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For the first time, abbreviations for counties, languages, county place-name surveys, and other frequently-cited publications can be found in the back of this volume.

The Bibliography for 2017 will appear in *The Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 51 (2019).

## Reviews

**Lindy Brady (2017), *Writing the Welsh Borderlands in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press). ISBN 978 1 7849 9419 8. Hardback, x + 202 pp. £75.**

This book seeks to challenge and complicate the longstanding arguments that the relationship between the Welsh and the Anglo-Saxons was primarily ‘one of warfare and mutual hostility’ (p. 3), highlighting other types of interaction and co-operation between these peoples. Its major argument is the existence of a cohesive Welsh border zone, somewhat similar to the later Welsh March, but lacking its legal distinction. This well-presented work is to be commended for drawing attention both to texts less well known within Anglo-Saxon and Celtic studies, and also to aspects of better-known texts which merit further study.

The first chapter begins by discussing the *Dunsæte Agreement*, an Old English text which has drawn attention for its relatively even-handed treatment of the Welsh and English. Brady rightly emphasizes its strong indications of co-operation between the English and Welsh, yet this is also a text which clearly distinguishes and divides the Welsh and English, with no suggestion of cultural mixing. If those responsible for the *Dunsæte Agreement* were indeed living in a ‘mixed Welsh and Anglo-Saxon community’ (p. 2), it appears they went to some lengths to disguise this.

The career of Penda of Mercia is the focus of the second chapter, using Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* as the key source. Brady effectively highlights instances of Anglo-Welsh cooperation in the text and elsewhere, although their relevance to the Welsh borderlands in particular is not always obvious. Three Welsh poems, *Moliant Cadwallon*, *Marwnad Cadwallon*, and *Trawsganu Cynan Garwyn*, all of uncertain date, are compared. The criteria for selection of Welsh poems are not entirely clear, and it appears that works which do not conform to the arguments put forward, such as *Canu Heledd* and *Armes Prydein Fawr*, are brushed over rather quickly.

Chapter 3 turns to sensitive reading of Felix’s *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* and the Old English poem *Guthlac A*, and includes a discussion of personal

names. Then the Old English riddles of the Exeter Book form the focus of Chapter 4, examining the Welsh as slaves and slave-raiders in riddles 52 and 72. The presence of the Welsh in riddle 72 is based primarily on the problematic half-line *mearc papas palas træd*, which Brady translates as ‘trode the paths of the Welsh marches’. If *palas* is retained, and it is arguable that a copying error has been made given the similarity between *papas* and *palas* with its initial *wynn*, I cannot see how the translation given here is possible. *palas* would appear to be nominative or accusative plural, whereas the translation demands either a quite different adjectival form or a genitive plural (as emended by Grein).

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is examined in Chapter 5. Again, there is perhaps more evidence for Anglo-Welsh interaction and co-operation than for the Welsh borderlands as a distinct region. Chapter 6 investigates outlaws and rebels in the borderlands in the eleventh century, drawing on a variety of sources, before the book ends with an interesting discussion of the neglected thirteenth-century *Life of Harold Godwinson*.

This is a volume concerned with written texts (primarily from England), as the title makes clear. Yet the central concept of the Welsh borderlands draws significantly on archaeological and historical studies (p. 12), and it would have been excellent to have had a more detailed discussion of the evidence hitherto presented for and, where relevant, *against* this concept in this period.

The historical conclusions drawn from the analysis (e.g. pp. 128–29) are sometimes rather too broad given the length of the period and the fairly limited number of sources. In particular, the evidence for a distinct border region does not appear to be as strong in the sources as Brady argues. Nevertheless, this book makes a significant contribution and is likely to be of interest and value to all who study the history of early medieval Britain and in particular the relationship between England and Wales.

**David Callander**

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