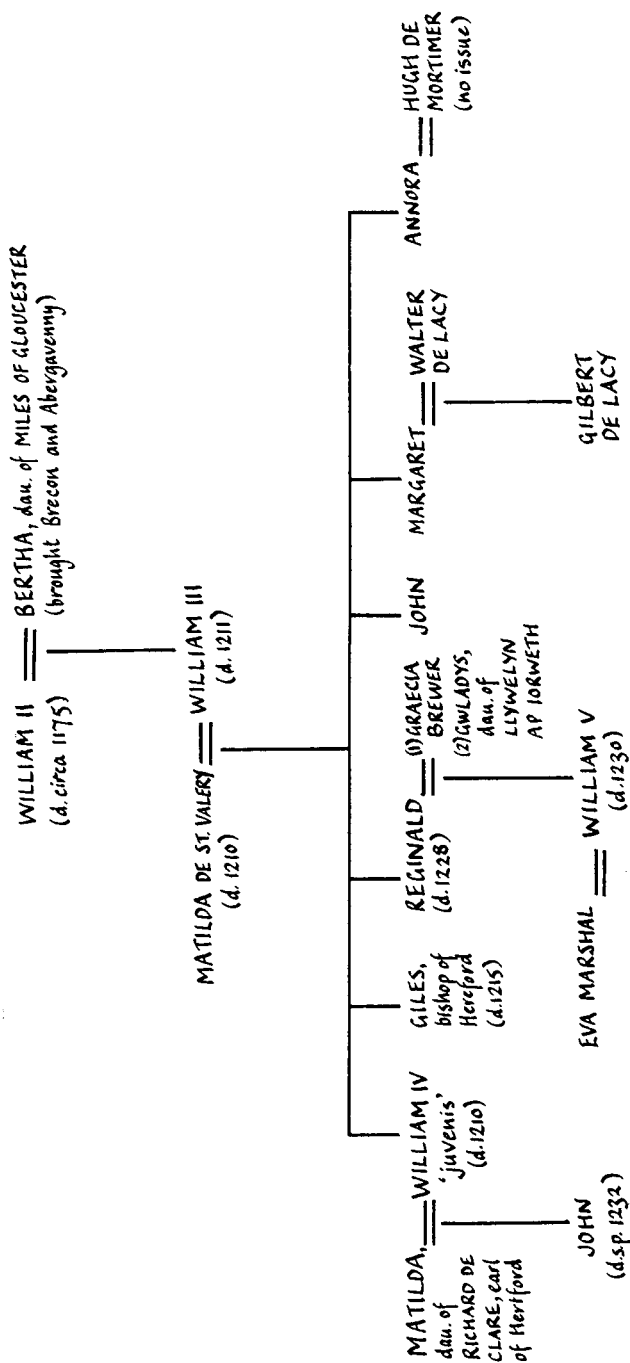
⁵⁰"*Chronica de Wallia*," ed. T. Jones, *BBCS* 12 pts. 1-3 (Nov. 1946): 277-44, s.a. 1209 (*recte* 1210).

⁵¹*RBE*, p. 601.

⁵²"*Cartularium prioratus S. Johannis Evang. de Brecon*," ed. R. W. Banks, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 4th ser., 14 (1883): 165.

⁵³*Liber Feodorum. The Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill*, 3 vols. (London, 1920), 2: 806.

THE HOUSE OF BRAOSE



Further, and firmer, evidence for the demise comes from the Curia Regis Rolls. When Reginald de Braose, a son of William III, and John de Braose, a grandson, were waging a legal battle over Bramber in Sussex in 1219, John claimed right of inheritance on the grounds that William the younger, his father, had been seised of the English and Welsh lands and had performed homage to the king for them.⁵⁴ The normal form of claim would only have to trace the line of descent; the claim of receipt of homage is thus all the more significant.⁵⁵ There is a further piece of evidence for a demise of at least the English lands. In Hilary term 1207, a tenant of the Braose honour of Bramber brought a recognition against William the elder for four knights' fees. William replied that he ought not to respond, as his son held the land. A day was given for judgment but none was entered, no doubt because the crisis brought an end to Braose lordship there.⁵⁶

Rowlands missed one final piece of evidence that is provided by Ralph of Coggeshall, who relates that Giles de Braose received all the possessions of his father *in custodiam* with his nephew (John), "donec puer ad aetatem legitimam venerit."⁵⁷ Coggeshall says that this occurred in 1213, when Giles returned from France with the other exiled bishops. But his regaining of the custody of the Braose lands is best dated to 1215, as no fine is mentioned until 5 March of that year, shortly before a rising in the former Braose marcher lordships enabled Giles and his brother Reginald to regain their patrimony anyway.⁵⁸ This rising seems to have occurred because Giles' fine of 5 March was a proffer and only gained him a hearing in the king's court concerning his claim; a writ dated 10 May promises that Giles shall have the judgement of "our court" (*curia nostre*).⁵⁹ The rising seems to have presented John with a *fait accompli*, with the fine being accepted and writs ordering the restoration of the Braose lands to Giles on 21 October.⁶⁰ But the fact that Reginald remained in rebellion even after the restoration and Giles' return to the king's side in autumn 1215 suggests that he

⁵⁴CRR, 8: 10–11.

⁵⁵I owe this observation to Dr. Paul Brand.

⁵⁶CRR, 5: 27.

⁵⁷Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, p. 168.

⁵⁸*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, 1: 189b, an order to all sheriffs to take up sufficient pledges to cover Giles' fine.

⁵⁹*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 141.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 151. Writs were sent to William Marshal concerning Swansea Castle in Gower, Henry de Tracy for Barnstaple Castle and Henry fitz Count for Totnes Castle, the latter two being the centers of the Braose estates in the West Country.

was not satisfied with this arrangement. The recognition of John de Braose as heir points to the seisin of his father William IV; if that had not been the case, the king, by favoring the representative claimant (John) over the cadet claimant (Reginald), would be going against that legal bugbear of his reign, the *casus regis* (although there was not total consistency in judgments involving the *casus regis* in John's reign).⁶¹ Giles de Braose's custody of his nephew John, as well as William IV's prior seisin, was referred to later by John de Braose's son (another William) when, in 1279–80, William de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, brought a suit for Gower.⁶² Beauchamp, however, denied that William IV de Braose had ever been seised of Gower.

The demise would have given an altogether more sinister air to John's demand for the younger William as a hostage. There seems to have been some ambiguity as to whether the demise was actually recognized by all parties concerned, as is indicated by the Bramber case in the *curia regis* in 1207 mentioned above, as well as the later disputes over the Braose inheritance. John's *apologia* of 1212, when it states that the distraint upon the elder William de Braose was carried out by attempted seizure of his English and Welsh chattels, implies that the king did not recognize the demise. Yet, that same document states that the king demanded as hostages the two sons of William the younger and the son of his brother Reginald, and this raises doubts as to which member or members of the family were demanded as security. Only one son of William de Braose is mentioned as a hostage in 1208, when William delivered "his son" to Walter de Lacy in assurance that he would follow the royal will (*ad faciendum de eo voluntatem nostram*).⁶³ The first mention of William the son of Reginald de Braose as a hostage is in July 1213, while William de Braose the younger's sons John and Giles are not mentioned until January 1214; both writs concerned their transfer to new custodians.⁶⁴ This does not mean that they were not taken as hostages in 1208, but they may equally have been captured in 1210. King John seems to have skirted the issue of the Braose demise in his *apologia*. It is also likely that he used the ambiguity of the situation, whether or not the demise was actually recognized by the Crown, as a means of keeping the Braoses off balance and striking fear into them.

⁶¹For a discussion of the *casus regis*, see J. C. Holt, "The Casus Regis: The Law and Politics of Succession in the Plantagenet Dominions, 1185–1247," in *Law in Mediaeval Life and Thought*, ed. Edward B. King and Susan J. Ridyard (Sewanee, Tennessee, 1990), pp. 21–42.

⁶²*Cartae et alia munimenta de Glamorgancia*, 6 vols., ed. G. T. Clark (Cardiff, 1910), 3: 805–08.

⁶³*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 80b.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 102, 108b.

The question of what would happen to the Braose lands that had been demised was an open one. This is a situation for which there was no answer in law or custom. It may well be that the lands also would be taken into royal custody.⁶⁵ Thus, the demand for William the younger can be seen as a means of further trimming the power of the house of Braose. Indeed, if the Welsh chronicler of the *Brut* is to be believed, William de Braose and his family were banished owing to the "enmity and envy" that John bore towards William de Braose the younger—a suggestive comment but one that can be followed no further.⁶⁶ Little wonder that the Braoses balked at handing the family heir over to the king. As it was, on 19 March 1208 the younger William was given up, but placed into the custody of his brother-in-law, Walter de Lacy.⁶⁷ John was unlikely to gain much leverage from this situation, which looks like a compromise. John increased the pressure and a month later Gerard d'Athée led an expedition of foot and horse into Braose lands in the March, ostensibly to distrain the elder William's chattels but more likely to capture the family.⁶⁸ The rest of the story is well known. William III and his wife Maud, their son William the younger and his brother Reginald, fled to Ireland, being received by the Marshal in spring 1209. From the Marshal the Braoses were passed on to the protection of Walter and Hugh de Lacy. A brief meeting before the invasion between William de Braose and the king in Wales failed to reach a peaceful solution, and John invaded Ireland in the summer of 1210, scattering all before him. The Braoses fled: Maud and William the younger were captured in Scotland and starved to death in Windsor Castle (or Corfe); William III died in exile in Paris in 1211; Reginald and Giles survived.⁶⁹

One result of Braose's downfall was that after 1208 John controlled a conglomeration of lands in the south March the extent of which was not seen again until the time of the younger Despenser. This was not purely an accidental effect of the persecution of William de Braose. When John lost Normandy in 1204 he faced an unstable and potentially rebellious political community. Before the king could seriously contemplate the reconquest of his continental lands he

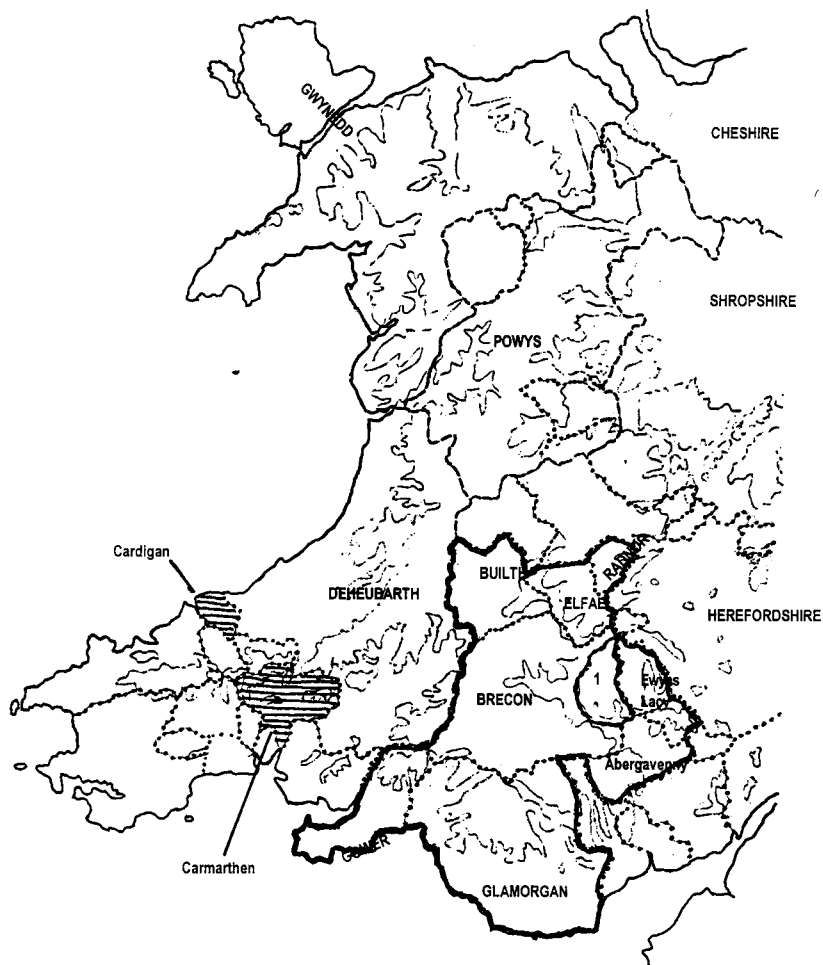
⁶⁵Nicholas Vincent commented to this author that had William the younger been demanded as a hostage after having taken the homage of his men, such a demand would have effectively been an order for his arrest. This does not fit with the pattern of John's hostage-taking, but the Braose quarrel was in many respects *sui generis*.

⁶⁶*Brut y Tywysogyon* (Peniarth MS. 20 version), ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1941), p. 83, s.a. 1210 (hereafter cited as *Brut*).

⁶⁷*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 80.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 81; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, 1: 112–13; Wendover, *Chronica*, 2: 49.

⁶⁹Painter, *Reign of King John*, pp. 243–48.



LAND IN ROYAL HANDS IN WALES, 1208-1213/1215

(1) Blaenllyfni granted to Peter fitz Herbert, 1211

had to assure himself that England was secure. That is one reason why trusted men from the lost Angevin dominions, men such as Falkes de Bréauté, Gerard d'Athée and Engelard de Cigogné, were slotted into important shrievalties and custodianships in England. The appointment of sheriffs *circa* 1207 was now directed as much towards security as towards finance. As Sir James Holt has pointed out, these appointments coincided with a hardening of the king's handling of his barons.⁷⁰ But such trusted servants could not be installed in the one area that was most dangerous to the king—the March.

With his Marcher experience and no doubt a knowledge of the previous history of the area under the Normans and his Angevin predecessors, John would have been well aware of the potential danger that the Marcher lords posed to the king. Empires could be built quickly on the frontier; indeed John himself had done much to help augment the Braose empire. The use of the March of Wales as a quick means to bolster one's power was almost a constant throughout the middle ages. Thus, in the 1220s Hubert de Burgh would try to build his power base in the Middle March, while the great gains of the younger Despenser in the early 1320s and of Roger Mortimer later in the same decade also occurred in the March. A particularly apt parallel is with Richard II's policy in the north March from 1397 to 1398. Richard added Flint to Cheshire and elevated the old palatine county to the status of a principality; he then augmented this block with the forfeited Marcher estates of the earl of Arundel.⁷¹ While John was not attempting to rule the kingdom from the March, he seems to have been determined to keep a sizable portion of it under direct royal control in order to neutralize the threat that the March could pose to the political stability of his kingdom. William de Braose was the poppy grown too high; there was little more the king could give him to keep him onside, so he was cut down to size. And there was no one to replace him along the March other than the king himself.

This was precisely what John set about doing. With the exception of Blaenllynfi, which Peter fitz Herbert had claimed, none of the forfeited land along the March was granted out to favorites, as there was no attempt to woo the baronage with landed rewards. In Ireland in the aftermath of the 1210 campaign some baronies had been granted out to royal supporters and local men were appointed the king's bailiffs. In the Welsh March, mercenary captains administered the region. The campaigns in Ireland in 1210 and Wales in 1211 make even more sense in terms of securing the March. Indeed, as Archie Duncan has convinc-

⁷⁰Holt, *The Northerners*, p. 225.

⁷¹R. R. Davies, "Richard II and the Principality of Chester 1397–9," in *The Reign of Richard II*, ed. F. Du Boulay and Barron (London, 1971), pp. 257–60.

ingly argued, a letter in the register of Philip Augustus, dated late 1209–early 1210, must have been sent to either Walter or Hugh de Lacy. This letter suggests French consideration of English claims in Normandy in return for rebellion “by friends and attacks in England, and by friends and defence of castles in Ireland.”⁷² The threat of some combination of William de Braose, the Lacys, and some of the Welsh princes, perhaps supported by the French, was very real in 1210. This was further borne out by the treaty of alliance agreed upon between Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and Philip Augustus of France in 1212, an alliance concluded at the height of the Welsh reaction to John’s successes of 1211.⁷³ Philip Augustus was determinedly fishing in the unsettled waters of the western British Isles from at least 1210. This threat helps place the expeditions of 1210 and 1211 in context. For a king bent on recovering his continental inheritance, the Irish and Welsh campaigns were a critical waste of resources if they were not undertaken for an important reason. John’s distrust of his barons alerted him to the imbalance of power in the west owing to his promotion of William de Braose. He also realized that to strengthen royal power would mean an expansion and solidification of his own authority along the Celtic fringe. Once he had moved against Braose, John must have been aware of the dangerous and real possibility of an organized opposition in that part of the world.

What went wrong for John? Why was 1211 not 1282? Prior to 1208, King John had enjoyed mostly amicable relations with Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, prince of Gwynedd.⁷⁴ But the removal of William de Braose was followed by the fall of Gwenwynwyn of Powys, who attempted to take advantage of Braose’s elimination. As noted above, this left an enormous vacuum of power and authority along the Middle March, a vacuum that only the king and Llywelyn had the resources to fill. Indeed, John’s distrust of his baronage ensured that the Crown would retain control of the area. The king was now a major player in the region as he had never before been.

John remained, however, on good terms with Llywelyn until January 1210. Sir John Lloyd has speculated that the reason for the sudden rupture in the relationship between king and prince was the result of the Welsh leader becoming involved with the exiled William de Braose, now in Ireland. The Barnwell chronicler states that many of the Welsh allied themselves to William de Braose and Hugh de Lacy earl of Ulster, and launched incursions into England.⁷⁵ We do not know if the phrase *Walensium nonnulli* was meant to include Llywelyn,

⁷²A. A. M. Duncan, “John King of England and the Kings of Scots,” in *King John. New Interpretations*, pp. 258–59. Letter in register of Philip Augustus preserved in the Vatican Library, printed in *Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires*, third series, 6 (1880): 344.

⁷³R. F. Treharne, “The Franco-Welsh Treaty of Alliance in 1212,” *BBCS* 18 (1958): 60–75; reprinted in *Simon de Montfort and Baronial Reform. Thirteenth Century Essays*, ed. E. B. Fryde (1986), pp. 345–60.

⁷⁴For much of what follows see Lloyd, *History of Wales*, 2: 612–23, 631–37.

⁷⁵*Memoriale fratris Waltri de Coventria*, 2 vols., ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series, 1872–73), 2: 202, s.a. 1210.

but even if the great Welsh prince himself was not involved, John's suspicion would have been attracted and the king may very well have held Llywelyn responsible for the Welsh attacks of 1210. It is certainly easy to see why Llywelyn might have covertly supported Braose and the Lacys. Although the Marcher barons had frequently caused trouble with the Welsh, they were also in many respects easier to deal with than the English king. One could play them off against each other or seek marriage alliances, as Llywelyn himself later would do with the competing Braose heirs, Reginald and John. One could not divide the English king against himself, and agreements struck with the Crown increasingly brought a further definition and tightening of feudal dependence for the Welsh princes.⁷⁶ John ultimately posed a greater threat to Llywelyn than did William de Braose. The character of English-Welsh politics had been inextricably altered.

The Welsh attacks of 1210 in support of Braose and the Lacys determined the events of the next two years. As early as 1209, John had appointed an experienced soldier, his brother William earl of Salisbury, as royal custodian of the March.⁷⁷ Early in 1210 Salisbury, the earl of Chester, the justiciar Geoffrey fitz Peter, and Peter des Roches bishop of Winchester led an incursion into north Wales. The combined status of these individuals is perhaps the best indicator of the severity of the Welsh threat in 1210.

On his return from Ireland in 1210, John seems to have been determined to deal with Llywelyn. The king's removal of Robert fitz Richard from his lordship of Haverford and his restoration of Gwenwynwyn to his lands in southern Powys further altered the balance of power in Wales, and Llywelyn's rivals among the Welsh joined John. Having seen the return of Gwenwynwyn, those Welsh princes who had a reason to oppose Llywelyn no doubt hoped to make gains of their own by supporting the English king. They had also certainly been awed by John's progress through south Wales on his way to and return from Ireland in 1210.

The English campaign of 1211 nearly finished Llywelyn, who was saved by the intercession of his wife Joan, John's illegitimate daughter. But, as Lloyd points out, John had overextended himself. The king's victory had come about partly because the support of the Welsh princelings isolated Llywelyn. With a continental campaign in the offing, John's resources would then be diverted elsewhere and he would be even more dependent on the co-operation of the

⁷⁶For *ius scriptum* and the intensifying of English overlordship over the Welsh, see Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, pp. 293–95; Rowlands, "King John and Wales," p. 279.

⁷⁷*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 88. Salisbury was himself recovering from a period of royal suspicion and disfavor which coincided with the first moves against Braose, see Holden, "Balance of Patronage," p. 85.

native Welsh to hold onto his gains in the country. It is at this point that John made a political miscalculation, one that was in keeping with his treatment of the forfeited Braose and Lacy lands in the March. The building of new castles at, among other places, Builth and Aberystwyth, convinced the Welsh princes that it was better to side with Llywelyn, as John was now changing the rules of the game.⁷⁸ For John's program of castle-building signalled in no uncertain terms that he would rule the conquered territories in Wales himself, rather than reward his Welsh allies with lands. The matter of hostages also figured prominently in John's alienation of the Welsh, as it had with the Irish in 1210.⁷⁹ Life along a violent border, where two cultures often conflicted, made for long memories. The Welsh certainly would not have forgotten Henry II's mutilation and hanging of Welsh hostages in 1165. Their misgivings were borne out when, in 1212 in the midst of the Welsh rebellion, John hanged twenty-eight hostages, including one seven-year-old boy.⁸⁰

Llywelyn's campaign of 1212, along with the baronial conspiracy of the same year, brought a shaky English dominance of Wales to a close. John was thus compelled to make overtures to the exiled Lacys in 1213 and to begin a policy of repairing relations with the Marchers. This policy was largely successful with the exception of the Braose lordships in royal hands. Once again, the Braose family would cause the king trouble. Although John did not lose control of the forfeited Braose lordships in the March, his control there was not as strong as it seemed. In those lordships, the king did not do a good job of attracting the loyalty of the more important tenants, although in his defence he may not have had enough time. The beginnings had been promising. In September 1208 the Braose tenants made an agreement with Gerard d'Athée that they would not return to the service of their lord.⁸¹ Indeed, prest and liberate rolls show that of the nineteen largest tenants of the Braose lordship of Brecon, nine accompanied the king to Ireland in 1210.⁸² They were not compelled to do so, as tenants of

⁷⁸For Builth, erected by Engelard de Cigogné, see *Brut*, p. 84; Aberystwyth, *Margam annals*, p. 31.

⁷⁹For the treatment of hostages in Ireland, see above p. 7 and n. 36.

⁸⁰Henry II and hostages, *Brut*, pp. 64–65; for John and Welsh hostages, see the discussion in Rowlands, "King John and Wales," pp. 280–81. The hanging of the young Welsh boy at Shrewsbury is in *Brut*, p. 86.

⁸¹*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 86b (royal ratification of the agreement dated 21 Sept.). Although witnessed by Peter des Roches bishop of Winchester, in the presence of the bishop of Bath and William Briwerre rather than the king, John had been in the area recently. He had been at Hereford on 26 June, was at Worcester 1–3 July, and was at Tewkesbury on 3 October followed by Shrewsbury 8–9 October. Although his servants carried on the negotiations with the Braose tenants, John made visits to the region numerous times in 1208, eleven times from March to October 1208, for a total of 23 days.

⁸²Walter de Clifford junior (4 fees), William de Waldeboef (3), William de Gamages (1), Ralph Torel (1), Richard de Pauncefoot (1), William des Furches (1), Pain de Burghill (1), Walter Devereux (1/2) and Roger de la Zouche (1/2), 13 out of 32 fees listed in 1211, *RBE*, 2: 601; *Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misi et Praestitis Regnante Johanne*, ed. T. D. Hardy (Record Commission, 1844), pp. 177–225 *passim*.

Radnor, Abergavenny, and the rest of Brecon fined in order not to cross.⁸³ From 1208 to 1210, John had managed to split the Braose affinity, much as he had done to the Marshal's in 1207.⁸⁴

But by 1215, Walter III de Clifford, sheriff of Hereford, would write "that the whole county of Hereford, besides the barons and their men, was with the bishop of Hereford [Giles de Braose] against the king, and bore arms against the king or sent armed men."⁸⁵ In the spring of 1215, Giles and his brother Reginald had risen in rebellion, undoubtedly in response to the delay in the restoration of the Braose lands.⁸⁶ The Welsh *Brut* relates that after the rising of the Northerners and Welsh, Giles sent Reginald to Brecon, where he was well received by the Welsh of the lordship. Reginald then attacked down the Usk, taking Pencelli, Abergavenny, and the Three Castles (White Castle, Grosmont, and Skenfrith) within a few days of 1 May 1215. There was obviously little or no resistance from the Braose tenants. When Giles de Braose then advanced up the Wye River from the north, Radnor, Hay, Brecon, Builth, and Blaenllyfni Castles all surrendered without resistance.⁸⁷ The disaffection of the men of the Braose lordships with royal control could not be more plain.

The Braose rebellion then spilled over into Herefordshire. Walter de Clifford's statement further supports the fact that the majority of the men of the region sided with Giles and Reginald de Braose in 1215, not merely those of the county of Hereford. One of the three men named later in the letter of Walter de Clifford who remained in rebellion with Reginald de Braose, Robert Devereux, held a knight's fee in Pencelli, in the lordship of Brecon.⁸⁸ This indicates the widespread nature of the initial rebellion in 1215, stretching across lordships and the hazy boundary of the March.

Loyalty to the ill-treated house of Braose must be counted a primary cause of the rebellion, but there were other factors. For the first time, royal administration and perhaps justice had been extended to the lordships of the Middle March. Although none of the Braose lordships accounted to the exchequer, Glamorgan occasionally did, so we may infer that the majority of the occupied lands probably paid scutages and tallages into the king's chamber. The scutage

⁸³*Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 147.

⁸⁴For the splitting of the Marshal affinity, see David Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147–1219* (London, 1990), p. 98.

⁸⁵*Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales*, ed. J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1935), # 1. 10, p. 2.

⁸⁶See p. 12 above.

⁸⁷*Brut*, p.90, s.a. 1215.

⁸⁸*RBE*, 2: 601.

lists compiled in 1211 for Brecon, Radnor, Builth, and Abergavenny were the only ones made for those areas in the thirteenth century. Sir James Holt saw the inquest of 1211, linked to the planned 1212 continental campaign, as one of the root causes of the baronial plot of that latter year.⁸⁹ The 1211 inquest into knights' fees was the most far-reaching since the *cartae baronum* of 1166 and undoubtedly heralded new and heavier scutages. From John's standpoint, the financial demands of reconquering his continental lands made such measures necessary. His barons did not see the 1211 inquest in quite the same way. New financial exactions would have been doubly unpopular to the Marchers, who had always been excused payment of scutage and royal aids owing to their defensive role on the border.⁹⁰ There is no evidence for the operation of royal justice in the area, but it was routine for such jurisdiction to operate when liberties came into royal wardship; this was indeed the case in Brecon in the 1230s. After the baronial plotting and Welsh offensive of 1212, John thought it wise in 1213 (2 June) to recall Walter de Lacy from exile in France.⁹¹ Walter's brother, Hugh, was also approached but refused to return to England. Although hostages were taken, Lacy's return was accompanied by a restoration of his lands in England and the March, minus Ludlow Castle.⁹² Concessions were granted, and Walter used his service with the king in Poitou in 1214 to bargain for the release of the men either captured at Carrickfergus in 1210 or held as hostages.⁹³ Thus, Walter rebuilt the Lacy affinity, mostly based in Ireland but also including relatives of Anglo-Welsh tenants. Walter de Lacy was restored to his Irish lands on 16 March 1215, and regained Ludlow Castle on 12 April.⁹⁴ John then recognized the fact of Braose title to their lands later in the year.

John was therefore from 1212 (with the exception of the brief Braose rebellion) able to secure the barons of the Welsh March and Ireland (with the exception of Reginald de Braose) to his side at the end of his reign, and they ultimately helped save his kingdom for his son. After Giles de Braose's return to royal allegiance in October 1215, the region was largely stabilized, and Reginald de Braose seems to have made little headway. When John died on 19 October 1216 at Newark, the Marcher barons Walter de Lacy, Hugh de Mor-

⁸⁹Holt, *The Northerners*, p. 81 and n. 1.

⁹⁰T. K. Keefe, *Feudal Assessments and the Political Community under Henry II and His Sons* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 189.

⁹¹*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 99b.

⁹²*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, p. 147.

⁹³Walter in France, *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 112, 113b.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 191, 132b.

timer, and John de Monmouth were present and Walter and John were named among the executors of his will. Nine days earlier, the king had granted to Margaret de Lacy, Walter's wife, three carucates of land in the forest of Acornbury for the foundation of a house of nuns. This house was founded for the souls of Margaret's father William de Braose, her mother Maud, and her brother William.⁹⁵ In his last days John was still courting the Marchers; perhaps he was also salving his conscience. Ultimately, John's policy of an expanded royal presence in the March, with the forfeited Braose and Lacy lordships directly administered by his mercenary commanders, had come to nought. Although this policy failed, it was in keeping with John's character, and shows the purpose and drive that John possessed in the middle years of his reign. It also shows an awareness on the part of the king of the important and at times dangerous role that the Marchers could play in English politics. His campaigns in Ireland and Wales demonstrate a grasp of the interconnected nature of politics and landholding on both sides of the Irish Sea. But John's political miscalculations in Wales and the concomitant alienation of many of the Welsh princelings, combined with the abortive baronial plot of 1212, undid his plans. John's increased involvement in Wales, touched off by his destruction of William de Braose, brought him close to doing what his grandson would eventually accomplish, but the same approach that the king showed to the forfeited Braose and Lacy lands proved to be his undoing in Wales.

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⁹⁵*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 199b.