

SIR JOHN RHŶS MEMORIAL LECTURE

After Glyn Dŵr: An Age of Reconciliation?

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DURING THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH centuries, following Edward I's final conquest, the inhabitants of the whole of Wales were adjusting to the fact that they were a cosmopolitan people of diverse origins. Their communities—rural as well as urban, even in the north-west heartland of recently conquered Gwynedd—were interleaved, in varying measure, with migrants (and their descendants) from England and Ireland, France and the Low Countries, and from elsewhere in Wales, and this process was unlikely to be reversed. In particular, contacts between English and Welsh multiplied, and relationships between them deepened.

The revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr in the first decade of the fifteenth century, the most serious of the challenges that faced the unsteady Lancastrian king, Henry IV, threatened for a time to disrupt this process. In Parliament and the passageways of government, the revolt seemed exceptionally dangerous; at the University of Oxford the departing Welsh students appeared nothing short of subversive; in the border towns of Chester and Shrewsbury, the alarm was palpable; in many a Welsh town the townsfolk—be they English, Welsh, or other by descent—felt under siege; and when Glyn Dŵr and his predominantly northern forces moved into southern Wales from 1402, not all welcomed them and the devastation was considerable.¹ The gradual defeat of Glyn

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¹ R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1995), especially chs. 4 ('Revolt in Wales, 1400–1409') and 10 ('Survival and Recrimination').

Dŵr's supporters and allies in the decade after 1406 posed large and pressing questions: how to ensure security for the English kingdom in the west thenceforward; how to restore peace and stability to the commonwealth; and how to achieve reconciliation among the peoples of Wales and with the king's subjects in England. These were not new questions, for they had arisen repeatedly during the centuries after the Norman conquest; but they were posed more acutely after Glyn Dŵr's revolt and required answers if the royal principality of Wales in the north and west and Flintshire, and the marcher lordships elsewhere, were to remain within the king's allegiance and recover a measure of stability and prosperity.

Answers were evidently found, for within four generations England and Wales were united, and their respective peoples made equal before the law by an act of Parliament, passed in 1536, about which comparatively few in either country expressed serious misgivings.² In that century and a quarter, stereotypes entrenched within tradition masked social changes and uncertain attitudes. For example, whereas the boundaries of English counties with Welsh lordships were precisely known, in England visitors to Wales could be described as 'going into' Wales and emerging 'out of' Wales as if it were an ill-defined and mysterious country.³ And whereas the generality of its peoples were called Welsh, it is doubtful if many of those who were Anglicised or of English—or indeed other—descent would have readily agreed.

Historians of Wales, like those of its neighbour, have found this a puzzling period, and whilst a number of strands have been examined—among them the changing political structures prior to union, the interests and horizons of social elites, the state of the Welsh church—other strands should be added to the weave in order to reach an adequate understanding of the age and the place of Wales and its peoples in it.⁴ An important strand in the aftermath of Glyn Dŵr's revolt is the relationship between English and Welsh in the borderland.

² See Glanmor Williams, *Wales and the Act of Union* (Bangor, 1992).

³ *A Chronicle of London from 1089 to 1483* (1827), p. 137 (referring to the Duke of York's journey to Dartford, Kent, in 1452), 140 (referring to York's flight from the skirmish at Ludford Bridge, near Ludlow, in 1459). Compare the phraseology used by private correspondents, in J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters* (6 vols., 1904), II, 113 (1449); III, 302, 307 (1461); J. Kirby (ed.), *The Plumpton Letters and Papers* (Camden Soc., fifth series, 8, 1996), 64 (1486).

⁴ For a valuable summary, see Glanmor Williams, *Recovery, Reorientation and Reformation: Wales, c.1415–1642* (Oxford, 1987), Part I ('Rebellion and Recovery', though its subtitle, 'The Twilight of Medieval Wales, 1415–1536', begs a host of questions).

I

Writing during the revolt itself, Adam of Usk, the opinionated chronicler from the Mortimer lordship of Usk in south-east Wales, identified some of the obstacles to the reconciliation of the peoples among whom he lived. He expressed the multiple and potentially conflicting loyalties which many of them felt in the charged atmosphere of rebellion. Whilst he seemed to share the common view of a distant past, when ‘The kingdom of Britain was, as everyone knows, once laid waste by the Saxons’, Adam could sympathise more immediately with ‘our men of England’ and later regarded Henry V as ‘our king’, ‘a most admirable youth, full of wisdom and virtue’. His attitude towards Henry IV, whom he almost certainly knew reasonably well, was more complex and became more guarded in later sections of his chronicle.⁵ However, he could admire Henry as a chivalrous monarch who responded to Owain’s unchivalric raids in September 1400—‘plundering and burning the towns inhabited by the English who lived amongst them, and forcing the English to flee’—by treating mercifully those rebels who submitted to him; according to Adam, the king executed only a few and released their leaders.⁶

Viewing the world as a native of Usk, Adam regarded the north of Wales, and especially Snowdonia, as ‘the source of all the evils in Wales’; and after spending an unhappy time in Welshpool in the north-east March, he returned south to what he called, with apparent relief, ‘his native country’.⁷ Yet he also feared for the consequences of the revolt for Wales, and of the extreme measures against the Welsh which Parliament took in March 1401.

And, as God is my witness, the previous night I was roused from my sleep by a voice ringing in my ears saying, ‘The plowers plowed upon my back’ etc., ‘The righteous lord’ etc., in the psalm, ‘Oft did they vex me’. As a result of which I awoke with a sense of foreboding that some disaster might occur that day, and in my fear I committed myself to the special protection of the Holy Spirit.⁸

⁵ C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk* (Oxford, 1997), pp. lxi, 200; lxxx, 143, 255, 243 (on the English and Henry V). The section of this chronicle up to early 1402 appears to have been written before Adam left England in February 1402, and the section from 1402 to 1414 in the spring of 1414. *Ibid.*, pp. xlvi–xlvi.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv, 173, 239–41. Cf. his references to Snowdonia’s wild mountains, caves, and forests which were Glyn Dŵr’s refuge, *ibid.*, pp. 135, 145, 147, 163, 173.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 126–7.

Even when he was writing with hindsight in 1414, these conflicting attitudes of Adam's were not resolved in his own mind. Recalling Owain's capture of Lord Grey of Ruthin and Edmund Mortimer, his own lord's uncle, in 1402, he recorded that

My heart trembles when I think of this dire blow against English rule inflicted by Owain; backed by a force of thirty thousand men who would issue forth from their caves, he seized castles everywhere throughout Wales and the march—including Usk, Caerleon and Newport [in Adam's own locality]—and burned the towns. What more can I say? Like another Assyrian, the rod of God's anger, he vented his fury with fire and sword in unprecedented tyrannies.⁹

Yet he noted too, and regretted, the hostility shown towards the Welsh in western English counties. He recalled how, after the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, Owain marched 'right across Wales as far as Severn sea; those who resisted him he either drove across the sea—where, being Welsh, they were persecuted by the local people—or forced with fire and sword into surrender; nor did he spare even the churches which ultimately was to lead to his downfall', which, Adam implied, he deserved.¹⁰

Such multiple loyalties and conflicts of attitude, albeit they were exposed in tense circumstances, were not easily reconciled, even after the revolt was over. In particular, loyalty to lord and lordship (or *pays*) proved resilient during the following century and was an obstacle to the restoration of order in Wales and the reconciliation of peoples, at the same time as the English crown sought to come to terms with the revolt's legacy of fear, distrust and resentment on many sides.

Twenty years after the disappearance of Glyn Dŵr, the security of the realm was still an important issue. The well-known tract, the 'Libelle of Englysche Polycye', expressed ideas of political economy, linking the commercial and economic welfare of England to its defence and its command of the seas, and in this tract the royal dominions like Wales were prominent. It was written between 1436 and 1438, and sought to influence decision-making in the king's counsels and political opinion more widely. The significance of Wales was clearly expounded. Like Ireland, it was a 'boterasse and a poste' under England.

God forbede but eche were othere brothere,
Of one ligeaunce dewe unto the kynge.

⁹ C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk* (Oxford, 1997), p. 161. Cf. too his condemnation of Owain's 'flagrant barbarities' across Wales (p. 173).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

If Ireland were to ‘be loste, as Criste Ihesu forbede’,

Farewell Wales.¹¹

At the same time, the Libelle warned:

Beware of Walys, Criste Ihesu mutt us kepe,
That it make not oure childe childe to wepe,
Ne us also, if so it go his waye
By unwarenesse; sethen that many a day
Men have be ferde of here rebellione
By grete tokenes and ostentacione.

To avoid further trouble in Wales, the Libelle stressed the perils of neglect and urged decisive action on the part of the king’s advisers.

Seche the menys wyth a discrete avyse,
And helpe that they rudely not aryse
For to rebellen; that Criste it forbede
Loke well aboute, for God wote we have nede,
Unfayllyngly, unfeynyng and unfeynte,
That conscience for slought you not atteynte.
Kepe well that grounde for harme that may ben used,
Or afore God mutt ye bene accused.¹²

Such dire warnings and exhortations struck a chord with the king’s council, which saw the problem as the responsibility of those who exercised lordship in Wales—including the crown itself. Between 1437 and 1442, at the outset of his majority rule, Henry VI intermittently put his faith in the marcher lords (most of whom were great English lords) acting in conjunction with the government itself—in other words, all the lords of Wales. But little of permanent significance emerged from the discussions that took place.¹³ A flash-point appears to have occurred at the sensitive interface of Herefordshire and several neighbouring marcher lordships. This was not, of course, the heartland of Glyn Dŵr’s revolt, suggesting that the perceived danger a generation later had a different source. Petitions to Parliament in the 1440s, sponsored (one supposes) by border MPs, indicate that it was, rather, the continuing apprehension about Welsh lordships and their inhabitants, at a time of Welsh migration

¹¹ George Warner (ed.), *The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye: A Poem on the use of Sea-power, 1436* (Oxford, 1926), pp. 36–7. For its composition, see R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (2nd edn., Stroud, 1997), pp. 225, 424–5.

¹² Warner, *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*, pp. 40–1.

¹³ R. A. Griffiths, ‘The Provinces and the Dominions in the Age of the Wars of the Roses’, in S. D. Michalove and A. C. Reeves (eds.), *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 10–11, examines this interesting episode.

into the border shires and Welsh raiding during famine and poor harvests.¹⁴ The Welsh encountered the residual antagonisms which Adam of Usk had recorded at the beginning of the century. Mutual suspicion and ineffective royal supervision, wedded to traditional respect for lordship, were aggravated by growing divisions within the king's government on a range of issues, both domestic and foreign; these divisions and the criticisms of Lancastrian government to which they gave rise had their resonance in both the marcher lordships and border English shires. In these circumstances, reconciliation between Welsh and English, and indeed between Welsh and Welsh, was made more difficult. Indeed, Welsh were pitted against Welsh in the most spectacular fashion at the battle of Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire in February 1461, when the Yorkist heir, Edward of March, defeated the Lancastrian forces under Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, in a battle principally between Welsh affinities drawn from different lordships and shires. The engagement could not be portrayed in a British or Arthurian light, and the poet-eulogists of the Welsh gentry made little reference to it—certainly not in the vein of the London chronicler of the battle between Henry IV and Henry Hotspur in 1403, when 'betwen Englysshmen and Englysshmen was the sory bataill of Schrovesbury'.¹⁵ Reactions were very different to the battle of Edgecote eight years later, when the Welsh affinity of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was vanquished by the earl of Warwick's mainly northern English army, and Welsh poets could unite in lamentation.¹⁶ Nevertheless, tranquil relations between English and Welsh were developing, albeit uneasily.

II

The town of Hereford, and Gloucester too, had an important part during the Glyn Dŵr revolt as military centres, sending reinforcements to

¹⁴ For example, *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, V, 53, 106, 151; *Statutes of the Realm*, II, 317–18, 351. For the context, see Ailsa Herbert, 'Herefordshire, 1413–61: Some aspects of society and public order', in R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 103–22, and L. B. Smith, 'The Welsh language before 1536', in G. H. Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution* (Cardiff, 1997), pp. 17–18.

¹⁵ H. T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge, 1915; reprinted Stroud, 1995), pp. 74–80; *Chronicle of London*, p. 88.

¹⁶ Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, pp. 102–9 (analysing the Welsh presence at Edgecote and the poets' reaction to the defeat); and a list of Welsh casualties in J. H. Harvey (ed.), *Itineraries of William Worcester* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 339–41.

vulnerable Welsh castles like Brecon and providing facilities for marshalling the armies of Henry IV and Prince Hal. Yet neither Hereford nor Gloucester—each with an almost legendary place in the urban settlement of Wales since the twelfth century—was subject to direct assault by the rebels, though the western parts of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire were raided and significant encounters with Owain's northern forces took place in neighbouring lordships, doubtless to the alarm of both towns.¹⁷ They may have left a sensitive legacy in Hereford, even though numbers of Welsh traders and craftsmen had settled there.

By 1450 the town of Hereford was in turmoil: the ruling oligarchy of merchant grandees was under pressure from lesser tradesmen and craftsmen, among them sufficient numbers of immigrants from the Welsh lordships to enable the oligarchy to be referred to as 'the English' and their challengers as 'the Welsh'. The surviving records of the mayor's court at Hereford note relatively few Welsh among the plaintiffs, defendants and sureties before the 1440s; thereafter, a number are recorded as being engaged in the food and cloth trades. The immigrants' identification with their lordships helped to focus and fuel the divisions in Hereford, resulting in severe disorder from 1450 onwards. The king's government made matters worse by appointing partisan commissions of oyer and terminer in 1452 and 1457 that may have packed juries and countenanced false indictments: the growing factionalism of English politics was being projected into the lordships of the March and the more claustrophobic politics of Hereford, in the process distorting English and Welsh identities and exacerbating rather than ameliorating the distinctions between them a generation and more after the rebellion. As one indictment put it, 'the Welsh rose to help [the lesser tradesmen] then and there and so there was a division between the English and the Welsh as in a land of war, each faction taking the part of its own country against the other, in breach of the king's peace'.¹⁸

To judge by the names of those involved, this was not a simple ethnic divide; rather did supporters of the city government and the Lancastrian crown become 'the English' and the urban opposition, aided by other Welshmen from Yorkist lordships, become 'the Welsh'. When Sir William Herbert and Sir Walter Devereux, with the Duke of York's marcher

¹⁷ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 115, 117–18, 122, 194, 230–1, 246–7, 255; the men of Herefordshire even sought a truce with the Welsh, p. 235.

¹⁸ Herefordshire Record Office, BG/11/2/5 (1414–17), 6 (1435–91), 75 (1439–40); 11/17/2 (1445–99, miscellaneous papers); Herbert, 'Herefordshire: Some aspects of society and public order', pp. 110–17, with the quotation translated from Public Record Office, KB 9/34/1 m.5.

affinity, seized control of Hereford in 1456, the town's government was overthrown and relations between Welsh and English seemed little better than they had been forty years earlier. With his sharp eye for the significant, the notable antiquarian William Worcester reported news of the situation in May 1457 in a letter from London to John Paston in Norfolk. He explained how Herbert, Devereux and their affinities from the Duke of York's lordships had been indicted at Hereford in the presence of Henry VI and Queen Margaret. Worcester focused on the Welshman, Herbert. He reported the vindictiveness and feud-like behaviour of the enquiry:

Manye be endyted, som causelese, whych makyth Herbert partye strenger; and the burgeys and gentlemen aboute Herford wille goo wyth the Kyng wyffe and childe, but [he added] a pease be made or the Kyng part thens, for ell Herbert and hys affinite wille acquyt after, as it ys seyed.¹⁹

Less is known of Gloucester's experience, but it seems likely that the Welsh were less evident in this town after the revolt than they had been in the fourteenth century. It may be that Gloucester's decline in the fifteenth century owed something to the treatment of the Welsh on the English side of the Severn to which Adam of Usk had alluded, as well as to the dominant position of Bristol in the Severn estuary. Nevertheless, Gloucester remained an important river-crossing for Welsh drovers, clothiers and drapers from Brecon and Llandovery, and from Tenby and ports in the channel, even as soon after the revolt as 1423–4.²⁰ By the end of the century, at least one of Gloucester's prominent mercers and aldermen was a Welshman, David Vaughan, who owned a ship of 100 tons, the *Edward of Gloucester*, which was wrecked in 1500 on its way from Minehead loaded with herring and salmon worth £40, a goodly cargo.²¹

In contrast to both Hereford and Gloucester, the activities of Glyn Dŵr's rebels may have had a direct and immediate impact on Shrewsbury, certainly on Chester, largely because these two towns were situated closer to Owain's north-eastern field of operations. Each town had its economic problems in the fifteenth century, partly caused by the dislocation of the

¹⁹ Norman Davis (ed.), *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, Part II (Oxford, 1976), p. 172.

²⁰ R. A. Holt, 'Gloucester: an English provincial town during the later Middle Ages' (unpublished University of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis, 1987), pp. 92, 101, 110 (rolls of trading fines, 1423–4, 1480–1). For the decline of Gloucester's population between 1377 and 1524–5, and the physical decay of its houses by 1487–8, see Christopher Dyer and T. R. Slater, 'The Midlands', in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, I (600–1540) (Cambridge, 2000), p. 636.

²¹ *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1500–9*, p. 66; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1494–1509*, p. 270; Holt, thesis cited, p. 210.

revolt and its aftermath. News of the rebels' burning of Ruthin in September 1400 reached Shrewsbury, forty miles away, the next day, when the town's bailiffs were instructed that all Welsh residents should provide surety for their loyalty, and that all those who failed to do so should be arrested; significantly, it was not felt necessary to order their expulsion. Nevertheless, it was a wise precaution, for three days later, Glyn Dŵr set fire to the March towns of Oswestry and Welshpool, less than twenty miles from Shrewsbury's gates.²² In the years that followed, the town, like others in the borderland, was required to sustain threatened castles in the March and to support royal military operations, but with such frequency that in 1407 the townsfolk wearily complained in Parliament. Neighbouring communities in west Shropshire were attacked from time to time, and in July 1403 the battle of Shrewsbury between Henry IV and Owain's Percy allies was fought just three miles north of the town.²³

As elsewhere, it took Shrewsbury some decades to adjust to the post-revolt situation, not least because it was vulnerable to competition from the marcher town of Oswestry which, to judge by the rhapsodical verses of Welsh poets, was regarded among Welsh folk as 'The London of Owain's land', 'Best of cities, far as Rome'. Shrewsbury's merchants found themselves upstaged by traders from Wales who sold their wares in marcher towns like Oswestry and Welshpool, whose traders then conveyed the goods to Shrewsbury for sale, doubtless with a mark-up. As the record of tolls shows, not only was Shrewsbury's trade with its hinterland to the west damaged, but costs threatened to undermine its prosperity. In April 1470 the craft guilds in the town council, in an effort to protect Shrewsbury's cloth trade, decreed that the town's drapers should not buy Welsh cloth in Oswestry, Welshpool, or anywhere else in the March; and that no Welsh draper or anyone else from Oswestry, Welshpool, or other nearby towns should henceforward be allowed to sell Welsh cloth in Shrewsbury unless he had actually manufactured it himself. In January 1500 these measures were extended to Welsh producers of corn, cattle, and general merchandise; they were encouraged to bring their wares to Shrewsbury by a reduction in tolls on Welsh cloth and cattle, and by a civic order that the townsfolk should treat all

²² *CPR, 1399–1401*, p. 359. See D. R. Walker, 'An urban community in the Welsh borderland: Shrewsbury in the Fifteenth Century' (unpublished University of Wales (Swansea) Ph.D. thesis, 1981), p. 328. Although Shrewsbury's population seems not to have fallen between 1377 and 1524–5, its trade tolls were declining from about 1470: Dyer and Slater, 'The Midlands', p. 636; Walker, thesis cited, pp. 75–7.

²³ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 102, 115, 117, 235, 241, 247, 281; *Rot. Parl.*, III, 618.

strangers courteously who came to buy and sell in the town. These were efforts to bring the Welsh back to Shrewsbury and in the face of growing competition from neighbouring Welsh towns: to do so 'courteously' smacks of reconciliation.²⁴

Fifteenth-century Shrewsbury was, after all, the preferred destination of Welsh apprentices in the cloth trade and crafts, and Shrewsbury merchants were often to be seen at the fairs of Newtown and Llangurig, half way to Cardigan Bay. By 1460 Matthew Gogh ('the Red'), an aspiring draper and the son of Ieuan Gogh of Machynlleth, on the west coast of Wales, had entered the service of Matthew Chirke of Shrewsbury. Apprenticeships for young Welshmen from Hope, Wrexham, Chirk, and Ruthin in the north-east March, and from Caernarfon, Bangor, and Conwy on the north coast, even from Dolgellau and Machynlleth across the mountains, could lead to admission to the guild merchant from the 1470s, as Shrewsbury opened the ranks of its burgesses and companies to those who were not born or bred in Shrewsbury.²⁵ The town in the mid-fifteenth century seemed anxious for reconciliation, mainly for commercial reasons.

The difficulties facing Chester were, if anything, even greater. The town was severely tested by the rebels and its prosperity, already sagging in 1400, was further undermined. Not only did it serve as a military and naval headquarters for English expeditions to Anglesey and north Wales, but to Chester came individuals and communities to submit to the king's authority when the rebel tide had turned. Relations between English and Welsh in the city may have been exceptionally tense as a result; restrictive and punitive measures from 1402 to regulate the movement and behaviour of Welsh people and traders in Chester may have brought short-term security, but they also damaged trade and prosperity in the longer term.²⁶

²⁴ Walker, thesis cited, pp. 146–8, from Shropshire Record Office, Shrewsbury Borough Archives, Assembly Book A; T. C. Mendenhall, *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh wool trade in the XVI and XVII Centuries* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 29–31, 45 and n. 3, 80–1. For other causes of tension between Shrewsbury and Oswestry in 1470, see Walker, thesis cited, pp. 146, 347. For poets' descriptions of Oswestry, see L. B. Smith, 'Oswestry', in R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, 1978), especially pp. 219, 228 (from Guto'r Glyn).

²⁵ Richard Brykdale (or Conwy), the son of Jenkyn Brykdale of Conwy, was apprenticed to Nicholas Pontesbury of Shrewsbury in 1496. Walker, thesis cited, pp. 111–12, 151, 228.

²⁶ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 103, 105, 108, 123, 184, 222, 254–5 (royal headquarters); 124, 223, 296–7 (submissions at Chester); 256, 281, 290–1 (anti-Welsh measures). See also J. G. Jones, 'Government and the Welsh community: the north-east borderland in the Fifteenth Century', in H. Hearder and H. R. Loyn (eds.), *British Government and Administration: Studies presented to S. B. Chrimes* (Cardiff, 1974), pp. 60–3. The transters (or carters) of Wrexham, Northop and elsewhere were especially restricted in their activities in Chester, and several

The suburb of Handbridge, at the southern end of Dee (or Welsh) Bridge, became known to Welsh residents and visitors as Treboeth, the ‘burnt town’, suggesting its vulnerability during the revolt. In 1445, the townsfolk were still claiming that they were unable to pay their annual fee farm because of the withdrawal of Welsh custom, and in 1484, when the townsfolk again sought relief, they claimed that the greater part of Chester was a wasteland whose ruinous buildings had been damaged during the revolt and its harbour destroyed through silting. But, whatever they said, throughout the fifteenth century they were anxious to entice the Welsh back to Chester.²⁷

Welsh immigrants were soon settling in Treboeth, albeit mostly menial labourers and workers living in humble dwellings. Welsh drovers returned to graze their stock in the water meadows nearby. The butchers of Chester relied on Welsh drovers and traders, whose names indicate that some of them came from towns like Hawarden, Flint, and Hope in the north-east March, while grain for Chester’s bakers was imported from the lordship of Bromfield and Yale and elsewhere in Wales. By mid-century, commodities—especially wine—were again arriving in ships from overseas, some of them putting in at Caernarfon, and Chester was still a cloth manufacturing and dyeing centre where Welsh weavers brought their cloth; by the end of the century, Welsh slates and tiles were being placed on Chester houses. At the same time, Chester’s merchants resumed their traffic westwards.²⁸

As in Hereford, co-existence among the Welsh and Chester folk was not always peaceful in the first generation after the revolt. Having secured their election in 1419, John Hope, the mayor, and his brother Robert, also a civic official, and the new treasurer too, were accused in the Chester county court of being of Welsh origin—and therefore ineligible to hold office in the town. It was evidently a Welsh cabal, which had secured its position by intimidation and bribery, and the distribution of liveries. The Hopes and their allies faced down their critics and virtually dominated

marcher communities feared lest they be banned from Chester’s shops: *Deputy Keeper’s Reports*, 36 (1875), 60, 226, 230, 247, 475, 544.

²⁷ Jane Laughton, ‘Aspects of the social and economic history of late medieval Chester, 1350–c.1500’ (unpublished University of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis, 1993), pp. 22, 164 and n. 35, 371 n. 77 (quoting Chester Record Office, Charter 28 (1445)), 387–8, 402–3 (quoting Chester Record Office, Charter 30 (1486)); *Deputy Keeper’s Reports*, 37 (1876), 137, 142; J. McN. Dodgson, *The Place-names of Cheshire*, 5 (I: i) (English Place-Name Society, 48, Cambridge, 1981), pp. 53–4.

²⁸ Laughton, thesis cited, pp. 22–3, 38, 67, 150, 159, 223, 248–9.

Chester's politics in the 1420s, but at the cost of failing to put down firm roots in a sharply divided community.²⁹ In 1416, when the rebellion was barely over, John of Ewloe and his companions were attacked in Eastgate Street and chased across the Dee as far as Hawarden; two of John's servants were murdered along the way.³⁰ Other Welshmen encountered hostility and it is not difficult to see why. In the 1450s, cattle bought at the Chester fair were stolen by thieves from Wrexham, and the Welsh in Chester were specifically ordered to keep the peace until 4 p.m., presumably on market and fair days.³¹ Chester merchants visiting Welsh towns fared no better; corn-dealers arriving in Flint in the 1450s were denounced as 'knavish Jews', though, interestingly, not as 'mere English'.³²

Yet, when all is said and done, Chester gradually re-established itself as the entrepôt for north-east Wales, by sea and land. It was a place where specialist services were available, including to the Welsh: in 1439 for Elis ap Gruffydd, who needed a scrivener to copy a teaching manual (though he failed to pay the bill for 3s. 4d.); and for a Welshman who needed medical help for his ailing wife in 1463 and went to the Midsummer fair at Chester in search of a cure.³³ The confrontations of rebellion were lodged in the Chester official mind, to be recalled to advantage long after hostilities had ended; and mistrust remained. But, as in Shrewsbury's case, the needs of the town brought reconciliation, as the share of Chester's trade conducted by Welsh people grew, especially in wool and cloth. This helps to explain the town's economic recovery during the fifteenth century, fitfully at first but more robustly from the 1480s. It has been calculated that in the first half of the sixteenth century the number of Welsh plaintiffs in the town's courts outnumbered Welsh defendants, which may suggest that relations were still a trifle uneasy. But it was common to encounter in the streets people from Denbigh, Wrexham, Mold, and Flint in the adjacent March, and from Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy, and Colwyn along the coast.³⁴

²⁹ Laughton, thesis cited, pp. 113, 147–8, 374–5, based on indictment rolls, PRO, CHES 25/11 m. 17d. In 1427 John himself instigated an enquiry into his Welsh origins and into any land he had bought in Chester contrary to the 1401 statute: *Deputy Keeper's Report*, 37 (1876), 380.

³⁰ Laughton, thesis cited, p. 375 n. 92, based on PRO, CHES 25/11 m. 7, 7d.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 235 (occurrences in 1458 and 1462).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 159, quoting H. Taylor, *Historic notices of the borough and county town of Flint* (1883), p. 103.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 345, 237.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 410–11; J. Kermodé, 'The trade of late medieval Chester, 1500–1550', in R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in medieval England: Essays in honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 287, 297, 299–305. Among the freemen of Chester were Walter ab

Smaller than these towns was Ludlow, situated midway between Hereford and Shrewsbury and less than ten miles from Clun, one of the Earl of Arundel's lordships that suffered more than most from Glyn Dŵr's rebels. By the early sixteenth century Ludlow's population had grown significantly. That this was due to a growing interest shown in the town by people from Wales is indicated by the records of the Palmers' (or Pilgrims') Guild, whose membership was widely sought as an entry ticket to the Hereafter. In the 1440s and 1450s, Ludlow was the favoured residence of Richard, Duke of York, Henry VI's cousin and ultimately the challenger for his crown; in the early 1470s it became the residence of Edward, Prince of Wales and the headquarters of his Council in the March.³⁵ Those who contributed to the Palmers' Guild had long included Welsh from the nearby lordships of Ceri, Clun, and Bishop's Castle, and by about 1430 others from as far afield as Chepstow and Rhaiadr, probably reflecting the cattle and cloth trades with the Welsh uplands and the Severn Valley. By 1460 the guild's connections were even wider—with tradesmen and merchants from Chipping Norton, Reading, and London, and a Welshman from Oxford, Hywel ap Llywelyn ap Hywel (otherwise known as Huw Clun), perhaps a former student, since his wife Alison also offered a contribution.³⁶ But what is most striking is the tally of brothers and sisters of the guild by 1485, after ten years of the Council's presence in Ludlow. Now, the members, men and women, came from as far afield as Machynlleth and as far north as Ruthin; in the English shires from Nantwich in Cheshire, Shrewsbury, Bristol, and Tewkesbury, and further east from Chipping Norton, Oxford, Devizes, Salisbury, Marlborough, London, and Westminster—in short from the valleys of the Severn and its tributaries, and along the drover and commercial routes towards Oxford and London (where Welsh communities were well established). On the same guild register appeared members of the king's household, Oxford students, men and women from Montgomery, Shrewsbury and Oswestry, and from the parishes of Llandinam and Llanwnno in what the

Ithel (1469) and his son John ab Ithel (1500): Laughton, thesis cited, p. 144 n. 143. Tudur ap Thomas, a fishmonger, was sheriff of Chester in 1496–7: *ibid.*, p. 174.

³⁵ David Lloyd, *The Concise History of Ludlow* (Ludlow, 1999), especially chs. 4–5; Ron Shoesmith and Andy Johnson (eds.), *Ludlow Castle: its history and buildings* (Almeley, 2000), especially chs. 7, 8. For the submission of the communities of Clun in 1406–7, see Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, p. 295.

³⁶ Shropshire Record Office, LB5/3/15 (1428–32); 5/3/1 (c.1460); Owain ap Tudur, an esquire 'of the kyng ys howse', presumably Henry VI's step-father, paid a membership fine of 13s. 4d. (f. lv), as did others from the king's and queen's households.

aniquarian-traveller, John Leland, was later to call ‘Hy Powis’. Their annual dues may have been collected by stewards trudging the lanes of southern England and north and mid-Wales, but the guild’s members, English and Welsh alike, felt an affinity with Ludlow in its most illustrious age.³⁷

Above all, it was Bristol, a city and county since 1373, and the third largest town in the kingdom, which had the largest number of Welsh residents and visitors of any English town, and it was a more flourishing entrepôt for the Severn basin than was Chester for the north-east. During the revolt, it was safe beyond the Severn and was a store-house of arms and supplies for beleaguered towns around the Welsh coast. The presence of Welsh men and women living and trading in Bristol is well attested before and after the revolt; some, like the Rede family of Carmarthen, appear to have maintained their links through the hostilities.³⁸ From the 1430s Welshmen were again taking a full part in its trade with Ireland, France, Spain, and Portugal: imports to Bristol frequently arrived in Welsh ships and were unloaded on a quay that became known as Welsh Back, and which William Worcester in 1480 identified as ‘where the Welsh ships come in’. In nine months during 1479–80 at least nine ships docked there from Tenby and Chepstow, with others from Haverfordwest and Milford Haven. In 1494 alone cheap Welsh cloth worth £816 was sold in Bristol, some of it for re-export. Other ships out of Bristol called at ports like Neath and Swansea en route for La Rochelle: in their holds lay coal from the mines in the coastal belt of south Wales.³⁹

By the 1530s and 1540s, when John Smythe’s business ledger records the commercial dealings of a prominent Bristol entrepreneur, merchants, smiths, and others from practically every Welsh port and haven between Milford Haven and Chepstow—and from Abergavenny, Cowbridge, and Caerphilly inland—were frequenting a city of more than 8,000 souls, purchasing (for example) iron and wine especially from Bordeaux and the

³⁷ Shropshire RO, LB5/1/2 m.1 (1485–6); L. T. Smith (ed.), *Leland’s Itinerary in England and Wales* (5 vols., 1906–10), III, 55. Cf. E. G. H. Kempson, ‘A Shropshire Guild at work in Wiltshire’, *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 57 (1958–60), 50–5.

³⁸ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 124, 222, 254–5. For the Redes, see R. A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales in the later Middle Ages*, I: *South Wales, 1277–1536* (Cardiff, 1972), pp. 113–14, 135–6, and references cited there.

³⁹ For Bristol’s close links with southern Wales, see R. A. Griffiths, ‘Medieval Severnside: the Welsh connection’, in R. R. Davies, R. A. Griffiths, I. G. Jones and K. O. Morgan (eds.), *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical essays presented to Glanmor Williams* (Cardiff, 1984), pp. 86–7. For the ‘Back’, see Frances Neale (ed.), *William Worcester: the Topography of Medieval Bristol* (Bristol Record Soc., 51, Bristol, 2000), pp. 78–9.

Iberian peninsula. Between 1532 and 1565, the Bristol apprentice-books reveal that Welshmen from the shires between Monmouth and Pembroke formed a sizeable proportion (between 15 and 20 per cent) of the apprentices registered in Bristol, many of them learning trades connected with cloth; and one may be sure that Bristol had attracted Welsh apprentices long before. The city's guilds, like the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow, had members of Welsh ancestry, some of them even serving as chaplains and officers, and others occupying properties owned by the guilds.⁴⁰

In the fifteenth century, it seems to have been from the 1460s that families of Welsh origin were most influential in commercial, guild, parish, and city government contexts. In those great Bristol enterprises in the north Atlantic in the last decades of the century, Welshmen had a role to play. One of the earliest, in July 1480 in the fruitless search for the so-called island of Brazil, was probably financed by Bristol merchants and was undertaken by a Welsh captain from Bristol, John Lloyd, who was acknowledged by William Worcester to be 'the most knowledgable mariner in all England'.⁴¹ John Cabot was residing in Bristol by the late 1490s, in St Nicholas Street; round the corner in Baldwin Street were the premises of Henry and John Vaughan, both of whom were prominent city merchants. The Vaughans seem to have hailed from Cardiganshire; at any rate, Richard Vaughan, who died in 1503, remembered Aberystwyth church in his will. Richard was a merchant and owned properties in the commercial heart of the city, including the Barbers' Hall, and his wife Cecily was buried in St Stephen's, Bristol; his brother David was sheriff of Bristol (1498–9) and so was another brother, William, in 1515–16. John, Thomas, and Henry Vaughan are also likely to have been related to them, all notable merchants of the city.⁴² Henry, who was trading in Bristol by 1463, was the city's most successful and respected merchant, trading overseas especially in broad cloths to Spain and Portugal, and importing mainly wine from France and Spain. He was appointed bailiff of Bristol

⁴⁰ Griffiths, 'Medieval Severnside', pp. 88–9. Despite the fall in its population after the Black Death, Bristol maintained its position as the third city in the realm: Dyer and Slater, 'The Midlands', p. 636 (and appendix p. 768).

⁴¹ Neale, *William Worcester*, p. 235.

⁴² For these Vaughans, see Griffiths, 'Medieval Severnside', pp. 88–9; further evidence is in R. H. Leech (ed.), *The Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol*, I (Bristol Record Soc., 48, Bristol, 1997), 25–6, 136, 149 (Richard Vaughan); Clive Burgess (ed.), *The Pre-Reformation Records of All Saints' Church, Bristol*, Part 2: *The Church Wardens' Accounts* (Bristol Record Soc., 53, Bristol, 2000), pp. 85–6, 91, 166, 369 (David or Davy Vaughan, who was churchwarden in 1477–9); 228 (William Vaughan). Richard Vaughan was supervisor of Henry Vaughan's will: PRO, PCC, 38 Horne.

in 1469–70, sheriff in 1477–8, mayor three times and MP for the city in 1487 and 1496; he commissioned a tomb for himself in St Stephen's well before his death in 1499. Henry Vaughan was the obvious man to whom the common council of the city should turn in an emergency when, on 11 October 1485, the newly elected mayor suddenly died. Four days later, Henry was elected in his place, just weeks after the first Tudor monarch, the part-Welsh Henry VII, ascended the throne of England. It may have been a coincidence that the civic authorities should have resorted to one of the leaders of Bristol's Welsh community—or was it an act of civic calculation which may have seemed inspired when King Henry paid a visit to Bristol in May 1486? The contemporary record of the pageants, speeches and religious services that entertained the king includes no report of a speech in Welsh; but after meeting him, Henry Vaughan emerged starry-eyed, saying that he had 'heard not thre hundred yeres of noo King so good a comfort'. This was reconciliation and more.⁴³

Further into the channel, the business links of even small Welsh towns survived the revolt. Those seeking the best apprenticeships might focus on Bridgewater or Barnstaple, as did John Taylor, a young man from Swansea who was indentured by his father as early as 1426 to an experienced Bridgewater tanner. And a number of Welshmen in the cloth industry set up businesses in the Somerset town, among them in the 1460s William Somer and his son David who were fullers of Neath.⁴⁴

Yet others bent on securing a business training, especially in the cloth industry, sought apprenticeships in London, to judge by the records of the Merchant Tailors' Company. Thomas Davy became master of the company in 1436; it was perhaps his namesake son who was apprenticed to another tailor and entered the service of Henry VII's queen. Stephen Jenyns, the son of William Jenyns of Tenby, was apprenticed to a London tailor in 1462–3; he became master of his company in 1488–90 and mayor of the city in 1508–9, when he was knighted following Henry VIII's coronation.⁴⁵ London and Westminster were naturally a mecca for Welsh traders, soldiers, ambitious gentlemen, and the unemployed and itinerant, and

⁴³ Griffiths, 'Medieval Severnside', pp. 88–9; for further evidence, see Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol*, Part I, p. 169; Burgess, *Pre-Reformation Records of All Saints' Church*, Part 2, pp. 191, 244, 251 (John Vaughan, mayor in 1507–8). For Henry VII's visit, see Joseph Bettey, 'Two Tudor Visits to Bristol', in Patrick McGrath (ed.), *A Bristol Miscellany* (Bristol Record Soc., 37, Bristol, 1985), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Griffiths, 'Medieval Severnside', pp. 85–6, for further details.

⁴⁵ Matthew Davies (ed.), *The Merchant Tailors' Company of London: Court Minutes, 1486–1493* (Stamford, 2000), pp. 184 and n. 321, 245 (Davy); 293 (Jenyns). For other Davys, *ibid.*, pp. 114, 123–4, 143, 145, 168.

Westminster Abbey's border estates directed some migrants to the metropolis, especially as the fifteenth century advanced.⁴⁶ The early Tudor court may have quickened the stream but it certainly did not begin it.

The professional needs of the Church in Wales and the opportunities offered by clerical careers there and beyond Wales placed a premium on a university education in the later Middle Ages. The proposals of Glyn Dŵr and his advisers for two universities in Wales recognised that. For a while, the revolt disrupted the flow of Welsh students to Oxford and (though the numbers were smaller) to Cambridge. In 1436 the University of Oxford hastened to reassure its chancellor, Thomas Bourghier, who was also Bishop of Worcester and therefore with a closer interest than most in the provision of priests from Wales, that it was untrue that no Welsh student dared to remain in Oxford.⁴⁷ However, even in this cosmopolitan environment, Welsh-speaking students, who had a lurid reputation during the revolt, might experience social problems, as the young poet Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal discovered; nevertheless, the numbers of Welsh students increased noticeably from the middle of the century, and by then there was a hall especially for Welsh lawyers. The largest number of students came from the diocese of St David's in southern Wales, the smallest number from Bangor in the north-west; and indeed they most commonly studied civil or canon law.⁴⁸

III

As apprehension about Wales and the Welsh faded, the features which made the Welsh-born distinctive in an English environment—their names and manners—attracted mockery of a generally light-hearted sort. Whilst he was at Oxford about mid-century, the Welsh poet, Ieuan ap Hywel

⁴⁶ P. Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the politics and trade of London* (New Haven and London, 1995), p. 395 (Brecon traders in the 1420s); Gervase Rosser, *Medieval Westminster, 1200–1540* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 189–90.

⁴⁷ T. A. R. Evans, 'The number, origins and careers of scholars', in J. I. Catto and R. Evans (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, II: Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 516–18; J. L. Barton, 'The legal faculties of late medieval Oxford', in *ibid.*, p. 285, quoting H. Anstey (ed.), *Epistolae academicae Oxon.: Registrum F.*, Vol. 1 (Oxford Historical Soc., 35, Oxford, 1898), no. 116.

⁴⁸ Barton, 'The legal faculties', p. 308; Evans, 'The names, origins and careers of scholars', pp. 516–18, noticing some distinguished Welsh graduates in church, state and university. See also R. W. Hays, 'Welsh students at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in the Middle Ages', *Welsh History Review*, 4 (1968–9), 325–61. The number of Welshmen ordained in the diocese of London increased after the rebellion, and also in the diocese of Winchester from at least the 1460s: Virginia Davis, *Clergy in London in the late Middle Ages* (2001), p. 28.

Swrddwal (fl. 1430–80), contrived to turn the tables on English students who mocked the scholarly abilities of students from Wales. He did so by feigned modesty and not a little guile. He suggested a competition rather than a quarrel with the bragging Englishmen, asserting that ‘a poor unaccomplished Welshman’ could compete with ‘the most learned Englishman in poetic composition and many other points’. The competition was the composition of a poem addressed to the Virgin in Latin, English, Welsh, or any language. Ieuan wrote a poem in English but in strict Welsh *cynghanedd* metre which quite stumped his scornful fellow students.⁴⁹

A passion for prophecy had long been a distinguishing trait of the Welsh, and it was later to help Shakespeare to characterise Glendower in *King Henry IV, Part One*. In 1402 Welsh ‘divinations, lies and excitations’ were seen by Parliament as a cause of Glyn Dŵr’s revolt, and prophecies derived from the British history were deployed by him in his diplomacy as if he believed them.⁵⁰ Such a passion remained part of the popular perception of the Welsh during the following century. In 1469 the continuator of the chronicle of Crowland Abbey in south Lincolnshire, to whom the Welsh of Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire scattered along the old ‘Welsh road’ might have been familiar, penned a report of the battle of Edgecote, near Banbury, where the Yorkist army, largely recruited from Welsh lordships by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was destroyed:

The earl of Pembroke and several other nobles and gentlemen of Wales were made prisoners, and were, by order of the before-named earl of Warwick, without any opportunity of ransom, beheaded at Northampton. The truth is that, in those parts [and the writer seems to be referring to Northampton] and throughout Wales, there is a celebrated and famous prophecy, to the effect that, having expelled the English, the remains of the Britons are once more to obtain the sovereignty of England as being the proper citizens thereof. This prophecy, which is stated in the chronicles of the Britons to have been pronounced by an angel in the time of king Cadwallader, in their credulity, receives from them universal belief. Accordingly, the present opportunity seeming to be propitious, they imagined that now the long-wished-for hour had arrived, and used every possible exertion to promote its fulfilment. However, by the providence of God, it turned out otherwise, and they remain for the present disappointed of the fulfilment of their desires.⁵¹

⁴⁹ T. Conran, ‘Ieuan ap Hywel Swrddwal’s “The Hymn to the Virgin”’, *Welsh Writing in English*, I (1995), 5. A Welsh translation of the poem, accompanying a discussion of the poet and his father, is in D. F. Evans (ed.), *Gwaith Hywel Swrddwal a’i Deulu* (Aberystwyth, 2000), pp. 124–6, 211.

⁵⁰ *Rot. Parl.*, III, 508–9; Given-Wilson, *Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 148–53 (letters to the king of Scots and lords of Ireland).

⁵¹ H. T. Riley (ed.), *Ingulph’s Chronicle of the Abbey of Crowland* (1854), pp. 446–7; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, II (1982), pp. 408–12 (for the prior as author). Crowland Abbey

Such prophecies were well known in households in Wales and the borderland, and are thought to have become even more popular during the fifteenth century by the adaptation of texts circulating in English as well as Welsh contexts.⁵² To take a border example, in the 1520s Humphrey Newton of Pownall, a Cheshire gentleman, kept a copy of a prophecy that ‘a lion shuld come out of Walys and also a dragon and lond in wer-all . . . and on wennysday after to drive don Chester walls and after to feght in the fforest delamer with a king of the southe . . . and ther the kyng shuld be kylled with many an other to the nowmber of .lxi. ml. and never kyng after bot .iiii. wardens unto domysday.’ It harked back to Glyn DŴr’s ambitious plans and beyond that into the past.⁵³ Only at times of crisis did such prophecies impinge on reality. When Henry VIII’s kinsman, Rhys ap Gruffydd, of Newton, Carmarthenshire, was accused of plotting in 1530–1, prophecy seemed to chime with political opportunism and was manipulated and exploited in order to justify the execution of another troublesome Tudor kinsman—just like the duke of Buckingham, the greatest of marcher lords, ten years earlier; both men were judged too much interested in prophecies for their own and the realm’s good.⁵⁴

More curious than ominous to the English ear were the distinctive patronymic-style names of the Welsh. To his letter to John Paston in 1457 about the violence in Hereford, William Worcester added a postscript: ‘I sende a bille of the namys endyted to my maister and yow, to see and laugh at theyr Wellsh names descended of old pedegréis.’ Worcester had been brought up in Bristol and was familiar enough with Welsh people; the amusement he felt his note would cause in Norfolk would have fallen quite flat in the west country, for the patronymic style of personal nomenclature favoured by the Welsh was commonplace in Hereford, Bristol, and

was situated near the Northamptonshire border; for its estates clustered around Northampton itself, see F. M. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey* (Cambridge, 1934), table at p. 10. For a Welsh association with Northamptonshire, see P. M. Zall (ed.), *A Hundred Merry Tales and other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Lincoln, Nebraska, and London, 1963), no. 31, pp. 93–4. The name of the Welsh drovers’ road survives: for example, J. E. B. Glover *et al.*, *The Place-names of Warwickshire* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 178.

⁵² C. L. Morgan, ‘Prophecy and Welsh Nationhood in the Fifteenth Century’, *Transactions of the Honourable Soc. of Cymmrodorion* (1985), pp. 9–10.

⁵³ Bodleian MS. Lat. Misc. c. 66 f. 104r (which I owe to Dr Deborah Youngs); T. Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State, 1480–1560* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 60–1. There is a resonance with the so-called Tripartite Indenture between Glyn DŴr, the Earl of Northumberland and Sir Edmund Mortimer, and the proposed partition of England and Wales in fulfilment of prophecy: Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn DŴr*, pp. 166–9.

⁵⁴ R. A. Griffiths, *Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his Family: A Study in the Wars of the Roses and Early Tudor Politics* (Cardiff, 1993), pp. 100–11.

the border shires—and was not unfamiliar at court, where Henry VI's step-father, Owain ap Maredudd ap Tudor, was a member of the royal household and did not change his name-style even after two of his sons were created peers in November 1452.⁵⁵

William Worcester's humorous comment—scornful at worst—scarcely conveyed hostility, but rather was of a piece with the reflections on the Welsh to be found in those English comic tales that were popular by the end of the century. A number of these colloquial tales or jests seem to have circulated orally, and at least seven of those known from texts printed in 1526 allude unflatteringly to characteristics of the Welsh as perceived in English circles: their lack of devotion to prayer and virtue, their lack of proportion in matters of conscience, their propensity for misdeeds, and their unreliability. One of the most famous ridicules the habits and priorities of the Welsh:

I find written among old stories how God made St Peter porter of Heaven, and how God, in his goodness soon after his suffering on the cross, allowed many men to come to the kingdom of Heaven who very little deserved it. So at this time there were in Heaven a lot of Welshmen, who troubled all the rest with their boasting and chatter. So God said to Saint Peter that he was fed up with them, and that he'd be very glad to have them out of Heaven. Saint Peter replied to him, 'Good Lord, I guarantee that it will be done in no time'. So Saint Peter went outside the gates of Heaven and shouted in a loud voice, 'Cause bobbe' [Caws bobbi]. Which is as much as to say 'Roasted cheese'. When they heard this the Welshmen ran out of Heaven at great speed. And when Saint Peter saw that they were all outside, he quickly went in to Heaven and locked the door, and so he barred all the Welshmen out.

By this you can see that there is no sense in a man loving or setting his mind too much upon any dainty or worldly pleasure whereby he may lose Heaven and eternal joy.

Storing up treasures in this world: thus were the poor Welsh perceived.⁵⁶

About 1340, a generation after Edward I's conquests in north Wales, the chronicler Ranulph Higden, monk of Chester, observed how the Welsh had begun to adopt English manners and lifestyles. A century later (c. 1429–38), another monk of Chester thought these observations uncan-

⁵⁵ Davis, *Paston Letters and Papers*, II, 172. For Owain, see Shropshire RO, LB5/3/1 f. lv; James Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (Camden Soc., new series, 17, 1876), p. 211; and R. S. Thomas, 'The political career, estates and "connection" of Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Bedford (d. 1495)' (unpublished University of Wales (Swansea) Ph.D. thesis, 1971), pp. 13–28, 190–1.

⁵⁶ Zall (ed.), *A Hundred Merry Tales*, pp. 2, 8, 58, 61–3, 78–9, 92–4, 108–9, 132, 134, 143–4; F. P. Wilson, 'The English Jestbooks of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, II (1938–9), 124–9. For a recent edition of 'Of Saint Peter that

nily appropriate to the post-Glyn Dŵr world. Whilst compiling a royal genealogy, he reproduced Higden's comment and added an apt phrase or two that prefigured the playful tale: 'in the time of Henry the fifth his son the Welsh began to live in the manner of the English. They accumulate riches [and] they fear losses.'⁵⁷

IV

Where they can be pieced together, the histories of landholding families in later medieval Wales reveal much about self-advancement and about reconciliation and the passing of confrontation. Although such histories tend to focus on one or more conspicuous individuals, and, in most cases, afford only a partial glimpse of lives, lifestyles, and attitudes, collective histories hitched to the family trees and patronymic descents which the Welsh especially cultivated can illuminate allegiances, interests, and ambitions on a broad front in an increasingly Anglo-Welsh environment. One such history, already partially reconstructed, is illuminating: that of the Don (or Dwnn) family of Kidwelly, a modest town in the Carmarthenshire lordship that belonged to the duchy of Lancaster in the later Middle Ages. Henry Don was as Welsh as they came, named after a swarthy (or 'dwnn') forebear and perhaps after Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster and lord of Kidwelly. He served the dukes before 1399 in Kidwelly and France, and with Richard II in Ireland, making himself a wealthy local landholder married into a family of similar ilk. Yet he judged his prospects best by joining Glyn Dŵr, and in 1403 he even led the rebel attack on Kidwelly castle. He parried forfeiture and imprisonment and a hefty fine; indeed, he soon returned to a life of imperious self-advancement in Carmarthenshire and died, in November 1416, as powerful as he had formerly been, his fine unpaid. His grandsons were his heirs.⁵⁸

cried: "Cause bobel!"', see Derek Brewer (ed.), *Medieval Comic Tales* (2nd edn., Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 74, 184 ('Why there are no Welshmen in Heaven'); also, for changing attitudes, Christie Davies, 'Change and continuity is one of Europe's oldest comic ethnic scripts', *Humor*, 12 (1) (1999), 1–31.

⁵⁷ A. Wall (ed.), *Handbook to the Maude Roll* (Auckland, 1919), n.p.; C. Babington (ed.), *Polychronicon Ranulfi Higden*, I (Rolls Series, 1865), 410–11, with commentary in R. R. Davies, 'Race relations in post-Conquest Wales: Confrontation and Compromise', *Transactions of the Honourable Soc. of Cymmrodorion* (1975), pp. 55–6.

⁵⁸ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 192, 200–1, 274–5, 307, 313, and p. 364 n. 4 for references. For Henry's father, Cadwgan Dwnn (or Gethin) (fl. 1330–64), see P. C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies, A.D. 300–1400* (Cardiff, 1974), III, 616.

Gruffydd Don put rebel associations behind him and—a key decision, this—answered Henry V's call for troops for France in 1415. In this military arena, Gruffydd was notably successful for thirty years until he was captured (and ransomed) in 1445; his main reward had come in 1421 when Parliament exempted him from the statute prohibiting Welsh-born from buying land in England. His two younger brothers followed in his footsteps. Gruffydd also extended the family's range of marriage partners by securing a daughter of Sir John Scudamore of Herefordshire, who was also the husband of Glyn Dŵr's daughter Jonet. Gruffydd stood at the very cusp of social change after the revolt.⁵⁹

Historians have been particularly interested in the third of Gruffydd's four sons; the others cut notable figures across south Wales, extending their relationships from Brecon to Pembroke. The third, John, grasped opportunities on a far wider front, capitalising on his and his father's service with Richard, Duke of York in France. In 1461 he benefited from the Yorkist *coup d'état*, whilst retaining interests in Kidwelly. He was Edward IV's lieutenant in south-west Wales, and a member of his household. He secured letters of naturalisation and married a daughter of King Edward's friend, William, Lord Hastings, whom he served in Calais—where, it is thought, he commissioned Hans Memling to paint the famous triptych with family portraits, now in the National Gallery. Sir John Don of Calais and Kidwelly—for he was knighted at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471—had also acquired a modest property in Northamptonshire, Hastings country. In 1480, he bought for £2,000 a much larger estate in Buckinghamshire where he resided, at Horsenden. He and his wife arranged for their burial in King Edward's mausoleum in St George's Chapel, Windsor, and not even Richard III's usurpation and Henry Tudor's invasion upset these plans.⁶⁰ Indeed, it was presumably Richard's brutal seizure of the Yorkist crown that led John to desert the new king and eventually to enter the service of the more congenial Tudors, who sprang from roots similar to his own. Henry VII retained him as sheriff of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, and restored him to the steward-

⁵⁹ Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, I, 201–2, 220–1, 323, and references cited there. Gruffydd's father was Maredudd ap Henry Don, his mother a daughter of Gruffydd ap Cadwgan Fychan: Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies, 300–1400*, III, 616.

⁶⁰ Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, I, 220–1 (for Robert, son of Gruffydd ap Maredudd), 323 (for Owain, son of Gruffydd ap Maredudd). For Sir John Don, see *ibid.*, pp. 187–9, and K. B. McFarlane, *Hans Memling* (Oxford, 1971), part 1. For the most reliable discussion of Sir John as Memling's patron, see L. Campbell, *The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Schools* (National Gallery Catalogues, 1998), pp. 374–91. For the Buckinghamshire purchase and related deeds, see Warwickshire Record Office, CR 895/29/24,28.

ship of the lordship of Kidwelly.⁶¹ These Dons had served three dynasties, one usurper, a Welsh rebel leader and self-styled prince, and, of course, their own interests, with equal aplomb, English pungent prejudices notwithstanding.

Sir John, who died in 1503, arranged that his eldest son, significantly named Edward, should marry Anne, one of the Verneys of Buckinghamshire; they lived at Horsenden, near Princes Risborough, for the rest of their lives. Edward is of uncommon interest as an Anglo-Welsh knight: brought up in Henry Tudor's household, he was a soldier, like his forebears, and served Henry VIII in France, where he was knighted in 1513; more to the point, for forty years until his death in December 1551, he kept weekly accounts of his expenditure, most of which happily survive.⁶² They reveal a man who concentrated on his shire, yet who kept in touch with court and capital and with Wales, and who cherished his extended family and nursed his estates in England and Wales. He received news from Wales, Welsh relatives called to see him, he employed Welsh servants, and carefully studied the estate accounts from Kidwelly; and he celebrated St David's day, on occasion (as in 1519) going out to dinner in Princes Risborough.⁶³ Sir Edward had no sons. He arranged for his eldest daughter to marry Thomas Johnes of Carmarthenshire, who was also a young man in the king's household and had served on campaign with Sir Edward Don; he was a nephew of Sir Rhys ap Thomas.⁶⁴

In 1526 Sir Edward decided to visit Wales, where he spent over two months in the early autumn. Sir Ralph Verney and his wife and the prior provincial of the Black Friars felt it wise to offer prayers at his departure. The tour's purpose seems to have been mainly to conclude the marriage to Thomas Johnes. The party took the road to Chipping Norton,

⁶¹ Griffiths, *Principality of Wales*, I, 277; R. Horrox and P. W. Hammond (eds.), *British Library, Harleian Manuscript 433*, Vol. 2 (Gloucester, 1980), 32; W. Campbell (ed.), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII* (2 vols., Rolls Series, 60, 1873–7), I, 356; R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, I (1953), 640.

⁶² Campbell, *Netherlandish Schools*, p. 383; McFarlane, *Hans Memling*, pp. 8–9, 53. Sir Edward's accounts (1510–51) are in Warwickshire RO, CR 895/106, with some loose pages in CR 895/45. They were brought to my attention by Dr Eileen Scarff (archivist of St George's Chapel, Windsor); Mr Roger Bettridge (of Buckinghamshire RO) allowed me to borrow a microfilm of the accounts; and Dr John Mullan and I are preparing an edition of them for the Buckinghamshire Record Series.

⁶³ Warwickshire RO, CR 895/106 f. 21v. A letter from his kinsman, Sir Rhys ap Thomas, arrived on 30 Jan. 1524 (f. 96); accounts from Kidwelly for 1529–30 are attached (f. 173).

⁶⁴ Thomas Johnes paid £200 for the marriage: Buckinghamshire RO, Grubb Collection, D108, B2; cf. Warwickshire RO, CR 895/35. For Thomas Johnes, see S. T. Bindoff, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558* (3 vols., 1982), II, 453–4.

Evesham, Worcester, Bromyard, Leominster, and Presteigne; they might have encountered Welsh cattle drovers along the way, and heard Welsh spoken well before they passed into the lordship of Powys. Sir Edward needed to hire a guide at the tiny village of St Harmon to take the party across the mountains between Rhaiadr and Aberystwyth, where Sir Edward stayed as long as two weeks, before making his way south to Strata Florida Abbey, Newcastle Emlyn, Haverfordwest, Carew Castle (the home of his and the king's wild kinsman, Rhys ap Gruffydd) and Carmarthen, and on to Kidwelly. He ate and drank well on the journey and especially after his arrival; he played bowls at Kidwelly and lost a fair sum of money. He bought gifts for his daughter Elizabeth—a drinking glass, a looking glass and a dial—at Carmarthen, the metropolis of the region, and he listened to a harpist. He lodged with the prior of Kidwelly, who may have conducted the wedding service, prior to the journey home—via Brecon, Bredwardine (Sir Richard Vaughan's home), Gloucester, and Northleach, staying en route with Welsh and English gentry like himself, some of whom were his kinsfolk. He arrived home on 26 October.⁶⁵ Sir Edward Don had the interests and perceptions of a truly Anglo-Welsh knight. In 1539 he assigned to Thomas Johnes a life interest in Horsenden after Sir Edward and his wife should die, and also power to advise on the disposal of Sir Edward's Welsh estates to feoffees.⁶⁶ One might suppose that the act of Union set a formal seal on the histories of such as the Dons and their circles in both England and Wales.

V

One family is not, of course, an exemplar of society, though the Dons' history includes individual features which are mirrored in a host of other family sagas. After Glyn Dŵr, the complexities, contrasts, and paradoxes of Welsh society, including those marking Wales's relationship with England and the crown, are not easy to reconcile, and they give that society a chameleon-like quality.

On the one hand, reconciliation of individuals and communities seemed quite rapid and there was no further rebellion after Glyn Dŵr's disappearance; yet serious mistrust lingered for decades. Border centres recovered their social and economic attractions for the Welsh, if they had

⁶⁵ Sir Edward's record of the visit is in Warwickshire RO, CR 895/106 f. 101, 102v, 104–107v.

⁶⁶ Buckinghamshire RO, Grubb Collection D108, B2 (12 July 1539).

ever entirely lost them, and migration took peoples and language out of their own communities.⁶⁷ Local, seignorial allegiances persisted, though they were frayed and weakened, first, by aristocratic divisions during the Wars of the Roses despite royal efforts to buttress seignorial and royal authority, and, second, by social intercourse beyond the borders of county and lordship, Wales and England. Whatever the unflattering prejudices, the Welsh were evident and acceptable in much of fifteenth-century England and perhaps gained in distinctiveness because of their presence; there and in Wales they—at least the ambitious and adventurous among them—seized their opportunities within their allegiance to the king and were increasingly identifiable as knights, esquires and gentlemen after the English fashion.⁶⁸ Although Wales seems a land of self-government and self-advancement by the end of the fifteenth century, there are two further qualifications to be made: contrasts between the north-west and the rest of Wales were almost as marked as in Adam of Usk's day, and also the chronology of social change suggests a shift of gear round about 1460. The Council in the March may be taken as one feature of the changes. It promoted the peaceful co-existence of peoples and their prosperity in the borderland. Note, too, the tone and substance of the conversation which Dr James Denton, one of the Council's officials, had with Henry VIII and the Duke of Norfolk in July 1531:

... Norfolk had a long communication with me for the reformation of Wales, ... Then I said if all South Wales might be reduced into sheeres ... and all North Wales, the king and his counsaill shuld have a perpetuall memorie. Then his grace said he trusted it shuld be so reduced and that he would faigne see the plott ageine ... for his grace hath lost the plot. ... I was present when the king's grace said that it weare a gracious deede to reforme Wales, but he said that some of the lord marchers do repyne against it. ... One said, Your Grace do sey truthe ... your grace hath half the lord marchers in your hand or more. Yf your grace and your Counsaill wold commaunde this reformation to be had who wold or durst saie the contrarie. Than his grace said Wee shall see what maie be donne and so departed.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ For example, see M. W. Chapman, 'An English settlement in Western Montgomeryshire during the Tudor period', *The Montgomeryshire Collections*, 87 (1999), 111–37, discussing early Tudor English immigration based on a study of personal surnames.

⁶⁸ For the knighting of Welsh landowners after 1485, see W. R. B. Robinson, 'Knighted Welsh landowners, 1485–1558: A provisional list', *Welsh History Review*, 13, no. 3 (1987), 282–98, with 'Corrigenda' in *ibid.*, 19, no. 3 (1999), 517–25. But even more significant would be a comparable study of knightings before 1485.

⁶⁹ National Library of Wales MS. 6620D f. 2d.

Shiring Wales as England was evidently considered to be overdue and only the marcher lords were thought likely to oppose it. When the lordships of Arwystli and Cyfeiliog, around the headwaters of the River Severn, were surveyed in c.1531, it was reported that the local population ‘for the most part desire to have the law of England ministered amongst them by the English ministers, that the eldest son should inherit the whole land according to the law of England’. From the king’s point of view, it was judged that

if justice were kept there according to the law of England by Justices as is in North Wales and yearly the sheriff [is appointed, then] would be great profits yearly come to the king’s highness by reason of the same and the country better inhabited and land better let on and woods better sold which is now little worth there.

It was felt on both sides that the future lay with change. Only some self-interested officials in the March were opposed.⁷⁰ When it came, five years later, there was hardly any resistance from the people of Wales or from the people of England.

⁷⁰ PRO, SC12/17/99, quoted by Murray, ‘An English settlement in Western Montgomeryshire’, p. 114. For the general welcome accorded reform, see (for example) P. R. Roberts, ‘The “Act of Union” in Welsh history’, *Transactions of the Honourable Soc. of Cymmrodorion* (1974), pp. 54 ff; Williams, *Wales, c.1415–1642*, pp. 257–76.