

Extract Gesta Regum Anglorum - Chronicle of the English Kings

By William of Malmesbury 1125 – Translation by Mynors

The Welsh were in constant revolt and King Henry maintained Pressure on them by frequent expeditions until they surrendered; also, in reliance on an admirable plan for reducing their ebullience, he removed into Wales all the Flemings who were living in England. Many Flemings who had trooped over in his father's time, relying on their kinship with his mother, were lying low in England, in such numbers as actually to seem a burden on the realm itself; and so he collected them all together, as though into some great midden, in the Welsh province of Rhos, with all their goods and chattels (belongings and relatives), thereby simultaneously purging his kingdom and putting a brake on his headstrong and barbarous enemies. None the less, he sent expeditions in that direction at any suitable opportunity, on one of which he was himself attacked from a distance, no one knows thanks to whose daring, by a stealthy arrow, but well and truly escaped, thanks to the trusty protection of his coat of mail and the aid of Providence, which brought that treachery to nought. The man responsible for that shot did not become known at the time, and could never afterwards be traced, although Henry had declared at once without hesitation that the arrow was sent, not by some chance Welshman, but by one of his own subjects, affirming this 'By our Lord's death' – a form of oath wrung from him by extreme anger or some matter of great moment; for at the time the army was on his own land, not in enemy territory, advancing slowly and cautiously, so that an ambush was the last thing to be expected. Yet fear of danger from within did not make him withdraw from what he had begun, until the Welsh handed over the sons of their nobles as hostages and allayed the king's generous resentment with a certain amount of money and a great deal of property.