

Review article: seals in medieval Wales

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SEALS AND SOCIETY: MEDIEVAL WALES, THE WELSH MARCHES AND THEIR ENGLISH BORDER REGION. Edited by P. R. Schofield and E. A. New, with S. M. Johns and J. A. McEwan. 156mm × 234mm xvii + 357 pp; 32 pp of colour plates. Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2016. ISBN 978 1 78316 871 2. Price £85.

The principal volume under review in this paper is the most recent product of a project funded by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and staffed by four researchers—Professor Schofield, and Drs Johns, New, and McEwan—working under the auspices of the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (IMEMS) at Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities. The researchers were supported by a Project Oversight Panel consisting of four distinguished scholars. The project, described on the website of IMEMS as ‘by far the largest and best-funded project of its kind ever undertaken in Britain’, and designed to run for three years, was given the title *Seals in Medieval Wales* (henceforth *SiMeW*).¹ It has proved highly productive. In 2012 the project team curated an exhibition held at the National Library of Wales and produced a bilingual book, to illustrate the scope of the work which had been carried out. The exhibition and the book bore the title *Seals in Context: Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches / Seliâu yn eu Cyd-destun: Cymru a'r Mers yn yr Oesoedd Canol* (henceforth *Seals in Context*).²

Four years later, in 2016, the same team was responsible for a major book, published by the University of Wales Press, under the title *Seals and Society: Medieval Wales, the Welsh Marches and their English Border Region* (henceforth *Seals and Society*). This is a substantial book, covering many aspects of the functions of seals and the extent of their use. It consists of an ‘Introduction’ by Phillipp Schofield and Elizabeth New, who also provide the ‘Conclusion’. In between come seven chapters, one by John McEwan on ‘Seals in Medieval Wales and its neighbouring counties: Trends in Motifs’; two by Phillipp Schofield on ‘Seals: Administration and Law’ and ‘Seals and Exchange’, two by Elizabeth New on ‘Ecclesiastical Seals’ and ‘Seals as Expressions of Identity’, and two by Susan Johns discussing ‘Seals and Lordship’ and ‘Seals, Women, Gender and Identity’. New, McEwan and Schofield add a substantial appendix, listing the seals in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* dataset. There is much in the book that is illuminating and useful, and several of its chapters offer new perspectives on the importance of seals in different contexts and for different ranks of medieval society. Nevertheless, the direction taken by the project and some aspects of *Seals and Society* do give grounds for some reservations. While it is clear that *Seals and Society* marks a significant advance in the study of seal design and function, and the place of sigillography in the study of the medieval world, it is rather less successful as an examination of the development of seal usage in medieval Wales.

When allowance has been made for the fact that early descriptions of the scope of the project did note that its focus would be on Wales and its border, the eastward geographical shift in the titles of the products of the project—from ‘Wales’ to ‘Wales and the March’ and then to ‘Wales, the Welsh Marches and their English Border Region’ may well be significant. That tendency to focus on the March and neighbouring English counties rather than on Wales was already evident in *Seals in Context*, a book whose content consists very largely of illustrations, descriptions and discussions of some sixty seals. Of these, rather more than half are seals connected with the Glamorgan region, mostly relating to grants to Margam abbey,

one of the ‘English’ or ‘Anglo-Norman’ Cistercian foundations of Wales. One third of the total number of seals discussed relates to Shropshire and of these a significant majority pertain to documents recording grants in the Bridgnorth area, in the eastern part of the county.³ These Shropshire seals rarely relate to people or lands that can be described in any meaningful sense as belonging to the March. Of the remaining seals illustrated in the book, three are from eastern England, one is from Chester, one is papal, and one is a seal of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth of Gwynedd. This last is the solitary example of the development of seal usage and design in the bulk of Wales in the high middle ages. It is true that another seal which is illustrated relates to north Wales: it is a judicial seal relating to the counties of Anglesey, Caernarfonshire and Merioneth, but it comes not from the medieval period but from the nineteenth century.

The problem of coverage of Welsh material is even more marked in the case of *Seals and Society*. This is a much more ambitious book, some three times the length of *Seals in Context*. Its thirty-two pages of plates reproduce many of those in the earlier book, and like the illustrations in that volume they are of a very high standard. But the coverage of the volume concentrates even more clearly on the English counties which border Wales. John McEwan makes it clear that of the seals in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* dataset ‘a significant proportion’—in fact some fifty-seven per cent—are drawn from the English border counties of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire.⁴ The largest single local group of seals discussed and listed in the appendix, some six hundred out of a total of around two thousand five hundred in the dataset, again relates primarily to the Bridgnorth area.⁵ Nearly twenty per cent of the seals listed relate to Glamorgan.⁶ Together, therefore, the English border counties and Glamorgan account for over three-quarters of the seals in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* dataset. And of the seals drawn from the rest of Wales (both *pura Wallia* and the March), the majority come from the later medieval period, leaving very few from the years before the mid-fourteenth century. It is immediately clear that many seals from Wales are not discussed in this work: analysis is almost entirely confined to the seals in the project dataset, though these do allow some illuminating observations on the role of ‘institutions such as Margam Abbey’ in promoting seal usage in Glamorgan.⁷ Some of the seals and evidence of seals excluded from consideration will be noticed below, but it is worth noting at once that amongst the excluded material are some of the most iconic objects in Welsh medieval history—including the seals of Owain Glyn Dŵr, whose name does not appear in the book’s index.⁸ The overall effect is to suggest the absence of seal usage throughout much of the medieval period from the bulk of Wales beyond Glamorgan.

Indeed, the material produced by the project team is characterised by what might very easily be interpreted as a failure to engage fully with the evidence for the development of seal usage in the great bulk of Wales—and, indeed, much of the March. That such a failure is not entirely imaginary is evidenced by the sometimes cavalier treatment of specifically Welsh data. Thus the index entry ‘*amobwr* (heriot)’ is questionable in two respects: the word is correctly *amobr* and it represents not a heriot, but a fee payable to a woman’s lord on her loss of virginity or on marriage. The English heriot itself is similar not to *amobr* but to the Welsh *ebediv*.⁹

Welsh names given in *Seals and Society* are not infrequently mangled in a surprising fashion.¹⁰ There is no consistency in the indexing of Welsh names: sometimes the forename is given as the headword, as in ‘Gruffudd ab Ivor’, but sometimes the headword is the patronymic, as in ‘Gruffudd, Dafydd ap’. Sometimes an attempt is made to modernize a medieval spelling, as in ‘Fychan, Ivor (Ivor Vaghan)’, while other, much less readily identifiable, names are not modernized.¹¹ Such errors are individually minor, but collectively they leave the impression that when dealing with Welsh matters accuracy is considered unimportant.

Some errors may give rise to more serious confusion. There are several references to the Treaty of Montgomery of 1272: the correct date is 1267.¹² At one point we are informed that ‘in 1282 the coronet of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, his seal matrix and those of his wife and son were melted down and recast into a

chalice'.¹³ Llywelyn ap Gruffudd had no son known to history, and the reference should be to his brother Dafydd, while the seal matrices in question were melted down in 1284, as is correctly noticed on page 39. The prince's coronet was not melted down, but had an entirely different fate: it was presented to the shrine of St Edward at Westminster.¹⁴ A problem of a different sort arises from the statement that 'Siddons found that there are no surviving examples of Welshmen who show the use of heraldic devices [*sc.* on seals] before 1300, and only a few examples from the fourteenth century, although he noted the early exception to this pattern in the seals of William, Madog, Epsus and Iowerth Fychan discussed above.'¹⁵ 'Epsus' in place of the correct Espus, and 'Iowerth' in place of Iorwerth (both names correctly given on page 82) may be regarded as trivial errors; but the reference to the situation before 1300 is more serious. For Michael Siddons prefaced his comment that 'no surviving seals of Welshmen show any heraldry before 1300' with the words 'apart from the seal of Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn and possibly that of John de Brangwen'.¹⁶ The case of John de Brangwen of Grosmont is inconclusive, for he may well have been English, but a heraldic seal of Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn—the lord of southern Powys who died in 1286, and who does not appear in the index to *Seals and Society*—is illustrated in Siddons's work.¹⁷ Discussion of Gruffudd's use of heraldry has been advanced by Huw Pryce, who notes that 'Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn had at least three circular heraldic seals.'¹⁸ Evidence from the early fourteenth century makes it clear that at least one of Gruffudd's sons followed him in using a heraldic seal.¹⁹ Certainly his wife Hawise Lestrangle employed a most handsome seal (surprisingly not discussed in this volume) depicting her holding shields showing the arms of Lestrangle and of her husband.²⁰

Seals and Society is a well-produced work, clearly printed and beautifully illustrated. Its target audience is none too clear. The presence of a full list of the seals in the project's dataset—a feature which will be discussed below—suggests that the volume is intended for people conducting serious research into seals and their significance. But such researchers will not be helped by the form of the catalogue entries, which make little or no attempt to identify the users of the seals or to locate the area of their use. And one is driven to wonder about the reader who needs to be informed that a lion is 'a carnivorous quadrupedal animal of the genus *Felis leo*', that an armoured man on horseback is 'a riding full-length humanoid in armour', or that a merchant mark is 'a motif consisting of a type of mark conventionally known as a 'merchant mark'.²¹ In contrast, that reader is apparently quite at home with a word such as 'gonfanons' which is indexed and referred to in the text without explanation.

A further problem, and it is a major one, arises in relation to the book's structure. Only a third consists of analysis and discussion; the remainder is largely given over to an appendix, effectively a catalogue of seals—which lists all the seals in the project database.²² But despite its size—listing over two and a half thousand seals from Wales, the March, and the neighbouring English counties—it essentially represents work in progress. It will need to be significantly supplemented from sources not considered in *Seals and Society* before we have a sound grasp of the development of seal usage in medieval Wales. Would it not therefore have been better to put the catalogue on the internet, where it could be readily supplemented from time to time, and to produce a book that could have been published more cheaply?²³ A book with a different format might also have given an opportunity for more revealing discussion of specific seals. There are indeed a number of missed opportunities in some of the discussions that exist, as in the case of the seal of William de la Zouche, lord of Glamorgan, evidenced from 1329. This seal also appears with brief discussion in *Seals in Context*, where it is noted that 'the female figure with the shields of arms signified that William held the Lordship of Glamorgan by right of his wife, and makes explicit the powerful role which women could play in the furthering of dynastic ambition and lordship.'²⁴ In *Seals and Society* it is explained that 'later impressions of equestrian seals are finely developed and have been associated with high social status and office as in the seals of William de la Zouche, Lord of Glamorgan in use in 1329. The former's [*sic*; but presumably the latter's] seal is unusual since on the reverse it

depicts a standing female holding the arms of her father'.²⁵ It is noted that the standing female was the co-heiress of Earl Gilbert de Clare (d. 1295). But the analysis of the importance of the seal would have been greatly enhanced by explaining the dramatic events of 1328–29, when Eleanor, daughter of Gilbert de Clare, widow of Hugh Despenser and lady of Glamorgan, was abducted by William de la Zouche, who later married her. Together, they attempted to secure control of Glamorgan where they faced considerable resistance. The use of the seal can be dated to February 1329, and in that month they were besieging Caerphilly castle.²⁶ It is clear that the prominence of Eleanor on William de la Zouche's seal is an indication of his using every means possible, particularly emphasising his wife's position in the lordship, to establish himself as lord of Glamorgan. The circumstances of 1328–29 thus provide a particularly dramatic, and exceptional, context for the manufacture and use of this seal.

Much material is not included in *Seals and Society*. Some collections have been worked through thoroughly, such as the Penrice and Margam estate records in the National Library of Wales, while in other cases collections of sigillographic material relating to medieval Wales are very partially represented—as in the case of the seals in the British Library.²⁷ Sometimes, small but very interesting collections of seals have been ignored—for example the group of sealed charters relating to the lordship of the Three Castles in Gwent, held at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library of the University of Kansas.²⁸ At other times large and important collections go unlisted, unreferenced and largely unconsidered, as in the case of the material preserved in the National Museum of Wales or in the National Archives. Discussion of the material held in the National Museum and catalogued by David H. Williams—and indeed of many items illustrated and described in Williams's short but informative book *Welsh History through Seals* (1982) would have enriched the analyses presented in *Seals and Society*. Over a quarter of the seventy-four medieval seals or seal impressions illustrated and discussed by Williams in *Welsh History through Seals* are included in the *Seals in Society* catalogue; but well over a half of the seventy-four are derived from collections or repositories not represented in *Seals and Society*, and a dozen, not included in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* database, appear in collections used by the project team. Nevertheless, the seals discussed in *Seals and Society* are presented as 'a robust sample'.²⁹ Precisely what is meant by this is unclear; the seals catalogued are certainly a sample; but the robustness of that sample is called into question by the apt comment that the 'key observation' that 'seals and seal usage were not predominant in *Pura Walia* . . . needs to be tested and challenged by future research, especially on collections not represented in the present sample utilised here'.³⁰

It is acknowledged in the 'Introduction' that the 'concentration of material must to some degree or other slightly 'skew' the more general picture'.³¹ Once again, this observation, the implications of which will be probed shortly, is followed by the suggestion that 'we look forward to future work aimed at establishing and/or correcting the patterns and discussions set out in this volume'.³² Inevitably, a number of topics receive scant coverage in *Seals and Society*, so that there is, for example, no sustained discussion of the materials from which seal matrices were made. The different metals used for matrices seem to confirm differences of wealth and status amongst the users. But what are we to make of the scatter of stone matrices in Wales? A few of these are to be traced to the March;³³ but it is perhaps more surprising to find Einion, dean of Llŷn in, probably, the early thirteenth century, using a seal matrix made of slate.³⁴

A more important matter for future researchers is the task of tracing the growing possession of seals in Wales in the thirteenth century, but as a first step a simple methodological point needs to be explored, the more so because it has not featured in either of the books under review. Both *Seals and Society* and *Seals in Context* are dominated by consideration of surviving seal matrices and seal impressions. These are of course the most tangible signs of seal usage, but they are not the only ones. A second category of evidence is constituted by medieval documents which are marked by the survival of a seal tag, from which a seal was appended to the document, but from which the seal is now missing. The presence of the tag

usually assumes the former presence of a seal; it is simply that we can no longer study the form taken by that seal. And then we have copies of documents, made very often in the medieval period. These might often involve making a copy of an original document in the process of including it in an enrolment, or in a cartulary. In those circumstances neither seal nor seal-tag will exist, but the text of the document may well include the information that the original was indeed sealed, and by whom. Yet a fourth type of evidence is constituted by reports that a seal existed—as when it was reported that when he was killed near Builth in December of 1282, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales, had about his person his secret, or privy seal.³⁵ Some of these various categories of evidence have been admitted to the analysis of seal usage in medieval Wales in *Seals and Society*, but this process of inclusion has not been applied systematically.

When we begin to take into account the various indicators of the possession and use of seals within native Welsh society a picture emerges which is very different from that which is provided by, for example, the map of regional seal usage in *Seals and Society*.³⁶ The map itself, which is small, occupying only half a page, might be a lot clearer and more focused on what is nominally the subject area of the project. Most of it, however, is taken up by the inclusion of a very large part of England. It is based entirely on the seals and seal impressions in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* database, and shows almost the whole of Wales beyond Glamorgan as entirely devoid of seal use throughout the medieval period, save for a few coastal pockets, and the eastern fringes of what became the northern March. This apparently very clear pattern of seal usage—and for most of Wales that appears to mean non-usage—calls for closer examination. This is not the place for an exhaustive survey of the evidence, but in the first instance it will be possible to make some progress towards a more refined view by looking at a single modest collection of documents: the Strata Marcella charters, mainly preserved in the Wynnstay deposit in the National Library of Wales and readily available in print in the edition of Graham C. G. Thomas,³⁷ while many have been included in Huw Pryce's *Acts of Welsh Rulers*. The Strata Marcella charters have been examined by the *Seals in Medieval Wales* team, though there are an additional three documents with associated seals that are not included in the *Seals in Medieval Wales* database.³⁸ Further examination reveals that some of the seals included in *Seals in Medieval Wales* are associated with documents which were certainly or very probably sealed at locations which are not included in the map of seal usage. The main point here is that it is clear that, contrary to what seems to be the assumption underlying the map of seal usage, a sealed document drawn up in favour of Strata Marcella was not necessarily sealed at the abbey. This can be fairly safely established in the case of documents which do not announce that the transaction recorded took place at the abbey, to which there are no monastic witnesses, and where the witnesses recorded can be identified as coming from the specific limited area to which the charter relates. Into this category come five documents sealed in the mid-Wales region of Arwystli, and one at Llandovery in Ystrad Tywi.³⁹ These areas are shown on the map in *Seals and Society* as being devoid of seal-usage. There are in addition two documents which were very probably sealed in Cyfeiliog, a western region bordering the Dyfi, and again one not noticed on the map of seal usage.⁴⁰

More importantly, if we broaden the criteria for inclusion in a geographic analysis of seal usage to take account of seals no longer extant but which are known to have been attached to surviving documents, a still fuller picture emerges. From the Strata Marcella materials alone, there are in this category four examples of sealing at Tafolwern in Cyfeiliog, the original court of the dynasty of southern Powys;⁴¹ there are two further examples of sealing at Llandovery, and single cases of sealing at Bala in Penllyn, Ystrad Yw—certainly implying use at Tretower—and a further case of sealing in Arwystli, at Llanwnnog.⁴² Again, these places are not marked on the *Seals and Society* map as offering examples of seal usage. Though the Strata Marcella charters constitute only a relatively small cache of documents,⁴³ some concentrations of seal usage amongst Welsh socio-political elites in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries begin to become visible.

This sort of exercise can be repeated for most areas of Wales, whether *pura Wallia* or the March. The evidence for Deheubarth is particularly interesting. While there is no surviving original charter of the Lord Rhys (d. 1197) two texts of his charters survive in copy form.⁴⁴ There is no mention of a seal in either of them—though this does not prove that he did not have one. Sealed charters which did not mention the affixing of a seal are known elsewhere in Wales, and it would be surprising if Rhys did not possess one, as he had extensive contacts with the English royal court and with English magnates, and a seal used by his older brother Cadell survives.⁴⁵ But it is clear that seal usage was not ubiquitous amongst the elite of Deheubarth in the later twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. The few copies of documents issued by Maelgwn ap Rhys and Rhys Gryg, both sons of the Lord Rhys, do not contain sealing clauses until 1222.⁴⁶ But another son, Hywel Sais (whose cognomen may be significant), had a seal by 1198.⁴⁷ And in 1202 a grandson of the Lord Rhys, Rhys Ieuanc ap Gruffudd, who had succeeded his father, Gruffudd ap Rhys, in the rule of part of Deheubarth in the previous year, issued a charter to Strata Florida with what the text emphasised was the first seal that he had ever had.⁴⁸ As we move further into the thirteenth century it is clear that it had become the norm for rulers of the fragments into which the realm of Deheubarth had broken to have seals, and the use of these is recorded at locations throughout the west and south-west, including Genau'r Glyn, Llanbadarn Trefeglwys, Tre-fin, Carmarthen, and Dinefwr.⁴⁹ With the exception of Carmarthen these places do not appear in the map of seal usage in *Seals and Society*. In one significant document of November 1271, it is recorded that Hywel ap Rhys Gryg, a son of the ruler of Ystrad Tywi, took a group of seven prominent men of that land to Rhyd y Briw (Sennybridge) in Brycheiniog (also absent from the map), to act as sureties for the loyalty of a named individual to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd.⁵⁰ It appears from the text of the surviving copy of that document that all seven possessed seals.

Elsewhere, evidence from the middle March is valuable in establishing the spread of seal usage in regions such as Elfael and Builth in eastern central Wales in the course of the thirteenth century. A document of 1251 relating to Cantref Selyf, across the Wye from Elfael, includes seals of four men, two ecclesiastics and one apparently prominent layman, as well as a Welsh castellan of Bronllys castle. It is interesting because it was not sealed by Owain ap Maredudd, lord of Elfael, who was present.⁵¹ This may suggest that Owain did not have a seal at that date. In a document of November 1271 three lords of Elfael (sons of Owain ap Maredudd) and three officials from neighbouring regions, announce that they have assembled at Builth a large group of men of some standing in the region to act as sureties for the loyalty of one Iorwerth ap Llywelyn to Prince Llywelyn. They note that the potential sureties have no seals—but it is also apparent that the lords and officials do possess seals.⁵² In the following month only one out of eight men standing surety for the future loyalty to the prince of a prominent figure from Elfael had a seal; the rest had to request the prince's *distain*, Tudur ab Ednyfed, to seal the letters of obligation on their behalf.⁵³ And in a document of May 1276, the prince's bailiff of Elfael is Mynydd and two lords of Elfael uwch Mynydd together with seven notables of the region also stand surety for a suspect individual's loyalty to the prince; all of the sureties had seals.⁵⁴ In the neighbouring territory of Builth, it is clear that some of the leading figures in the lordship had seals in the 1270s—men such as the dean of Builth and Owain ap Meurig, one of the most prominent local notables.⁵⁵ By the end of the century possession of seals seems to have been widespread amongst freemen in Builth.⁵⁶

A more mixed pattern is presented by a document of December 1276 issued at the prince's court at Aber but relating to Powys.⁵⁷ Again, it records a number of notable figures standing as sureties for the loyalty of a named individual to the prince. The list is headed by three lords of Mechain, (Maredudd and Owain, sons of Llywelyn, and their nephew Gruffudd ap Llywelyn) and it includes several senior figures who had been, and would be again, officials of the exiled lord, Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn.⁵⁸ The document concludes by noting that the seals of the lords, together with those of the other *optimates* who had seals, were appended; those who lacked seals were to fulfil their surety with their own hands, before

the prince's attorney.⁵⁹ Consideration of documents such as these offers the prospect of establishing a regional chronology of the acquisition of seals by various strata within the Welsh elite in the course of the thirteenth century. Such work may turn out to open up new lines of enquiry; it has been cogently argued by John McEwan that 'thanks in part to the efforts of institutions such as Margam Abbey that promoted the use of written records, by the end of the twelfth century, the segment of society in Glamorgan using seals encompassed those who owned property.'⁶⁰ The situation in the middle March, as represented by Elfael, seems to have been significantly different. The influence of monastic houses such as Cwm-hir did not, it seems, produce widespread seal usage in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century.⁶¹ Instead, one is forced to wonder whether it is entirely a coincidence that seal ownership appears to have developed strongly in that region during the ascendancy there of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, and subsequently in the post-Conquest period. It seems likely that seal usage may have been connected with the need to authenticate the obligations to the prince into which the leading men of the region were increasingly forced to enter in the 1270s. The administrative pressures in the regimes, both royal and marcher which were established or restored after 1277, appear to have taken the process of seal usage still further.

It is hoped that the sort of approaches suggested and adopted in the present paper may help in the task of developing that 'even more nuanced picture' of seal usage in Wales and the March of Wales that is anticipated in *Seals and Society*.⁶² Although that volume is something of a disappointment as a contribution to the study of the development and use of seals in medieval Wales, it is nevertheless to be welcomed, both for some stimulating discussion in its analytical chapters, and for the fact that it will undoubtedly prompt further work on an interesting aspect of Welsh medieval studies on which much remains to be done.

NOTES

1. See the IMEMS description of the project at <www.imems.ac.uk/medievalwelshsealsinthenlw.php.en>, last accessed on 10 January 2017.
2. *Seals in Context: Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches/Selïau yn eu Cyd-destun: Cymru a'r Mers yn yr Oesoedd Canol*, edited by/golygydd gan John McEwan and Elizabeth A. New, with Susan M. Johns and Phillipp R. Schofield (Aberystwyth: CAA Aberystwyth University, 2012)
3. The Shropshire seals are nos 12, 19 (three seals), 20 (two seals), 21, 22 (three seals), 24, 30, 38, 41 (five seals), 42, 46, 47.
4. *Seals and Society*, 14.
5. These are the seals of documents in the National Library of Wales, Ottley (Pitchford Hall) Estate 1 deposit, numbered in the appendix to *Seals and Society* as seals 1572–2175.
6. The seals of documents in the National Library of Wales Penrice and Margam collection are numbered in the appendix to *Seals and Society* as seals 1133–1571.
7. *Seals and Society*, 20.
8. For Glyn Dŵr's seals see David H. Williams, *Catalogue of Seals in the National Museum of Wales, Vol. 1: Seal Dies, Welsh Seals, Papal Bullae* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1993), 34–5, and illustrations W8, W14 and W20 on page 78.
9. *Seals and Society*, 341; the equation with heriot is also evident on page 52. For *amobr* see Dafydd Jenkins, *The Law of Hywel Dda. Law texts from Medieval Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1986), 311; for *ebediw* and the comparison with heriot, *ibid.* 340.
10. In the index, Einion ap Bleddyn appears as 'Eionion ap Bleddyn', Iorwerth Fychan as 'Fychan, Iowerth', Cadell ap Gruffudd as 'Gruffudd, Cadel ap' and Gruffudd ap Budr ei hosan (Gruffudd,

- son of ‘dirty hose’) is rendered as ‘Gruffudd a Bud rei hosan’. The entry in the text (*Seals and Society*, 80) is an improvement (‘Gruffudd ap *Bud rei hosan*’) but still rather misses the point. Though he is correctly named, the index entry ‘Cadwgan, bishop of Bangor (1215–38), 74 n. 49’ should read ‘Cadwgan, bishop of Bangor (1215–36) 74 n. 50’. The problem extends to Latinized place-names: Strata Marcella appears as such in the index, but is repeatedly ‘Strata Marchella’ in the text.
11. Such is the case of the somewhat confused index entry ‘Yeruard Du (c. 1225–50) *Yewan ab Yustin* Iwan ab Iestyn’, where ‘Yeruard’ presumably represents Iorwerth. The man in question was not the same as Yewan ab Yustin, but his son: see *ibid.* 83
 12. *Ibid.* 78, 80, 348.
 13. *Ibid.* 78.
 14. See J. Beverley Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 332 and n. 215.
 15. *Ibid.* *Seals and Society*, 83.
 16. Michael Powell Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry*, vol. 1 (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1991), 3.
 17. *Ibid.* 291.
 18. Huw Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 132.
 19. Siddons *op. cit.* (note 16), 292, with reference to Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn; but it is entirely probable that Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn’s eldest son and successor as lord of Powys, Owain, also had an heraldic seal.
 20. *Ibid.* 291.
 21. These bizarre definitions are all on pages 29–30.
 22. *Seals and Society*, 130–325.
 23. This point gains force from the comment, *ibid.* 128, that ‘It is also anticipated that the *SiMeW* data will in due course become available online, thus facilitating searches by motif, name and so on linked to the seal number given in each instance here.’
 24. *Seals in Context*, 98.
 25. *Seals and Society*, 81.
 26. For an account of these events see T. B. Pugh, ‘The Marcher Lords of Glamorgan and Morgannwg, 1317–1485’, in T. B. Pugh (ed.), *Glamorgan County History Vol. III, The Middle Ages* (Cardiff: Glamorgan County History Committee, 1971), 174–5.
 27. Thus collections such as the Additional Charters have been sampled, but not worked through comprehensively for Welsh material, which is well represented.
 28. These documents and seals can be viewed online through the website of the Digital Scriptorium <www.digital-scriptorium.org>, last accessed on 14 January 2017. The charters from Gwent are in Lawrence, University of Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, MSS 191: 1–15.
 29. *Seals and Society*, 4.
 30. *Ibid.* 124. The term *pura Wallia*, which is perhaps more generally spelt as *pura Wallia* and appears with that spelling in the index, seems to be used to describe ‘west Wales’, and to exclude ‘northern, southern and eastern Wales and its border regions’ (*ibid.* 6) whereas in more general usage *pura Wallia* implies those regions subject to Welsh lordship including large parts of the north as well as significant parts of eastern and south-western Wales.
 31. *Ibid.* 7.
 32. *Ibid.*

33. See the Churchstoke seal in Williams op. cit. (note 8), 59, 60, 98 (illustrations W396 and W408). This seems to have been a family seal, the obverse being the seal of Thomas son of Baldwin, and the reverse that of Robert son of Thomas. For two stone matrices found in Radnorshire see J. M. Lewis, 'Two stone seal-dies from the Knighton Area', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 38 (1968), 66–7.
34. Williams op. cit. (note 8), 43, 70 (illustration D.20); see also D. H. Williams, *Welsh History through Seals* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1982), 7 (no. 4).
35. Smith op. cit. (note 14), 552.
36. *Seals and Society*, 7.
37. G. C. G. Thomas, *The Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1997).
38. Ibid. nos 20 (lost, but available in facsimile), 52, 89.
39. Ibid. nos 16, 18, 50, 59 (the Llandovery charter), 64, 65.
40. Ibid. nos 35 (Cyfeiliog), 51 (Cyfeiliog or northern Arwystli).
41. Ibid. nos 11, 12, 14, 23. The first of these documents is spurious, but elements of it appear to have been incorporated from a valid charter.
42. Ibid. nos 15 (Bala), 42, 61 (Llandovery), 54 (Llanwnnog), 56 (Ystrad Yw).
43. Just over ninety charters to Strata Marcella are recorded before the later fifteenth century; of these, around twenty are simply short entries in *inspeximus* charters; some of those may well have been sealed. But this reduces the number of full texts to some seventy.
44. Pryce op. cit. (note 18), nos 26, 28.
45. Ibid. no. 22.
46. Ibid. nos 43, 52.
47. Ibid. no. 46.
48. Ibid. no. 55.
49. Ibid. nos 66, 71, 73, 74, 92, 93, 98.
50. Ibid. no. 86.
51. British Library, Campbell Charter xviii 2.
52. Pryce op. cit. (note 18), no. 106.
53. J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Littere Wallie* (Cardiff: University Press Board, 1940), 26.
54. Pryce op. cit. (note 18), no. 107. The document was issued at Brynysgeffyll (a place otherwise unknown, but clearly in Elfael).
55. University of Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, Special Collections MS 191:15.
56. A series of enquiries in 1299 relating to lands of the now dead Owain ap Meurig includes one to which the jurors had put their seals: '*juratores sigilla sua apposuerunt*'. See *Original Documents printed as a supplement to the Archaeologia Cambrensis*, vol. 1 (1877), clviii.
57. Pryce op. cit. (note 18), no. 612.
58. In particular the list includes Gruffudd ap Gwên, Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn's steward.
59. This document is discussed in *Seals and Society*, 80, where it is dated to 1275; the discussion is weakened by the absence of any detailed examination of the identity of those standing surety.
60. *Seals and Society*, 20.
61. This may be an interesting indication of cultural difference between 'English' and 'Welsh' Cistercian houses in Wales.
62. *Seals and Society*, 7.