GERALD OF WALES AND THE SPECULUM

GENRE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Kambriae* (written c. 1189), a narrative that recounted his travels through Wales. I propose that he designed his text as a *speculum*, a work that drew upon mirror imagery for didactic and creative purposes. Books with *speculum* titles achieved increasing popularity among Latin writers during the twelfth century. A dexterous image, the mirror fulfilled a variety of purposes in medieval literary works such as the *Speculum Ecclesiae* by Honorious Augustodunensis and the *Speculum Virginum*, attributed to Conrad of Hirsau. Authors expressed the hope that readers would look into their books, as if looking into mirrors, and learn from the contents. As they frequently explained in their prefaces, the narratives and characters of their manuscripts acted as mirrors that taught morality by positive or negative examples.

In his own preface, Gerald stated that his book would act “as if it were a highly polished mirror.” He employed the mirror metaphor in uniquely creative ways. First, he described Wales as a miraculous terrain full of lakes that responded to external events like magical mirrors. When Welsh lords engaged in feuds over land, disrupting their communities, the lakes on their properties exhibited extreme reactions—they turned the color of blood, or the fish in them spontaneously killed each other, mimicking the human battles. By linking human history to the natural landscape, Gerald was participating in a tradition of historical writers that included Orosius, Gildas, and Geoffrey of Monmouth.
Second, Gerald represented himself as a positive model for his readers, an exemplary mirror of Christian virtue that they could admire and emulate. Gerald equated moral authority with literary mastery in order to win recognition as a respected literary figure among his peers. He believed that the pursuit of literature would bring him success with powerful patrons who could appoint him to high-ranking ecclesiastical positions. His self-presentation was an appeal to their personal erudition as well as to the scholarly world at large. My analysis of the mirror imagery in the *Itinerarium* situates Gerald’s writing firmly within the context of contemporary developments in Latin literature.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Moral Landscapes of Gerald of Wales</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Author as Exemplary Mirror</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I propose in this thesis a new reading of the *Itinerarium Cambriae* by Gerald of Wales (c. 1145-1223), namely that he designed his text as a *speculum*, a work that drew upon mirror imagery for didactic and creative purposes. Although the *speculum* image had existed in spiritually instructive literature since the ninth century, it had grown considerably in popularity during the twelfth-century. Authors contemporary to Gerald found increasingly innovative ways to explore the mirror metaphor. As I shall explain, Gerald employed this metaphor in two distinct ways. The *Itinerarium* was Gerald’s autobiographical account of traveling through Wales in 1188 to preach sermons. Throughout the narrative, he described the Welsh landscape as a moral mirror in nature. It reacted to societal problems such as feuding among the Welsh nobility and deficiencies among the Welsh clergy. In addition, Gerald portrayed his character, the protagonist, as a moral model whose behavior served as an inspiring example to his Welsh audiences. Gerald’s multifaceted use of the *speculum* metaphor not only allowed him to critique contemporary social, ecclesiastical, and political problems, but it also demonstrated his literary erudition to prospective patrons.
Historiography

"The prolific output of Gerald of Wales has been quarried for telling anecdotes and quotations by virtually every scholar of late twelfth-century English history," proclaimed Robert Bartlett at the beginning of his 1982 biographical study of Gerald.  
Michael Richter likewise described Gerald’s writing as “often quoted but seldom understood.” Since the four texts Gerald wrote on Ireland and Wales, the *Itinerarium Kambriae*, the *Descriptio Kambriae*, the *Topographica Hibernica*, and the *Expugnatio Hibernica*, contained so much information on twelfth-century daily life, scholars before the 1970's tended to treat them as encyclopedic resources. As a result, they have never waned in popularity. Although Gerald’s surviving corpus of writings was not published in full until 1974, the Irish and Welsh books have always enjoyed a wide audience and exist today in abundant reprintings. David Powel produced the first printed editions of the *Itinerarium Kambriae* and the *Descriptio Kambriae* in 1585. Subsequent editions appeared in 1602, 1691, and 1804. In 1868, James Dimock produced the *Rolls Series*

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6 William Camden. *Anglica, Hibernica, Normanica, Cambrica, a veteribus scripta: ex quibus Asser Menevensis, Anonymus de vita Gulielmi Conquestoris, Thomas Walsingham, Thomas de la More,*
edition of the *Itinerarium* and the *Descriptio*, part of a nine-volume series of Gerald's works he edited along with J.S. Brewer and George Warner from 1861-1891. Their reputation as gold mines of source material, however, prevented scholars from examining their literary merit. During the 1920's and '30's, new scholarship on Gerald mainly consisted of several articles and unpublished dissertations by philologists and folklorists. Two unpublished dissertations appeared in 1950 and 1957 respectively, dealing with Gerald's references to classical Latin authors. It was not until 1972, with the publication of the German scholar Michael Richter's *Giraldus Cambrensis: The Growth of the Welsh Nation*, that a historian addressed Gerald's life and writing in a book-length study. Beginning with Richter's book, I will summarize the major scholarship on Gerald of Wales for the past thirty years. Both historians and literary scholars have undertaken studies of Gerald's writing, and I will pay particular attention to their different approaches. To summarize, I will explain how my argument diverges from

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previous studies of Gerald and why the need remains for a comprehensive analysis of the *Itinerarium Kambriae.*

_Giraldus Cambrensis: The Growth of the Welsh Nation_ followed four years of articles Michael Richter had written on the development of the medieval Welsh church in the twelfth century, including Gerald’s struggle to become bishop of St. David’s. As bishop, Gerald hoped to turn St. David’s into an independent bishopric that answered directly to Rome rather than Canterbury. He naturally ran into opposition from Hubert Walter, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Although Gerald appealed before the Pope on three separate occasions, from 1199-1203, he never achieved this desired position, and St. David’s remained subject to the authority of Canterbury. Richter lamented the lack of book-length studies on Gerald, explaining that the popular perception of him as a Welsh national hero due to his fight for St. David’s had prevented any examination of him as a European scholar. He examined the St. David’s controversy and its role in the development of a Welsh national consciousness. Although he focused on the documentation relating to the St. David’s controversy, he included a discerning discussion of Gerald’s perceptions of the Welsh people in the *Itinerarium Kambriae* and the *Descriptio Kambriae.* Richter contended that Gerald described the Welsh as a separate cultural group even though they did not possess political autonomy. At the same

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time, glimpses of how the Welsh perceived their own culture surfaced through the anecdotes of the *Itinerarium*. According to Richter, the native Welsh understood themselves as a distinct ethnic and social group. Not only did they regard their culture as different from their Norman neighbors, but they considered it necessary to preserve in the face of conquest. While the Welsh may have acquired a sense of nationalism early due to the constant threat of Norman domination, Richter postulated that Gerald's writing has preserved merely one example of a more widespread growth in nationalistic sentiment.

Richter chose a literal approach in analyzing Gerald's book. He regarded the *Itinerarium* as an articulate collection of facts and observations about the Welsh people. By doing this, he uncovered interesting information relating the development of the Welsh church to Welsh nationalism. He also contributed to Gerald's biographical information by minutely studying his works for any dates and references that could further elucidate his role in the Welsh church's struggle against Canterbury. This choice in method, however, neglected the *Itinerarium*'s fictional aspects as well as its relationship to contemporary literary productions in England and on the Continent.

In 1972, the same year Richter published his book, Antonia Gransden's article about twelfth-century English writers appeared in *Speculum.*\(^\text{13}\) She considered Gerald's Irish and Welsh works as examples of "realistic observation."\(^\text{14}\) The twelfth century

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\(^{12}\) Richter 10-11.


\(^{14}\) Gransden 175.
witnessed developments in written descriptions of material culture, topography, and historical figures. Gransden attributed this advancement first to Christian considerations after the Norman conquest. Monastic writers included detailed descriptions of tombs and relics in their chronicles to promote the popularity of Anglo-Saxon saints. At the same time, writers involved themselves increasingly in study of the classics. Ancient writers such as Suetonius provided models for heightened physical descriptions and character sketches.\textsuperscript{15} Gransden grouped Gerald with contemporary authors Walter Map and William Fitz Stephen, and to a lesser extent, Adam of Eynsham, the biographer of Hugh of Lincoln, Ralph Diceto, and Richard of Dervizes. All of them, she explained, wrote under the influence of classical authors but followed no particular model. "An interest in man as an individual and an objective curiosity about man's environment" served as their impetus for realistic description.\textsuperscript{16} Gransden focused on Gerald in particular, noting his skill at evoking a sense of character. She also remarked upon his lifelike accounts of animal and plant life, an interest complemented by contemporaneous developments in art.\textsuperscript{17} Like Michael Richter, Gransden continued to interpret Gerald's writing in the most literal sense. While she analyzed the particularities of Gerald's style, she did not attribute his motives as a writer to anything more than "objective curiosity and aesthetic

\textsuperscript{15} Gransden 186.
\textsuperscript{16} Gransden 188.
\textsuperscript{17} Gransden 195-197.
appreciation.”18 This approach unfortunately ignored the complex ambitions that drove his literary pursuits.

In 1982, Robert Bartlett produced the first book that dealt comprehensively with Gerald of Wales.19 His biographical study examined Gerald in his roles as ecclesiastic, courtier, naturalist, and ethnographer in order to elucidate precisely his contribution to twelfth-century society. He used the four Irish and Welsh texts as well as the De Principis Instructione and the Gemma Ecclesiastica as his source material, regarding them as Gerald’s most significant contributions to history.20 The first half of his book is mainly biographical. Bartlett offered new insights into Gerald’s political affiliations by analyzing how his descent from the Welsh Marcher knights affected his career. The Marchers, Anglo-Norman knights who had colonized Wales in the 1090’s, conflicted with the Angevin kings over their rulership of Wales and their incursions into Ireland in the 1160’s. Naming Gerald as “their eulogist and apologist,” Bartlett suggested that it was Gerald’s relationship with the Marchers that prevented him from achieving his political aspirations.21 Combined with the stigma of his maternal relatives—the native Welsh nobility—Gerald came under continual suspicion from Henry II and the archbishops of Canterbury. The continuing disappointments of his career, however, forced him into “an awareness of difference” that allowed him to articulate the distinct

18 Granaden 195.
21 Bartlett 20,
cultures of Wales and Ireland. His mixed heritage and the disadvantages he faced because of it led to his novel approaches to ethnography and topography.

Bartlett considered Gerald’s ethnographic innovations in the *Topographia Hibernica* and the *Descriptio Kambraei* his greatest achievements. Before the fifteenth century, no examples of classical anthropology were available to serve as models. The writings of ancient ethnographers such as Herodotus, Lucretius, and Tacitus had not survived in the Latin West. Gerald, therefore, undertook his examinations of Irish and Welsh culture without any ethnographical theories or vocabulary. Even without these essential tools, he nonetheless managed to portray “an anthropologically plausible society.” In the *Topographia* and the *Descriptio* he systematically addressed topics such as geography, religious practices, domestic practices, dress, hospitality, and the arts. He also theorized about the similarities between Indo-European languages, prompting Bartlett to name him a “comparative philologist.” He enhanced his analysis with “an implicit feeling for the distinctiveness and unity of the society he was describing.”

While describing Gerald’s innovation in the field of ethnography, Bartlett also compared him to contemporary Western historians who wrote about cultures they considered barbaric. He noted similarities between Gerald’s conclusions about the Welsh and the

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22 Bartlett 212.
23 Bartlett 187.
24 Bartlett 194.
25 Bartlett 208.
26 Bartlett 194.
Irish, Adam of Bremen’s accounts of the Scandinavians written in the 1070’s,\textsuperscript{27} and
Heimold of Bosau’s observations on the Slavs written in the 1170’s.\textsuperscript{28} They discussed
the bloodthirsty natures, moral depravity, and political fragmentation of these cultures, an
image that arose from the cultural clash between the politically centralized Latin West
and pastoral kin-based societies. The subject peoples invariably appeared primitive,
disorganized, and inherently less Christian. In their efforts to understand alien societies,
Bartlett concluded, these twelfth-century ethnographers contributed to later colonial
attitudes, creating “an ideological weapon which has not yet lost its cutting edge.”\textsuperscript{29}

Bartlett’s book has proved invaluable for understanding Gerald in terms of the
intellectual trends of his day. His examination of Gerald as a scholar, humanist, and
courtier has illustrated the international aspects of his multiple interests. Our arguments
differ, however, in terms of the significance of the \textit{Itinerarium}. He devoted little attention
to this particular work, dismissing it as a text with less thematic unity and organization
than Gerald’s later works, haphazardly “crammed” with anecdotes concerning local
history.\textsuperscript{30} Bartlett described Gerald’s four Irish and Welsh texts as innovative forays into
the field of ethnography, and by this criteria, the \textit{Itinerarium} ranked below his other
works. A study of the \textit{Itinerarium} that considers both its social context and its
relationship to contemporary literature is therefore long overdue.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum.}
Ed. B. Schmeidler. (Hanover: 1917).
\textsuperscript{29} Bartlett 177.
After the publication of Bartlett’s study, Gerald received little attention from historians for over a decade. Literary critics discovered his Welsh and Irish texts in the mid-nineties. Their approaches differed drastically from those of Richter, Bartlett, and Gransden, as they argued for metaphorical rather than literal readings. Although their interpretations varied, Monika Otter, David Rollo, and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen each portrayed Gerald as a self-conscious writer of fiction rather than a faithful observer of the natural world. The elements of fiction in his writing expressed his anxieties over a variety of elements in contemporary society, including colonialism, politics, and artistic patronage.

Monika Otter examined the *Itinerarium Kambriae* in her 1996 study, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century Historical Writing*. She included Gerald among several twelfth-century historians who wrote “along the borderline between historiography and fiction.” Her intention was to demonstrate the literary self-awareness of medieval Latin historians, including their sophisticated use of metaphor and their development of the role of the narrator. Literary critics, including Peter Haidu and Frank Bauml, had hitherto attributed these qualities to medieval vernacular writers. Otter also devoted chapters to William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and

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30 Bartlett 181.
32 Otter 2.
Walter Map to illustrate the possibilities for “fictionality” in Latin historical writing. By “fictionality,” she meant “a self-aware notion of textural coherence by the text’s own internal criteria,” as well as a fictionalization of the authorial role. Gerald’s writing she considered the most complex in its exploration of fictionality because he investigated the relationship of the reader as well as that of the author to his text. This type of narrative finesse prompted her to compare him to vernacular writers such as Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France. Otter interpreted the literal journey of the narrative as a metaphor for the reader making his way through the text. The numerous anecdotes involving quicksand acted as the central metaphor. When Gerald and his travelling companions become mired in a bog during a storm, Gerald was exhorting the reader to slow his pace and to search carefully for underlying meanings in the narrative.

She argued that Gerald portrayed himself as an unreliable narrator by parodying himself in numerous characters, all of whom intentionally lied or were uncertain of their memories. In one anecdote, for example, a priest named Elidyr lived in a fairy kingdom as a child from which he attempted to steal a golden cup. Not only did the fairies reclaim the cup, but as an adult he could only remember bits of their language which he had once known fluently. Elidyr acted as an “alter-ego” of the historian who could only hint at the

33 Otter 1.
34 Otter 6.
35 Otter 161.
36 Otter 149-50.
truth, without knowing it fully. With Elidy r and other characters, Gerald purposely damaged his credibility as a narrator and as a historian.\textsuperscript{37}

Monika Otter offered a discerning reading of the \textit{Itinerarium} because she took pains to demonstrate its metaphorical complexity. Individual anecdotes assumed their full meanings only in relation to the entire text. As she convincingly argued, the narrative only made sense as a coherent whole, rather than as a collection of stories detailing local history. This is the approach I will take in the following chapters. Where my interpretation differs from hers significantly is her contention that Gerald purposely undermined his authority as a narrator. As I shall propose in the second chapter, Gerald positioned himself as the moral center of the narrative precisely to establish his literary credibility. Although our readings vary considerably at points, her examination of the self-referential nature of Gerald’s writing supports my interpretation of the \textit{Itinerarium} as one all-encompassing metaphor of a \textit{speculum}.

David Rollo, like Monika Otter, considered Gerald’s writing in terms of contemporary literary developments. He examined the “cultural paradox” of the twelfth-century by which learned clerics worked for kings, lords, and even minor landholders possessing distinctly less education.\textsuperscript{38} As George Duby had originally asked, how many of the nobility could actually understand the books dedicated to them? Even when clerics wrote in the vernacular, their prose often relied upon references to the Latin classics.

\textsuperscript{37} Otter 155.
\textsuperscript{38} Rollo ix.
David Rollo posited that many of these books addressed the irony of this situation, containing veiled barbs intended to point out the ignorance of their noble patrons. His study, which included writers such as William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Benoît de Troies as well as Gerald, addressed the ways authors perceived their audience, especially the degree of education they considered necessary for complete comprehension of their texts. He selected these writers not only for their famed erudition, but for certain images that appeared in their texts. Like Monika Otter, he believed these writers employed characters who acted as their alter-egos, “a thematic figure who is the peer of the accomplished reader and is always endowed with . . . figuratively magical powers.” 39 These powers, the “glamorous sorcery” of the title, always deceived, bewitched, or seduced other characters, demonstrating how the author understood his effect on uneducated readers.

Relying primarily upon the Topographica Hibernica, Gerald’s geographical description of Ireland dedicated to Henry II, Rollo named Gerald “the most manipulative figure of magical literacy of the period.” 40 Gerald, according to Rollo’s elaborate argument, proved three major points in the Topographica. He first vilified Henry II as an unlettered ruler incapable of understanding the complexities of Gerald’s prose. By describing Ireland as a land populated with bearded ladies and werewolves, Gerald was daring Henry to dismiss the book as preposterous, thus demonstrating his ignorance of

39 Rollo xv.
40 Rollo xxv.
metaphorical language. He then extended this condemnation to all Henry II’s Anglo-Norman subjects who had colonized Ireland in the 1170’s. This argument culminated in a defense of the Welsh-Norman nobles who had invaded Ireland originally a decade earlier. Gerald’s relatives had led this earlier expedition, but Henry II had replaced them with nobles from England in an effort to diffuse their power. Gerald had glorified his family’s conquests over the Irish in the *Topographica* and its companion volume, the *Expugnatio Hibernica*. His portrayal of them as noble warriors contrasted with his likening of the Anglo-Normans to diseased ridden frogs. In their beastly state, the Anglo-Normans would not be able to survive in the almost paradisically pure landscape of Ireland. The Welsh-Normans, however, shared a primeval connection with the Irish, namely musical skills. Rollo contended that throughout the *Topographica*, Gerald privileged music as the purist form of communication, “the ultimate form of signification open to mankind, as much a gift from the Almighty as the physical perfection and robust health enjoyed by the Irish.” The Welsh-Normans, by virtue of their Celtic descent, shared the Irish musical ability, and by association, the Irish purity. They were qualified, therefore, to rule Ireland, unlike their vile Anglo-Norman opponents. Through this complex web of associative images, Gerald was “purposefully creating a climate of reception in which a message of political gravity will pass unnoticed to all save those capable of applying the requisite litteratura.”

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41 Rollo 153.
42 Rollo 138.
would never understand the intricacies of this argument that disparaged their moral
fitness for leadership. As the writer, Gerald would have the last laugh while Henry II and
his courtiers would discard the Topographica as meaningless, never realizing that it
satirized their own inadequacy as both rulers and readers.

At certain times, to follow the finer points of Rollo’s reading of the Topographica
requires leaps of the imagination. His discussion of music as the elemental link between
the Irish and the Welsh-Normans, for example, relied upon certain passages in the
Itinerarium Cambriae, a book Gerald did not write until several years after the
Topographica. The methodology that he employed, however, both echoed that of
Monika Otter and anticipated my own approach to Gerald’s writing, namely that his
literary landscapes required allegorical rather than literal interpretations. By considering
how the tension between learned clerics and illiterate patrons may have shaped his ideas,
Rollo also placed Gerald firmly in the midst of contemporary developments in
scholarship. The influence of the academic world on Gerald’s writing is a topic which I
shall explore in this thesis, as I shall situate the Itinerarium Cambriae within the
increasingly popular speculum genre of literature.

The question of Gerald’s political allegiances continues to intrigue scholars. As
the son of a Norman father and a Welsh mother, he had loyalties to both sides. While
politics is clearly present in the Itinerarium, his statements concerning English-Welsh
relations are inherently contradictory. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen applied postcolonial theory
to the *Itinerarium* in an effort to make sense of them. He interpreted the work as an example of the anxieties born from mixed ethnicity and conflicting political allegiances. Gerald’s life was characterized by personal conflict—raised in Wales and educated in Paris, a relative of the Welsh rebels and a servant of the English king, and, if one considers the context of the *Itinerarium*, a colonized subject returning to his homeland on a mission in support of another colonial enterprise, the Third Crusade. Cohen argued that Gerald expressed not only his internal discord, but the confusion of a colonized people through the perplexing anecdotes concerning hybrid creatures. According to his interpretation, the numerous hybrid animals that Gerald described represented the contemporary inhabitants of postcolonial Wales. The sow nursed by a hunting dog and the knight who gave birth to a cow, for example, struck Cohen as the pointed creations of the child of a Welsh mother and Norman father. Two and three generations after conquest by the Anglo-Norman knights, very few could identify as solely Norman or solely Welsh.

The culture of South Wales is already impure, and Gerald is a living embodiment of its intermediacy. He is instead exploring how both Wales and England were changed when two bodies formed a third that carries with it something of both parents without being fully either.43

Cohen used the Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa’s definition of borders to express the nature of the Wales that emerged from the *Itinerarium*. Borders occurred at the junctures of established entities—both geographically and mentally, “a vague and undetermined

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43 Cohen 92.
place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary . . . in a constant state of transition.\textsuperscript{44} Although Anzaldúa’s writing emerged from her Chicana-lesbian-feminist background, worlds away from twelfth-century Wales, Cohen found her approach methodologically valid to a reading of the \textit{Itinerarium}. Like Gerald, she employed monsters, \textit{mestiza}, to personify the trauma of a mixed heritage. Although historians and literary theorists have traditionally pinpointed India as the postcolonial paradigm, Cohen found Chicano/Chicana writing more applicable to post-Conquest Wales.

Cohen argued that scholars should consider the methodological possibilities of postcolonial theory for the medieval world. “It would be difficult to find a medieval culture that was not in some sense a ‘borderlands,’ since internal homogeneity may have been an abiding dream, but was almost never a practical reality.”\textsuperscript{45} Cohen’s insights are undoubtedly compelling but not comprehensive. To read the \textit{Itinerarium} through a postcolonial lens, Cohen focused exclusively on Gerald’s ethnic allegiances. While his mixed heritage profoundly influenced Gerald’s portrayal of both the Welsh and the Normans in the \textit{Itinerarium}, Gerald owed his stylistic influences to the scholarly communities in which he spent most of his life. The literary techniques he learned from traditional authors and contemporary writers provided him with the mediums to express his views on such issues as politics and ethnicity.

\textsuperscript{44} Cohen 96.
\textsuperscript{45} Cohen 98.
Even though our conclusions differ, the recent work of Cohen and Otter has illustrated the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach. Nancy Partner has demonstrated that twelfth and thirteenth-century historians emulated contemporary literary standards in order to create entertaining and edifying history. An in-depth reading of the *Itinerarium* must consider it as a careful mixture of fact and artifice. It is a valuable historical source that contains a myriad of details on a society for which few records exist. Gerald’s frank opinions also shed light on the complex relations between the Normans and the Welsh. At the same time, it is a work that relies heavily on literary technique. The stylistic choices and narrative structure reveal how Gerald referenced past authors in order to comment upon present society. As I will explain in the next section, Gerald considered himself first and foremost a scholar, and the following analysis shall therefore situate his writing firmly within the context of contemporary literary developments.

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The Context of the *Itinerarium Kambriae*

The *Itinerarium Kambriae* was an account of Gerald’s six-week long venture in Wales in 1188 as a companion to Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The purpose of the mission was to gather recruits and money for the Third Crusade. The two men traveled from South to North Wales, preaching sermons to crowds of Welsh peasants, native Welsh nobles, and Anglo-Norman knights. Baldwin also said Mass in the four Welsh cathedrals—Llandaff, St. David’s, Bangor, and St. Asaph. Since 1184, Gerald had served as a secretary, chaplain, and tutor to the Angevin court, and Henry II had specifically requested that he accompany Baldwin on the Welsh tour. Gerald was related to the leading Welsh nobles through his mother, and Henry II probably hoped to utilize these connections. This plan proved successful, as Baldwin was able to enjoy the hospitality of the Welsh princes, the majority of whom pledged their support to the Crusade. The one prince who failed to attend their sermons, Owain Cyfeiliog of Powys, Baldwin promptly excommunicated. According to Gerald’s account, the mission garnered approximately 3000 soldiers as well as promises of financial backing.

Gerald wrote three separate versions of the *Itinerarium*. Lewis Thorpe, the *Itinerarium*’s most recent English translator, believed that Gerald finished the first version in 1191, probably based upon a diary he kept while travelling.\(^{47}\) Gerald dedicated

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the first manuscript to William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely (1190-1196). The second version, which he dedicated to Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, Thorpe dated to 1197 in light of certain political allusions Gerald had added. He produced the third and final version in about 1214, dedicating it to Stephen Langton, the new archbishop of Canterbury (1207-1228). This redaction formed the basis of James Dimock’s 1868 edition for the Rolls Series. The text of the preface remained the same in all three versions, except that the name of the dedicatee changed. In analyzing the Itinerarium, I have used the final and most complete version.
The Speculum Genre

In order to situate the Itinerarium in the context of the speculum genre, I will explore the diverse meanings that Gerald and other contemporary writers ascribed to the mirror image. Represented by a handful of examples beginning in the ninth century, books with speculum titles achieved increasing popularity among Latin writers during the twelfth century. Works such as the Speculum Ecclesiae by Honorius of Autun (c.1100) and the Speculum Virginum by Conrad of Hirsau (c.1140) firmly established the place of the speculum title in medieval literature.48 Writers produced approximately sixty new titles in the thirteenth century, including the emergence of mirror texts in the vernacular.49 The genre existed until the late seventeenth century, addressing subjects such as politics, anti-Catholicism, and Puritanism.50 A dexterous image, the mirror fulfilled a variety of purposes in medieval literature. Three scholars who have studied the speculum genre, Sister Ritamary Bradley, Herbert Grabes, and most recently, Einar Már Jónsson have explored the range of meanings behind medieval mirrors.51 Herbert Grabes has catalogued all known speculum titles written between 1000-1500 into categories and

50 Grabes 30-37.
subcategories. As he acknowledged, however, the more complex works rarely fit into only one category. Since the mirror was such a flexible metaphor, authors could employ its multiple manifestations into one text.

Gerald's *Itinerarium* easily encompassed several of the following definitions of the mirror and the following chapters shall demonstrate how he drew upon a range of its interpretations. He imbued the natural imagery of the Welsh landscape with mirror-like functions. Additionally, his own character acted as a model of virtuous behavior for readers. Although the *Itinerarium* employed this imagery in an innovative manner, it corresponded with the functions of the mirror in contemporary works of literature, including the *Speculum Virginum* (c. 1140) and the *Speculum Stultorum* (c. 1180).\(^5^2\)

Herbert Grabes identified four major categories and numerous sub-categories of *speculum* titles written in England and on the Continent between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. They consist of the "factually informative mirror," the "exemplary mirror," the "prognostic mirror," and the "fantastic mirror." Grabes did not date the first titles of the final two categories until the late sixteenth century and I will therefore concentrate on explaining his definitions of the "factually informative mirror" and the "exemplary mirror," as well as presenting examples of *speculum* titles contemporary and nearly contemporary to Gerald of Wales. A detailed explication of the origins and

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development of the genre will clarify my arguments concerning Gerald's thematic choices in the two subsequent chapters.

The first category, which Grabes termed the "factually informative mirror," includes encyclopedic texts, comprehensive texts, and texts concerned with specific areas of knowledge. The didactic concerns of these texts were intellectual rather than moral. Albertus Magnus' *Speculum Astronomiae*, for example, written in the second half of the thirteenth century, synthesized all contemporary knowledge of astrology, including translations and summaries from Greek and Arab scientists.\(^53\) He explained that the field of science needed such an undertaking since non-experts could no longer distinguish false books from intelligent ones.

Therefore, a certain man zealous for faith and philosophy, [putting] each in its proper place, of course, has applied his mind towards making a list of both types of books, showing their number, titles, incipits, and the contents of each in general, and who their authors were, so that the permitted ones might be separated from the illicit ones; and he undertook to speak according to the will of God.\(^54\)

Paula Zambelli, the *Speculum Astronomiae* 's editor and translator, regarded it as one of the first modern encyclopedia entries, because it "intelligently combines bibliographical information with a succinct theoretical discussion."\(^55\) The metaphor at work drew upon


\(^54\) Zambelli 209.

\(^55\) Zambelli 122.
the mirror as an accurate medium of reflection. It endeavored to portray its subjects realistically, rather than ideally or satirically.\textsuperscript{56}

Grabes' second category, "exemplary mirrors," contains the oldest examples of medieval \textit{speculum} works. Grabes included guides for behavior in this category.\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{Speculum of Augustine}, listed in a ninth-century catalogue at Reichenau, contained rules of conduct from the Bible.\textsuperscript{58} The \textit{Speculum Ecclesiae} by Honorius Augustundunensis, offered a complete handbook for running a church, including sample sermons for specific saint's days and Sundays and even guides for pronunciation.\textsuperscript{59} The material function of the mirror provided the impetus for the metaphor here, as the preface clarified.

The name of [this] writing tablet would be the \textit{Speculum Ecclesiae}. Accordingly, all priests, before the eyes of the church, should consider this mirror, in order that the bride of Christ might see in it how (moreover) she might be displeasing to her bridegroom, and might arrange her ways and action to the image.\textsuperscript{60}

The text itself, as a corporeal object, acted as the mirror. Priests should examine the state of their churches, comparing them to the advice offered in the \textit{Speculum Ecclesiae}, the way the metaphorical bride of Christ, as a woman, would examine her appearance, hoping to please her husband. The words of the text also behaved in a reflective fashion. The liturgical year they illustrated should match the condition of the church under the

\textsuperscript{56} Grabes 47.
\textsuperscript{57} Grabes 48.
\textsuperscript{58} Grabes 48.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Hujus tabellae sit nomen: Speculum Ecclesiae. Hoc igitur speculum omnes sacerdotes ante oculos Ecclesiae expendant ut sponsa Christi in eo videat quid adhuc Sponso suo in se displaceat, et ad imaginem suam mores et actus suos componat}, Honorius Augustundunensis, Col. 0815.

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charge of a prospective reader. If it did not, the reader could use the proffered advice in the *Speculum* to improve his own church.

"Exemplary mirror" texts also described the lives of religious, historical, or even fictional figures for the reader to either admire or eschew. The *Speculum Stultorum*, written by Nigel Longchamp c.1180, taught virtuous behavior through negative exempla. Græbes termed it as a "mirror of sin and folly," a subcategory in which "a blatant evil is depicted in such a forceful (or exaggerated) manner that the reader will endeavor to keep his distance and improve his conduct."\(^{61}\) Nigel Longchamp, a Benedictine monk, created a satire of ecclesiastical life by narrating the adventures of a young donkey. He explained in the preface to the *Speculum Stultorum* that the exploits of the foolish animals should inspire potentially intelligent readers to improve their behavior. Reading the story and recognizing their own faults, they would feel ashamed, and endeavor to act more wisely. Insipid readers, however, would never understand the moral lessons, and their future actions would reflect the folly of the story.

'Tis called therefore "A Mirror for Fools," either because fools having beheld wisdom straightway forget it, or because the wise take advantage from this too, namely that from regarding the stupidity of fools they dispose themselves aright, and from seeing the beam in another's eye they cast out the mote from their own.\(^{62}\)

The mirror reflected both the nature of the reader and the state of the current Church. The animals in the *Speculum Stultorum* represented members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy,
and their behavior in various situations satirized what Longchamp considered as contemporary problems in the Church. An example of this occurred when Bumel the donkey learned the story of two cows stuck in the mire. Their reactions illustrated the two ways monks could respond to the cloistered life. One cow chopped off her tail to free herself, unable to handle the restraints of her situation. The second cow resolved to endure the mud and the harsh weather. Naturally, the patient cow received the reward of pleasant days in the sun for her virtue, while the hasty cow died in bitter regret.63

The Speculum Virginum (c.1140), attributed to Conrad of Hirsau, relied upon positive exempla to create a version of the Benedictine rule for women. It illustrated a way of life for young girls that glorified spiritual purity as well as physical virginity. The twelve sections of the Speculum unfolded as a dialogue between Peregrinus, a priest, and Theodora, a young girl whom he instructed in the virtues of virginity. Theodora, a bright and questioning pupil, became the first model in the narrative structure for female readers. She acted as a mirror by which other girls could measure their own intellectual curiosity.64 Parts Four and Five of the Speculum Virginum contained the stories of exemplary women who behaved admirably throughout their lifetimes. They acted as mirrors of morality in that they both reflected images of virtuous behavior themselves and they inspired their readers to reflect those virtues in their own behavior. Peregrinus

63 Longchamp 7-23.
explained that the ultimate female exemplum for young virgins was Mary. "You, virgin of Christ, imitate this leader of Virgins as much as you can and with Mary you will seem spiritually to bring forth the son of God." The book also detailed the lives of historical women from the Bible and from mythological tales, in order to demonstrate the power of the female sex.

How many women in barbarian nations had such manly boldness that they conquered kingdoms in war . . . ! I think certain things must be set forth, not so that I should place the evil of these women as an example, but so that I might show how the weaker sex conquered the stronger.

Peregrinus admonished Theodora against ever doubting the capability of women to achieve spiritual purity through virtuous living. These female exempla possessed the strength of character Theodora could attain.

Peregrinus began with the biblical figures of Yael and Judith, whom he considered exemplary because even in their moments of victory, they never allowed pride to triumph over humility. After introducing the subject, he offered a lengthy list of pagan women, including Seminaris, the Queen of Babylon, and Marpesia and Sulia, two Amazon queens, who were able to conquer enemy male armies through their physical and mental strength. These women provided valuable lessons precisely because they were pagan. "For if women, if weak idolators exerted so much energy on behalf of fame, what

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65 Maria radix aeterni floris, flox et fructus aeternae benedictionis. Hanc virginum principem, tu virgo Christi, quantum possibile est, imitare et cum Maria filium dei videberis spiritualiter parturire 114.
66 Quantae in barbaris etiam nationibus feminae virilis audaciae regna bellis domuerunt, hostes suos prostriuerunt spectabilesque triumphi sui titulos posteritati consignarunt! . . . De quibus aliaque ponendae sunt, non ut maliciam mulierum in exemplum proponam, sed quomodo sexus infirmior fortiorem vicerit, ostendam 103.
could virgins of Christ do on behalf of an eternal crown? He followed these accounts with examples of early Christian queens who advanced the cause of Christ in their pagan kingdoms, recounting first the story of an unnamed queen of the Persians who convinced her husband to convert through patient love. Finally, Peregrinus discussed the accomplishments of two Roman empresses, Helena, mother of Constantine, who discovered the remnants of the cross buried at Calvary, and Eudoxia, renowned for her devotion throughout the Empire, who legalized Christian practices. As Peregrinus insisted to Theodora, he could have continued to list historical women with great strength of character and faith, but he stopped so that she would not develop an inflated sense of pride in her sex.

Einar Már Jónnson, the most recent scholar to deal extensively with the speculum genre, considered the Speculum Virginum a “mirror of the soul.” Although she referenced the categories of Herbert Grabes, she developed her own schema for medieval mirror imagery. Jónnson described certain texts as leading the reader to self-revelation because they literally reflected the inner nature of the reader. The author of the Speculum Virginum, whose book Jónnson referenced as an early example of this type of mirror, explained this concept succinctly in its preface. He instructed young girls to contemplate his book as they would gaze upon their appearance in a mirror, admiring their finer points

\[67\] Speculum Virginum 103.
\[68\] Ecce sexus fragilis . . . Si femine, si fragiles ydolatrae tantum sudoris impendere pro fama, quid Christi virgo pro aeterna corona? ” 105.
\[69\] Jónnson 171-186.
and seeking out their physical flaws for improvement. His mirror, however, would reveal the flaws of their soul with complete clarity.

You seek the mirror, daughter. The degree to which you profit or fail you will be able to judge in either outcome, for if you seek yourself, you will find it here. Only that thing which reflects an image of the one gazing upon it is able to be called a mirror. Take thought, therefore, for yourself in accordance with the holy scripture and you will find certain vestiges of virtues and vices impressed upon your conscience.71

By following the prescriptions of the text, young girls could strengthen their character and reflect the virtuous lifestyle that the exempla of the Speculum illustrated. The ultimate goal the Speculum Virginum proposed was a complete mirror image between the text and the reader.

In yet a further extension of the metaphor, the author of the Speculum Virginum compared the Bible to a mirror. Young girls could discover a complete formula for virtuous living in the pages of the Scriptures. After they had read and understood the word of God, they would understand the state of their souls and the necessity of improvement.

The mirror, therefore, is a page of the divine sacred scripture, capable of the word of God, whose clarity of pure truth illuminates minds of students thus with profound reason, as they recognize him, where they were not able to see him in themselves. You will therefore attend the divine Scripture as if it were a mirror, you will discover yourself within it, and what occurs, you will learn.72

70 Speculum Virginum 2-3.
72 Speculum Virginum 107-108.
He suggested, therefore, that his own work existed merely as a mirror of the Bible, the ultimate mirror of the soul. By discovering their true potential, young girls would, in effect, achieve an intuitive understanding of God. The Bible, therefore, functioned as both a "self-revelatory mirror" and an "exemplary mirror"—it revealed faults and offered models for improvement.

According to Ritamary Bradley's 1954 study of the background of *speculum* titles, the medieval concept of the Bible as a mirror derived from the writings of Augustine, specifically the *Enarratio on Psalm 103* and the *De Trinitate*.\(^ {73}\) In the *Enarratio*, Augustine called the Bible a mirror of knowledge. Drawing upon I Corinthians, 13:12. "we see now through a mirror as if in an enigma, but soon we will see face to face," in the *De Trinitate*, he discussed his theory that the human soul was a shadowy reflection of God's divinity. Through introspection, therefore, every human possessed the ability for true knowledge of God.\(^ {74}\) The Bible was the mirror through which Christians could achieve this greater understanding of themselves, and therefore, God. Early medieval writers, among them Pope Gregory I and Anselm of Canterbury developed Augustine's concept of the Biblical mirror in their own writing.\(^ {75}\) Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604) elaborated upon Augustine's explanation, arguing that the lives of the saints described in the Bible offered the true mirrors for virtuous living. This justified


\(^ {74}\) Jönsson 147.
his use of moral human lives as exempla in works such as the *Dialogues.* This idea appeared in the work of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) who explained that his account of the life of Daniel would act as a mirror to his students. Hildebertus of Lavardin (c. 1056-1134) described the Bible as a mirror of enlightenment, because only by understanding its lessons would readers witness the true state of their souls. These early works by revered authorities of the early medieval Christian Church contributed to the widespread applications of mirror imagery in twelfth and thirteenth century texts.

Like the *Speculum Virginum*, the *Itinerarium Kambriae* by Gerald of Wales employed multiple functions of the mirror. Although his title did not specifically designate the work as a *speculum*, he explained his intentions in a lengthy dedicatory preface.

"Loca igitur invia per quae transivimus, et tam fontium quam torrentum flumina nominatim expressa, vera faceta, visaeque labores et casus varios, notabiles quoque tam moderni temporis quam antiqui partium illorum eventus, patriae naturam, naturaeque mirandos interedium excursus, patriae quoque descriptionem, hoc opusculo quasi speculo quodam dilucido, per te, vir incitae, Stephane Cantuariensis archiepiscopum, posteritati praesentavi." Dimock 13 Unless otherwise states, all translations from the *Itinerarium* are my own.
As we have seen, this followed a standard format for the prefaces of *speculum* titles, in which authors elucidated their choice of the mirror metaphor. Gerald explicitly stated that his book would act as a mirror. Gerald, as the third chapter of this thesis shall argue, created an “exemplary mirror” within the *Itinerarium*. In a manner similar to the *Speculum Virginum*, he illustrated the behavior of a character that acted as a positive model of behavior. Since the *Itinerarium* recounted his own autobiographical travels, Gerald uniquely centered the mirror imagery around his own character instead of around a mentor or distant hero. The mirror became a metaphor for his personality and actions, both of which he intended his readers to admire and emulate. Rather than an act of hubris, however, this tactic allowed Gerald to achieve authority as the writer of the *Itinerarium*.

Gerald also created a “mirror of sin and folly,” according to Grabes’ definition. To do so, he played upon the idea of a literal mirror that reflected the horrors of its surroundings. These mirrors appeared in the form of lakes, rivers, and wells—natural mediums of reflection in the Welsh landscape. As I shall argue in the second chapter, the lakes reacted to the violent feuding of the Welsh nobility and the general decline of Welsh morality. Water turned the color of blood after local battles and in one notable instance, the fish in a river fought all night and killed each other. This type of horrific imagery taught the readers through negative rather than positive models. Bloody water
and dying animals portrayed the situation in Wales with obvious hyperbole in order to
demonstrate the dire nature of its social problems.

The mirror was an image to which Gerald continued to return in his writing. The
*Speculum Duorum* (c. 1216) was among his final works, and it reflected the bitterness of
his later years.\(^{81}\) It was a lengthy invective against his nephew, Giraldus de Barri, whose
education he had sponsored, and his nephew’s tutor, William de Capella for their
ingratitude. After Gerald, at around sixty years of age in 1203, resigned his archdeaconry
at Brecon in favor of his nephew, the two quarreled at length about money. The young
archdeacon eventually complained to the Bishop of St. David’s concerning his uncle, at
which point Gerald first began composing the *Speculum Duorum*.\(^{82}\) He concluded his
account of their quarrel with the following explanation.

Therefore we offer you a wide and large mirror in which both tutor and pupil can
contemplate the features of their nature rather than their natural faces. . . . For various
reasons, apart from those mentioned, we have written more carefully and at greater
length, so that the crimes of them and those like them can be seen more easily in future,
that they may be rebuked, and finally that we may be consoled by our song of
lamentation and, though they can have no remedial effect for us, that they may serve as a
warning to all those who may perhaps read it in future.\(^{83}\)

Exposing their faults in an unbridled stream of accusations, Gerald intended the
*Speculum Duorum* to act as a self-revelatory mirror that would hopefully awaken the
consciences of his recalcitrant subjects. At the same time, the devastating portrait of the

\(^{81}\) Giraldus Cambrensis. *Speculum Duorum or a Mirror of Two Men*. Ed. Yves Lefevre and R.B.C.
\(^{82}\) See Michael Richter’s introduction for a complete account of the quarrel, xxxi-xxxiii.
\(^{83}\) Giraldus Cambrensis. *Speculum Duorum* 153.
two men presented a negative exemplum that would warn readers away from similar actions. The mirror imagery, however, lacks the subtlety of that in the Itinerarium, and scholars rank the Speculum Duorum among the lesser of his achievements.\textsuperscript{84}

Among Gerald's last works was a book entitled the Speculum Ecclesiae, dating to around 1220, when he was almost seventy-five. This work has survived in only one badly damaged manuscript in the British library (MS Cotton Tiberius B.XIII), and in numerous parts the writing is barely legible.\textsuperscript{85} It contains a jeremiad against the general decline of learning among both monks and students. Monks displayed their lack of education by mispronouncing Latin. Students supposed to be learning the Trivium were ignoring grammar and rhetoric in favor of dialectic, as law and medicine were more profitable vocations. Gerald also lamented the impossibility of liberal arts as a vocation due to the lack of interest in patronage among princes.\textsuperscript{86} The mirror imagery appeared to act in a similar vein as that of the Speculum Duorum. By exposing the faults of the current state of learning, it would shame the audience into improving the situation. The manuscript contains many gaps, and the first three fragments have been bound in the wrong order, a mistake that J.S. Brewer repeated in the only published version, the 1873 Rolls Series text.\textsuperscript{87} Further analysis of his imagery would therefore require extensive

\textsuperscript{84} See the introduction by Michael Richter for a critique of the Speculum Duorum and a detailed explanation of its background.
\textsuperscript{85} For an account of the manuscript tradition, a transcription of the preface, as well as a partial English translation of the preface, see R.W. Hunt. "The Preface to the Speculum Ecclesiae of Gerald of Wales. Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies 8, 1977, 189-213.
\textsuperscript{86} Hunt 193-195.
\textsuperscript{87} Hunt 189.
manuscript study. The existence of the *Speculum Ecclesiae* does demonstrate, however, that the conception of the mirror as a compelling didactic tool appeared in Gerald's writing from the beginning to the end of his career.

By using the *speculum* as the framework for his *Itinerarium*, Gerald seized upon an intellectual trend at its beginning. The proliferation of *speculum* works during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries demonstrate that the mirror was an image circulating in learned ecclesiastic circles. Gerald, as Robert Bartlett, has explained, believed in writing as a vocation and entertained "an almost classical concept of reputation (fama) as the writer's reward." 88 After studying for at least ten years in Paris, he possessed a firm opinion of himself as an intellectual. Employing such a significant concept allowed him to challenge his audience and to boast of his own erudition. It positioned him at the forefront of literary culture. In the following two chapters I shall explain exactly how he created the admonitory and exemplary mirrors in the *Itinerarium Kambriae*.

CHAPTER 2

The Moral Landscapes Of Gerald Of Wales

This chapter will continue to place the *Itinerarium Kambriae* within the popular twelfth-century genre of the *speculum*. In my introduction, I have explained the diverse catoptric representations available to medieval authors and the numerous levels on which the *speculum* metaphor could operate. I examine here the intricate imagery that Gerald employed to invent a miraculous terrain for Wales, as well as the influence earlier historians of Britain exerted upon his authorial technique, namely Gildas and Geoffrey of Monmouth. I will also demonstrate the place of geography in the early medieval historical tradition by explaining how Augustine, Orosius, and John Scottus Erigena understood nature to be a manifestation of morality. Gerald's account of his travels contained multiple images of reflection, as if in a mirror, scattered through the expanse of Wales. All of these images acted as mirrors of sin and folly for the reader, revealing Gerald’s thoughts on morality. They assumed the forms of bodies of water that were capable of divulging lessons about how nature reflects human moral behavior, including an array of lakes that possessed prophetic powers, either by changing colors, temperature, or substance depending on the actions of nearby inhabitants. Their aquatic animal and plant life likewise reacted dramatically to local human error. Bodies of water defined the geography of Wales, separating provinces and prinedoms. At regular intervals throughout the text, water bridged the gap between event and interpretation. Using these
bodies of water, Gerald described a moral landscape that acted in the name of God to comment upon human problems.

The problems Gerald addressed ranged from the political to the social. Sometimes he censured infractions against ecclesiastical law, such as forced marriages, incestuous marriages, non-payment of tithes, or the burning of churches. His reactions to social practices in Wales derived from a clash between his educated background and native Welsh culture. Since the conversion period, the Welsh church had developed in an insular fashion, maintaining ties with Ireland rather than England or the Continent.\footnote{R.R. Davies. \textit{Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415}. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 172-213.}

During his years studying at the University of Paris, he encountered theologians and lawyers of canon and civil law who urged him to follow the strictest principles of the Church.\footnote{Robert Bartlett. \textit{Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223}. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 29.} “Gerald adopted a rigorous moralism, a reforming zeal, and a vocal concern with the pastoral duties of ecclesiastics,” according to Robert Bartlett.\footnote{Bartlett 29.} When Gerald returned to Wales in 1174, he planned to impose order on the undisciplined and sprawling Welsh church.

His efforts at reform formed the bases of the impressions of the Welsh church that he recorded in the \textit{Itinerarium}. In his memoirs, \textit{De Rebus a Se Gestis}, written at the end of his life, Gerald recounted his struggles as an ardent reformist during his first years as
the Archdeacon of Brecon.  

He expressed the difficulties in trying to organize his local churches according to the standards he had learned in England and Paris. In 1174, immediately after returning to Wales from his studies in Paris, he vigorously sought to remedy the status quo of St. David’s, the bishopric in which his family held lands. He first reinstated the tithes of wool and cheese that the parishes had neglected to reinforce. When his parishioners refused to pay the tithes, he sought letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury to bolster his authority. Entire churches still failed to pay, leading Gerald to excommunicate them, as occurred at Angle. Gerald also experienced problems with local secular officials, when in the same year, the Sheriff of Pembroke stole eight yoke of oxen from his priory. The priory did not receive compensation until Gerald had personally excommunicated the Sheriff. After his official appointment as the Archdeacon of Brecon in 1175, Gerald experienced outright rebellion from his local clergy. The Welsh clergy generally enjoyed freedom from strict ecclesiastical standards—they kept mistresses and their children inherited their positions. “The arrival of a bishop or archdeacon with rigorous views on the state of the clergy was a disaster,” according to Robert Bartlett. Representatives from Gerald’s border parishes immediately informed him that his intrusions were unwelcome. They ordered him not to

94 Gerald explained that many of his parishioners were Flemings. Under Henry II, the Flemings of Rhos were exempted from these tithes, and the other Flemings in Wales wanted the same privileges. Gerald refused to allow this, eventually excommunicating those who still refused to pay. See De Rebus 45.
95 The Autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis 41.
visit and interfere with their local affairs. Later, they drove away his messengers with arrows. When confronted with insurmountable resistance, Gerald turned to the local nobles, many of them his relatives, to bolster his authority.\footnote{Bartlett 33.} Considering this relationship, any conflict among the nobility hindered his reforming efforts and promoted instability within the Welsh church.

Gerald criticized the multiple manifestations of violence that he encountered, either among the native Welsh nobility or between the Normans and the Welsh. He did, however, approve of violent actions when they produced positive results, for instance, in the Crusades. His purpose, while travelling through Wales, was to gain monetary support and soldiers for the Third Crusade. Throughout the \textit{Itinerarium}, he reiterated his dedication to this cause. Unlike the warfare of the Crusade, however, the violence that provoked Gerald’s ire in the \textit{Itinerarium} led to moral decline. This violence included the ceaseless feuding among the native Welsh princes, often consisting of intra-familial feuding over land inheritance. The native Welsh chronicle, the \textit{Brut Y Twysogyon}, or the \textit{Chronicle of the Princes}, supports Gerald’s impressions of the Welsh nobility.\footnote{\textit{The Autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis} 48.}

Compiled in the thirteenth century at the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida in Ceredigion, the three existing versions of the \textit{Brut} are Welsh translations of lost Latin manuscripts. The longest version, which I have used, extends to 1282, with continuations up to 1332.\footnote{\textit{Brut Y Twysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes, Red Book of Hergest Version. Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Series}, No. XVI. Trans. and Intro. Thomas Jones. (Cardiff:}
The entries for the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries demonstrate that feuds, both between rival dynasties and among close family members, were a way of life for Welsh society.

The frequency of feuds among the members of the nobility depended greatly upon the Welsh legal structure. In the twelfth century, Welsh inheritance still depended upon the system of partible inheritance, in which every legitimate son received an equal share of the inheritance. Depending upon the wishes of the father, illegitimate sons could also claim a portion of the family lands. The persistence of this tradition guaranteed continuous feuds without any permanent solution. "Even a formal partition was no more than a temporary truce," wrote Rhys Davies, "for no partition would be regarded for long as equitable by all the claimants; and any new death in the family ... precipitated a new crisis and required a new partition or repartition."\(^{99}\) According to Gerald, this type of destruction derived solely from greed and contributed not only to the political fragmentation of Wales, but also to the disruption of ecclesiastical authority. As the pages below reveal, feuding led to the burning of churches and the deaths of princes friendly to reforming clergymen, such as Gerald. Gerald also expressed his concern over the skirmishes involving the Welsh nobles, the Norman knights of long-term residence, and Henry II. The child of a Welsh aristocratic lady and a Norman lord, as well as a servant of Henry, he favored none of the parties consistently. Rather, he censured or

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praised them all depending on the individual incident. Henry II’s callous interference in Welsh affairs received Gerald’s criticism, as did the Welsh people’s inability to govern themselves with any modicum of order. He praised those who respected ecclesiastical authority. Without supporting one side against the other in the crisscrossing of ethnic and political allegiances that existed in Wales, Gerald critiqued the useless squabbling that was crippling the country. As I shall describe below, the land and water bore the markings of this interminable warfare and lax morality.

By using nature to criticize contemporary morality, Gerald was consciously writing within an established tradition of historians, including Augustine, Orosius, John Scottus Erigena, Gildas, and Geoffrey of Monmouth. These writers provided Gerald with models for the construction of his moral landscape. While Gildas and Geoffrey influenced his writing directly in terms of technique and style (ideas to which I shall return), early medieval understandings of geographical study and biblical exegesis commenced the origins of this methodology that later writers employed. As Natalia Lozovsky has recounted in detail, post-classical geographers embarked upon their studies for didactic purposes. All knowledge derived from God, and thus its ultimate purpose was to shed light upon His divine plan. As with so many disciplines, the roots of medieval thought concerning the visible world lay with Augustine. According to Augustine, God had designed the Bible as the medium for revelation and the witness to

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99 Davies 224-226.
his divinity. *Genesis* described the creation of the world, and the material world affirmed the truth of the biblical description. "The earth is our big book," Augustine wrote in a telling phrase. "In it I read as fulfilled what I read as promised in the book of God."\(^{101}\)

Carolingian scholars further articulated the divine enterprise of geographers. Studying the Earth, God's creations, was necessary for any higher understanding of the eternal truth. In the second half of the ninth century, John Scottus Erigena wrote the *Periphyseon* as both a geographic exploration and a commentary on the creation of the world.\(^{102}\) Relying upon Augustine's previous argument, John Scottus Erigena explained that the Earth offered proof of God's existence, defining nature as encompassing both the visible world and the presence of its Creator. He marveled at how the revolutions of the heavenly bodies verified the truth of Genesis.

For even Abraham knew God not through the letters of the Scriptures, which had not yet been composed, but by the revolutions of the stars. Was he simply regarding the appearances only of the stars as other animals do, without being able to understand their reasons? I should not have the temerity to say this of the great and wise theologian.\(^{103}\)

According to John Scottus Erigena, scholars needed to understand the divinity behind the surface of the material world. He reasoned that this had been the flaw of pagan minds.

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\(^{100}\) Lozovsky, Natalia. "*The Earth Is Our Book: Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400-1000.*" *Epistulae* 43.9.25 from Lozovsky 142.

\(^{101}\) *Epistulae* 43.9.25 from Lozovsky 142.


\(^{103}\) Ioannis Scotti Eriugenae, *Periphyseon* Vol. III, 265. I was referred to this passage through Lozovsky 143.
Although their intellectual explorations may have led them to scientific discovery, they had failed to understand the divine nature of the visible world.\textsuperscript{104}

Intent upon their own didactic messages, it is not surprising that medieval historians employed geography as an instructive tool. Geographical study possessed methodological similarities to historical study, and many authors combined both genres in one work. In the early fifth century, Orosius commenced a tradition of intertwining human events and natural phenomena, particularly in the opening passages of histories.\textsuperscript{105} Orosius interpreted history with the potent phrase, "a forest of evils."\textsuperscript{106} In his seven books, nature, by definition, was history that bore the mark of human sin. His \textit{Seven Books of History against the Pagans} opened with an intriguing geographical description that inextricably tied up the fate of the Earth with that of humanity. When God justly punished the ignorance and cruelty of men, the Earth suffered as well. It bore the telltale scars of previous sins centuries after the original transgressors had died. The landscape provided evidence of the events of the Old Testament.

Since, after the formation and adornment of this world, man, whom God had made upright and immaculate, and likewise the human race depraved by lusts had become sordid with sins, a just punishment followed upon unjust license. The sentence of the Creator, God and Judge, destined for sinning men and for the earth because of men, [is] . . . to last forever as long as men shall inhabit the earth.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} Lozovsky 144.
\textsuperscript{105} Lozovsky 69-70.
\textsuperscript{107} Orosius 24.
This passage entwined the history of the Earth and the history of mankind. Beginning with Adam and Eve, mankind contaminated the Earth with their original sin, condemning it to share in God’s wrath.

In Orosius’s vision of history, the Earth bore the physical marks of human behavior. The parting of the Red Sea and the subsequent drowning of the Egyptians, for example, had left tangible evidence.

Even today there exists most reliable evidence of these events. For the tracks of chariots and the ruts made by wheels are visible, not only on the shore, but also in the deep, as far as sight can reach ... so that whoever is not taught the fear of God by the study of revealed religion, may be terrified by His anger through this example of His accomplished vengeance.**

According to this interpretation, history determined geography. Augustine had argued that the existence of the Earth offered the ultimate proof of God. Orosius continued this tradition by creating a landscape that provided evidence of the events of the Old Testament, and sustained moral lessons for the edification of later generations.

Following in this tradition, Gerald used the natural bodies of water in Wales to critique the morals of the Welsh nobility. He saw in this theological tradition and its later adherents the guide of God’s hand in natural events. The Welsh lakes in the Iterarium could reflect upon the human condition by dramatically changing colors. When the sons of Iestin, the Prince of Glamorgan ravaged parts of Brecknockshire, a local lake turned a vivid green. Local inhabitants recalled that several years before this, the lake had turned a

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108 Orosius 31.
similar “viridissimi” shade through the devastating raids of another prince, Hywel ap Maredudd.

Therefore, it happened a little before that great war in which the entire province was nearly driven into extinction through the sons of Iestin, that that great lake . . . was found to be a most green color. Moreover, certain elderly people of the land, having been consulted about what this was able to portend, responded that a little before that great desolation through the deed of Hywel, son of Maredudd, the water was discovered to have been a similar color.109

Gerald was careful to note that the lake in question was the one “from which the River Llunfi flows out, the same river that went into the Wye across from Glasbury.”110 The Wye traversed the center of Wales, and thus the needless destruction poisoned the entirety of the country.

According to the Brut Y Tywysogyon, Hywel ap Maredudd, the prince who had initiated the drastic change in color, was a local noble of Brecknockshire with a typical penchant for battle. The Brut referred to him in one entry only, affirming that he and his two sons participated in an attack against the Marcher lords in Ceredigion in 1136, burning two castles. At the end of the year at the castle of Cardigan, he fought victoriously against several Marcher lords, including Gerald’s uncles, William and Maurice Fitzgerald.111 Gerald may very well have been referring to this incident, thus suggesting that the ramifications of Hwyl’s behavior at the other end of the country, in


110 Dimock 20.
Cardigan, manifested themselves in his own local terrain. Or he could have been alluding to another instance of private feuding that the *Brut* never recorded. As the archdeacon of Brecknockshire, Gerald certainly would have known the past and present behavior of the local lords. As an old enemy of Gerald's Norman relatives since 1136, Hwyl ap Maredudd would have been an ideal example of Welsh belligerence.

Gerald often rendered his points about the mystical lakes subtly, pushing the readers to search for meaningful connections between historical event and natural event through multiple passages. When first introducing the lake of Brecknock Mere, also in Brecknockshire, he stated its supernatural history in proper guidebook fashion, as if reporting local curiosities to the interested traveler.

Just as the neighboring people testify, that lake abounds in many miracles; thus the lake was once discovered to be the color green, and another time it was also discovered *in our days* to be the color of blood, nevertheless, not entirely, but as if it dripped blood through certain brooks and veins. . . . In winter too, with the ice constricted and sinking below the shell of the water, having frozen into a slippery sheet of ice, it emits a horrible sound, so horrible that it sounds like the roaring of many animals collected in one place (italics mine).  

He first offered a practical explanation for these phenomena, based upon close observation of the lake's natural behavior. "Nevertheless there is a chance that the ice shrinks down into a protective shell, through obstructions of the atmosphere, and a sudden and violent eruption causes the air to do this, exhaled through hidden

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111 *Brut* 114-115.
112 "*Plurimus quoque, ut accolae tespantur, lacus iste miraculis pollet.* Quemadmodum enim viridis aliquoties, sicut praescripsimus, coloris, sic et sanguineus aliquando nostris diebus repertus est; non universaliiter tamen, sed quasi per venas quasdam et rivulos sanguinem manare compertus est. . . . Sub
windows.” Gerald, although he moved onto other subjects, including an account of the local mountain ranges and their notable landmarks, had not yet completed his elucidation of Brecknock Mere’s activities.

Only at the end of this lengthy description do we realize that Gerald had not yet left his original subject.

In truth, in the East, it occurs in the mountains of Talgarth and Ewias. Of which places the inhabitants do not desist in unbroken hostilities and in insatiable hatred, and they do not desist to shed blood and pursue violence and to waste blood in mutual wounds.

We leave the place to others to explain those things that occurred at these places, in this, our time—in truth, so many and such enormous excesses over marriages most stained with blood, forced rather than contracted, and with bloodstained divorce having been forced, and many other acts more cruelly exacted (italics mine). ¹¹⁴

Having first related the story of a miraculous lake, Gerald then offered an example of the human folly that provoked its response. The lake that mysteriously turned red “as if it dripped blood through certain brooks and veins,” clearly reacted to the eastern natives who “[did] not desist to shed blood and pursue violence and to waste blood in mutual wounds.” Gerald skillfully linked the two events by pulling them into the contemporary world, with the phrases, “hoc nostro tempore,” and “nostris diebus.” Talgarth and Ewias

bruna quoque glacie constrictus, et aquarum superficie in lubricam testam frigore concreta, somum horribilem, tamquam multorum animalium in umum collectorum mugitum, emitit,” Dimock 35.

¹¹³ “Sed hoc forte, glaciale testudine deorsum residente, aeris inclusi, et per fenestras occultas sensim exhalantis, subito interdum et violenta foci erupit.” Dimock 35-36.

¹¹⁴ Ab eurro vero de Talgarth et Ewys moniana praetendit. Quorum incolae continuis inimicitiis, et odio implacabili, mutuis vulneribus sanguinem fundere et caedibus insissere non desistunt. Quanti vero et quam enormess excessus super matrimonii cruentissimis, protractis tamen potius quam contractis, et sanguinoletento divorcio praedepitis, ceterisque multis crudeliter exactis, hoc nostro tempore finibus istis acciderint, allis explicare locum damus,” Dimock 36.
fell within his diocese, so he may have witnessed firsthand the forced marriages and rapes he mentioned above. The Brut only recorded one rape narrative for the twelfth century, so it is not clear from the records the specific events to which he was referring in this passage. Around 1109, Owain ap Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, a prince from Powys in North Wales, had raped and kidnapped Gerald’s grandmother, Nest, a Welsh princess who had married Gerald of Windsor, the steward of Henry II. The elaborate process of revenge involved multiple stages of bloodshed. The issue of forced marriage may have concerned Gerald not just for its violence, but for the ecclesiastical infractions that would have accompanied it, such as divorce, incest, and illegitimate offspring. He considered this yet another instance of the ceaseless fighting that plagued the Welsh aristocracy, leading to the continuing damage of ecclesiastical and political control.

The human violence transferred onto a bloodstained landscape demonstrated both the stylistic influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth on Gerald’s writing and the predominance of the historical tradition that encompassed them both. With different aims but similar techniques, Geoffrey of Monmouth (d.1155) embodied history in the landscape through his own Historia Regum Britanniae. Geoffrey provides an interesting addendum to the British historical tradition because he interpreted history through a primarily secular lens. Writers of the Anglo-Norman historiographical tradition possessed an interest in both the role of the individual in history and the

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115 Brut 55-59.
psychological motivations behind particular events. Greed, violence, and the charisma of exceptional leaders drove the rise and fall of nations. It was this very human process that intrigued Geoffrey.\textsuperscript{117} When he narrated the Trojan invasion of Britain, he explored the process by which invaders conquered and regimes rose. The ramifications of these violent historical events manifested themselves in the earth and water in ways similar to Gerald’s use of nature.\textsuperscript{118}

As the Trojans established their rule in Britain over the native race of giants, they marked the landscape with blood and deaths. Corineus, a commander of the Trojan army, fought with Goemagog, the leader of the giants, in a wrestling match over control of the area that would become Cornwall. When Corineus won, he hurled Goemagog’s body over a cliff, staining the water below with blood.\textsuperscript{119} The blood in the water represented the subjugation of the natives by the Trojans. This type of imagery continued to recur throughout the narrative. The major rivers of Britain all derived their names from rulers who had died in their waters. Humber, a Trojan prince, while fighting with his brother, drowned in the river that henceforth bore his name.\textsuperscript{120} Gwendolyn, the wife of the first British ruler, murdered her husband’s mistress and illegitimate daughter by drowning them in a river. The British began calling the river the Habren after the

\textsuperscript{119} Geoffrey of Monmouth 17.
murdered girl.\footnote{Geoffrey of Monmouth 75.} The Trojans also renamed the landscape to reflect their power. After defeating the natives, Brutus, the Trojan leader, decided to call the island, Britain, to memorialize his success as a leader.\footnote{Geoffrey of Monmouth 77.} His two oldest sons divided the country between them and named the two halves of the kingdom after themselves.\footnote{Geoffrey of Monmouth 72.} Geoffrey thus crystallized the experiences of violence in the soil and water of Britain.

The use of nature imagery to explain history constituted the framework of the Itinerarium's moral argument. Gerald used the lakes of Wales and their miraculous behaviors to control the thematic unity of entire chapters. In this way, he expressed his concern over contemporary problems, such as feuding among the nobility and its resulting destruction, through the marvels of the water. For example, the natural wonders that occurred right before the deaths of Henry I and Henry II imparted different messages concerning a series of separate events. As Gerald related, on the night before Henry I died in 1135, two lakes alongside the Welsh border, one natural and one artificial, overflowed their banks. The artificial lake dried up, but the natural one mysteriously relocated two miles away, animal life intact. In 1189, a lake in Normandy experienced an equally bizarre occurrence shortly before Henry II's death. The fish of the lake fought together with such ferocity that they alarmed the local peasants. The battle did not end until all the fish killed each other. As Gerald concluded these two episodes, "by this

\footnote{Geoffrey of Monmouth 75.}
amazing and unprecedented sign, by the death of many they predicted the death of one.”\textsuperscript{124} On one level, the fish and the lakes they lived in reacted to the momentous events that had occurred in England.\textsuperscript{125}

Gerald, however, strategically placed the accounts between two independent anecdotes. Directly before, he had briefly discussed a local church in Brecknockshire that burned to the ground during an enemy raid. The fire destroyed everything but the consecrated host. Directly afterward, at the end of the chapter, Gerald condemned the interfamilial violence that had beset the surrounding area.

In truth, enough men hold from memory the lands of Wales and abhor how truly and how many deaths happened in our days, in addition to blindings of brothers and first-cousins, on account of the miserable strivings for lands, those between the Wye and the Severn, that is to say, between the boundaries of Maelfenydd, Elfael, and Gwrythynion.\textsuperscript{126}

The vicious fighting of the fish over the same lake directly related to the local fighting between brothers over their inheritance.

Gerald’s opinions of the English kings were so contradictory that it is difficult to decide definitively why he chose to reference their deaths as the focal point of this chapter. He blatantly censured Henry II, particularly over his arguments with the church, his indecisiveness before committing to the Third Crusade, and his invasions of Wales in 1157, 1158, and 1165, but he also spent ten years serving him as court chaplain and tutor

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{... miro et inaudito prognostico, multorum morte, mortem unius praesagientes.} “Dimock 18.
\textsuperscript{125} At the moment, I have not found any other references to these events. However, if they exist in other accounts, I would like to include them in the argument in its final version.
to his sons.\textsuperscript{127} Gerald may have been making a pointed statement about the English kings’ inability to control their territory effectively, thus successfully preventing feuding. Perhaps he was suggesting that their stranglehold upon Wales prevented the development of any other viable system of sovereignty to impose order.

However he may have intended his critique of Henry II, the violent image of the fish fighting in the lake served the censorial tone of this chapter well. The raid that destroyed the church offered an example of the mindless destruction that feuding engendered. Men who fought over territory and inheritance obeyed no earthly laws, and when they burned churches, they flouted God’s laws as well. Since the host miraculously survived the fire, God clearly pronounced judgement against this behavior. Gerald thus related a three-fold account of the same problem, illustrating how both divine and natural powers exacted justice for human failures. Although he did not draw an explicit connection, the repetitive nature of these events clarified his point about contemporary violence.

The aforementioned feuding in these areas, Maelienydd, Elfael, and Gwrthrynion, was a well-documented problem. Gerald had experienced its disastrous effects either firsthand or through his relatives and friends. Although in this passage, he spoke in general, rather than specific terms, it is possible to identify the activities of Gerald’s patrons and acquaintances in these districts by searching through the native Welsh chronicle, the \textit{Brut}.

\textsuperscript{126} Quanti vero et quam enormes excessus, super fratrum et consobrinorum exoculationibus, ob miseras terrarum ambitiones, in his inter Waiam et Sabrinam, Mailenith scilicet, Elvail, et Warthrenniaum finibus, his nostris diebus acciderint, satis Walliae fines memoriter tenent et abhorrent, ” Dimock 19.

\textsuperscript{127} For an account of Henry II’s invasions into Wales, see R.R. Davies, 51-3.
Maelienydd, Elfael, and Gwrthrynion all fell within the diocese of Brecknockshire, where Gerald had held the position of Archdeacon since 1175. An energetic clergyman, he conducted frequent visitations in these districts. In his memoirs, Gerald had mentioned seeking the aid of Cadwallon ap Madog, the prince of Maelienydd, to secure protection within the diocese.¹²⁸ An entry of the Brut identified Cadwallon as the first cousin of Rhys ap Gruffudd, which would make him a relative of Gerald himself. Gerald referred to him as his kinsman in his memoirs.¹²⁹ Cadwallon and his family possessed an extremely bloody history, fraught with betrayal and murder.

Their family relations were not unusual by the standards of the Welsh nobility in the twelfth century, and merely act as examples of the phenomenon that affected all the significant native dynasties. In 1160, Cadwallon, the prince of Maelienydd, had seized his brother, Einion Clud, the prince of Elvael, and turned him over to an enemy noble, Owain Gwynedd. Owain Gwynedd next offered him to the French as a prisoner.¹³⁰ By 1165, however, the two brothers had resolved their differences enough to unite with their cousin, Rhys Gruffudd, against Henry II.¹³¹ They managed to maintain their truce during 1175-1176, while Gerald was in residence at Brecknockshire as their archdeacon. During this year, they accompanied the leading princes of South Wales on a visit to the court of

¹³⁰ Brut 141.
¹³¹ Brut 145.
Henry II in a grand gesture of friendship after the previous revolt.\textsuperscript{132} Also in this year, Gerald's first time in his native country in a decade proved particularly volatile for nearby families. The prince of Caerleon, in South Wales, Hwyl ap Iorwerth, blinded and castrated his uncle to prevent any children from challenging his own heir. The same year, in Anglesey, Rhodri ab Owain attempted to gain a share of his patrimony, prompting his brother, Dafydd ab Owain, to imprison him in shackles. Yet the tides had turned by the end of the year, when Rhodri escaped from prison and chased his brother from their lands.\textsuperscript{133} The saga of the Brecknockshire princes continued in 1177, with the murder of Einion Clud, the prince of Elvael, although the Brut did not identify the culprit. Gerald had resumed his studies in Paris at this point. In 1179, the same year he returned to Wales, Cadwallon, Gerald's kinsman and protector, was murdered as well.\textsuperscript{134} In 1187, the year before Gerald undertook his travels through Wales, the brothers of Llywelyn ap Cadwallon captured and murdered him. Although the Brut did not specify whether or not these were the sons of Cadwallon of Maelienydd, it is possible, given the family name and the dates, and Cadwallon did have at least two sons, Hywel and Maelgyn, who had united their forces in 1194 to destroy the castle of Rheeadrgwy.\textsuperscript{135}

Aside from his familial connections to the Cadwallon family, Gerald, as the archdeacon, relied upon the local ruling princes to provide him with the necessary

\textsuperscript{132} Brut 165.
\textsuperscript{133} Brut 165-166.
\textsuperscript{134} Brut 169.
\textsuperscript{135} Brut 175.
authority to quell his unruly flock. Maelienydd and Elfael, located on the border of Gerald’s diocese, proved to be the sites of continuous problems for Gerald. When the villagers of Llanbadarn, urged on by their clerks, first chased away his messengers and then refused to welcome him, he sent word to Cadwallon, who immediately sent assistance.\(^{136}\) In 1176, both Gerald, as representative from the bishopric of St. David’s, and Adam, the Bishop of Llanebury, as representative from the neighboring bishopric of St. Asaph’s, appealed to Cadwallon in a dispute over control of these areas. Gerald was able to retain this territory for St. David’s only through the intervention of Cadwallon.\(^{137}\) Considering the dependent relationship of the clergy on the nobility, the ceaseless feuding that the Welsh chronicles record disrupted the stability of their lands and provided further obstacles for the shaky authority of reforming ecclesiastics, such as Gerald.

One final aspect of this complex chapter requires analysis; Gerald’s use of animal imagery, particularly the tale of the murderous fish that mimicked the behavior of the local nobility, and its historical origins. Gerald learned this style from the early British historian, Gildas. In the *De Excidio Britonum*, Gildas strove to describe a world of desperation, and the strategies he employed to do so both continued the tradition of Orosius and inspired subsequent historians.\(^ {138}\) He wrote his jeremiad in South Wales, in

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\(^{137}\) *The Autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis* 49-56.

\(^{138}\) All translations will be from *Gildas: the Ruin of Britain and other works*. Ed. and Trans. Michael Winterbottom. (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., Ltd.) 1978.
about 540 AD, a century after Rome had pulled out of Britain. In the intervening period, Britain had experienced a backsliding of Roman civilization, which numerous invasions by Celtic and Anglo-Saxon tribes had fostered. He addressed his appeal especially to the kings and clerics of Britain in hopes that they would recognize and repent of their sins. The fetid landscape of Britain in the De Excidio Britonum, particularly the animals, embodied the state of morality that Gildas deplored in his contemporaries. Former inhabitants of the old Roman cities had degenerated into animals, living meager existences in the surrounding countryside. A.C. Sutherland has examined meticulously the bestial imagery in the De Excidio.139 While Gildas turned the suffering mass of the British into brutish beasts of the field, he rendered their leaders into savage lions. “The pitiable citizens were torn apart by their foes like lambs by the butcher; their lives became like that of the beasts of the field.”140 The Pictish and Scottish invaders became plagues of swarming insects and rabid wolves, “like dark throngs of worms who wriggle out of narrow fissures in the rock when the sun is high and the weather grows warm.”141 With this evocative language, Gildas expressed the nature of the British as he believed it to have been. The political leaders of Britain along with their throngs of followers had forgotten the teachings of Christianity. With no spiritual structure to their lives, they

140 Gildas 23.
141 Gildas 23.
could only survive like dumb beasts, without the moral fiber to combat the trials of natural and human enemies. 142

Stylistically, Gerald’s emulation of Gildas’s use of nature determined how his narrative reiterated its key themes. In his subsequent work, the Descriptio Kambriae, he acknowledged Gildas as the historian he most admired.

Gildas seems to me to be alone good for imitation, before all the other writers of Britain, whose same works he [Gerald] had often consulted for direction. 143 Who in those things that he saw and those things he himself knew, committing to writing, and lamenting the ruin of his people more than describing, he wove history with greater truth than embellishment. Therefore, Giraldus followed Gildas. Which man, oh! Would that he would be able to follow him in ways of life, having already made himself an imitator of the same, more with wisdom than with eloquence, more with spirit than with a pen, more with zelo than with writing style, and more with life than with words. 144

Gerald acknowledged his debt to Gildas’s style, a debt that becomes evident in studying the similarities in their usage of animals and nature.

Animal imagery appeared in the Itinerarium, contributing to the themes of societal violence and political disjuncture. The animal life of certain lakes possessed the ability to express their own opinions concerning the state of human affairs. Their reactions to events past and present served to further raise the readers’ thematic

142 Sutherland 158-160.
143 Gerald often switched back and forth between the first and third person in both the Itinerarium and the Descriptio Kambriae.
144 “Prae aliis itaque Britanniae scriptoribus, solus mihi Gildas, quoties eundem materiae cursus obtulerit, imitabilis esse videtur. Quia ea quae vidi et ipse cognovit scripto commendans, excidiunque gentis suae deplorans potius quam describens, veram magis historiam texui quam ornatem.
Gildam itaque Giraldus sequitur. Quem utinam moribus et vita sequi posset; factus ejusdem plus sapientia quam eloquentia, plus animo quam calamo, plus zelo quam stilo, plus vita quam verbis imitator.” Dimock 158.
consciousness. The miraculous properties of the lake, Brecknock Mere, in Brecknockshire again serve as an example. The incident involved Gerald’s great-uncle, Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr (d. 1137) and two Norman knights, who, travelling home from the king’s court, found a great flock of birds covering the lake. One knight remarked that according to Welsh legend, the rightful ruler of Wales could order the birds to burst into song. “An ancient saying has been retained from antiquity in Wales, that if the natural prince of Wales, coming to this lake, orders the birds that they should sing, immediately they all will sing.” The birds refused to respond to the entreaties of the Norman knights. When Gruffudd prayed to God, however, “the nearby birds, each in its own way beating the water with outstretched wings, began to sing as one to proclaim him [ruler].” When the knights reported the incident to Henry I, he expressed his lack of surprise. “Even though we impose injury and violence on these people through our great strength, nonetheless, they are recognized to have hereditary right in their same lands.”

The anecdote contained a miniature account of the greater struggle between the Norman knights and the Welsh nobility. Although the three companions were engaging in a good-natured contest, before taking his turn, Gruffudd had lain prostrate on the

145 “‘Antiquum, inquit, ‘verbum, et ab antiquo in Wallia retentum est, quod si naturalis Walliae princeps, ad hunc lacum veniens, avibus ejusdem praeceperit ut canant, statim omnes canent, ‘” Dimock 34.
146 Et continuo aviculae cunctae, quaebit in suo genere, alis expansis aquam verberando, canere una et proclamare coeperunt,” Dimock 35.
147 “. . . non adeo est admirandum. Quia licet gentibus illis per vires nostras magnas injuriam et violentiam irrogemus, nihilominus tamen in terris eisdem jus hereditarium habere noscuntur,” Dimock 35.
ground in supplication to God “just as if about to enter a battle.” The incident clearly reenacted actual battles fought on Welsh soil, only this time, moral truth, rather than earthly power, determined the victor. Gerald’s use of the word hereditary, *hereditarium*, was an especially powerful choice in light of his continual reproach to the feuding Welsh nobility. He considered their problems directly related to their subjugation by the Normans. We, as historians, can understand this passage as Gerald’s reflections on the impact of colonialism. The Welsh nobles killed each other over their familial inheritance, but the Normans denied them their rightful inheritance, Wales itself. As the king acknowledged, the landscape embodied truth on a moral level, and rebelliously disclosed those truths to the ruling powers.

The concept of a moral landscape again tied Gerald’s writing with the British historical tradition, especially Gildas. In the *De Excidio Britonum*, Gildas presented a world decimated by urban decay, poisonous vegetation, and agricultural devastation. The ruined cities expressed the sloth of an uninspired people. He opened his lament with a brief description that presented the infinite possibilities of Britain. It possessed castles, cities, and vast lands ideal for cultivation. This pleasant beginning lent an irony to his following imagery of insidious decay. Gildas continually reiterated that the great urban centers the Romans had built were deserted. “But the cities of our land are not

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148 *At illo frustra praecipiente, sicut et praecipitio Giphini postea quoque Pagano, videns Giphinus ad eorundem instantiam sibi jam praecipiendi lege consortii necessitatem incumbere statim ab equo descendens, et in orientem genua ponens, tanquam duelli conflictum ibidem ingressurus, nunc cernus in*
populated even now as they once were; right to the present they are deserted, in ruins and
unkempt." Any new attempts at building fell to pieces because of shoddy
workmanship. The evil of the times had saturated not only manmade structures, but the
earth on which they stood. "Hence the sprig of iniquity, the root of bitterness, the
virulent plant that our merits so well deserved, sprouted in our soil with savage shoots
and tendrils." The sins of the British had taken root in the entire landscape, preventing
any refuge from lawlessness and immorality.

In the Itinerarium the natural world did react positively to human behavior one
time, and significantly, the situation concerned Gerald’s personal and national ambitions.
He discussed the River Alun that ran through the cemetery of St. David’s Cathedral, the
most blessed landmark in Gerald’s geography. Gerald devoted the latter half of his career
to trying in vain to secure the archbishopric of St. David’s for himself. His maternal
uncle, David II, had been archbishop, and Gerald attempted to emulate him throughout
his life. He hoped that under his guidance, St. David’s would become the leading Welsh
bishopric, independent from the authority of Canterbury. This ambition drove him to
Rome no less than three times to plead his case before the Pope, never losing hope of
achieving his desired position. Not only did he include a lengthy history of St. David’s in
the Itinerarium, but he related that when his maternal uncle, David II, was bishop, the

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terram et humiliter prostratus, nunc oculis ac manibus in coelum intentus, devotas ad Deum fudit
orationes," Dimock 34.
149 Sutherland 167.
150 Gildas 28.
river Alun ran with wine. Also during David’s lifetime, a spring in the cathedral churchyard ran with milk.\textsuperscript{152} It was hardly coincidental that one of the few instances of positive natural prophesy occurred at the cathedral his ancestors had patronized. Under Gerald’s family, his account implied, nature reflected divine pleasure with human rule.

As Gerald was to do in the late twelfth century, Orosius, Gildas, and Geoffrey of Monmouth relied upon their geographical imagery to signal their particular historical perspective. Each author, while referencing the work of his predecessors, reworked the technique according to his own literary contrivance. Orosius began a tradition of historians who employed geography to serve the thematic purposes of their narrative. Gildas’s fevered imagination had conjured a world of ruins, populated by lost souls. Geoffrey of Monmouth’s account of the Trojan discovery of Britain examined the mechanics of historical conquest. Although they validated their writing through references to classical authorities, they imbued landscape with character and memory as befitted their literary designs. Their opening descriptions of Britain presented the landscape as an integral segment of the historical nexus. Gerald of Wales therefore possessed an entire tradition, consisting of the historians whom he most admired and consulted, to rely upon when creating his emotional map of Wales. This technique accorded well with the concept of the \textit{speculum}, which as the introduction to this thesis

\textsuperscript{151} Gildas 26.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Hoc autem mihi notabile videtur, quod nostris temporibus, proesidente videlicet David secundo, tam fluvium hunc vino manare, quam fontem quem Pistildeqi id est, Fistulam David vocant, quia quasi per
has explained, operated within literature and history as an instrument of indirect vision. The lakes, rivers, and springs in the *Itinerarium* operated as mirrors of human folly—they offered the benefit of extraordinary vision to the reader. They taught through shock value—the images of lakes turning into blood would force the reader into recognizing the ills of his society. By using natural bodies of water, already part of the larger landscape, Gerald was able to combine geographic imagery with catoptric imagery. Having pronounced his work a *speculum* in the *praefatio*, he then proceeded to explore the image of the morally authoritative mirror in a variety of ways. The *Itinerarium Kambriae* demonstrated his fascination with the mystical marriage of meaning and landscape. In the tradition of his predecessors, he engaged his own ability to manipulate metaphor in the *Itinerarium*, imbuing water with the characteristics of moral reflection. By combining traditional historical methodology with the newly popular *speculum* genre, Gerald displayed both his intellectual dexterity and his involvement in contemporary concerns.

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*fistulum quam quandam in coemiterium ab oriente fons dilabitur, lac stillare constat aliquoties esse comportum,* "Dimock 109."
CHAPTER 3
The Author As Exemplary Mirror

I have maintained in this thesis that Gerald of Wales designed his *Itinerarium Kambriae* as a *speculum*—a metaphorical mirror of morality. In this chapter, I will examine how Gerald created a protagonist whose personality and actions taught by good example, acting as an "exemplary mirror" according to the classification of Herbert Grabes.\(^{153}\) Grabes defined this type of literary mirror as either a book or a literary character that served as a model of praiseworthy or condemnable behavior.\(^{154}\) As I explained in the introduction, writers preceding Gerald as well as his contemporaries had used fictional characters and historical figures as exemplary mirrors. In his *Dialogues*, Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604) described the lives of saints so that their virtuous acts would inspire readers.\(^{155}\) Conrad of Hirsau, the author of the *Speculum Virginum* (written c. 1140), portrayed the deeds of noble women throughout history for the edification of young girls.\(^{156}\) Gerald, both the narrator and the protagonist in this autobiographical account of his travels through Wales, privileged his own character with the properties of an exemplum. It is necessary to remember that Gerald appeared in the narrative in two

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\(^{154}\) Grabes 48.


roles—the narrator who employed the first-person voice and Gerald, the archdeacon of Brecon, whose adventures preaching sermons in Wales the narrator described in the third-person. He freely alternated between these two voices throughout the narrative. Both of these personae behaved in exemplary fashion, demonstrating Christian morality and devotion to the cause of the Third Crusade. As a preacher, Gerald acted as an exemplum for the fictional audience within the story. He took the Cross first before exhorting others to follow his actions. Subsequent scenes portray audiences so affected by his preaching that they emulated his behavior and joined the Third Crusade. The narrator who spoke in the first-person voice and revealed bits of autobiographical information also displayed exemplary characteristics. Shifts between the first-person and the third-person voices, however, constantly reminded the audience that the narrator and the protagonist were the same person. This technique established a duality in the text between preaching and writing. At the same time, it created a parallel between the audience of Gerald’s sermons in the story and the audience who would read the Itinerarium. His self-described success as a preacher within the text mirrored his desired effectiveness as a writer of the text. As writer and character, therefore Gerald positioned himself as an exemplary mirror.

This exemplary status served to endow him with credibility as a writer. After studying theology and law at Paris, Gerald returned to England, determined to build a career upon his literary skills. Many men educated at the universities of Paris, Oxford,
and Bologna went on to careers at the Angevin court in government or ecclesiastical administration. To single himself out from the other clerics at court, Gerald needed to win the respect of contemporary men in power such as William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely (1190-96), Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (1186-1200), and Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (1207-28), to whom he dedicated the three editions of the *Itinerarium*. At the same time, he admittedly hoped to establish a reputation for literary mastery among future generations. Literary credibility, however, the exclusive property of an *auctor*, a revered literary figure, was difficult to achieve in the twelfth-century academic world.\(^{157}\) It was usually bestowed only on the deceased. Past works were always favored over present ones, and contemporary works could even be attributed to deceased authors. Every discipline possessed its own tradition of *auctores*, and scholars at universities achieved their degrees by meticulously studying their works. Gerald’s self-presentation in the *Itinerarium*, therefore, established his own claim to the literary prestige of an *auctor*. He equated the moral authority of the exemplum with the literary authority of the *auctor*. In this innovative use of the metaphor, the image of the exemplary mirror used the author rather than the subject to teach the reader. An exemplum within the text and an *auctor* of the text, Gerald fashioned himself as a writer whom present and future audiences would respect.

The Necessity of Literary Authority

This section concerns Gerald’s efforts to achieve recognition as a respected literary figure among his peers. I will first define “literary authority” according to the standards that Gerald and his educated patrons would have valued. Twelfth-century scholasticism was devoted to reflection and commentary upon the great auctores of past generations. According to the academic standards of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna, an auctor was both the author of a written text and an authority on his subject. An auctoritas was a selection from the work of an acknowledged auctor. The study of auctores formed the basis of university education. There were auctores specific to each discipline—Priscian and Donatus for grammar, Cicero for rhetoric, Aristotle, Porphyry, and Boethius for dialectic, Boethius and Martianus Capella for arithmetic, Gratian for canon law, Galen and Constantine the African for medicine, Hyginus and Ptolemy for astronomy, and Peter Lombard for theology. Masters in the universities centered their lectures around explicating the auctores. In the case of grammar and rhetoric, they offered them to their students as models to imitate. The first lecture in a series introduced the auctor, his intention, the structure of the work, and its pertinence to the field of study, and subsequent lectures delivered extensive commentaries on every section of the text. During his years in Paris, Gerald followed this format when he delivered lectures upon

\[158\] Minnis 13.
\[159\] Minnis 14-15.
Gratian’s *Decretals* to his students. In addition to delivering these lectures, scholastics wrote commentaries on the works of *actiores*, a practice that had increased markedly in the twelfth century. Nikolaus M. Häring succinctly summarized the popular undertaking.

“One cannot help perceiving it as a reflection of the profound reverence and respect of the age for the giants from whose shoulders its scholars professed to pierce more deeply the distant horizons of learning.” Peter Abelard, to cite a famous example, composed commentaries on Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, and Aristotle’s *Categories, De interpretatione, De divisonibus, De syllogismo*, and the *Topica*. His contemporary, Thierry of Chartres, wrote a commentary on Cicero’s *De inventione*. The preeminence of the *actiores* contributed to academic conceptions of what constituted valuable literature.

A medieval audience equated literary credibility with moral authority. Not everyone who wrote could count as an *actio*. To achieve the title, a writer needed both “intrinsic worth” and “authenticity.” A text possessed “intrinsic worth” if it accorded with accepted Christian beliefs. An *actio*’s authority was therefore inherently moral, and the Bible was the ultimate text possessing moral authority. Twelfth-century writers often disparaged the moral authority of poetry unless, as in the case of the works of Ovid,

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162 Häring 173.
163 Häring 173.
164 Minnis 16-11.
165 Minnis 10.
they considered them extensive allegories based on Christian truths.\textsuperscript{166} An “authentic” text was the creation only of an \textit{auctor}. Books without known authors could not possess \textit{auctoritas}, and scholars believed them to be of lesser value. Scholars conferred the status of \textit{auctor} on deceased writers whose works they valued, and living writers did not possess the requisite literary authority.

This presented something of a conundrum to scholars like Gerald who attempted to make a career of writing in the style of the classical man of letters. Critics, in fact, could doubt that a new work of merit was actually the product of a contemporary. This mentality forced Gerald’s friend, Walter Map to defend his \textit{Dissuasio Valerii ad Rufinam} from charges of plagiarism.\textsuperscript{167}

\textbf{My only offence is, that I am alive; it is, however, one which I have no intention of correcting—by dying. I changed our names for those of dead men in the title, for I knew that would be popular; had I not done so, my book, like myself, would have been thrown aside.}\textsuperscript{168}

He then predicted the success of his book among future generations, simply because through death he would acquire a greater prestige as a writer.

\begin{quote}
When I have begun to rot, the book will begin to gain savour, my decease will cover all its defects, and in the remote generations my ancientness will gain me dignity; for then, as now, old copper will be of more account than new gold. It will be an age of apes (as now is), not men; they will scoff at their present, and have no patience for men of worth.\textsuperscript{169}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{166} Minnis 11.  
\textsuperscript{167} Minnis 12.  
\textsuperscript{169} Map 313.
As Map dryly observed, scholars favored the products of past writers even over new works of genuine quality.

Gerald nonetheless believed that maintaining academic standards in the pursuit of literature would bring him success with powerful patrons outside of the university system. While working at court, he planned to use his skill at letters to gain the attention of Henry II and his high-ranking administrators. Henry II cultivated a reputation for his court as a cultural center.\textsuperscript{170} He had received an extensive education in the household of his uncle, Robert of Gloucester, a patron of history and literature, where he had learned science under the tutelage of Adelard of Bath.\textsuperscript{171} Legal writing, history, and romance flourished due to the encouragement of Henry II and his family, and a host of talented writers served at his court in administrative and religious capacities. The list of renowned authors who spent time at his court included Marie de France, Wace, Ranulf de Glanville, Walter Map, Peter of Blois, Benoit de Sainte-Maure, and Roger of Hoveden, the chronicler of Northern history.

Despite the impressive number of masterpieces produced at Henry II's court, however, the system of patronage was not satisfactory to all. Gerald, Walter Map, and Wace all complained that Henry had failed to reward their services sufficiently.\textsuperscript{172} In the


\textsuperscript{171} Haskins 72.

\textsuperscript{172} Haskins 74.
Roman de Rou, Wace’s account of the Norman Conquest, he criticized Henry for inadequate remuneration.\textsuperscript{173}

\begin{quote}
 Mult me duna, plus me pamist:
 Et se il tot duné m’eust
 Ço k’il me pamist, mielz me fut.\textsuperscript{174}
\end{quote}

Wace explained that Henry had commissioned Benoit de Saint-Maure to write a similar chronicle, revealing the rivalries that existed among the aspiring writers at court. Court service sometimes entailed interminable waiting for recognition. Walter Map worked at court for approximately thirty years before becoming Archdeacon of Oxford in 1197. He tried unsuccessfully for the bishoprics of Hereford and St. David’s. Of all Henry II’s disgruntled clerics, Walter’s literary laments were by far the liveliest. His De Nugis Curialium actually included a comparison of the Angevin court to hell.

\begin{quote}
 Hell, it is said, is a penal place; and if I may presume so far, in an access of boldness, I would rashly say that the court is, not hell, but a place of punishment. Yet I doubt whether I have defined it rightly: a place it does seem to be, but it is therefore not hell. Nay, it is certain that whatever contains a thing or things in itself, is a place. Grant, then, that is a place: let us see whether it be a penal one. What torment has hell which is not present here in an aggravated form?\textsuperscript{175}
\end{quote}

Gerald, who served Henry II at the same time, expressed similar sentiments in the preface to the Itinerarium when describing the emptiness of court life.

\begin{quote}
 If you seek advancement at court, ambition will attract you and capture you so strongly that you will not be let go alive from the court, unless it is satisfied. Moreover, if your labor is in vain, you will lose one more year, and then year after year, and thus
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{174} Wace 5.
\textsuperscript{175} Walter Map 9.
into infinity.... You will also incur the sacrifice of time which is irrevocable and the
greatest sacrifice of all. 176

The opportunities that had originally attracted men such as Map, Gerald, and Wace to the
Angevin court brought them into competition with too many equally ambitious talented
civil servants.

In the preface to the *Itinerarium*, Gerald revealed his original ambitions for his
career and his subsequent disillusionment. As he explained, he had first looked to the
Angevin kings to recognize his literary merit and promote him to an appropriate position,
dedicating the *Topographica Hibernica* to Henry II in 1188 and the *Expugnatio Hibernia*
to Richard I. c. 1189.

I wasted my time in fruitless labor when I dedicated my works to princes of small
love for learning and many occupations, the *Topography of Ireland* to Henry II, king of
the English, and the *Vaticinal History* [Gerald sometimes referred to the *Expugnatio
Hibernia* in this way] to Richard, count of Poitou, his son and—if only it were not
true—his successor in vices! 177

In 1196, Gerald left the English court, disappointed by the lack of opportunities. By the
time he was engaged in writing the first edition of the *Itinerarium*, he had lost faith in
royal patronage and had redirected his energies towards the English bishops.

176 *Nempe si quiescunt facis in curia, te tanto fortius allicit et annectit ambitio, non missura cutem, non
curiam, nisi plena. Sin autem labor in damno est, adhuc iamen annum apponis, et iterum annum anno, et
si in infinitum, ne una cum censu tempora perdideris, facturam temporis, quae irreparabilis est et omnium
major, incurris.* Dimock 6.

177 *Sed quia principis parum literatis et multum occupatis, Hibernianum Anglorum regi Henri secundo
Topographiam, ejusdemque filio, et utinam vitiorum non sucedano, Pictavestium comiti Ricardo
Vaticinalen Historiam, vacuo quondam quod accessorium illud et infructuoso labore peregi,* Giraldi
Cambrensis Opera. Ed. J.F. Dimock. Vol. VI. Rolls Series. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and
Dyer, 1868) 7.
He dedicated the three editions of the *Itinerarium* to three bishops, the first to Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (written c. 1191), the second to William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely (written c. 1197), and the third to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (written c. 1213), hoping that they would appoint him to high-ranking episcopal positions. All three men were twelfth-century success stories. Having received similar training in the masterpieces of the *auctores*, they had achieved the eminence in their lifetimes to which Gerald, Map, and others aspired. From c. 1180 to 1206, Stephen Langton studied at Paris and lectured on theology. He even studied under Peter the Chanter, a master in theology who had also taught Gerald.¹⁷⁸ William de Longchamp enjoyed a successful career in government administration under Richard, becoming chancellor in 1190. He later acted as chief Justiciar when Richard was away on the Third Crusade. Gerald worked in his household briefly during this period. William offered him the Welsh bishopric of Bangor, which Gerald refused, hoping for either an English bishopric or the bishopric of St. David's.¹⁷⁹ By the end of his career, Gerald professed an intense hatred for Bishop William.¹⁸⁰ In 1197, however, when Gerald dedicated the second edition of the *Itinerarium* to him, he must have still been hoping for his support. Of these three men, Gerald’s relationship with Bishop Hugh of Lincoln (1186-1200) proved to be the most profitable to his career. Although Hugh had received his education

¹⁸⁰ *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales* 117.
at a Carthusian monastery rather than a university, he demonstrated a clear commitment
to learning after becoming Bishop of Lincoln in 1186.\textsuperscript{181} He appointed William de
Montibus as chancellor, an acclaimed theologian and an old friend of Gerald's from
Paris. The combined efforts of Hugh and William de Montibus revitalized the schools at
Lincoln, and Hugh extended invitations to respected scholars, including Gerald.\textsuperscript{182}
Gerald accepted, finding Lincoln a welcome retreat after leaving the court, remaining
there from 1194-1199.\textsuperscript{183} He retired there for a second time in 1207, after resigning his
archdeaconry in favor of his nephew. Roger of Rolleston, the Dean of Lincoln Cathedral,
probably commissioned the life of Bishop Hugh that Gerald wrote in these years.\textsuperscript{184}
Gerald considered these men his intellectual equals. In the \textit{Itinerarium}, his self-
presentation was an appeal to their personal erudition as well as to the scholastic world at
large. He fashioned himself as a figure of authority—moral and literary—according to
contemporary concepts of Christianity and scholasticism.

The next section will analyze the techniques by which Gerald achieved this
authority in the \textit{Itinerarium}. As the protagonist, Gerald acted as an exemplary model of
virtuous behavior, forming the moral center of the narrative. The protagonist, therefore,
possessed the moral supremacy of the Christian Church. By revealing to the audience that the central character and the author were the same person, Gerald achieved both moral authority and literary credibility.
The Protagonist as Exemplary Mirror

I have explained that Gerald of Wales appeared in two roles in the *Itinerarium Kambriae*, as protagonist and as narrator. Here I will examine Gerald as the central character of the text. Through his personality and behavior, the *Itinerarium* presented Gerald as an exemplary mirror. In his role as preacher, he possessed every desirable quality for emulation and admiration. The narrative portrayed his actions as worthy of imitation, both by the fictional audience within the text and the actual audience. As an exemplary mirror, Gerald’s character became the moral focus point of the narrative.

As the exemplum of the story, Gerald possessed the authority of Christian morality. Traditionally, writers, teachers, and preachers employed exempla as empathetic appeals to their audience. Larry Scanlon has defined the medieval exemplum as “a narrative enactment of cultural authority. . . . In its narrative the exemplum reenacts the actual, historical embodiment of communal value in a protagonist or an event, and then, in its moral, effects the value’s reemergence with the obligatory force of moral law.”¹⁸⁵ The cultural authority of the exemplum in the early medieval Latin tradition was always that of the Church and its representatives, that is, the power of the Christian church that the Pope and his representatives exercised over the entirety of Christian society.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Scanlon 38.
Characters and stories that expressed the nature of this power, thereby supporting its validity, acted as exempla in sermons and literary texts.

Traditional didactic texts encouraged preachers to include exempla in their sermons. In the *Dialogues*, Pope Gregory I articulated why exempla were effective means of instruction. He explained why they appealed to both pupils and audiences of sermons.

Then too, the lives of the saints are often more effective than mere instruction for inspiring us to love heaven as our home. Hearing about their example will generally be helpful in two ways. In the first place, as we compare ourselves with those who have gone before, we are filled with a longing for the future life; secondly, if we have too high an opinion of our own worth, it makes us humble to find that others have done better. . . . An explanation of holy scripture teaches us how to attain virtue and persevere in it, whereas a description of miracles shows us how this acquired virtue reveals itself in those who persevere in it.

Exempla, according to Gregory, portrayed material manifestations of Biblical virtue. They provided tangible explanations for students eager to understand the Bible's complexities. Exempla possessed moral authority as the "narrative enactments" of Biblical virtue. At the same time, they demonstrated how virtuous behavior could occur in day-to-day existence, motivating students by portraying virtue as obtainable.

The best way to teach, however, was through personal example. According to Pope

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188 Pope Gregory I, *Dialogues* 5-6.
189 Scanlon 34.
Gregory I in the *Regula Pastoralis*, his guidebook for preachers, a preacher was most effective when his own lifestyle confirmed the validity of his lesson.\(^{190}\)

The ruler should always be exemplary in his conduct, that by his manner of life he may show the way of life to his subjects, and that the flock, following the teaching and conduct of its shepherd, may proceed the better through example rather than words.\(^{191}\)

As Gregory explained, if the preacher taught by example, he made his lesson more accessible to his audience. The exemplum offered the audience a focal point for identification—a character they could emulate or a situation to which they could relate. In order to successfully inspire his audience as the protagonist of the *Itinerarium*, Gerald needed to not only provide them with examples of Christian virtue, but to demonstrate that virtue through his own actions.

The narrative immediately revealed that Gerald’s deeds were worthy of emulation. It established his exemplary status in the first dramatic scene, when the audience literally mirrored his behavior. This was the occasion of the Archbishop Baldwin’s first public sermon.

At once, with the sermon over the matter of the Cross having been spoken by the Archbishop in public, and having been related to the Welsh through an interpreter, he stood up first of all, who wrote this, providing an example for others, to the present importuning of the king and the promised full reminder of the archbishop and the Justittiar so often on behalf of the king, and having fallen at the feet of the holy man, he undertook the sign of the Cross with devotion, after repeated and anxious arguments with himself, for the injury and insult to the cross

\(^{191}\) Gregory I, 1950 50.
of Christ, with the persuasion of proper reason, and to the most valid resolution of all . . . 192

The *Itinerarium* explicitly stated that Gerald inspired others to action, "aliis exemplum praebens." The narrative further cemented his position as the exemplary mirror when a series of notable personages, including the Prince of Elvael and Peter de Leia, the Archbishop of St. David's, took the Cross, following his lead. The phrasing of this passage emphasized that these men had not acted from spontaneous piety, but from the example Gerald had provided. "Which example Peter, the Bishop of St. David's and a Cluniac monk, both imitated and followed."193 His decision to take the Cross next encouraged the crowds to throw themselves before the Archbishop, in a mass effort to take the Cross. This placement of this scene at the opening of the narrative is hardly accidental. As the purpose of the mission was to gain warriors for the Third Crusade, Gerald's valiant action provided the impetus for the entire story. Everyone who subsequently vowed to avenge Jerusalem therefore followed the moral path Gerald had first trod.

As he traveled further into Wales, Gerald continued to inspire his audiences through his moral example. Both Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Gerald

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192 "Ubi sermone statim super negotio crucis ab archipraesule publice facto, et per interpretem Walensibus exposito, primus omnium, ad importunam quae praecesserat regis instantiam, et pollertis plenam tam archiepiscopi quam justicarii totes ex parte regis commotionem, qui scripsit haec, aliis exemplum praebens, se primus erexit, et ad validissimam quoque omnium inductionem, praemissis quidem occasionaliter adjutam, post crebas et anxias secum disputationes, ob temporis demum irmaniam et crucis Christi contumeliam, propriae ratione persuasione, ad pedes viri sancti prouolatus crucis signaculum devote suscepsit," Dimock 14
preached in French and Latin, so often an interpreter was present for the benefit of those audience members who spoke only Welsh. During one momentous sermon, however, he delivered his message without the aid of an interpreter. Miraculously, his words affected even those Welshmen who could understand only their native vernacular. As the *Itinerarium* related, the crowd rushed towards him, filled with desperate desire to fight for Christ.

The surging crowd was attracted by the multitude, both the knights and the common people. Where though something fantastic, and as if it was led by a miracle to the multitude, the fact that the words of God expressed by the Archdeacon, while his tongue spoke with Latin and Gallic, those who knew neither tongue were so moved to an abundance of tears no less than the others, even as they ran to the sign of the cross in flocks.194

In this particularly noteworthy account, Gerald communicated to his audience by virtue of his inherent morality rather than his eloquence. Gerald’s gift of preaching resided in his inherent moral worth. Earthly barriers such as language had no effect upon his ability to communicate spiritually. The audience responded to his virtuous qualities by imitation. The combined efforts of Gerald and those following his lead contributed to the cause of the Crusade. In this way, Gerald’s personal authority in the *Itinerarium* became synonymous with Christian authority.

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193 *Quem illico Petrus Menevensis episcopus, et Cluniacensis monachus, tam imitatus est quam secutus,* Dimock 14.
194 *... turbae allecta est multitudino tam militaris quam plebs. Ubi et pro mirando, et quasi pro miraculo ducetur a multis, quod ad verbum Domini ab archidiocono prolatum, cum tamen lingua Latina et Gallica loqueretur, non minus illi qui neutram linguam noverunt, quam ali, tam ad lacrimarum affluentiam moti fuerunt, quam etiam ad crucis signaculum catervatem accurrerunt,* Dimock, 82-83.
The Author as Exemplum

The *Itinerarium* depicted Gerald, the protagonist, as an exemplary mirror of Christian behavior. Gerald appeared as narrator as well as character, however. It was the interplay between the two roles that produced literary credibility as well as moral authority. As the author of the text, he characterized himself as an exemplary man. In his first-person interventions into the narrative, the author identified himself as Gerald de Barri, the archdeacon of Brecon. Throughout the *Itinerarium*, he revealed bits of autobiographical information concerning his family, his habits, and his writing ambitions. In these narratorial asides, he always described his morals in the most glowing terms.

His lengthy examination of several orders of the Church illustrated his narratorial self-fashioning. He had few positive opinions to offer on the current state of the Church. The Cluniacs he dismissed for their greed and fondness for luxury. Although he admired the ingenuity of the Cistercians, they came under particular censure for their zealous acquisitiveness in acquiring new lands. After this account, Gerald contrasted the moral failings of the two orders with his own modest lifestyle, using the voice of the first-person. As he related, he lived and worked with contentment in an unassuming house, a far cry from the ostentatious manors of the Cluniacs. The greedy concerns of the Cluniacs and the Cistercians highlighted his otherworldly simplicity.

Therefore, in these most temperate places that have been described before [Brecknockshire], having acquired a name of worth even if I have not obtained a
great name in respect to great riches and the pomp and tragedies of the world, in a
certain contented mediocrity suitable for studies and labor, having a little place
and residence neighboring and nearby the principle castle of Brecknockshire.
Which residence, always full of its own pleasures, and lifelong friendships, I far
prefer to the riches of Croesus, and I prefer it incomparably to those things that
are able to perish and pass by.\textsuperscript{195}

The use of the first person rendered this an explicit authorial reference. By presenting
himself as an exemplary mirror, Gerald, as author of the text, gained the same authority
with which he had endowed his character as a preacher. This implied a parallel between
preaching and writing, the respective functions of the protagonist and the narrator.

Gerald strategically designed this duality by reminding the readers that the hero of
the narrative was also the writer. The first dramatic scene underscored their joint identity.

“At once, with the matter of the Cross having been preached by the archbishop in public .
. . he stood up first of all, \textit{who wrote this}, providing an example for others (italics
mine).”\textsuperscript{196} Further reminders continued to occur at Gerald’s most shining moments as a
preacher. They explicitly identified the preacher with the act of writing and the
physicality of books. “Therefore at Havorfordwest, with the first sermon having been
preached by the Archbishop, the next [was preached] by the Archdeacon of St. David’s

\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Praescriptis igitur in finibus temperatissimis, etsi non omen quoad gazas rande, tragicasque mundi
pompas adeptus, juxta usualia tamen vocabula nomen dignitatis obtinui; collateralem et propinquum
principalii de Brecheniauc castro loculum habens et domicilium, felici quadam mediocritate studii
idoneum atque labori. Quem suis semper deliciis plerum, et aeternitas amicum, Creti divitiis longe
praefero; quinimmo cunctis, quae perire ac praeterire possunt, incomparabiler antepono. Sed ad rem
revertamur,” Dimock 47.

\textsuperscript{196} Dimock 14.

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[Gerald], whose name the title-page of this little book holds presently."¹⁹⁷ When Gerald related how the party struggled through quicksand, he reported how his luggage, containing his books, fell into the muddy waters.

... we were approaching the water, inaccessible before all others rivers of Southern Wales because of the dangers of quicksand which devoured all that was thrown into it, and the one mule, which alone he who wrote this same work possessed, was walking in the middle of the compact crowd, and yet alone descended into the abyss. Finally, at length, it escaped, having been extracted with the dangerous and laborious efforts of young men, not without injury to my bundles and books (italics mine).¹⁹⁸

Not only has his use of the first person inserted an authorial presence into the narrative, but he twice referred to the presence of books and the business of writing. His dual presence reinforced the moral authority of each act—preaching and writing. Since effective preaching both required and bestowed moral power, effective writing assumed the same power. Literary mastery, like rhetorical mastery, equaled moral authority.

Having set up the duality of preacher and author, Gerald drew an implicit connection between the audience within the text and the audience who would read his text. Through recounting how audiences reacted to his sermons, he explained how his readers should understand the written text. In effect, he offered a guide for the interpretation of his speculum. His sermons roused his listeners to action. After listening

¹⁹⁷ "Apud Haverfordiam itaque primo ab archipraesule sermone facto, deinde ab archidiacono Menevensi, cuius nomen praesentis opusculi titulus tenet . . . ." Dimock 82.
¹⁹⁸ "Acenditibus itaque nobis ad aquam, prae aliis australis Cambriae fluvii, vivi sabuli periculis, totumque subito quod ingeritur absorbentis, inaccessiblem, inter citellarios multos, qui via versus mare venerant inferiore, unus quem solum scripsit haec ibidem habebat, quanquam medius in turba conserta incederet, solus tamen quasi in abyssum descendit. Sed demum tamen, non absque sarcinae detrimento librorumque, laboriosa simul et periculosae juvenum opera, vix extractus evasit," Dimock 73.
to Gerald’s exhortations, they discovered new depths of inner strength with which they could serve God. One elderly woman, dwelling in Cardigan, persuaded her only son to go on the Crusade, delighted that she possessed such a worthy offering. “As if inspired by Heaven, the mother at once said, ‘Thank you, most beloved Jesus Christ. I am pleased that I have such a son, whom you have granted to be obedient in your service.’” Those who refused to take advantage of Gerald’s moral advice suffered dire consequences, however. Most allowed desire, cowardice, or laziness to sway their decisions, and outraged justice repaid them in kind. In endeavoring to retain their prized possessions, they lost that which they had held most dear. After listening to Gerald preach, another women of Cardigan brazenly refused to allow her husband to take the Cross.

But the woman, after three nights, heard this terrible voice in her sleep, ‘You removed my servant from me, for which reason that which you love most will be removed from you.’ . . . when she had again fallen asleep, she crushed her little son, whom she had laying in her maternal bed, with more fondness than diligence, no less unhappily than unpleasantly. And immediately her husband, reporting to the diocesan bishop both the dream and the vengeance, accepted the Cross, supported by his wife, and she herself, of her own accord, embroidered he sign on her husband’s shoulder, with her own hands.”

The woman who had failed to heed Gerald’s advice suffered a painful loss. Yet, in the end, she too succumbed to the example he had set. This story offered an explicit lesson.

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199 “Quorum uno crucisignato, quanquam unico filio et unico matris intuīta, et divitus ut videbatur inspirata, subject; ‘Gratias tibi, carissime Domine Christe Ihesu, intimas ago, quod talem mihi filium quem tuo dignareris obsequio parere concessisti,’” Dimock 113.
200 “Sed eadem, tertia post noce, terribilem hanc in somnis vocem audivit; ‘Servientem meum mihi abstulisti; quamobrem et a te quoque quod plurimum diligis afferetur.’ Qua visione viro cum utriusque tam admiratione quam terrore relata, cum iterum obdormisset, filium parvulum, quem secum in toro materna plus dilectione quam diligentia jacentiem habebat, non minus infeliciter quam insuaviter oppressit.
to the readers of the *Itinerarium*. Disregarding the work would be synonymous with disregarding the power of the Church. Gerald, as an exemplum, through his character and his actions, embodied this power, and his written words therefore wielded the full force of Christian authority.

As well as warning his readers against trivializing his book, Gerald described its ideal reception by an educated audience. During the first days of the trip, Gerald gave a copy of his previous book, the *Topographica Hibernica* to Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Archdeacon of the place presented his not ignoble work, the *Topographia Hibernica*, to the Archbishop. Which book, he himself accepting gratefully, either reading or listening attentively to it every single day on the journey from then on, at length returning to England, he completed the reading together with the legation. 201

This scene occurred at a telling intersection of character and narrator. While the events unfolded in the third-person voice, they centered around a book that the author had written in the world outside the narrative. Gerald had first discussed writing the *Topographica* in the preface, so those reading the *Itinerarium* in order would already be aware of its authorship by the time they reached this anecdote. Mentioning the *Topographica* reminded the readers that the *Itinerarium* was autobiographical and any characteristics of the protagonist reflected upon its author. This scene, for example,

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201 "Archidiaconus quoque loci ejusdem opus sua non ignobile, Hibernam ibidem Topographiam archiepiscopo praezentavit. Quod ipse gratanter accipiens, singulisque diebus obiter inde vel legens vel audiens attente, tandem in Angliam reversus, lectionem una cum legatione complevit," Dimock 20.
portrayed Gerald as an *auctor*. Baldwin clearly considered Gerald’s writing worthy of careful attention. That the preeminent ecclesiastical figure in England appreciated the full merit of his work further validated Gerald’s credibility as a writer. It also demonstrated to audiences of the *Itinerarium* how they should understand the work they were in the process of reading—as the product of a respected authority who had designed it for their moral edification. If Baldwin, the late archbishop of Canterbury had valued Gerald’s literary skills, could Stephen, the current bishop of Canterbury to whom Gerald dedicated the third edition, do any less?

Gerald, as both character and narrator, became the voice of morality in the *Itinerarium*. His behavior and personality inspired emulation in the fictional audience of the text. This relationship was designed to teach the actual audience of the *Itinerarium* by its positive example. He therefore became an exemplary mirror of morality, a standard image in contemporary didactic literature. The *Itinerarium* used this image, moreover, to explore the nature of Gerald’s authorial position. The moral authority of his fictional persona transcended to his identity as author. When describing his merit as a preacher, he was commenting upon his own abilities as a writer. His ability to win over audiences within the text predicted his achievements as a writer. Audience reactions in the *Itinerarium* dictated to readers the appropriate way to receive his works. As one who exemplified Christian morality in his behavior and in his writing, Gerald sought to
achieve credibility as a writer according to contemporary academic standards. By continually dedicating his work to powerful patrons, he hoped adherence to these standards would ensure him material success within his lifetime.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In the course of researching the mirror imagery in the *Itinerarium Kambriae*, I have identified two major areas in need of future study. Both the extensive works of Gerald of Wales and the medieval genre of *speculum* titles offer untouched reservoirs of research opportunities for interested historians. Several projects immediately come to mind. Different approaches still exist that could further elucidate Gerald’s most frequently reviewed works, the Irish and Welsh texts. Much of this paper has focused on Gerald’s narratorial voice in the *Itinerarium Kambriae*. I have looked at how his role as narrator contributed to his self-fashioning as a figure of literary authority. It would be informative, however, to compare his role as narrator with other contemporary writers. In a series of articles and books, Matilda Bruckner discussed the development of the narrator in vernacular French literature.\(^{202}\) She examined writers such as Wace, Marie de France, and Chrétien de Troies. According to Bruckner, these authors often divulged personal information and deliberately interjected their opinions into the text. Although Latin was Gerald’s language of choice and he wrote histories rather than romances,


Gerald, like many contemporary historians, used similar techniques. The distinction between works of fiction and works of history concerned content rather than form. History purportedly concerned the actual past while fiction described imagined events. Twelfth-century historians had no specific guidelines and they emulated the aesthetic rules of narrative fiction.\footnote{Nancy Partner. *Serious Entertainments: the Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).} A study that examined Gerald alongside writers of romance would further explore the fictional elements in medieval histories. It would continue to provide insight into the growth of both Latin and vernacular literature during the crucial years of the twelfth century.

Not all of Gerald’s surviving works have been the subject of historical studies. Considering how few examples of medieval autobiography exist, it is surprising how little attention historians have paid to Gerald’s own account of his life, *De Rebus a Se Gestis*.\footnote{*The Autobiography of Giraldis Cambrensi/De Rebus a Se Gestis*. Ed. and Trans. Harold Edgeworth. (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1937).} In contrast to the writings of Guibert of Nogent and Marjory Kempe, it has never received critical study, and the only English translation has long since gone out of print. It is nevertheless a remarkable work that covers Gerald’s first sixty years in detail, including his childhood, his studies in Paris, his life at court, and his difficult experiences as an archdeacon in Wales. Gerald’s narratorial voice, full of sarcasm, bitterness, and occasional humor, comes through in full force. A wide-ranging analysis of the *De Rebus* both alone and in conjunction with other medieval memoirs has yet to be written. Jay
Rubenstein's recent book on Guibert of Nogent has demonstrated the continually innovative ways that exist to approach medieval autobiography. He critiqued the numerous scholars who have focused on Guibert's neuroses and instead he portrayed him as an early leader in psychological thought. Rubenstein also positioned Guibert at the forefront of contemporary literary developments in history and hagiography. Gerald's autobiography offers a similar opportunity for an exploration of medieval self-presentation. An in-depth study of the De Rebus would contribute to a variety of subjects, including historical work in medieval memory, psychology, and scholasticism.

Another fruitful area of research I have begun to explore in this paper is the speculum genre. In broad overviews, Herbert Grabes and Einar Már Jónsson have demonstrated the importance of speculum titles to both Latin and vernacular literature during the medieval and early modern periods. Specific aspects of the genre call for in-depth analysis. The Speculum Virginum, which I discussed in the introduction to this paper, is one example of a text that necessitates further study, as it contains a wealth of information about the spiritual lives of medieval women. Although it is the largest twelfth-century didactic text directed towards women, it has received little attention compared to male monastic literature. In 1990, Jutta Seyfarth produced the first critical

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edition in Latin.\textsuperscript{207} She later published a Latin and German translation in 2001.\textsuperscript{208} No English translations exist at the moment. Prominent scholars including Constant Mews and Barbara Newman have since published articles on various aspects of the \textit{Speculum}.\textsuperscript{209} Many more avenues of research still exist, however, due to the text's complex range of subjects that includes the daily lives of novices, the levels of female virtue, and the possibilities for personal communion with God.

Historians and literary critics have not yet considered the \textit{Speculum Virginum} as an early product of an extremely influential field of literature. Its author drew upon neo-Platonism, classical literature, didactic texts, and the Bible in order to construct elaborate metaphors of reflection. One possible approach would be a comparison between these many levels of mirror imagery with the equally complex mirror imagery in other works of female didactic literature, for example, the writings of Hildegarde von Bingen, Herrad of Hohenbourg, and Christine de Pizan. The use of historical figures as positive exempla is another aspect of \textit{speculum} imagery that calls for exploration. Did certain characters, such as Judith and Yael, reoccur in didactic literature, and did their portrayals vary? Another avenue of research would be a consideration of the \textit{Speculum Virginum} not only in light of didactic texts written for women, but in the context of monastic literature in

\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Listen Daughter: the Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages.} Ed. Constant Mews. (New York: Palgrave, 2001) and Barbara Newman. \textit{From Virile Woman to}
general. How did it compare with other contemporary speculum titles directed towards men, for example, the Mirror of Monks by Arnulf de Boheries or the Mirror of Novices by Stephen of Sawley. The Speculum Virginum portrayed the mirror as a specifically feminine object, playing upon the vanity of young girls. How did works intended for male instruction utilize this same image? These are all questions that necessitate studying the Speculum Virginum within the contexts of both twelfth-century spiritual literature and the growth of the speculum genre. According to Constant Mews, “the literature of spiritual formation, often anonymous or by authors who are little known, offers a still largely untapped field of study.” He explained that a scholarly fascination on charismatic individuals such as Hildegard of Bingen and Heloise has turned historical attention away from the general growth of female religious life. There are still many avenues left for historical exploration.

The Speculum Virginum provides just one example of the potential inherent in studies of the speculum genre. The multitude of speculum titles from the twelfth through the seventeenth centuries illustrates exactly how meaningful this metaphor was to medieval and early modern writers. A detailed analysis of exactly how the mirror

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211 Mews 11.
imagery operates in these texts will help to illuminate their social and literary circumstances. My research of the *Itinerarium Kambriae* has hopefully demonstrated the value of this approach.
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