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Catherine A. M. Clarke[a]

[a] Faculty of Humanities, Avenue Campus, University of
Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BF, United Kingdom
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Place, identity and performance: spatial practices and social proxies in medieval Swansea

Catherine A. M. Clarke[*]

Faculty of Humanities, Avenue Campus, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BF, United Kingdom

The testimonies of the nine witnesses to the hanging of William Cragh in Swansea in 1290 offer a rare opportunity to investigate the social and spatial practices of figures from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds moving within the same urban environment. This paper maps the itineraries of the witnesses within the landscape of medieval Swansea and its environs, exploring how they negotiate various spaces, boundaries and thresholds within and around the town, as well as how their spatial practices and reported actions shape social identity, status and power. In particular the paper examines the ways in which certain individuals make use of 'proxies' to circumvent spatial constraints and regulation and to extend their sphere of action, raising implications for our understanding of medieval selfhood and agency. The paper advances new insights into the ways in which medieval identities and the medieval town were mutually constitutive, contingent and subject to continual re-making.

Keywords: medieval Wales; towns; cities; identity; mapping; space; miracles; witnesses

Robert Bartlett's book, *The Hanged Man*, offers a brilliantly perceptive evocation and analysis of Swansea *c*.1300 and of the ways in which secular, religious and broader social concerns and agendas converge around the hanging of William Cragh and his apparently miraculous revival.[1] But Bartlett's study contains no map of medieval Swansea itself — an absence aptly suggestive of the 'documentary silence' of most medieval sources in relation to the visual or cartographic depiction of urban landscapes.[2] Yet the depositions of the nine medieval witnesses to the hanging of Cragh are emphatically situated spatially, shaped and structured by the speakers' narratives of their movements within and around Swansea *c*.1290. The production of a detailed map of medieval Swansea around 1300, as part of the City Witness project, has presented a new opportunity to examine the witness statements in their specific spatial context, as well as to analyse the witnesses' itineraries and spatial practices within the particular topography and urban layout of this medieval town. This article outlines the likely routes of the nine witnesses, based on the depositions recorded in The Vatican, Biblioteca

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[1] All manuscript references in this article, unless otherwise indicated, come from The Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4015. Robert Bartlett, *The Hanged Man: a Story of Miracle, Memory and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[2] Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late-Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1–2.

Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, folios 7v–14v and 219v–227v, with reference to the map of Swansea produced by the City Witness project (see Figure 1 in the introductory paper to this special issue).[3] These hypothesised routes form the basis for a more discursive interpretation of place and identity in medieval Swansea, paying particular attention to the ways in which witnesses negotiate various spaces, boundaries and thresholds within and around the town, as well as how their spatial practices and reported actions were constitutive of social identity, status and power. Of course, the events and itineraries recorded in MS Vat. Lat. 4015 are at some remove from the events surrounding Cragh's hanging in Swansea in 1290, separated by 17 years and the witnesses' powers of recollection, the mediation and translation of the papal commissioners and their notaries, as well as the presence of the 'structuring devices' of 'existing genres, rhetorics [and] comparators' which codify events and locate them, for the manuscript's medieval audience, within recognisable systems of meaning and value.[4] Indeed, the ways in which the Swansea witnesses and their transcribers draw upon these received genres and conventions can tell us much about the ways in which they understood, or wished to present, their own spatial practices and identities.

While this paper focuses on medieval Swansea and the witness statements associated with the hanging of William Cragh, it engages with current critical debates which extend across a range of disciplines within medieval studies. It is informed by theory on place and space, and in particular by recent work on urban environments and cultures in medieval Britain (including Wales specifically) and continental Europe. The approach to the itineraries and actions of the Swansea witnesses draws on recent work on performance or performativity, which Susan Crane sites 'at the intersection of agency and prescription, innovation and memory, self and social group'.[5] In the case of the Swansea evidence, particular attention is paid to connections between place and performance, exploring how the witnesses navigated the urban landscape and acted within various different settings, the conventions and expectations which shaped these practices, and the ways in which the witnesses sought to present their own status and identity to others within the town. Theories of performativity point towards a complex, ambiguous model of individual agency and identity, in which the potential for unique self-assertion is poised against the constraints of iterative, socially constructed, normative behaviours. The discussion will also touch on recent work on medieval self-conception and self-presentation by scholars such as Crane and David Gary Shaw, whose analysis of the 'social self' in later medieval England urges us to recognise the value of small 'biographical moments', comparable to those outlined in the Swansea witness statements, in extending our understanding of medieval formulations of identity and belonging.[6] Certainly, close reading of

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[3] For an interactive version of this map, covering a larger area beyond the town of Swansea itself, and including plotted witness routes, descriptive labels and 3D reconstructions of sight-lines, see http://www.medievalswansea.ac.uk. For a discussion of the methodologies and evidence involved in the creation of these new maps of medieval Swansea, see the article by Lilley and Dean in this special issue.

[4] John J. McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 12. Paul Strohm makes similar comments with particular reference to medieval legal texts in *Hochon's Arrow: the Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4.

[5] Susan Crane, The *Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 3. For concise overviews of the critical history and background to 'performance' and 'performativity', including seminal work by Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman, J.L. Austin and others, see Crane, *Performance of Self*, 3 (an implicit précis of Austin here) and 5; and McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 15–17.

[6] David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: the Social Self in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 5, 196.

the Swansea witness statements reveals details which complicate and nuance our understanding of medieval selfhood, including the use of what will be referred to as 'proxies' to enable individuals such as Lady Mary de Briouze to circumvent spatial constraints and to enlarge their spheres of agency. It is rare to be able to reconstruct and analyse in detail the itineraries of such a socially diverse range of individuals within the same geographical space.[7] The nine Swansea witness statements are suggestive of a medieval urban landscape in which spaces carried distinctive (and often malleable) meanings for different communities and individuals, borders and boundaries were inscribed both visibly and invisibly throughout the town, and inhabitants were adept at shaping the ways in which they were perceived by others through their own spatial practices.

Nine witness itineraries

Lady Mary de Briouze

According to her own deposition, Lady Mary de Briouze remains in her chamber at the castle (Swansea's New Castle, constructed *c.*1284–90) during all the events of Cragh's hanging and resuscitation.[8] She later goes on pilgrimage to Thomas Cantilupe's shrine at Hereford Cathedral with her husband Lord William de Briouze senior and Cragh.

William de Briouze junior

William junior, stepson of Lady Mary and son of the Lord William who orders Cragh's hanging, watches the hanging from the hall of Swansea Castle. After the hanging, William makes two journeys to the house of the burgess, Thomas Mathews, walking north through the castle bailey, northwards up the High Street and out of the North Gate, then along the Upper High Street to the house of Thomas Mathews, located near St John's Chapel. Here he sees Cragh, apparently dead, and later after he has begun to recover.

William of Codineston

The de Briouze family chaplain, William of Codineston, remains in or near the castle during all the events of Cragh's hanging, possibly leaving the castle and going along West Gate Street, as far as the West Gate (but not beyond) when Cragh is led to the gallows.

William Cragh (William ap Rhys)

Cragh, the hanged man himself, is held in the dungeon of Swansea Castle before his execution. He is then led out of the castle bailey, along West Gate Street and out through the town's West Gate. From here he is probably taken west on the path which follows the course of Washing Lake Brook, and then meets Gallows Road, where it climbs steeply up the hill. After the hanging on

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[7] Paul Strohm has reconstructed three routes through fourteenth-century London in 'Three London Itineraries', in *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 3–19, but these are not an original medieval grouping and do not present the same potential for social comparisons as the Swansea evidence.

[8] All subsequent references to Swansea Castle refer to the New Castle, at the top of Wind Street, rather than the earlier Norman motte and bailey structure slightly further to the north.

Gibbet Hill, Cragh's body is carried north-eastwards down Gallows Road to where it joins the Upper High Street. From there he is carried to the Chapel of St John on the Upper High Street, but as the chapel is closed, his body is laid in the house of the burgess Thomas Mathews, nearby. Here Cragh recovers, eventually going to the castle to speak to Lord William and Lady Mary de Briouze. He then joins them on pilgrimage to Thomas Cantilupe's shrine at Hereford Cathedral, and promises to go to the Holy Land, but appears to remain in the Swansea area.

Thomas Marshall

The priest Thomas Marshall is nearby when he sees Cragh (and the other condemned man, Trahaearn ap Hywel) being led out of the dungeons of Swansea Castle. He then leaves the castle bailey through the northern gate, and walks westwards along West Gate Street, following the execution procession. He watches the hanging from the West Gate. Later that day, he goes to the house of Thomas Mathews to see William's body, probably walking back along West Gate Street, and northwards up the High Street and Upper High Street.

John of Baggeham

John of Baggeham, the steward of Lord William de Briouze senior, leads Cragh from the dungeons of Swansea Castle, northwards out of the castle bailey, along West Gate Street and out of the town's West Gate. From there he probably takes the path along the Washing Lake Brook, joining Gallows Road and then making the steep climb up Gibbet Hill. He returns to the castle (probably re-tracing his steps) to report to Lady Mary that Cragh is dead, and is then sent back up to the gallows to ensure that the body is taken down. He then returns to the castle and is given a length of string by Lady Mary, with which to measure Cragh's body. He goes northwards, out of the castle bailey, up the High Street and Upper High Street to the house of Thomas Mathews, where he measures Cragh's body and sees his foot move. He reports back to the castle and then returns to the house of Thomas Mathews, claiming to accompany Lady Mary and her daughter. He returns to Swansea Castle where he spends the night. The next morning, Baggeham returns to the house of Thomas Mathews, where Cragh is recovering and he goes there again several times over the following days.

Henry Skinner

Henry Skinner is a reasonably wealthy local man (probably associated with Swansea's important leather trade).[9] He describes only what he witnesses when standing at the foot of the scaffold on the top of Gibbet Hill.

Adam of Loughor

Aged around 14 at the time of the hanging, Adam describes how he watches the hanging of Cragh from the town walls. His location was probably on the walls above or near to the West Gate. He then goes to Thomas Mathews' house, most likely along West Gate Street and up the High Street and Upper High Street.

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[9] See W.R.B. Robinson, 'Medieval Swansea', in *Glamorgan County History*, vol. 3, *The Middle Ages*, ed. T.B. Pugh (Cardiff: Glamorgan County History Trust, 1971), 361–77 (364).

John ap Hywel

Local Welsh labourer John ap Hywel sees the hanging from an open area ('platea', folio 227r) near St Mary's Church. This is probably the triangular or funnel-shaped area just outside the Wassail Gate.[10] He then walks to the house of Thomas Mathews, near the Chapel of St John,[11] probably making his way through the town along Frog Street, Cross Street, Goat Street, West Gate Street, High Street and Upper High Street. He leaves Thomas Mathews' house and returns a second time (his location in the intervening period is unknown), where he sees Cragh recovering.

Spaces, practices, thresholds

The reconstructed routes of the nine Swansea witnesses give insights into different spaces within and around the medieval town, and the 'meaning-making activities' associated with them.[12] As Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka observe: 'Not only did people create uses for space, but having done so, that space could influence the behavior of those who occupied it, defining space tended to prescribe the behavior within it.'[13] The distinctive meanings and practices associated with particular spaces in medieval Swansea are perhaps most particularly evident in William Cragh's own itinerary, as he is led from dungeon to gallows, the Chapel of St John and house of Thomas Mathews, and finally back to Swansea Castle. Yet Cragh's witness statement also reminds us that the meaning of a place is always contingent, constituted by the activities performed within it and (particularly in the case of these recorded depositions) by the range of ways in which both the place and these spatially located practices could be articulated and represented. In the written version of Cragh's itinerary, the meanings of key sites such as the dungeon and even the gibbet itself emerge as contested and susceptible to divergent interpretations.

In Swansea around the year 1300, the power of the Marcher lordship of Gower, at this time held by the Anglo-Norman de Briouze family, was inscribed emphatically and legibly in the landscape. Swansea Castle itself was one of the most visible material assertions of the lord's power and authority, but the power of the lord of Gower was also staged in the highly visible setting of the gibbet, his instrument of punishment and revenge, on a high hill close to the town. Identifying the site of the gallows was an important goal of the City Witness research, and a range of evidence locates it on today's North Hill to the north-west of the town. John of Baggeham tells the papal commissioners that the gibbet 'was at a certain high place about a quarter of one Roman mile distant' from the castle,[14] and Adam of Loughor is among the witnesses who estimate the distance of the gallows from the town, suggesting that it stood 'in

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[10] See discussion below.

[11] The manuscript here in fact reads 'propinqua ecclesie sancte Marie predicte' ('neighbouring the aforesaid Church of St Mary'), but this is almost certainly a scribal error. The other witnesses agree that Thomas Mathews' house was near the Chapel of St John, and John ap Hywel's recent reference to St Mary's Church may have been the cause of the notary's confusion. See MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 227r, ed. and trans. Harriett Webster, http://www.medievalswansea.ac.uk. All subsequent references to the text are from this edition, with minor amendments.

[12] See Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text*, 4, which reappraises the theories of Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu from the perspective of medieval spatial practices.

[13] Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, introduction to *Medieval Practices of Space*, eds. B.A. Hanawalt and M. Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), ix–xviii (x).

[14] f. 223v: 'ad furcas dicti domini existentes in quodam loco excelso, distantes quasi per quartam partem unius miliaris a dicto castro'.

his estimate about two crossbow shots' ('ad duos tractus baliste ut estimat') from his vantage point on the town walls, probably near the West Gate.[15] The steep promontory known today as North Hill fits these descriptions plausibly. Further confirmation is provided by the 1852 Board of Health plans of Swansea, in which modern-day 'North Hill Road' still carries the name 'Gibbet Hill Road'.[16] The distance does seem a little far for Adam of Loughor's estimate of 'two crossbow shots', and raises the possibility that his use of the term *ballista* denoted a more substantial weapon (perhaps more akin to a siege catapult).[17] The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* confirms that *ballista* most commonly refers to a hand-held crossbow in early fourteenth-century Britain,[18] though of course there is the possibility that the continental notaries recording Adam's testimony used different terminology and that there was some confusion in the transcription here, or indeed that Adam was over-stating his personal capabilities with a weapon. In any case, the argument for modern-day North Hill as the site of Swansea's medieval gallows is compelling, its elevation above the town ensuring that the gibbet was visible, outlined against the skyline, from almost any location within the medieval urban area. This visual assertion of the authority of the Marcher lord was an inescapable sight across the town and surrounding landscape. Yet Cragh's testimony shows us that the meaning of even these most emphatic symbols and sites of the lord's power could be wrested in alternative directions.

William Cragh describes his night in the dungeon of Swansea Castle before the morning of his execution. The meaning of the dungeon, a space in which the power of Lord William de Briouze was enacted on the imprisoned and condemned men, and materialised in the strength of the castle walls and fortifications, might initially seem incontrovertible. Yet Cragh's narrative imbues the space with different associations and valences. He recounts the visitation he receives from the Virgin Mary, accompanied by a man whom he identifies as Thomas of Hereford. His description of Mary, 'covered in precious stones with a white head-dress on [her] head'[19] alludes to typical features of the depictions of Mary which were 'omnipresent in Welsh churches and chapels' at this time;[20] Mary's appearance holding a ladder for the prisoners to climb also gestures towards Marian iconographic traditions.[21] The narrative trope of the prisoner visited by a saint or holy figure in prison before his execution is common enough in medieval literature for Guy Geltner to refer to it as the *topos* of 'jail-breaking hagiography', again locating Cragh's experience within a recognisable system of genre and markers of meaning.[22] Cragh is also careful to state that there are 13 condemned men in the cell, of

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[15] ff. 226r–v. See Bartlett, *Hanged Man*, 65–7, for some reflections on how medieval witnesses articulate linear measurements.

[16] Swansea, West Glamorgan Archives, D/D P 856: Swansea Local Board of Health Survey of the Borough of Swansea, 1852, scale 1:528. The location of Swansea's gallows has also been discussed by Bernard Morris, 'From Swansea Castle to Gibbet Hill', *Minerva: the Swansea History Journal* 18 (2010–11): 6–11, which also argues for a site at modern-day North Hill.

[17] Like Webster, Bartlett also translates *ballista* as 'crossbow' (see for example *Hanged Man*, 67, where he also remarks on the 'ambitious range' suggested by Adam).

[18] R.E. Latham, D. R. Howlett and R. K. Ashdowne, eds., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975–2013), *s.v.* ballista.

[19] f. 221r: 'operta lapidibus preciosis cum stolla alba in capite'.

[20] Jane Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 8.

[21] See for example Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 292.

[22] G. Geltner, *Medieval Prisons: a Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 67–8. See also the overview in Guy Geltner, 'Medieval Prisons: Between Myth and Reality, Hell and Purgatory', *History Compass* 4 (2006): 2. Jussi Hanska also notices parallels between the narrative of Cragh's visions

whom all are saved except one (Trahaearn ap Hywel, who is hanged successfully alongside Cragh the following day). Even this detail is suggestive of the biblical 12 apostles, plus the doomed Judas Iscariot.[23] Cragh's account of his experiences in the dungeon reconstitutes this space and its meaning according to the conventions of religious passion narrative and hagiography, as opposed to secular formulations of crime, justice and punishment. The relationship between the dungeon and power is disrupted and re-made: instead of signifying the power of the Marcher lord of Gower, the events which occur within the cell manifest the omnipotence of God and his saintly intercessors, subverting secular ambition.

Cragh's ability, retrospectively, to re-shape the meaning of this acutely significant space within medieval Swansea was of course invited and facilitated by the papal inquisition and its re-reading of the events of 1290 through the lens of hagiography rather than criminal justice and Marcher politics. Further details typical of passion narrative or hagiography recur throughout the witness statements, from reports of Cragh's vision while on the gallows, to Lady Mary's assertion that his body was carried down from the hill 'on a certain wooden wheel … the head hanging down from one part, and the feet from another, and the middle of him as it were lying across the said wood'.[24] Mary is also at pains to describe the suffering and injury which this wheel would have caused, had Cragh still been alive:

> And this manner in which he was carried to the said chapel on the said wooden wheel was so painful, that any healthy person who was carried from the said gallows to the said chapel as the said William was carried (it was generally said) would be almost dead.[25]

None of the other witnesses can corroborate the claim made by Mary (who was in her chamber in the castle and saw nothing directly herself) that Cragh was carried on this wheel.[26] Again, Mary's story seems to owe more to the familiar tropes of the *passio* tradition, and especially, of course, elements associated with St Katherine of Alexandria, tortured and killed on a wheel, the subject of numerous church dedications and hagiographies in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Britain, her cult having been promoted and popularised through traditions brought across the Channel from Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[27] Once again, a key spatial practice and public performance involved in the hanging of William Cragh gathers a radical new meaning. Rather than the public display of the mutilated corpse of a criminal after his execution, the transportation of Cragh's body becomes, through Mary's presentation of the event, a spectacle of suffering, *passio*, and ultimate spiritual redemption, played out in the streets of Swansea.

Even the meaning of the gibbet itself, the widely visible tool of the Marcher lord's authority to punish, emerges as unstable and malleable. William of Codineston, the de Briouze chaplain, describes the contrition of Cragh as he is led to his place of execution:

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and rescue and other miracle stories; see J. Hanska, 'The Hanging of William Cragh: Anatomy of a Miracle', *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001): 133.

[23] Medieval sources usually number the apostles at 12 excluding Judas, the twelfth apostle being either Matthias (Acts 1:20–6) or St Paul.

[24] f. 8r: 'in quodam ligno rotundo, capite pendente deorsum ex una parte et pedibus ex alia, et dicto ligno existente in medio eius quasi per transversum'.

[25] f. 8r: 'Et modus apportandi eum ad dictam capellam super dictum lignum rotundum, fuit ita gravis quod quilibet sanus qui fuisset apportatus de dictis furcis ad dictam capellam sicut dictus Willelmus fuit apportatus fuisse fere mortuus, sicut communiter dicebatur.'

[26] William of Codineston, the de Briouze chaplain, is asked directly, but replies tactfully that he does not know: f. 13v, 'Interrogatus, dixit se nescire.'

[27] Sherry M. Reames, ed., *Middle English Legends of Women Saints.* TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2003), 169–71.

… who was showing he had great contrition and sorrow for his sins and was asking the people to beseech God for him, and forgive him the harm which he had inflicted upon them, just as the same witness said he saw before, and heard with his own ears, when William was saying the aforesaid, and was showing the said signs of penitence and contrition with weeping and tears … [28]

In Codineston's account, Cragh's performative behaviour of crying and displaying recognisable, conventional signs ('signa') of remorse reconstitutes the meaning of events. Notably, Codineston locates Cragh's display of weeping within the walled area of Swansea, just inside the West Gate, *before* he leaves the town to walk to the gallows. In this busy part of the town, on West Gate Street and close to the junction with Goat Street, Cragh's behaviour is highly visible and performatively appropriate as a public display of penitence for his crimes against the people of the town. Cragh's tears evoke a long-established equation in late antique and medieval culture between weeping, penitence and spiritual transformation.[29] The spectacle of Cragh's weeping transforms the meaning of the execution procession, and changes the signification of the gallows from a site of rightful secular punishment to a place of spiritual revelation and redemption.

Both alive and (apparently) dead, the journey of Cragh's body calls attention to the established – but also contestable – meanings of particular spaces within the medieval landscape, and to the presence of the multiple boundaries and thresholds which score through the urban environment. Whether visible and material or invisible and 'virtual', these boundaries reflect the intersection and competition of 'criss-crossing jurisdictions' within the medieval town,[30] and the multi-layered, often contrasting ways in which space could be configured and imagined by members of different cultural and ethnic communities. These overlaid geographies are immediately evident in the ways in which Lady Mary de Briouze, in response to questioning from the papal commissioners, describes the location of Swansea. The town is:

Swansea, in the region of Gower, in the diocese of St David's, and the region was in the temporal jurisdiction of the said William, formerly her husband … [31]

Here, the town itself (with its likely Viking origins as 'Sweyn's island'), the Marcher lordship of Gower and the diocese of St David's are all available as ways of configuring and articulating space. Yet the neat concatenation of spatial references, recorded by the notaries in London, elides the tensions and dissonances between them, implying congruence between their different systems of power. Recent work on the towns of medieval Wales has emphasised their character as places of contact and exchange between different ethnic and social groups, presenting them 'not only as foci of tensions between distinctive nations and peoples but also as fulcrums in which the rich regional cultures and dialects of the separate societies of

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[28] f. 13r: ' … qui ostendebat, se habere magnam contricionem de peccatis suis, et rogabat gentes quod orarent deum pro eo, et quod remitterent ei dampna que intulerat eis sicut idem testis dixit se predicta vidisse, et suis auribus audivisse, cum dictus Willelmus predicta dicebat, et dicta signa penitencie et contricionis cum fleta et lacrimis ostendebat … '. Cragh's sadness and weeping are evidently identified as significant by an early reader of this manuscript, with 'et dolorem' added later in a lighter ink in the margin.

[29] For a seminal text, see the account of Augustine of Hippo's tears of repentance in the Milan villa garden; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. W. Watts. 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), 1: 462, 463. For a broader discussion of the uses and meanings of tears in the Middle Ages, see Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 44–5, and Elina Gertsman, ed., *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[30] Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 32.

[31] f. 8r: 'Sweyneseye, in terra de Gouer, Menevensis dyocesis, que terra erat de iurisdictione temporali dicti domini Willelmi, viri sui quondam … '.

England and Wales intermingled and merged'.[32] As Lady Mary's description of the geographical context of Swansea suggests, our understanding of urban culture in medieval Wales must extend beyond the simplistic binary of Welsh and Anglo-Norman (or indeed urban and rural), instead taking into account the wide variety of communities and identities shaped by ethnicity, social and economic position, gender and religious status.[33] Ralph Griffiths' view of the inhabitants of Welsh towns 'living in harmony in normal circumstances' reminds us that these diverse urban communities usually functioned effectively, and that the medieval town was more than merely a site of perpetual ethnic and political conflict.[34] Yet a close analysis of the itineraries of the nine Swansea witnesses reveals that beneath the overt 'harmony' of the medieval Welsh town there is evidence of subtle and complex social division and spatial regulation, as well as practices which constituted multiple urban communities within the same geographical area.

After being taken down from the gallows, Cragh's lifeless body is taken (perhaps on a wooden wheel) to the Chapel of St John (also referred to in medieval sources as St John iuxta Swansea). Not all the witnesses mention the chapel, yet those who do so evidently recognise its significance in the narrative. While the chapel is locked, and Cragh's body cannot be laid inside as his friends hoped, it is clearly worthy of note that they try to carry him there. The Chapel of St John had a particular association with Swansea's Welsh community in the Middle Ages, and a history which may well have reached back before Norman colonisation. The chapel is known as 'Eglwys Ieuan' in Welsh: *eglwys* is recognised as a good indicator of early ecclesiastical sites.[35] Edith Evans comments that 'there are good reasons why this cannot be the case' for the Chapel of St John, as it is known to have been founded by the Knights Hospitaller in the mid-twelfth century.[36] Yet it is of course possible that this was a re-foundation on an earlier ecclesiastical site. Archaeological and mapping work has identified a large elliptical enclosure at the northern end of the medieval town, within which the medieval Chapel of St John was sited. Early elliptical enclosures have been identified across the Gower landscape, where Jonathan Kissock suggests they may represent early 'agricultural estates, perhaps associated with the church or even preserving earlier Roman land holdings'.[37] The enclosure around St John's could also be suggestive of an early Celtic monastic site, inside a curvilinear wall or ditch, typically located in 'lower-lying ground or lower valley slopes' in a 'coastal situation' (but not immediately on the coast itself).[38] The site could be identified, then, as a pre-Norman settlement nucleus, pre-dating the colonial Marcher town. In 1290, the Chapel of St John was outside the town walls of Swansea, on the Upper High Street where it led north through a growing suburb towards the Carmarthen road. This extra-mural location would itself have been a significant factor for those carrying Cragh's body: while the agents of Lord William de Briouze would undoubtedly

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[32] Llinos B. Smith, 'In Search of an Urban Identity: Aspects of Urban Society in Late Medieval Wales', in *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales*, ed. Helen Fulton (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), 19–50 (29).
[33] Spencer Dimmock urges such a re-focusing of attention onto class and social status in his essay 'Social Conflict in Welsh Towns *c*.1280–1530', in *Urban Culture*, ed. Fulton, 117–36.
[34] Ralph A. Griffiths, 'The Study of the Medieval Welsh Borough', in idem, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994), 157–68 (163).
[35] T. Roberts, 'Welsh Ecclesiastical Place-Names and Archaeology', in *The Early Christian Church in Wales and the West*, eds. Nancy Edwards and Alan Lane (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1992), 41–4 (42).
[36] Edith Evans, *Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites in Southeast Wales*. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust report 2003/030 (Swansea: Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, 2003), 40.
[37] Keith Lilley and Gareth Dean, 'Development of Medieval Swansea' (http://www.medievalswansea.ac.uk); Jonathan Kissock, 'The Upland Dimension: Further Conjectures on Early Medieval Settlement in Gower', *Morgannwg* 35 (2001): 55–68.
[38] *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan: Pre-Norman*, Part 3, *The Early Christian Period* (Cardiff: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 1976), 12–13.

have been keen to avoid taking the body back through Swansea's central streets (and perhaps creating a dangerous disturbance),[39] Cragh's Welsh family and friends may have also preferred a resting place outside the greater regulation and scrutiny of the walled Anglo-Norman town. The association between the chapel and the Knights Hospitaller may also not have been unimportant for Cragh and his companions: the order had another foundation at Llanrhidian in Gower, the parish from which Cragh came.[40]

The complex history, associations and likely mythology of the Chapel of St John for inhabitants of medieval Swansea and Gower remind us of the ways in which places gather meanings over time and shape the spatial practices of those who inhabit them. The archaeological, historical and topographical evidence here helps to explain the decision to bring Cragh's body to this particular location, reflecting collective memories, spatial practices and traditions distinctive to the Welsh community in medieval Swansea. These kinds of nuances and associations can be elided by the initial appearance of a medieval town such as Swansea, with its single parish church of St Mary's. Llinos Smith comments that 'the majority of Welsh urban centres were single-parish communities, a true *corpus Christianum* where church and urban community were conjoined.'[41] Yet the attitudes of the medieval Swansea witnesses to the Chapel of St John, together with what we can recover of its history and significance to the local community, suggest that this image of a united urban body sharing a single place of worship and religious identification may be simplistic. In Swansea, the Church of St Mary, a twelfth-century foundation, seems to have been associated much more strongly with the Anglo-Norman town and its Marcher lords. Finding the chapel locked,[42] Cragh's body is taken to the nearby house of the burgess Thomas Mathews, also in the extra-mural area of Swansea on the Upper High Street. This location and the events which take place there are discussed in the final section of this paper.

The town walls of Swansea were an obvious, material marker of a key boundary and threshold in the urban landscape. Even with the extra-mural development to the north, and the lack of walls to the south and east (where the topography forms natural defences), the walls fulfilled a symbolic function, asserting that the town and those within it were subject to particular control, regulation and, in some cases, privileges.[43] But many borders and divisions within the medieval town were much less immediately visible, although, as Carol Symes reminds us, individuals 'would have been acutely aware that a network of virtual boundaries was being crossed and re-crossed. Sometimes these were invisible to certain people but obvious to others.'[44]

In medieval Swansea, these invisible or 'virtual' social and cultural boundaries, maintained by socially constructed and accepted normative behaviours as well as by explicit regulation, were in

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[39] John of Baggeham, steward of William de Briouze, mentions in his testimony that the execution procession included 10 armed horsemen in case of trouble (f. 223v).

[40] See Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitaller* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 104. For Cragh's reference to Llanrhidian, see his deposition, f. 220r.

[41] Smith, 'In Search of an Urban Identity', 30.

[42] Even this apparently minor detail may be suggestive of the anxiety of the Knights Hospitaller about becoming embroiled in the events surrounding Cragh's hanging, and wider tensions in the wake of the Rhys ap Maredudd rebellion. Alternatively, within the spiritual framework of the miracle narrative, that the chapel was closed may retrospectively suggest that it was not yet 'ready' to receive Cragh, until his healing by St Thomas. The lack of any given reason for why the chapel was locked perhaps implies that space has been deliberately left for a range of more spiritually weighted explanations.

[43] See Richard Suggett, 'The Townscape, 1400–1600', in *Urban Culture*, ed. Fulton, 51–94 (55).

[44] Carol Symes, 'Out in the Open, in Arras: Sightlines, Soundscapes and the Shaping of a Medieval Public Sphere', in *Cities, Texts and Social Networks 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space*, eds. Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester and Carol Symes (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 279–302 (294).

many ways stronger and more compelling than material barriers. Once again, the picture presented by the nine medieval witness statements complicates any simplistic configuration of spatial practices and enfranchisement purely as a reflex of 'ethnic duality'.[45] The de Briouze family chaplain, William of Codineston, for example, explains that he was unwilling to go with Cragh and the execution procession to Gibbet Hill because of his status as a priest:

> … but the said witness was not present in person, as he said, when the said speech was made, because of his priestly office he did not wish to accompany the said criminals when they were led to be hanged outside of the town of Swansea.[46]

It seems likely from Codineston's comments here that he did not want to associate himself with the 'shameful' death of a criminal:[47] he seems to have regarded the West Gate of Swansea as the point beyond which he should not pass, with his testimony noting specifically that the hanging was to take place 'extra villam'. Yet here, the barrier constraining Codineston is virtual and social rather than material: it is social pressure and expectation which determine his spatial practice and self-regulation, though his very narrow definition of his priestly office may also imply a particular personal concern with negotiating loyalties divided between his duty of pastoral care and his obligations to his lord.

    The material boundaries visible within the urban landscape of Swansea were in fact all porous and permeable, their power maintained more by social conventions and normative spatial practices rather than any physical barrier. Yet these material boundaries did create distinctive spaces and zones within and around the town, each with their own recognisable character and with perceptible thresholds and crossing-points between. The walls divided Swansea from its extra-mural settlement on the Upper High Street, apparently understood by the Welsh community (as the witness statements show) as an area with a more complex, ambiguous relationship to the enclosed Anglo-Norman town. Water provided natural boundaries around much of the town, from the busy port on the River Tawe to the east, to the boggy ground around the Cadle, Town Ditch and Nant Press to the south and west. But even here, to the west of the town, the location of the 'Washing Pool', where townspeople would likely have come to do their laundry, suggests a focal point for social congregation – a kind of urban centre, at least for certain groups, such as women – outside the walls. At this western edge of Swansea, communities from the town and Gower would have come into constant contact, again undermining the rigid town-country antithesis familiar from medieval Welsh literature.[48] Within the walled town, the inner castle bailey, with its own enclosure, would have had a distinct character, in terms of the more tightly controlled constituency of the population allowed inside, and its encircling walls, which would have limited sight-lines, affected the presence of sun and shade, and even created a particular soundscape, muting the noise of the town – such as the busy market at the top of Wind Street – beyond.[49] But the bailey was

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[45] Smith, 'In Search of an Urban Identity', 38.

[46] ff. 13r–v: ' … sed dictus testis non fuerat presens, ut dixit, quando dicta oratione facta fuit, quia propter officium sacerdotale noluit sequi dictos malefactores quando ad suspendium ducebantur extra villam de Sweyneseye.'

[47] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 12.

[48] Smith, 'In Search of an Urban Identity', 20–4; Griffiths, 'Study of the Medieval Welsh Borough', 161. W.R.B. Robinson notes that 'Swansea would have attracted large numbers of country people'; see idem, 'Swansea', in *Boroughs of Mediaeval Wales*, ed. R.A. Griffiths (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 1978), 263–88 (266).

[49] For discussions of soundscapes in the medieval town and city, see Symes, 'Out in the Open', 297–9; C.M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 66–71; Leonie

certainly not a sealed, hermetic space inhabited only by Swansea's noble family and those in their service: already by 1300 it is possible that part of the bailey had been divided into burgess plots for rental.[50]

The itinerary of John ap Hywel, the lowly Welsh labourer who gives his testimony on the events surrounding the hanging of William Cragh, suggests again the interplay between material and virtual boundaries, as well as the intersection of norms and pressures relating to ethnicity, gender and social class, within the medieval town. John tells us that he watches the hanging from an open area near the Church of St Mary. The deposition records: 'The witness himself was with 100 people (in his estimate) in the square (*platea*) in the town of Swansea near the church of St Mary.'[51] *Platea* would suggest an open square or wide street, but probably not a churchyard, which would likely have been denoted more explicitly.[52] Michael Richter assumes that this location was within the town walls of Swansea ('innerhalb der Stadtmauer'),[53] but John ap Hywel does not state this explicitly, and it is difficult to identify an appropriate location in this area, which could have accommodated 100 spectators, other than the churchyard of St Mary's. A location immediately inside the Wassail Gate or adjacent to St Mary's Church would also have had its sight-lines significantly limited by the proximity of the town walls, making John's ability to witness the hanging directly, as he claims, more doubtful. Instead, it is possible that John, and the rest of the crowd, watched the hanging from the triangular or funnel-shaped area just outside the Wassail Gate, where they would have had a clear view up along the western edge of the town towards Gibbet Hill. It is possible, in fact, that this area may have been a secondary marketplace for the medieval town, supplementing the main Anglo-Norman market adjacent to the castle at the top of Wind Street, with its location just outside the walls suggesting that it may have primarily served the local Welsh community. Triangular or funnel-shaped forms have been identified as characteristic of earlier medieval marketplaces, before the introduction of planned market squares in the later Middle Ages.[54] These forms are particularly associated with monastic towns, where they are found outside abbey walls and gateways.[55] A similar spatial configuration could well have led to the organic development of a marketplace outside Wassail Gate in medieval Swansea: an obvious place for commercial activity, at a busy thoroughfare and landmark, just outside the formal

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V. Hicks, 'Through the City Streets: Movement and Space in Rouen as Seen by the Norman Chroniclers', in *Society and Culture in Medieval Rouen, 911–1300*, eds. Elma Brenner and Leonie Hicks (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 78–94 (89–90).

[50] William de Briouze junior had even mortgaged towers within the castle by 1326. See R.R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 100.

[51] f. 227r: 'ipse testis existens cum centum personis ut estimat in platea ville de Swayneseie prope ecclesiam Sancte Marie'.

[52] *Platea* has an extremely wide semantic range, but the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, *s.v.*, gives its first sense as 'street (usually in city or town … public as distinct from private space)'. Rarely, it can refer to a cemetery and can also describe a 'yard, court, courtyard, garden', though conventional usages again refer notably to secular spaces. Michael Richter translates *platea* into German as 'Platz' (an open place or square); see M. Richter, 'Waliser und Wundermänner um 1300', in *Spannungen und Widersprüche: Gedenkschrift für Frantisek Graus*, eds. S. Burghartz and others (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1992), 23–36 (28).

[53] Richter, 'Waliser und Wundermänner', 28. He remarks in a footnote here that information about Swansea *c*.1300 is scarce.

[54] Sarah Rees Jones, 'Civic Government and the Development of Public Buildings and Spaces in Later Medieval England', in *Construir la ciudad en la Edad Media*, eds. B.A. Bolumburu and J.A. Solorzano Telechea (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2010), 497–512 (497).

[55] D.M. Palliser and others, 'The Topography of Towns 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. D.M. Palliser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153–86 (160–8).

controls of the town itself. On the road west, leading to the Gower, the site would have been particularly convenient and attractive for the local Welsh community, and gathering or trading here may have been as much a positive choice as the result of any exclusion or disenfranchisement in Swansea's main urban market. When John ap Hywel leaves the *platea* to view the body of Cragh in the house of Thomas Mathews, he crosses a visible threshold – passing through the Wassail Gate and the town walls – but also moves from an area probably associated with Welsh traditions and customs into the more predominantly Anglo-Norman town, and then on into the extra-mural area beyond.

Spatial regulation and constraints – or preferred practices shaped through a range of social traditions and pressures – clearly cannot be understood in terms of a simple ethnic binary. The example of William of Codineston has already shown how the status of religious orders affected an individual's spatial practices, and it is striking that the depositions given by the two highest-born witnesses – Lady Mary and Lord William de Briouze junior – show that they were also subject to regulation and the limitation of their movement within the town. Mary's movements are constrained by social norms relating to gender as well as her noble status;[56] William, son of the lord of Gower at the time of Cragh's hanging, is restricted in terms of his status and probably his vulnerability due to his unpopularity with the local community.[57] While Mary remains in her chamber during the hanging, however, William watches it from the elevated position of the first-floor hall of Swansea Castle, accompanied by members of his household and guests.[58] Despite his lack of physical presence in the town, he and his father command a panoptical view of events within it.[59] In contrast to those whose movements and spatial practices are limited, some witnesses traverse the urban landscape with much more apparent freedom. Most notably, John of Baggeham, the steward of Lord William de Briouze senior, is able to move widely and easily within and beyond the town of Swansea.

Although addressing a more traditional manorial context in England, the thirteenth-century Latin treatise *Fleta* may have still reflected the *ideal* of a steward at the end of the century, albeit modified in practice by the power structures and realities of a Marcher context.

> Let the lord then provide himself with a discreet and faithful steward, a man wise, prudent and well-mannered, humble and modest, peace-loving and temperate, who is versed in the laws and the customs of the county and the duties of his office, one who is eager to protect his lord's rights in all things … [60]

Baggeham's account of his movements in his deposition certainly reinforces his importance, but perhaps throws into question the required 'humility and modesty'. He journeys back and forth

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[56] For a discussion of spatial regulation and noble women, see Barbara A. Hanawalt, *'Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially 71–84. She acknowledges that the urban environment complicated traditional medieval social conceptions and customs (81), but regards higher-born women as particularly subject to continuing control and constraint.

[57] See discussion below.

[58] f. 10v. The first-floor hall was a distinctive feature of Welsh architecture at this time. See Michael Thompson, *The Medieval Hall: the Basis of Secular Domestic Life, 600–1600 AD* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995).

[59] I allude to Foucault here. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991).

[60] 'Provideat tunc sibi dominus de senescallo, circumspect et fideli, viro provido discreto et gracioso, humili et pudico, et pacifico et modesto, qui in legibus consuetudinibusque provincie et officio senescalcie se cognoscat et iura domini sui in omnibus tueri affectet … ': H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, eds. and trans., *Fleta*, vol. 2, *Prologue, Book I, Book II*. Selden Society 72 (London: Selden Society, 1955), 240, 241 (Book II, chap. 72).

between the gibbet and the castle, and the castle and the house of Thomas Mathews, reporting to his lord and lady and taking charge of events at the gallows and in the town. Even on horseback, the itinerary Baggeham presents on the day of the hanging seems doubtful: the boggy ground along the Nant Press, the steep climb up Gibbet Hill and the busy-ness of the town would have made this slow and difficult. Yet Baggeham's reported itinerary is an effective display of his power and importance as an agent of the Marcher lord, as he moves constantly between the town's centre of power and authority (as he presents it) and peripheries such as the gallows and suburb. The temptation for Baggeham to exaggerate the frequency of his journeys between the castle and elsewhere is understandable. As he knows, these hurried, busy journeys through the town are legible by others as a mark of his importance and seniority as the lord's right-hand man. And it is also possible that, after the curtailment of the powers of William de Briouze junior and his household over the burgesses in the 1306 Swansea charter, Baggeham (giving his deposition in 1307) is nostalgically evoking a recent past in which he enjoyed greater status in the town.[61] Baggeham self-consciously presents himself as the proxy of William de Briouze senior, carrying his authority and enacting his wishes beyond the restricted space of the castle from where he watches the hanging.[62] Interestingly, Lord William is not the only figure to make use of a proxy to extend his range of spatial movement and his sphere of agency. The use of proxies and agents is one strategy in a range of intersecting spatial and performative practices investigated in the final section of this paper.

In the house of Thomas Mathews

After the hanging, William Cragh's body is taken to the house of Thomas Mathews, where he eventually recovers. The witness statements tell us nothing about Mathews, other than referring to him as a burgess of the town. It is difficult to speculate as to his ethnicity: he may well have come from a Welsh background, as by the late thirteenth century many Welshmen were established as burgesses in towns,[63] but it is hard to extrapolate ethnic origin from personal nomenclature.[64] A minister's account for Swansea in 1449 includes several references to a 'David Mathewe', a former receiver of taxes in the town, but despite recent work which suggests the continuity and stability of families in small medieval Welsh towns, 'Mathews' and its variants are common names and any possible link is highly tenuous.[65] It is in the house of Thomas Mathews that most of the nine Swansea witnesses, with their diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, converge. The presence of so many of the witnesses, as well as their reference to the crowd of others in the house, remind us of the complex 'permeability' of the domestic space in the later medieval town.[66] Felicity Riddy has identified the emergence of a

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[61] For a short overview of the much-discussed 1306 de Briouze charter, see Robinson, 'Swansea', 267–9. The document suggests that the de Briouze steward presided over the hundred court and controlled the town's affairs (279).

[62] I do not use the term *proxy* in its strict medieval legal sense, but rather to signal someone who acts in place of another individual; see discussion below.

[63] Griffiths, 'Study of the Medieval Welsh Borough', 163; Ralph A. Griffiths, 'Who Were the Townsfolk of Medieval Wales?', in *Urban Culture*, ed., Fulton, 9–19 (12).

[64] Griffiths, 'Who Were the Townsfolk', 10–11.

[65] For a discussion of the minister's accounts, see W.R.B. Robinson, 'An Analysis of a Minister's Account for the Borough of Swansea for 1449', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 22 (1967): 169–98. On names and families in towns, see Smith, 'In Search of an Urban Identity', 31–3.

[66] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity in Later Medieval England: a Material Culture Perspective', in *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Later Medieval England*, eds. Maryanne Kowaleski and P.J.P. Goldberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 124–44 (136).

distinctive ideology of 'domesticity' in the fourteenth century, associated with the urban values of the *burgeiserie*, in which the home could function as a setting for social engagements, commerce and public display as well as a space for more private activities.[67] Strikingly, the burgess dwelling of Thomas Mathews parallels Swansea Castle itself as a space of *Weltanschauung*, in which identities and relationships are displayed and performed before witnesses and actions are freighted with particularly acute meaning.[68]

Mary de Briouze tells us that she was not present at the house of Thomas Mathews in person. Yet she, like her husband, uses proxies effectively to ensure that she has a stake in the dramatic events unfolding there. Mary sends a maidservant (*domicella*) whom she names as Sunehild, to the house of Thomas Mathews to measure Cragh to St Thomas, a popular devotional practice in which a candle the size of the man's body would be made as an offering to the saint.[69] Mary then explains that she had subsequently 'arranged for broth to be prepared [for the recovering Cragh] for several days in her home in the aforesaid castle' which is taken to Thomas Mathews' house by another maid.[70] Thomas Marshall, the priest, seems to corroborate this in his account of his own visit to Thomas Mathews' house:

> … yet before he left, he said he saw one silver bowl with a silver spoon in the hands of Matilda de la Chapel (a chambermaid of the lady of the castle) in the same house, but he did not say that anything administered to the said William was swallowed … [71]

John of Baggeham also reports that Mary 'arranged care for him and had prepared a broth of almonds'.[72] Both the measuring and feeding of Cragh can be seen as appropriate acts for a woman of Mary's status: almsgiving and acts of charity are conventionally associated with noblewomen in the period.[73] We can understand the feeding of Cragh as a ritualised performance of Mary's piety and the suspension or rejection of secular politics while she fulfils her Christian obligations to care for the vulnerable and weak in the community. Yet there is another way of reading Mary's feeding of Cragh (via her maidservant) in the house of Thomas Mathews. Feeding – and particularly public feeding and public acceptance or ingestion of food – had a range of powerful political associations and uses in the Middle Ages. The sociologist Claude Fischler has explored connections between eating, social inclusion and identity, noting that we 'become what we eat'.[74] More recently, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Robert Barrett have both examined textual examples from medieval Britain in which ingesting food offered by the colonial power (England or the Anglo-Normans) is presented as a kind of bodily colonisation and incorporation in which (in the cases they analyse) Irish and Welsh

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[67] Felicity Riddy, '"Burgeis" Domesticity in Late-Medieval England', in *Medieval Domesticity*, eds. Kowaleski and Goldberg, 14–36. In this essay, Riddy engages with a range of work on the medieval home, including influential contributions by Rybzcsinski, Ariès and others.

[68] See Thompson, *Medieval Hall*, 115.

[69] f. 9r. The maidservant is identified differently as 'Jovanta' by William de Briouze. See Bartlett, *Hanged Man*, 112.

[70] f. 9v: 'fecit sibi pluribus diebus parari sorbilia in domo ipsius domine in castro predicto'.

[71] f. 223r: ' … prius tamen quam inde recederet dixit se vidisse in manibus Mathilde de la Chapel camerarie domine castri unum gyphum argenteum cum uno cocliari argenteo in eadem domo, sed non vidit quod aliquid administretur dicto Willelmo ad absorbendum … '

[72] f. 225r: 'fecit haberi curam de eo et preparari sibi sorbilia de amigdalis'.

[73] See Jennifer Ward, 'English Noblewomen and the Local Community in the Later Middle Ages', in *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 186–203; Patricia Skinner, 'Gender and Poverty in the Medieval Community', in *Medieval Women*, ed. Watt, 204–21.

[74] Claude Fischler, 'Food, Self, and Identity', *Social Science Information* 27 (1988): 279.

individuals are 'forcibly anglicised'.[75] The feeding of Cragh here carries a similar kind of political valency, as the witnesses in the house of Thomas Mathews watch the Welsh rebel William Cragh being fed, by proxy, from the de Briouzes' silver spoon, publicly incorporated into the charge of the ruling Marcher family as he ingests their food. The wording of Mary's testimony makes a direct and arresting connection between the two domestic spaces here: the text refers explicitly to her own home within the castle ('domo ipsius … in castro') where she had the broth prepared, drawing the two spheres into contiguity and, effectively, extending the reach of the castle (and Mary, restricted to her chambers) into the urban environment of the town.[76] But there may be another reason for the emphasis in Mary's deposition.

John of Baggeham sees and reports these events in the house of Thomas Mathews. However, unlike the other witnesses, he claims that Lady Mary herself was there, accompanied by 'soldiers and handmaidens and other members of her husband's household and his men'.[77] As we have already seen, John's testimony may not always be reliable: here again he seems to claim particular importance for himself, insisting (unlike the other witnesses) that *he* did the measuring of Cragh's body (folio 224v). John's error, or inaccurate assertion, presents some interesting questions. His claim that Mary was in the house of Thomas Mathews certainly emphasises the importance of events in which he was a key actor, though it may have been something of a breach of decorum for her to be present (even with the retinue from the castle). Notably, just before this point in his testimony, John has recalled criticising Mary's interest in Cragh and her involvement in the case.[78] Perhaps the careful explanation in Mary's deposition that she had the broth prepared inside the double enclosure of the castle and her home ('domo ipsius … in castro') is a deliberate emphasis of her propriety. It is possible also that, whether deliberately or not, John conflates a proxy (Lady Mary's maidservant) with her mistress, perhaps giving an insight into his estimation of his own status as Lord William's steward and senior agent. There is, potentially, a hint here that for medieval observers there could be some conceptual slippage between proxy and master, particularly in the mind of someone like John, who is so finely attuned to the ways in which agents stood for others and carried out their actions. Work on the medieval period has examined the function of formal proxies (and the specialised use of related terminology) in legal and commercial contexts.[79] But examples from the Swansea witness testimonies, such as Lord William's use of John and Lady Mary's use of her maidservant, suggest that, in a looser sense, the idea of the proxy may be helpful for thinking about medieval identities and spatial practices. The role of the proxy enabled

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[75] Robert W. Barrett, 'Leeks for Livery: Consuming Welsh Difference in the Chester *Shepherds' Play*', in *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place and Identity in Chester, c.1200–1600*, ed. Catherine A.M. Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 184–200; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 21. C.M. Woolgar's analysis of gifts of food through the anthropological and political lens of gift exchange is also illuminating here; see 'Gifts of Food in Late Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011): 6–18.

[76] The formula used by Mary also seems to imply a significant distinction between the castle as a whole, and a domestic space within it, perhaps particularly associated with the female members of the de Briouze family and their attendants.

[77] f. 225r: 'militibus et domicellis et aliis familiaribus viri et suis'.

[78] ff. 224v–225r.

[79] See for example K.L. Reyerson, *The Art of the Deal: Intermediaries of Trade in Medieval Montpellier* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Jamie Smith, 'Women as Legal Agents in Late Medieval Genoa', in *Writing Medieval Women's Lives*, eds. Charlotte Newman Goldy and Amy Livingstone (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 113–30. Smith observes that 'procurators allowed men to be legally in more than one place at one time' (122).

individuals to enlarge their sphere of agency, negotiate spatial constraints or regulation, and extend the forms of action available to them within and across communities. Such a model further complicates notions of medieval selfhood, not only reminding us that it was socially constituted, but suggesting that it may have been conceived as extensible, or transferable, beyond a single physical body.

Conclusion

The rich detail of the nine witness statements from medieval Swansea, read in conjunction with careful analysis of the historic landscape of the town and its environs, has the potential to extend and nuance our understanding of medieval spatial and social practices in a range of ways. As this paper has shown, this rare opportunity to investigate the routes and itineraries of figures from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, moving within the same geographical space, reveals ways in which the urban environment was negotiated and understood differently by individuals and groups. While reminding us of the existence of complex layers of social and cultural geography, visible and invisible boundaries and constraints within the landscape, the witness statements also show the skill and sophistication of medieval actors in re-shaping and manipulating the meanings of spaces within the urban setting, as well as in employing strategies to circumvent spatial regulations and limits. In the William Cragh witness statements, we see clearly that medieval selfhood and the medieval city were mutually constitutive, contingent and subject to continual re-making.

Catherine Clarke is Professor of Medieval Literature and Culture at the University of Southampton. She directed the AHRC-funded research project 'City Witness: Place and Perspective in Medieval Swansea', having previously led a similar project on the literature and culture of medieval Chester. She has published widely on place, power and identity in medieval Britain.