



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Dissertation Schwizer: On the Past – Gerald of Wales' Uses of History

Project funded by own resources

Project title Dissertation Schwizer: On the Past – Gerald of Wales' Uses of History

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Organisation / Research unit

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Gerald of Wales (1146-c.1223, also known as Giraldus Cambrensis) was one of the outstanding literary figures of the Angevin-Plantagenet Empire, and is therefore well suited for a case-study. Over the three decades of his career, he wrote a vast oeuvre on a variety of topics. His works are usually taken apart, and looked at in respect to specific themes, with a focus on individual texts. In contrast, this thesis proposes to look at Gerald's *Opera* as a whole in order to analyse his uses of history, and how different contexts influenced this. To determine how Gerald used form and language to construct a historical narrative as a basis for his argumentation on current affairs, this thesis will split the works into three interrelated themes, conquest, politics and the Church.

Strongly influenced by the developments in the historical discipline introduced through the *linguistic turn*, this thesis will have a substantial focus on form, language and rhetoric, in order to determine how Gerald makes form and language work for his intentions. However, there is a still on-going debate on how medieval histories should be approached, and this dissertation will be positioning itself within this debate. Through this, modern scholars will be able to better understand the way Gerald of Wales' works functioned, and to include his case in the on-going larger debates of the perception and construction of history in the High Middle Middle Ages.

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