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OWEN GLENDOWER AND THE WELSH
FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE

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Owen Glendower led the last military struggle of the Welsh against the English crown for Welsh independence and nationalism. The failure of the Glendower rebellion established the supremacy of English rule over Wales. For six hundred years the status of Wales as a principality of the crown has not been seriously challenged. This paper will show how widespread the idea of "Welshness" was in 1400 and how much support existed for Wales as an independent nation. Welshmen sought to move from the status of a medieval, tribal principality to a position of an independent nation capable and ready to stand with other national in the world. The role of leadership that Owen Glendower assumed in the final rebellion against the English king, Henry IV, lifted him from a popular Welsh prince to an historical legend.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Can a man at the turn of the fifteenth century be termed a national hero or be regarded a national leader struggling for national goals before the term "nationalism" was used in its modern sense? An examination of this question will be undertaken in this study of the Welsh leader Owen Glendower and his role in the Welsh rebellion against the English Crown (1400-1410). Owen Glendower remains a controversial figure in both Welsh and English history. He has become, however, the most prominent symbol of Welsh culture, Welsh pride, Welsh uniqueness and Welsh unity. While the structure of political nationalism, as understood in the modern sense, replete with political and military power, political boundaries and a centralized financial and tax system, was never achieved by Owen Glendower for the Welsh, he did provide the Welsh with a hero, a giant among men, who combined all of the tradition, culture, legacy and passion for independence that unified the Welsh. Owen Glendower ended forever the myth that the Welsh were a disparate group of tribal people more barbaric than civilized, for Glendower was among the most sophisticated and aristocratic of the English world. He was

a member of the landed gentry, trained for the law in the Inns of Court at Westminster, a descendant of several Welsh and Breton lines of nobility, a faithful servant to the English Crown (Richard II), the commander of thousands of rebelling men and a self-proclaimed prince. Indeed, for the Welsh, their hero sat at the right hand of the legendary King Arthur.¹ Historians might well differ in their appraisal of Glendower's motives, but few would minimize his leadership or significance in English history.

Writers of English history prior to the nineteenth century saw this particular Welshman as a rebel, a malcontent and a destroyer of unity and cohesion. The English had their seditious rebel, the Welsh their prince. Elements of truth are contained in both views along with elements of bias. This paper examines the role of Owen Glendower and some of the events that led to Welsh nationalism, a nationalism that remains strong today with Glendower as the major symbol. Five centuries of hero worship cannot be stripped away easily. Even the English have reluctantly acknowledged his impact and know they must contend with his ideas and love of independence as much in the twentieth century as they did in the fifteenth.

The Welsh love for independence goes back to the time when the Roman legions left Britain in the fifth century A.D. The area now known as Wales was divided into small kingdoms, each independent from the other and often at war

with their neighboring lords. The Anglo-Saxons ruled in England but the lords in Wales remained independent with their own language, laws, literature and religious beliefs. In other words, a separate culture or cultures developed apart from the Anglo-Saxons and remained separate until the Norman invasion in 1066.

William the Conqueror was determined to secure his victory over Harold and the English crown and firmly establish himself and his descendants as rightful heirs to the English throne. He pushed his conquest north and west to include the area of Wales. The Normans took advantage of the petty differences that existed between the various lordships and the chieftains and slowly established a network of defensive castles in the areas that fell under their control along the coastal regions in the west and on the boundaries between England and Wales in the south and east. Old lordships were replaced with Normans or Englishmen in sympathy with William and who had supported him in his successes. Often a lordship was divided into two parts, Englishry and Welshry. The English shires were generally located in the lowlands in a manorial style. The Welsh shires were generally in the uplands where the old laws were followed and agriculture was carried on by tribal groups with their own ancient customs and laws. A separateness was created even in the attempt for unification. The area of Norman lordships was mainly in the

east and south and became known as the March (march comes from the French word "marche" meaning frontier) or the Marches of Wales. The area in the north and west, the more rugged terrain, remained under the control of the old Welsh hereditary princes. They were more tribal and owed their allegiance to their own hereditary princes and little toward the Anglo-Norman crown. Marriages were arranged between families of the princes and chieftains and not with the Normans and English. Intermarrying between the Normans and English took place in the Marches of Wales where the custom was to intermarry Norman with English or English with Norman as one means of pacifying the area and to make the Norman invaders more secure. The allegiance of the Marcher Lords was to the south and the English crown. The germ of conflict was born between these different loyalties and time would see it grow and mature into open rebellion.²

However, Wales was to have a little more than two hundred years to wait (1066-1282) before that rebellion found its voice. In the meantime the Normans made the Welsh a European people. The Normans and their European allies brought feudalism with its barons and knights living in their castles and manors. Increased trade and a money economy was introduced along with the notion of towns and large scale farming. The French language was introduced inserting itself between Welsh and Latin. The European church and the Pope crossed the channel and then over the

Welsh borders forging ties between feudal lords and Rome. The character of the Welsh culture began to change. The old Welsh church with its pagan rituals and customs was replaced with monastic orders who took instructions from Canterbury. Alien people (non-Welsh) rushed in following the Norman victories and lands that had once belonged to tribal princes were taken and given to the new robber barons. Lines of inheritance were broken or crossed over and estates were divided and administered along European lines. The Norman lordships of the March became very powerful. They had taken over lands that once belonged to Welsh princes and now owed allegiance only to the English Crown.³

One means whereby the Welsh were able to retain their identity was through their poetical literature. Bardic schools began to increase in number and secular poets became the historians of the period. The old stories were told and retold and embellished with each telling. A tradition of "Welshness" developed and a sense of uniqueness began to emerge. The poets gave voice to the memory of a heroic past where the Welsh had been a part of a dynasty that was undefeated and unvanquished. The dream of a golden age was reborn and the prophecy of a new messiah was told time and time again until the legend took on a life of its own. The poets' emphasis on the deeds of the past coupled with the promise of a new and glorious future furthered the sense of heritage and lineage. The new messiah would come from one

of the princely houses. He would lead the Welsh into victory over the English oppressors and regain sovereignty for Welshmen.⁴

As long as the Marcher and Welsh lords were able to maintain relative peace and some stability in their own regions, the English Crown was willing to exercise a policy of benign neglect. As a consequence, individual Welsh lords amassed great wealth and strength and began to form small powerful kingdoms within larger kingdoms. The area of Gwynedd in the far northwest had become the most independent from the English Crown and began to mobilize into a feudal principality. It became very powerful both militarily and politically in the thirteenth century and began to challenge the Crown and other Welsh and Marcher lords for sovereignty. The princes of Gwynedd refused to give fealty to the English Crown and instead sought to divert homage of all Welsh lords to themselves. The two greatest princes of Gwynedd, Llywelyn the Great (1196-1240) and Llywelyn the Last (1247-1282), both capable soldiers and skillful diplomats, came close to fulfilling the prophecy of the bards. Llywelyn the Last was even recognized as Prince of Wales in 1267 by Henry III. However, the English Crown in the person of Edward I could not tolerate such a challenge to his authority and quickly put down the uprising mounted against him from Gwynedd. An uneasy peace settled into place and

lasted until 1400 as the Welsh continued to wait for deliverance from English rule by the prophesied Messiah.⁵

After the defeat of Llywelyn, the Last of the House of Gwynedd in 1282, the lands of the rebels came under the direct authority of the Crown. In 1301 Edward I declared the area a Principality and gave total jurisdiction over it to his son, later Edward II. It became the custom from that time to the present day for the English King's eldest son to be designated Prince of Wales. The Principality was set apart from the Marcher lordships in the east and south thereby creating two separate political entities. This separation lasted until 1542 when the Acts of Union removed the primary distinction between the Principality and the Marches. The entire area of Wales was then declared "Principality of Wales" and the Prince of Wales had jurisdiction over all Welshmen. The English Crown was unwilling to tolerate an independent Wales and the die was cast for Wales' loss of national identity. But the Crown would have to contend with one more challenge to its sovereignty in Wales in the person of Owen Glendower (Owain Glyn Dwr).⁶

Although of Welsh blood, Glendower was the quintessential English knight. He fought loyally and bravely for the King of England against the Scots and was a respected member of the English court. In the year 1400, the time of the rebellion, he was of middle-age when he

returned to his family estates in the north of Wales. Having laid down his arms in the service of the King, he was an unlikely candidate to become the hero of the events to follow.⁷

The exact date of Glendower's birth is not known, but it is surmised to be around 1359. He had inherited estates in North and South Wales which made him a landowner of some means. However, his leisurely life as a country squire came to an abrupt end when he entered into a dispute with his neighbor, Reginald Grey, Lord of Ruthlin, whom he accused of seizing some of his estates. In 1400 Glendower and his men laid waste to Grey's estates, and Henry IV, returning from Scotland, was obliged to go westward to quell the unrest. The Welsh resorted to their time-honored practice of disappearing into the mountains so that Henry was unable to confront Glendower and his men directly. It soon became apparent that Wales was in the thralls of a full-scale national uprising.⁸

Little is known of Owen Glendower's early life. We know that for thirteen years he kept his standard flying, and earned the respect and finally the pardon, of the young English Prince, the future Henry V. He was no upstart, being a descendant of the Welsh princes of Powys and Gwynedd, and an affluent landowner in his early forties, when circumstances placed him at the head of the last Welsh national uprising.⁹ His lands were divided by the Berwy

Mountains in the North of Wales at Glyndyfrdwy, which is situated in the valley of the River Dee between Llangollen and Corwen, and at Cynllaith Owain not far from Oswestry, and nearer the English border. He had properties at Carrog in Glyndydrwy and a keep at Sycharth where his ancestors had been Lord Marchers for three or four generations. As a young man he had studied at the courts of Westminster. He accompanied King Richard II on his campaign in 1385 against the Scots, and became an Esquire to the Earl of Arundel.¹⁰

Owen Glendower by heritage, upbringing and endeavor represented the very best of Welsh tradition and culture. The Welsh in turn, immortalized him in legend and history. Unlike his feudal peers, who turned conveniently with the tide of the English monarch to retain their estates, Owen Glendower established a powerful tradition of separatism and proud independence which remains a Welsh trait to this day.

This study is based on the life of a man whose name is revered by all Welshmen and whose character has impressed more than one discerning writer of English History although few monographs have been written on Owen Glendower. Immediately following the rebellion there was a scramble for the survivors to line up on the right side. Final victory lay with the English Crown so any praise for Glendower had to remain dormant until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He was never held responsible for the rebellion's failures by the Welsh bards, some of whom even

refused to believe that he was dead. Not one Welsh bard was willing to write or sing his elegy. In this way there was the unrealistic hope that he would someday return to deliver the Welsh from their English oppressors. This hope, unrealistic though it might be, intensified Welsh nationalism and Welsh identity.

Adam of Usk (1352-1430) was the first chronicler to set down the events of his time (Chronicon Adae de Usk) which included the account of Glendower's uprising. The problem with Usk's treatment of the revolt was that he was in Rome most of the time and had only a second hand knowledge of the actual events as related by Glendower's allies. Even though his account lacks validity, it nonetheless was the standard source referred to by succeeding historians for quasi-contemporary data.¹¹

The first comprehensive history of Wales was written by David Powel (1552-1598), Historie of Cambria, now called Wales, (1584). His work reflects a Tudor bias toward Welsh history and he declared against the claims of Glendower. Powel stated that Glendower's claim to the title of the Principality of Wales was frivolous and that the Earl of March of the Mortimer line had the rightful claim to the Principality of Wales.¹² Powel, as a loyal subject to the Tudor Queen Elizabeth heaped scorn on the Glendower movement, calling it a fool's paradise born in the mind of a

demented visionary. He expanded at length on the troubles the rebellion had brought on the people of Wales.¹³

Edward Hall (1498-1547) a Tudor historian wrote a popular history of England, Halls' Chronicle (1542) in which he saw Glendower as "a rebel and seditious seducer, the miserable end of whose wretched life in desert places and solitary causes was a final reward mete and prepared by God's providence for so notorious an offender".¹⁴

David Powel and Edward Hall are good examples of the criticism levelled at Glendower by early English historians. The rebellion and the rebel became the scapegoat for many of the ills that troubled England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In saying that early literature belittled Glendower, one must allow for one great exception. The genius of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) underscored the greatness of the man in his historical play, *Henry IV, Part One*. With his pen Shakespeare left an imperishable portrait of Owen Glendower.¹⁵ This portrait was carefully drawn to put Glendower in a special place in history:

. . . Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary;
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the role of common men.¹⁶

Shakespeare made use of the work of the popular historian of his day, Raphael Holinshed (d. 1580). It is

doubtful, however, if Shakespeare used Holinshed's work for a description of Glendower since Holinshed's Chronicles had nothing meritorious to say about the Welsh rebel. Churton Collins, a twentieth century Shakespearian scholar, has pointed out that for the character of Glendower, Shakespeare "had not even a hint in the Chronicles".¹⁷ Shakespeare, certainly was not under any compulsion to draw upon the chronicles for his conception of the character of a Welsh gentlemen, or rebel, for his notion of the real worth and dignity of Glendower. In 1507 there were many Welshmen at the English court. Indeed many a famous British subject, like the queen, was of Welsh descent.¹⁸ The rebellion had occurred a hundred years earlier and Wales was again in good standing with the Crown and its people were held with some respect. It is, moreover, quite likely that Shakespeare met some Welshman in London who gave him to understand that among his countrymen Glendower was remembered as a great patriotic leader, a towering figure for Welsh nationalism and by no means to be counted "in the roll of common men". Be that as it may, this was how Shakespeare envisioned Glendower, and then presented him to the Elizabethan public as a Welsh hero. The likeness is one which, far from needing revision, grows more creditable as time reveals more and more of Glendower's role in shaping the Welsh sense of oneness with a proud history.

A change in favor of Glendower seems to have occurred in the literature of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1775 there appeared posthumously as an appendix to A History of the Island of Anglesly, the Memoires of Owen Glendower, written by Reverend Thomas Ellis of Dolgelly (1625-1673). This was the first published biography of the national hero. Thomas Pennant (1726-1798), a naturalist who travelled widely in north Wales, keeping a record of his journeys and observations, published Tours in Wales (1778) in which he discussed at some length the life and influence of Owen Glendower.²⁰ Thomas Pennant set out to restore the name of Glendower to its former luster and it was through his efforts that the hero of Welsh nationalism was taken out of obscurity to be given his due place of distinction in history. He followed the fortunes of his hero with scrupulous care and gathered every fragment of song, record and story which illustrated his life. Thomas Pennant's Tours in Wales brought the events of Glendower's life back to life and inspired a renewed interest in Welsh independence. What had engaged Pennant's interest and kindled his enthusiasm was Glendower's brave stand for Welsh national freedom. He refused to believe tales of the miserable and lonely end attributed to Glendower by moralizing writers. The theory of Glendower's final days in these negative accounts was that Glendower had retreated into the mountains in disgrace and shame, and would die

alone and friendless in his defeat, hardly the figure of a national hero. Pennant sought to change this erroneous view by looking at the terms Henry V presented to Glendower in 1415. When Henry V took the throne one of his first acts was to grant a general pardon to all the rebels in Wales. Many of the rebels came forward to receive this pardon but Glendower was not one of them.²¹ No one knows for sure why Glendower refused to come in but it was probably his proud Welsh spirit that made it impossible for him to admit defeat. Pennant saw Henry's generosity as an indication that Glendower still held the respect of the Crown and was admired as a great patriot even if his mission for independence had failed. After Pennant's work, the attitude of chilly disapproval vanished. He concluded his narrative with a triumphant statement of support, "Our chieftain died unsubdued; unfortunate only in foreseeing a second subjugation of his country, after the loss of the great support of its independency".²²

Glendower was now fully rehabilitated and scarcely any one has ventured since Pennant's time to describe him as a common and undistinguished rebel. The account in the Tours in Wales has, indeed, become a classic. It is unfortunate that the many biographers, both English and Welsh, who have since told the story of the Glendower movement have to a large extent drawn on Pennant for their material, making little effort to trace his sources or to estimate the value

of the lore which he recorded, much of which is inaccurate and carries the expected bias. But even if it cannot be ascertained whether Pennant's narrative on Glendower is historically correct or incorrect and even if it cannot be considered as anything but a first attempt at a comprehensive presentation, Pennant still contributed much to the rehabilitation of a national hero, whose memory, even though flawed in some respects, kept alive the idea of a proud history in the hearts of the common people.

The standard biography of Glendower remains J. E. Lloyd's Owen Glendower (1931).²³ This is the work of a scholar who had spent a lifetime working on the history of Wales. He also authored a study, A History of Wales that makes essential reading for a study of the background to Glendower that makes his stand for nationalism more plausible.²⁴

A much older work and one that spells out some of the charm of Wales and Welshmen is Arthur Granville Bradley, Owen Glyndwr and The Last Struggle for Welsh Independence (1901).²⁵ It carries the expected bias for Glendower as one would anticipate from a Welsh historian. It was published in the Heroes of the Nations series which immediately classifies it as pro-Glendower with colorful accounts.

J. D. Griffith Davies, Owen Glyn Dwr (1934) is somewhat critical but he too cannot escape admiration for Glendower: "His fight against England was perhaps a forlorn hope; but

it was a daring adventure; and it was inspired by an enthusiasm which was absent in so many of the earlier Welsh fights for freedom against the English."²⁶

A small popular biography by Glanmor Williams, Owen Glendower in the Clarendon Biographies Series (1966) gives a short overview of Glendower for the general reader. The attempt is again made to present him as a leader of Welsh nationalism. Glendower's rebellion for Williams, stressed two essential emotions, "the awareness of the Welsh that they were a separate nation with a history and a culture of their own and that as such they were entitled to be treated with dignity and consideration, and not as a conquered race of inferior barbarians".²⁷

Writers of English and Welsh history all have to treat Owen Glendower and his rebellion in some fashion. No valid history of this period can escape a treatment of the man and his movement. Even the most conservative of English historians could not ignore Glendower and his significance. George Macaulay Trevelyan, History of England saw, "this wonderful man [Owen Glendower] as an attractive and unique figure in a period of debased and selfish politics, [who] actually revived for a few years the virtual independence of a great part of his country".²⁸

Owen Glendower by birth, training and example represented the very best of Wales and in turn, became their hero. He treasured freedom more than favor. He set a

powerful precedent for a fiercely independent nation. He became the catalyst for Welsh unity that transcended his military and political defeats at the hands of the English.

NOTES

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CHAPTER II

ANCESTRY AND INHERITANCE

Owen Glendower secured his place in history mainly through birthright and charisma. His people revered him for his Welsh ancestry and his distinguished lineage. It is unlikely that he would have engendered the loyalty of his followers without this prerequisite. Although the greatness of the House of Glendower had declined since ancient times the name still stood for power and prestige.¹

In 1400 he was one of the very few Welsh landowners who still held lands which their ancestors had once ruled as princes. The same lands were also reinstated to him by the crown. His cousin, John of Mawddwy, descended from the princes of Powys Wenwynwyn. He, too, still held the remote corner of that province from which he took his name. He was perhaps the only other Welsh magnate in the same position.² Glendower was the representative of the northern line and the heir of the princes of Powys Fadog. His ancestors had long ceased to rule the neighborhood of Wrexham and Llangollen. They retained and had handed on to Owen Glendower the regions of Cynllaith Owain and Glyn Dyfrdwy. The history of these two lordships and how they came into his hands is vital to understanding Glendower.

In approximately 1269, on the death of Gruffydd ap Madog, Northern Powys had been divided among his four sons, Madog, Llywelyn, Owain, and Gruffdd, in accordance with the prevailing custom.³ The brothers, Llywelyn and Owain shared the commote (commonage) of Cynllaith between them. Gruffydd was assigned Iâl and Edeirnion. Later on this included Glyn Dyfrdwy, also known as Glendower from which Owen got his last name.⁴ Gruffydd Fychan, so called because he bore the same name as his father, was a supporter of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in the war of 1277. In the peace that followed, provisions were made that he would do homage to Llywelyn for Edeirnion, but to the King of England for Iâl. This was in view of the fact that Powys Fadog was no longer under the lordship of the Prince of Wales. It was instead to be held directly by the crown.⁵ So it remained until the time of the great revolt of 1282 when ownership changed again. The princes of Powys Fadog supported the losing cause and were dispossessed of all their territories. Iâl was given to the Earl of Surrey.⁶ The half of Cynllaith held by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd ap Madog was attached to Roger Mortimer's new lordship of Chirk.⁷ The other half, the property of his brother Owain, was bestowed by Edward I upon Eleanor, his queen.⁸ For some time it seemed as if the heirs of Northern Powys were to retain no foothold in the lands they had long ruled.

But Graffydd Fychan was fortunate enough to survive the upheaval. He was able to acquire the wealthy Earldom and gain possession of the bulk of his inheritance. This was done by remaining neutral in the struggle. On February 12th, 1283, at the request of Surrey, the king granted him the land of Glyn Dyfrdwy, (Glendower) to hold as tenant at will.⁹ Not long afterwards, an attempt was made to upgrade the new holding into a barony. The attempt failed, and until his death Gruffydd continued to be merely tenant at the pleasure of the king.¹⁰ He was twice heard of during his tenure of Glyn Dyfrdwy. In May 1284, his brother Madog's widow, Margaret, claimed from him the village of Corwen and the manor of Hafod Cil y Maen Llwyd. She contended that it was part of her dowry.¹¹ And in August of the same year, he acknowledged a debt of eleven marks to Bishop Burnell who was Edward II's wealthy and powerful chancellor. It was suggested that this may have been a payment promised for services in connection with the abortive barony.¹² Gruffydd died in 1289. On November 6th of that year the king ordered the acting Justice of North Wales to give to Queen Eleanor the lands that Gruffydd Fychan held at the pleasure of the King.¹³ On the death of the queen in the following year, her estates were found to include Glyn Dyfrdwy and Sycharth. The latter was an alternative name for Cynllaith Owain, which she had received in 1284.¹⁴

For a year or two the family control of Glyn Dyfrdwy was in jeopardy. The lordship was committed to the care of Reginald Grey, Justice of Chester.¹⁵ In July 1292, there was a significant reference to the kings forest of Glyn Dyfrdwy.¹⁶ On May 26th, 1293, the Patent Rolls recorded the appointment of Thomas of MacClesfield as keeper, during the minority of the heir. These included lands of Gruffydd Fychan, late tenant in chief.¹⁷ Glyn Dyfrdwy had become an hereditary fief. It was expected by many for the heir to succeed in due course. Gruffydd had in fact, a son, Madog. Chance has preserved a letter, only partly legible, in which Madog pleaded his case as heir of Glyn Dlyfrdwy and petitioned the king to make suitable provision for him.¹⁸ These were to come either from his inheritance or in some other way.¹⁹ How Madog ap Gruffydd rose to the title of baron of the Welsh march and became the owner of Cynllaith Owain, in addition to his father's holding of Glyn Dyfrdwy, was not recorded. However, he was in that position about 1300.²⁰ He had, by his wife Gwenllian, daughter of Ithel Fychan of Halkin, a son Gruffydd who could inherit his estate.²¹

The story of Gruffydd of Rhuddallt, as he was recorded in Welsh genealogy, was known in some detail. Madog ap Gruffydd had reason to believe that he had not long to live.²² Accordingly, he took steps to put his infant son under the protection of a powerful marcher lord. This lord

was John Lestrangle. On July 8, 1304, the little boy of six was married, in the presence of the two fathers, to Elizabeth, daughter of John Lestrangle of Knokin.²³ Not long afterwards, and probably in the same year, Madog's fears came true. He died at his manor of Rhuddallt.²⁴ Gruffydd then became the ward of his father-in-law.²⁵ Unhappily, his new protector did not live much longer than his father. John Lestrangle died in 1309 and the wardship passed, first to Edmund Hakluyt, and then, by purchase, to Roger Mortimer of Chirk. The Lestrangle family contrived to retain their hold upon the youthful heir. In 1315 Mortimer appealed to the king in parliament against Lestrangle's claim to have secured his wardship of him by marriage.²⁶ A formal inquiry in 1318 established the validity of the union beyond any doubt.²⁷ In March, 1321, the wardship of the heir of Glyn Dyfrdwy came to an end. Robert Mortimer, Justice of Wales, was ordered to give to Gruffydd, son of Madog ap Gruffydd, and tenant in chief, rule of his father's lands, since he was of age and had done homage to the king.²⁸ The inquiry which prepared the way for this step supplied valuable information as to the nature of the Glyn Dyfrdwy holding. These holdings consisted of Glyn Dyfrdwy itself, which was the fourth part of a commote in the country of Merioneth, and Cynllaith, which was half a commote (commanage) outside the county. Both were held by the king and ruled by the chief Welsh barony in his stead. In Welsh this was called

"pennaeth". In return for this privilege the holder and his subjects were duty-bound to join the king's army, at the king's cost, on command. After these requirements were met the use of Glyn Dyfrdwy was Gruffyd's. He ruled from the county court of Merioneth.²⁹ Gruffydd's position was that of a marcher lord. He still retained, to some degree, most of the privileges of a ruling Welsh prince. That he had holdings which had been in the possession of his ancestors for three to four generations, established his authority.

Glyn Dyfrdwy and Cynllaith, as had been carefully ruled by the jurors of 1321, were separate lordships.³⁰ They were divided by the Berwyn range. The former signified the Glen of the Water of the river Dee, (glyn was a narrow valley or defile threaded by the course of a river), and was distinguished from the broad dyffryn or valley (vale), where the hills stood apart at some distance.³¹ Fortunately, the ancestors of Glendower were not dependent upon the resources of Glyn Dyfrdwy. The manor at Carrog, stood on a moated hill surrounded by park lands. The more valuable part of their inheritance lay south of the Berwyn and the Ceiriog valley.³² This was the lordship of Cynllaith Owain. It was a fertile and luxuriant region known as Sycharth. The remains of a moat and Baily Castle are still there to be seen today. This became the favorite residence of the family, which for centuries to come retained its character. As late as the end of the eighteenth century, formal

gatherings were held here. To this date this estate has been preserved.³²

In 1324 Gruffydd ap Madog appeared as the second witness to a charter granted in that year by his neighbor, Edmund, Earl of Arundel.³³ This was the tenancy of Chirkland, a very normal conjunction in which to find the holders of the two divisions of the original Cynllaith.³⁴ Four years later, Gruffydd obtained license of the crown to convey his manors of Glyn Dyfrdwy and Cynllaith to trustees, who were to reconvey the estate to himself and his wife Elizabeth as entailed property. This was a legal device intended to secure these manors against the risk of forfeiture for felony or treason.³⁵ His connection with the Lestrangle family was maintained. As it appeared from an original document found in the British Museum, dated 1332, he was acting as keeper of the manor of Ellesmere. Prior to that date it was bestowed upon his brother-in-law, Eubolo Lestrangle.³⁶ He was last mentioned in 1343. This was at the time when the magnates of Wales were paying homage to the new Prince of Wales, as one of a group of tenants in chief who had not yet performed their duty.³⁷

Gruffydd ap Madog was succeeded by his son, Gruffydd Fychan the second. No conjecture can be offered as to when the new lord inherited his father's estates, or when he left it to his son Gruffydd Fychan. Recorded evidence is lacking for a considerable period. However, he held together the

family estate by further increasing his fortune with a prudent marriage, thereby providing his son and heir with the benefit of a good Oxford education.³⁸ The marriage of Gruffydd was an important link in the chain of events which gave Owen Glendower a unique position in Wales. The bloodlines of Deheubarth, of Rhys ap Tewdwr and the Lord Rhys, were in turn crossed with that of the house of Northern Powys. The Powys descended from Bleddyn ap Cynfyn and Madog ap Maredudd. After the revolt and death of Rhys Maredudd under Edward I, the dynasty which had once ruled over the whole of Welsh South Wales was represented by a group of lordlings. Their patrimony had shrunk to little more than a commote and a half in south Cardiganshire.³⁹ Their position was well established by an inquiry held at Cardigan on September 20th, 1344. It revealed Owain ap Llywelyn ap Owain as lord of one half of the commote of Iscoed Uch Hirwen and of one quarter of the commote of Gwynionydd, while his nephew, Owain ap Thomas ap Llywelyn, had the other half of Iscoed and another quarter of Gwynionydd.⁴⁰

Both uncle and nephew were still alive in 1355, when they appeared as joint patrons of the church of Llandysil in Gwynionydd.⁴¹ Not long afterwards both died and with them the male line of Deheubarth became extinct. Owain ap Llywelyn left no children, but Owain ap Thomas had two sisters. The oldest, Helen, married Gruffydd Fychan. This brought to the house of Glendower the greater part of the

scanty Cardiganshire remnant of the broad realm of Rhys ap Tewdwr.⁴² What proved eventually to be of still greater importance was that the oldest son born of this marriage could reasonably claim to be regarded as the lawful successor, not only of the rulers of Northern Powys, but also of those of South Wales and these were Glendower's just holdings.⁴³

There existed in medieval Wales an ideology of genealogy especially among the aristocratic families. Since there was no political unity or independence, the people found their identity in the past. This looking to the past also allowed them to look to their futures. History and prophecy were closely akin and the poets called for a deliverer to come and free the Welsh from the English yoke. Any pretender to that position must first establish his legitimacy through his ancestral line. This is why the genealogy was so important to establish and keep. The ruling families wanted not only to restore their earlier dynasties but also to create a unified Welsh kingdom. When Glendower was later to proclaim himself "Prince of Wales" it was a unitary proclamation and not Prince of Gwynedd or Powys. "Mythology, prophecy, legitimate descent, messianic expectation and national unity were, therefore, among the vital ingredients of the political ideology of native Wales in the fourteenth century."⁴⁴

NOTES

1. G.T.O. Bridgeman, History of the Princes of South Wales (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1904) 267.
2. See also: Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls A.D. 1290 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), I, 330.
3. Brut y Twysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes. Red Book of Herhest Version, ed. and trans. T. Jones, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), 105.
4. Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls A.D. 1290 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), I, 171.
5. Calendar of various Close Rolls, Edward I (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), I, 399.
6. T. Rymer, ed Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, etc., revised edn. 4 vols. in 7 parts (London: Record Commission 1816-69), I, 545.
7. Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls, (October 7th) A.D. 1282 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), I, 240.
8. Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls, 1266-1516 (June 2nd) A.D. 1282 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), I, 223.
9. Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls, 1277-1326 (May 10th and 26th, 1283), (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1912), I, 271.
10. Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1277-1326, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1912), I, 266.
11. Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1277-1326, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), II, 287.
12. Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward I, 1272-1422, (London: her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), II, 297.

13. Ibid., 302.
14. Calendar of Chancery Rolls, 1244-1326, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), II, 321.
15. Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1272-1471, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1949), I, 286.
16. Ibid., I, 304.
17. Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward I, 1272-1422, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), III, 235.
18. John Edward Lloyd Owen Glendower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 11.
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20. Ancient Correspondence, (London: Public Record Office, 1941), XIX, 92.
21. T. A. Glen, Archaeologia Cambrensis, VII, 2, (1922), 135.
22. H. Lewis, T. Roberts, I. Williams, ed trans., Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Erail, (Cardiff: 2nd ed. University of Wales Press 1937), 37.
23. Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, 1216-1392, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1974), V, 6, VI, 80.
24. Ibid.
25. Rotuli Parliamentorum, 7 vols. (London: Record Commissions, 1783-1832), I, 306, (nos. 74 and 75).
26. Ibid., 12, n. 5.
27. Calendar of Various Close Rolls, Edward I, 1232-1422 (March 5th, 1321), (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1970), III, 290.
28. Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, (Jan. 14, 1321) 1216-1392 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1974), VI, 150.

29. Compare "Glyn Ceiriog" (distinguished from "Duffryn Ceiriog"), "Glyn Ogwr" and "Glyn Rhondda". Glyn Dior is a popular Welsh abbreviation of Glyn Dyfrdwy; from it comes the English "Glendower".
30. John Edward Lloyd Owen Glendower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 14.
31. Merionethshire Inventory, (London: Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales, Public Records, 1974), II, no. 39, 44.
32. Denbighshire Inventory, (London: Public Records, 1968), III, no. 554, 285.
33. John Edward Lloyd Owen Glendower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 14.
34. E.A. Lewis, Topographical Dictionary of Wales, (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 115.
35. James Hamilton Wylie, History of England under Henry the Fourth, Four vols. (London: Oxford University Press, (1884-1898), 1929), I, 143.
36. J.Y.W. Lloyd, the History of the Princes of Powys Fodog, six vols. (London: Oxford University Press, (1978), IV, 24.
37. Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward III, (August 12, 1328), 1232-1422 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1906-1911), I, 314.
38. John Edward Lloyd Owen Glendower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 14.
39. Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1266-1516 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1927), IV, 243.
40. Archaeologia Cambrensis, the journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association, (1928), IV, 4.
41. G.T.O. Bridgeman, History of the Princes of South Wales, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 233.
42. Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, 1216-1392 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1974), X, 394.
43. G.T.O. Bridgeman, History of the Princes of South Wales, (Wigan: Oxford University Press, 1978), 259.

44. R.R. Davies, Conguest, Coexistence and Change
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CHAPTER III

EARLY YOUTH AND MANHOOD

Differing accounts are given for the age of Glendower at various points in his life. The exact year of his birth cannot be stated with any confidence. There is no contemporary evidence beyond the statement in the record of the Scrope-Grosvenor trial. It stated that he was twenty-seven years old in 1386. This would point to the year 1359 as the time of his birth.¹ A manuscript used by Thomas Pennant in his book Tours in Wales gave a precise date, of May 28th, 1354.² Other sources say that Owen rose to fame at the age of forty-six.³ There were persistent stories that he was born in 1349. This was the year of the great plague.⁴ Between these various dates, there is no easy choice. 1359 remains the established date for many authorities which would mean a somewhat younger Glendower at the time of the rebellion than appears to support his portrayal in legendary stories.⁵

The same confusion exists about his place of birth. While one would place the event in Carrog or Sycharth, others maintain, that he was born at Trefgarn Owain.⁶ This cannot be proven, however, because the abbey of record was burned down during one of Wales many rebellions. Trefgarn

Owain is in the region of St. David's.⁷ He was therefore a native, not of North, but of South Wales. If it is right to assume that this idea grew out of the supposition that Trefgarn Owain belonged to the Glendower's mother it would seem that he received his name from there. It may then be rejected without hesitation. In actuality the manor belonged to his maternal grandfather. This portion later passed in the division of the estate, not to his mother, but to his aunt. She was the wife of William of Mawddwy. In all probability it derived its name from an earlier and less famous bearer of the name of Owen (Owain).⁸

Owen was a student of law at Westminster, probably at the end of the reign of Edward III.⁹ According to one account, he devoted seven years to his legal studies.¹⁰ The term, appointed at law, had at this time a wide application and included all barristers (lawyers) outside the small and highly privileged class of sergeants.¹¹ Glendower had no desire to make law his profession. His presence in London was rather to be explained by the well-known passage in Fortescue.¹² It told how the Inns of Court had become an upper-class university. They were too expensive for any but the well-to-do and provided an education which was more social than professional. Gruffydd Fychan was determined that his heir should lack nothing in this respect. In fact, Owen did not fall short of the social standards of his age and class. He was the complete gentleman. In this respect

Shakespeare gave us a accurate portrait in his Henry IV, Act III, Scene I.¹³

At an early age, Glendower turned from law to the profession of arms. According to James Hamilton Wylie, a contemporary chronicler, he "fought with distinction as a worthy squire to our present king, before he assumed the crown".¹⁴ The words, written in 1400, can only mean that he served Henry of Lancaster. They showed, despite the confident assertions of later writers, that, Glendower had personal ties with Henry at the time of his rising. This attachment was to the new king, and not to his monarch's predecessor Richard II. At the same time, it is unclear when Owen could have been one of the retinue of the future Henry IV. There was no evidence that they were together on Henry's crusading travels.¹⁵ The likeliest conclusion is that their association began in 1387. This was during the campaign of Radcot Bridge. In this war against King Richard II's supporters, Henry, then a very young man, acted in concert with Owen's neighbor, the Earl of Arundel. Wylie spoke of Glendower as esquire, not of Bolingbroke, but of Arundel.¹⁶ This was a link which was easier to explain. The reputation of Glendower as a warrior of valor and distinction was well supported. Even his detractors had to allow this when they declared him a rebel. Evidence would suggest that he had fought in more than one campaign. He played a part, as one narrative tells us, in the French and

the Irish, as well as in the Scottish wars of Richard II.¹⁷ He fought in the Scottish campaign of August, 1385. It was in this campaign that he first appeared on the stage of history as a warrior prince.¹⁸ Two poems by Welsh bards celebrate the prowess of the lord of Glendower. It was in the land of Prydyn, the home of the Picts, which Welsh bardic tradition had not forgotten. Iolo Goch spoke of Owen as "the worthy son of a worthy sire," who was now lord, in succession to his father, of the Fair Glen.¹⁹ He described the valor of the young warrior at Berwick. Goch wrote that Glendower wore in his helmet the scarlet feather of a flamingo. Owen unhorsed his opponent, fought with a mere fragment of his broken lance and drove the Scots like wild goats before him. Goch goes on to say that the grass and the corn withered after the hot blast of his devastating onslaught.²⁰ Gruffydd Llwyd also commemorated this adventure of Owen's in a poem which is familiar to students of Welsh literature today. It opens with praise of Owen's lavish hospitality, but soon passes to a more somber theme, the sorrow and desolation in his halls, while he is away in Scotland on his perilous enterprise.²¹ Tears fall as showers of rain down the furrowed cheeks of his inconsolable minstrel.²² But, suddenly, a messenger arrives with heartening news: Owen is alive, not dead, and he has won great renown. He has routed his foes and has shown courage worthy of the fabled heroes of romance.²³ The reader was

told of the broken spear and the spear-butt turned into a dagger, of the panic of the enemy, driven before him as one would drive so many oxen. The last word is of the honor and the glory which had come to Wales through the valor and daring of the Knight of the Glen.²⁴

It was in the following year, 1386, that Owen gave evidence in the famous trial over who had the right to a particular coat of arms. Richard, Lord Scrope of Bolton in Wensleydale, and Robert Grosvenor of Hulme and Allostock in the county of Chester had both fought in the Scottish campaign and both displayed "azure, a bend or" on their coat of arms. This was a blue shield with a gold band running diagonally from its upper left hand corner to its lower right. It was referred to a court of chivalry. The two knights could not carry a shield displaying the same coat of arms. It was presided over by the Duke of Gloucester as Constable of England. He was to adjudicate these rival claims. A suit began which lasted for nearly five years. Scrope had the weightier witnesses, including the leaders of the baronial opposition to the crown. Grosvenor was supported by a solid body of evidence from his own country and the adjacent marches of Wales. Among others, Owen, lord of Glendore, age "twenty-seven and more", testified that he had seen Grosvenor bear the arms in dispute on the last expedition of his present majesty to Scotland. He also stated that in the counties of Chester and Flint and the

neighboring regions they were generally thought to be his. This was at Chester, on September 3rd, 1386.²⁵ Evidence was also given by his brother Tudor Glendower age twenty-four, and his brother-in-law, John Hanmer and Robert Puleston, aged twenty-two and twenty-eight respectively.²⁶ The significance of this record was not in the substance of Owen's testimony. However, it does give evidence to the setting in which he was placed. He followed the crowd, but it was a crowd of well-born young squires. They were quite learned in heraldic distinctions and the customs of chivalry. This was Owen's world, and he was perfectly at home in it.

By 1387, Owen was married and a family was growing up around him. His wife was the daughter of Sir David Hanmer of Hanmer. Hanmer was thought to be one of the most distinguished Welshmen of that time. An advocate under Edward III, Hanmer had before 1377 attained the rank of King's sergeant and in 1383 was appointed a judge in the court of the King's Bench.²⁷ His name appears among the triers of petitions in the parliament of 1386.²⁸ There can be no doubt that he stood high in his profession. The Hanmer family was of English origin.²⁹ It also had long been settled in the Maelor district of Flinshire and had intermarried with the Welsh families of that neighborhood.³⁰ The judge's own sympathies may be inferred from a contemporary poem. It showed Gruffydd Llwyd asking Owen to

impanel a jury, for the trial of a Welsh gentleman accused of some crime. The jury was composed of a group of bards, men of known probity, and, recipients in the past of the accused's bounty:

There are a thousand who with me will declare him
guiltless. For it is Morgan who gives the gold.³¹

It is a delicate plea, in the form of a jest, put forward by one Welshman to another. The reader of the *Cywydd*, a bardic poem about Welsh lineage and history, can have little doubt that Margaret Hanmer came from a Welsh home. Glendower's marriage took place in 1383.³² It was in all respects a happy one and the connection with the Hanmers remained close and intimate.³³ In 1387, on the death of Sir David Hanmer, his sons Gruffdd, John, and Philip were assigned to be trustees of their father's estates. They transferred their charge to Glendower whose joint duty it was to apply the revenue to the support of the judge's widow.³⁴ It was seen later that even the uprising did not sever the ties which bound the Hanmers to Owen Glendower. They were among his most prominent supporters.

During the latter part of the reign of Richard II, Glendower was not heard from. His name occurred, however, in the papal registers, which recorded that on June 28th, 1397, Boniface IX granted an indult, enabling a confessor to grant plenary remission in the hour of death to Owain ap

Gruffydd (Owen Glendower), esquire, lord of Glyn Deffrdwy, and his wife.³⁵

These years were spent by Owen in the ordinary pursuits of a country gentleman, varied by some military service in Ireland. Despite his prowess in the field as a warrior prince, it does not appear that he was ever dubbed a knight. He was quite content to remain an esquire.³⁶ This rank gave him the comfortable income of some 300 marks a year.³⁷ Part of this income was derived from South Wales, where he held his mother's lands in Iscoed and Gwynionydd.³⁸ His chief support was drawn from the paternal inheritance of Cynllaith Owain and Glyn Dyfrdwy. Here was located his ancestral seat of Sycharth, on the banks of the Cynllaith. The poet Iolo Goch found him living here and described his manor home and family in a famous Cywydd which cannot have been composed long before the revolt.³⁹ Iolo Goch described these years of Owen's life as "uneventful". Owen was described at ease, wealthy, generous, respected, and happy in the life of his home. In all respects he was in the early part of his retirement. The attractions and comforts of Sycharth were portrayed by Goch with much detail. Owen's castle had a moat around it, with a draw bridge which gave access to the gatehouse. On the green hillock within were the timber houses, with their lofts, which rested on pillars. The roofs are tiled. The chimneys carried off the smoke. The rich clothing which filled the wardrobes spoke of great

wealth and abundance. There was a mill on the Cynllaith river, a tall stone pigeon-house, a fishpond, a rabbit-warren, and a heronry. There was never any want of food or drink at Sycharth.⁴⁰ Sitting by his side was the best of wives, a lady who came from knightly stock, and before them,

 Their children come in couples, a goodly nestful of young princes.⁴¹

NOTES

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2. Thomas Pennant, Tours in Wales 1270-73, Second ed., 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), III, 200.
3. Ibid., 310.
4. Ibid., 615.
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23. Ibid.

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26. Ibid., 256.

27. J.Y.W. Lloyd, The History of the Princes of Powys Fadog, 6 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), I, 197.

28. Ibid., I, 260.

29. Ibid., 259.

30. Ibid., 258.

31. George Foss, Judges of England, 10 vols, (London: Records Commission, 1851), IV, 38.
32. Ibid., 56.
33. Calendar of Patent Rolls, Richard II, 1232-1422, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1906-11), I, 60.
34. Ibid.
35. Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Erail, ed. trans. H. Lewis, T. Roberts, I. Williams, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1937), 125.
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38. Calendar of Papal Letters, 1282-1415, 5 vols., (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Public Records, 1906-11), V, 44.
39. Iolo Manuscripts, ed. Taliesin Williams, Second Edition, (Liverpool: Records Commission, 1888), 36-7.
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CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLT

The underlying problems that lead to an open revolt against ruling authority are difficult to pinpoint and often vary as new historical interpretation emerges. Fourteenth century Wales was a hot bed of discontent. As English fortunes changed so did the fortunes in the March and Principality. Following Edward I's settlement after the 1282 rebellion, the administration of royal authority in Wales was discordant. The top administrative posts were held by Englishmen but Welshmen held the lesser posts on the local levels. Very often Welsh laws and customs superceded English law leading to a division of justice or a confusion about which law should be adhered to. At best, two levels of administration existed with the local officials having more direct power. This increased power and the enlargement of landed estates made the desire for independence from the English Crown even greater. The Welsh had learned to play the role of natives under colonial rule and presented the front of being submissive with deference to their English rulers. They were willing to acquiesce as long as their local customs were not violated. Small incidents occurred that belied the peace that the English needed. People

refused to pay increased taxes; members of the Welsh aristocracy were banished or imprisoned for no apparent reason; lands were taken when royal homage was slow in coming; legitimate grievances petitioned to the King were ignored; Welshmen were refused appointments as church bishops and other valuable church offices; racial hostilities built up between Welshmen and Englishmen with the English having the advantage; petty rivalries between Marcher lordships over territory grew more hostile under the growing bad economic conditions. The conviction began to grow that the English government was not willing to grant Welshmen rights and interests that the Welsh felt they had coming and an increased sense of separateness developed. Consequently, the Welsh aristocracy began to feel that military means were necessary to accomplish political independence.

On September 16th, 1400, Glendower's life took an abrupt turn. The reasons for the events which were to follow remain a mystery to this day. What is in question are the motives which spurred Glendower into revolt and the inducements which he held out to those who rallied to his banner. These motives were varied and complex. The change in kings of the previous year, 1399, was not the direct occasion for this unrest. The Welsh were favorably disposed towards Richard II, for Richard II treated the Welsh with much respect.¹ Legend has it that Glendower may have been

present when Richard II was captured at Flint Castle by Henry Lancaster.² Glendower's personal links were attached to Lancaster and Arundel, he had been a squire to both men at one point in time and not to Richard II.³ Glendower's conduct during the early months of the new reign bore this out. He petitioned parliament with certain grievances which he and the Welsh people suffered.⁴ Also, he was summoned to join the new king Henry IV in the Scottish expedition to suppress the rebellion of barons opposing him as King of England.⁵ The new Lancasterian reign stirred up unrest and disorder throughout the land, but it provoked intense hostile feelings in the Welsh marches. Many Welsh did not like to be considered a conquered race and subject to English rule. Many fought against it, some accepted it and did the best they could under the circumstances, and a few profited from it. Glendower, however, did not take action until he was attacked. In the summer of 1400 there was considerable chaos in Cheshire, where Richard II had been popular. These problems were serious enough to require the personal attention of the king, which in turn disrupted his plans for the invasion of Scotland. About this time there also was trouble in Glendower's lordships of Cynllaith and Glyn Dyfrdwy. One Gruffydd ap Dafydd ap Gruffydd, with anti-English attitudes, was lured to Oswestry by a promise of the office of master forester and bailiff of the Arundel lordship of Chirk. He discovered that a plan existed

involving John Trevor, bishop of St. Asaph, to persuade him to go abroad.⁶ He was not against this idea, but in the midst of his preparations he discovered that the real plot was to kidnap him. He fled from Oswestry and sought asylum among the Welshmen of Dyffryn Clwyd. Here, in the park of Bryan Cyffo, near Clocaenog, he stole the horses of the local lord, Reginald Grey of Ruthin, an act which the English viewed as a blatant disregard for the authority of British rule.⁷

Glendower took up arms as the result of a quarrel, which became not only a personal thing with Reginald Grey but against all that was English, this same lord of Ruthin, Reginald Grey, was the third by that name to hold the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd, and who had succeeded his father in 1388. He was now about forty years old. He held wide possessions in the east of England. He was also a member of parliament, and for a short time had been governor of Ireland.⁸ He was therefore an opponent to be reckoned with. It was an additional misfortune for Glendower that Reginald was a close friend of the new king of England, Henry IV. At Evesham the current news was that the two magnates had been brought into open hostility by the preparations for the Scottish campaign of that summer of 1400. Glendower's summons to the general muster had been entrusted to Grey who maliciously withheld it until it was too late to obey. By this action, Reginald knew that this would appear to be a

refusal by Glendower to come to arms and the king would therefore brand him as a traitor.⁹ Other accounts say that the quarrel was over certain lands claimed by Glendower as part of his inheritance, which were forcibly seized by Grey.¹⁰ This seems to be a more likely explanation. It would be inevitable for conflict to arise between these two egotistical noblemen whose territories bordered each other. This was a typical problem between pro-English and Welsh nobles as a whole at this time.

While Henry was on his way home from the successful conclusion of the Scottish campaign, Glendower resolved to wait no longer for a peaceable solution of his petitions to the king about Grey's actions. He launched an attack on the dominions of Reginald Grey. It was impossible to ignore him from this point on. The events of the ensuing week may be gleaned from the verdict of the Shropshire jury which was sworn in on October 25th in the year 1400.¹¹ On the 16th of September the conspirators assembled in Glyn Dyfrdwy. They included Glendower; his oldest son, Gruffydd; his brother, Tudur, his wife's brothers, Gruffydd and Philip Hanmer, his sister's husband, Robert Puleston, the dean of St. Asaph, Hywel Cyffin, with his two nephews, Ieuan Fychan of Mochliwrch and Gruffydd ab Ieuan of Lloran Uchaf; Madog ab Ieuan ap Madog of Eyton; John Astwick; and the prophet Crach Ffynnant.¹² What started out as a personal vendetta against Reginald Grey, carried over to an outright attack on the

crown and brought about a full scale national revolt by the Welsh. Their first step was to proclaim Glendower the true Prince of Wales.¹³ After collecting a sufficient force, on September 18th they marched north to Ruthin and burnt the town in the midst of its preparations for the annual fair for St. Matthew's day.¹⁴ During the next three days they ravaged the English settlements at Denbigh, Rhuddlan, Flint, Hawarden, and Holt. However, no castles were captured. On Wednesday, the 22nd of September, they moved on to Oswestry, where the damage done by their fires was devastating.¹⁵ On the 23rd they destroyed the town of Welshpool. At this point the rebels were stopped on the banks of the Severn (or the Vyrnwy), by the levies of Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, under the command of Hugh Burnell.¹⁶ He was a prominent magnate of the Shrewsbury region who dealt to Glendower and his rebels a crushing defeat.¹⁷ For the moment, the rebellion had come to a standstill. Having failed in their bold enterprise Glendower and his friends sought refuge in their native woods and mountains. Surprisingly, some of them returned to their homes as if nothing had happened.

On September 19th the king was well on his way south, when news was brought to him at Northampton of the Welsh uprising. He immediately turned his forces westward. He then instructed the sheriffs of ten counties to summon all able-bodied men within their jurisdiction. He sent an

urgent message to Shrewsbury. He warned the citizens of the danger from the Welshmen in their midst.¹⁸ On the 22nd of that month he was at Coventry, on the 23rd at Lichfield. By the time he had reached Shrewsbury on the 26th, the immediate crisis was over and the situation could be examined with greater leisure.

The tide of revolt had spread far beyond Glendower's sphere of operations, perhaps because the Welsh at last had a leader to rally around. In Anglesey the standard of rebellion had been raised by William and Rhys, sons of Tudur ap Gronwy of Penmynydd who were maternal cousins of the lord of Glyn Dyfrdwy (Glendower).¹⁹ It was felt by the English that Henry should lead an army into the country and defeat and punish all disorderly elements. The king made a complete circuit of North Wales. He arrived in Bangor early in October. He then moved toward Caernarvon and returned to Shrewsbury on the 15th of October, through the mountain passes of Mawddwy.²⁰ Many Welshmen surrendered and sought royal protection, including the rector of Llanllechild, with his flock, the abbot of Maenan, the abbot of Cymer, and the abbot of Bardsey.²¹ Opposition was quite strong in Anglesey, where its leader was Rhys ap Tudur, otherwise known as Rhys the Black of Erddreiniog. He attacked the royal forces at Rhos Fawr, near Beaumaris.²² This was also where the Franciscan friars of Llanfaes were known to have upheld the cause of Glendower. This allegiance brought

about the ruin of their order. Their abbey was torched by the royal troops and destroyed.²³ On the whole, Henry's campaign was successful. On his return to England, steps were taken to deprive the chief rebels, none of whom had been captured, of their landed property. The estates of Gruffydd and Philip Hanmer and of Robert Puleston were declared forfeit.²⁴ On November 8th a grant was made to John Beaufort, the Earl of Somerset. All the manors and lands of Owen Glendower in North and South Wales, with all royalties, knights' fees, advowsons, franchises, liberties, customs, wards, marriages, reliefs, escheats, forfeitures, chaces, parks, warrens, wreck of sea, etc. were given over to The Earl of Somerset.²⁵ This grant did not take effect at once, but in course of time it became fully operative and the Earl bequeathed to his successors the inheritance of Owen in Cynllaith, Glyn Dyfrdwy, Iscoed and Gwynionydd.²⁶ Some of the rebels, including Glendower's brother, Tudur, the dean of St. Asaph, and the seer from Ffynnant, whose prophetic foresight had not foreseen this sudden collapse, surrendered at about this time. The English monarchy was pleased that the upheaval had not extended to South Wales.²⁷

When parliament met in January, 1401, serious concern was voiced over the situation in Wales. Members from the border counties were well aware that the September rebellion had stirred up new hope and strong feelings of nationalism among the Welsh. The rebellion also encouraged the

necessary support the Welsh leaders needed to further their cause. On February 21st the commons reported to the King and Parliament that the Welsh were in a dangerous mood. Welsh scholars had thrown down their books and left Oxford and Cambridge in order to join the rebels in the fighting to come. Welsh laborers in England had similarly left their jobs and returned home, with much furor to show they were ready for battle.²⁸ Representations by the English were followed by petitions, in which the commanages specified the legislative measures they thought appropriate to the situation.²⁹ The crown agreed to include six of these in statutes.³⁰ These statutes narrowly limited the power and privileges of all Welshmen living in England and in the Welsh marches and boroughs. These statutes also protected all Englishmen from the malice of Welsh juries. It provided for the immediate execution of convicted Welsh felons, and required the barons of the marches to garrison and equip their castles.³¹ There were many Englishmen who were not satisfied. At Evesham it was said that practically nothing had been done about the Welsh uprising.³² Adam of Usk, a Welshman who was a pro-English Chronicler for the crown and church with a lucrative practice as an ecclesiastical lawyer, had a bad dream that the Welsh would be totally subdued by the English on March 9th. He became much relieved when parliament broke up on the following day without proceeding further in its anti-Welsh campaign.³³

The lords of the marches, in particular, were far from content. At their insistence, royal ordinances were issued some ten days later which supplemented and strengthened the measures adopted by Parliament.³⁴

In North Wales itself, control was in the hands of the council of the English Prince of Wales. The young Henry, the future Henry V was crowned prince on the accession of his father, and was now established at Chester.³⁵ Here he had the aid of a body of counsellors. The chief counsellor was Henry Percy, the famous "Hotspur".³⁶ He was justice of Chester and North Wales, sheriff of Flint, holder of Anglesey and Beaumaris, and keeper of the lordship of Denbigh.³⁷ Percy was the man upon whom fell the task of pacifying Wales. He was well equipped for this duty. "Hotspur" had a great reputation as a soldier, he was also skilled in diplomatic matters. His duties were to carry out the new ordinances with discretion. He was to grant pardons on a liberal scale. These pardons were not extended to Glendower and a few other ringleaders.³⁸ This policy was a promising line of action. During the spring of 1401 it met with some measure of success except for one serious misadventure. Among those to whom pardon was denied were William and Rhys ap Tudur the two Anglesey leaders. They were able to put themselves in a position to command their own terms. On Good Friday, April 1st, when most of the garrison were in the parish church, attending the service of

Tenebrae, a band of forty Welshmen forced the gates of Conway castle and securely established themselves inside.³⁹ The strength of the walls defied recapture and the accumulated stores put a surrender by famine out of the question. Accordingly, Percy was driven to negotiate with the intruders, who were helped by the ruinous attacks of the peasants on the town and its defenses.⁴⁰ Terms took some time to arrange, for William inside the castle and Rhys without were anxious to press their advantage, while the king and his advisors were not inclined to allow such notorious traitors to go free. At the end of June, an agreement was struck.⁴¹ William and his associates sacrificed nine of their number to the vengeance of the English.⁴² They were allowed to depart in peace, with a pardon for all their misdeeds.⁴³ Thus was ended an incident which had damaged the credit of Henry Percy. This was the first time Hotspur had ever been defeated, thus showing the rebels that he was mortal and could indeed be beaten. The constable of the castle, The Cheshire magnate, John Massy of Puddington suffered an even greater loss of face when defeated and surrendering the castle to the rebels.⁴⁴

The two Anglesey leaders, William & Rhys Tudur in spite of their kinship with Glendower, were fighting in this Conway enterprise solely for themselves and not for Glendower at all. At this time Glendower's fortunes were at a low ebb. His prominent followers had left him and he was

wandering as an outlaw in the woods and the mountains. Percy reported to the king's council on May 3rd that he had been able to discharge his duties as justice in the counties of North Wales. He reported that the people of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, except for the group of rebels at Conway, were in a "most submissive mood".⁴⁵ As time went on, Percy grew annoyed at the heavy burden laid upon his shoulders by a government which seemed content to allow him to pay for his own expenses. It was these facts that eventually made him join the revolt. Hotspur's journey to the foot of Cader Idris (to discuss a treaty with Glendower) on May 30th and the victory won by John Charlton of Powys (over Pro-Glendower rebels) about the same time Owen Glendower and his men showed that the leader of the revolt was being hard pressed in his own country.⁴⁶ It was for this reason that Glendower transferred his activities to South Wales.

At the beginning of summer Glendower appeared with a small following in the wilds of Phynlimmon. Here, in a remote mountain Glen, Glendower and his men defeated (on the banks of the river Hyddgen) a large force of English troops that had been gathered in West Wales to defeat him.⁴⁷ The news travelled rapidly and raised Glendower's prestige to its highest point. Large numbers of men rallied to him in the marches of Carmarthen. Rumor spread rapidly among the Welsh that Glendower's purpose was to invade England, to

ruin the English people and destroy the English language. This was the news which was delivered to Henry on May 26th.⁴⁸ The king took a very serious view of the situation and summoned the military powers of fourteen counties to meet him at Worcester with all possible speed.⁴⁹

Among the documents laid before the king was a letter from Glendower to Henry Don cousin to the King of Scotland which appeared to have missed its destination. It may well have been the summons dispatched by Glendower about this time to Henry Don of Kidwelly.⁵⁰ In this letter Owain son of Gruffydd, lord of Glyn Dyfrdwy (Owen Glendower), did not use the title of prince. This was done so he would not appear too ostentatious to the Scottish Prince. He claimed to be the deliverer appointed by God to liberate the Welsh race from the bondage of their English enemies. "After many years of captivity, the hour of freedom has now struck. Only cowardice and sloth can deprive the Welsh nation of the victory which was in sight." Don, as an old and valued friend, was to join Glendower with an armed force. He was to fight the English and to go wherever Glendower wished to make his presence known in hostile raids upon the possessions of his enemies. The letter closed with an apology for failure to warn Don of the rising in the previous year.⁵¹ Such information would have been dangerous to the success of a movement in which so much depended upon surprise. This was the spirit of rebellion in which

Glendower embarked upon another campaign in spite of the failure of his first attempt to win by the sword the recognition of his claims against both the crown and Reginald Grey. What started out as a personal conflict between Owen Glendower and Reginald Grey over land rights, etc., became an issue of Welsh vs. English, of freedom against tyranny. With this stand, Glendower became the leader and symbol the Welsh people were looking for to drive out their English rulers and become a Welsh nation ruled by the Welsh people. At this time Glendower had won some victories and suffered some defeats but it was his tenacity and his courage that kept the Welsh people and his followers going and to keep their dream alive at this point in time.

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CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY

What had begun as a jurisdictional dispute over estate boundaries between two Marcher lords, an occurrence not unusual in Welsh history, expanded into a major revolt. The Welsh gentry had the manpower, wealth and administrative ability to keep the rebellion going, but they also had the most to lose if the rebellion failed. The fact that so many of them joined Glendower indicates the state of unrest caused by Henry IV among the Welsh aristocracy. Later, when the rebellion began to lose its momentum and started to collapse, it was the withdrawal of this support that would lead eventually to the total failure of the revolt. The one outstanding element that made Glendower's rebellion different from those in the past was the almost total involvement of all Welshmen--gentry and peasant alike. The penal ordinances of 1401 passed by the English Parliament acted as one of the unifying forces. When the English Parliament passed these laws against Welshmen as Welshmen it became an emotional issue involving raw racism. The laws penalized the Welsh simply for being Welsh.¹ No Welshman could hold high office in Wales. No Welshman could purchase land in England or in English towns in Wales. No Welshman

could bear arms in any town, market, church, assembly or on any roadway. No Welshman could hold or fortify any castle built since Edward II. No Englishman could be convicted of a crime committed in Wales or be subject to any lawsuit while in Wales. No Englishman married to a Welsh woman could hold major office in Wales.²

The attempt by the English to legislate Welshness out of existence only heightened the Welsh's sense of oneness and unity. The Marcher rebellion and peasant revolt had grown into a national guerilla war. The rebels were outmanned and outgunned. The Welsh lacked siege-machines for taking fortified castles; they lacked supplies for long sustained battles; they lacked gunpowder; they lacked trained military leaders and their forces were primarily made up of peasants and workers who could not afford to be away from their fields for long periods of time. Still, the rebellion enjoyed early successes and the gentry continued to join the revolt indicating a belief in its purpose and eventual success. Glendower was, after all, one of them and was fighting for their rights and privileges in the only way open to him. Henry IV was not the English king the Welsh loved and supported and when he was crowned in 1399, after Richard was deposed they knew their fortunes would change and in time suffer. The penal ordinances of 1401 justified their fears. The superior manpower and wealth of Henry kept Glendower from any major advances in 1401-1402 and he had to

content himself with small victories with no castles taken while he was gathering around him men of exceptional ability for leadership and vision for an independent Wales. When he declared himself Prince of Wales on September 16, 1400 he envisioned a nation separate and apart from English rule.

We are permitted a rare look at the actual operations of Glendower concerning the first two weeks of July, 1403. There is little mentioned of them in the chronicles and the records of the time. A bundle of letters has been preserved among the papers of the royal council. These letters were written in the heat of the battle by the severely tested aristocratic defenders of the English monarchy and clearly show the English's fluctuating state of mind, their hope and fear, optimism and despair. These letters make it possible to trace the daily progress of Glendower for nearly two weeks.³ Importance has been attributed to these letters by the Earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy, father of Hotspur, claiming that they clear Glendower from the charge that he had not supported the Percies at the critical moment of their rebellion.⁴ Evidence from the letters show that dialogue between father and son breaks off on July 12th. This was nine days before the battle of Shrewsbury.

On July 1st, 1403, the Welsh forces surrounded the castle of Brecon.⁵ The danger was lifted by the arrival of John Bodenham, sheriff of Hereford. On this day, Sunday, July 1st, he slew two hundred and forty of the enemy.⁶

However, this success was of little consequence. No sooner had the Herefordshire contingent returned to Harlech than news arrived that the Welsh rebels were amassing an army of some magnitude in the valley of the Towy. This powerful force was led by the mighty Glendower himself.⁷ On Monday, July 2, 1403, a general uprising of the Welsh of this district took place. With Glendower were Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Llywelyn Foethus, William ap Phylip, Henry Don and his son.⁸ Ralph Monnington who was in charge of defending the Audley castle of Llandovery, and Jenkin Harvard, who held Dinefwr for the king, found themselves isolated and outnumbered by a tide of rebellious Welshmen.⁹ Fairford, the canon of Abergwih who kept watch over the royal interests at Brecon feared that the next step would be a full scale assault on that town.¹⁰ He warned the authorities on the March, that the movement had escalated and had assumed the dimensions of a national revolt. He also stated that none of the Welsh were to be trusted.¹¹ However, Glendower had other plans. He did not march to the east, as Fairford had anticipated, or to the south, as others predicted he would.¹² Instead, he proceeded westward. It was here that all his friends and allies prepared to join his banner.¹³ On Tuesday, the 3rd of March, Glendower spent the night at Llandilo.¹⁴ Each day his numbers steadily increased as the common people joined his ranks. On Wednesday, the 4th of March he spent the

night at Dryslwyn castle at the invitation of his confederate, Rhys ap Gruffydd.¹⁵ In the meanwhile, the Captain of the Guard of Brecon castle, John Scudamore, was very concerned for the safety of his wife and female relatives and their attendants.¹⁶ He tried in vain to obtain a letter of safe conduct for the women.¹⁷ Earlier on March 5, 1403 in a dispatch to Fairfield he had described their situation as desperate.¹⁸ He explained that there were traitors on every side and nothing but the person of the king himself at the head of any army could restore law and order.

Glendower moved on to Carmarthen, the center of the royal power in West Wales. He was joined by his loyal followers from the valley of Conway. These were Rhys Gethin (the Fierce) of Cwn Llannerch, Rhys Ddu (the Black) of Cardigan and William Gwyn of Kidwelly.¹⁹ The surrender to him by Jenkin ap Llyelyn of Newcastle Emlyn left the way open to the north.²⁰ On Thursday the 5th, he besieged the town and castle of Carmarthen. On Friday the 6th of March, it was surrendered to him by the castellan, Robert Wigmore.²¹ The extent of his astonishing success caused great consternation among the defenders of the crown. Jenkin Harvard, Baron of Dinefwy, wrote the next day to say that, unless reinforcements arrived promptly at Dinefwy he would be forced to flee to Brecon under cover of night. On the 8th of March Richard Kingston, archdeacon of Hereford,

added his account of the dismal state of affairs to a letter addressed to Henry IV King of England.²²

Meanwhile, Glendower was advancing on Pembrokeshire, which he recognized as being the obstacle to his conquest of West Wales. The 9th of March found him at St. Clears. On the 10th he was at Laughorne. His main antagonist in this region was Thomas, Lord Carew, with whom he would have preferred to negotiate terms. Glendower was impatient to deal with Carmarthen, where considerable spoils awaited him.²³ But Carew, as his later career bore out, disdained to bargain.²⁴ He prepared to confront Glendower for battle on Thursday, the 12 of March, 1403, but Glendower was warned of the imminent attack on the 11th. He sent out a band of 700 men into the hill country north of Carmarthen to secure his retreat. They were ambushed by Carew and slain.²⁵

The defeat dealt him by Carew put a stop to the operations of Glendower in the region of Carmarthen in the southwest. In the meantime the Percy's (the Earl of Northumberland Henry Percy and his son, Hotspur) came out on the side of the rebellion. They had formerly been strong supporters of Henry IV and against the revolt. Glendower knew he would have to have a change in strategy in order to include these new forces into his plans of operation.²⁶ The young prince of Wales, future Henry V, moved with decisiveness into Wales and burned Glendower's residence at Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy. He urged the king to give him

more men in order to make a final attack on the rebels. He knew that when the forces of the Percys joined with those of Glendower he would be outnumbered and much of what had been gained would be lost.²⁷

In the meantime, Glendower had been joined by his uncle, the Earl of Worcester, and in droves by the men of Cheshire and the Welshmen in the March, who had been duped by the story that Richard II was still alive.²⁸ Henry IV continued to move northward totally unaware of the treachery of the Percys and it was not until he reached Nottingham, on the 13th of March that he was informed of the latest events.²⁹ He realized that once the divergent rebel forces joined he would be outmanned and altered his course to the west, followed the Trent westward to Burton where on the 16th he called to the men of twelve counties to fight against the rebels.³⁰

Hotspur proceeded southwards to Shrewsbury with the plan to capture the young prince Henry after Henry's daring raid into Wales had destroyed Glendower's residence at Sytharth and Glyndyfrdwy. Henry, however, was informed of this advance and the threat to his personal safety and moved to arrive at Shrewsbury ahead of Hotspur. He realized that he must act swiftly before the chief conspirators could combine forces and on the 20th entered Shrewsbury with his army. The gates were then closed against the Welsh. Hotspur was forced to withdraw some three miles to the

surrounding countryside. On Saturday, the 21st of March, 1403 the Battle of Shrewsbury was fought. Hotspur was defeated and killed and Henry of Lancaster, the future king preserved the crown for himself with much bloodshed on both sides.³¹

Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, the father of Hotspur, with his forces still in the far north, several day's journey away, along with Glendower were conspicuously absent.³² Could it be that Glendower did not want to risk his mountain fighters in the open combat of a pitched battle of such dimensions? A more likely explanation is that Henry's bold initiative found the rebels unprepared and out maneuvered. It would seem that an opportunity to inflict a crushing defeat to Henry had been missed. The battle of Shrewsbury did not really diminish Glendower's threat by much. Once Henry's troops were withdrawn the rebels moved back in and once more took command.

Whatever advantages may have been lost to Glendower in the Battle of Shrewsbury, Henry IV gained no real advantage for himself in Wales, where his difficulties were as serious as before. Two days after his victory, he appointed a commission, consisting of the Earl of Arundel, Lord Berkeley, Edward Charlton, Hugh Burnell and Audley to deal with the Welsh issue replacing his son (Prince Henry) who had been wounded at Shrewsbury. Actions that were contemplated were mostly of a defensive nature for as long

as Northumberland remained a threat in the north. During the following weeks while advancing towards York the Welsh insurgents were raiding the countryside through which they were travelling under their leader's command. Glendower's movements were, as usual, difficult to trace. Wherever he passed he made his presence felt by the trail of destruction that he left in his wake. From North Wales Adam of Usk, the chronicler with obvious English prejudices described as "the source of all evil, bands of raiders sweeping along the shores of the Bristol Channel and carrying off the plunder of castle, borough, and monastery."³³ On August 10th the alarm was sounded in Shropshire, while on the 25th Glendower was rumored to be in the Marches of Chester and Wirral was in a state of alert and at this point a punitive English force was assembled at Worcester on September 3rd.³⁴

To inhabitants of the Herefordshire who had a truce of sorts with Glendower, but were not spared the occasional random attack by the Welsh, it seemed to take forever before Henry finally arrived with his troops on the actual scene of conflict.³⁵ William Beauchamp, Lord of Abergavenny, wrote a letter from Hereford dated August 23rd to Henry IV, now at Woodstock, complaining of his misfortune. Kingston, a few days later, sent an urgent letter requesting reinforcements of one hundred lances and six hundred archers under Thomas Beaufors, or some other brave experienced captain.³⁶ He feared that the rumor that the king was not expected to come

in person to the border had further encouraged the Welsh and caused great anxiety among the defenders of the crown. "For the salvation of your shire and marches, trust ye nought to no lieutenant."³⁷ Finally, the monarch arrived at Hereford on September 11th, 1403.³⁸ Henry, who had earlier sent dispatches to the Marcher Lords to defend their castles as best they could in the area of conflict, now decided to take an active part in the reconquest of South Wales.³⁹

His first objective was Carmarthen, where Glendower had shown his powers in the summer and the route lay across the land of Brecon.⁴⁰ Opposition dwindled as if by magic as the impressive royal train entered the valley of the Usk, and at Defynnog, on September 21, Sir John Oldcastle among others were empowered to grant pardons to submissive Welsh of the Lordships of Brecon, Builth, Cantref Selyf, Hay, Glyn Bwxb, and Dinas.⁴¹ He advanced through the valley of the Towy in like manner. The royal entourage stopped for some days at Carmarthen to meet out rewards and punishments and replace the command.⁴²

Henry remained just long enough to make a royal gesture in this part of his dominions and prepared to return home. One chronicler accredited the king's brief sojourn in Wales to the lack of its suitability for horsemanship.⁴³ The real problem lay more in the difficulty of maintaining such a large army with a limited amount of supplies.⁴⁴ The belief that the movement led by Glendower would lose momentum and

eventually come to a full stop may have been the reason the king returned to England as he did. Be that as it may, October found him firmly installed at Hereford and the Earl of Somerset at Carmarthen to conduct the crown's business.⁴⁵

Peace however, did not materialize. During three months of 1403, October, November and December, Glendower's followers continued to create havoc, greatly aided by the support they were now beginning to receive from the French. Formal dialogue between the French King Charles VI and Glendower was still in the making, but already the French were actively engaged in the rebel attacks on the castles scattered along the coast. On October 3rd, 1403, Henry Don, then accompanied by Frenchmen from Brittany, approached Kidwelly and threatened town and castle. The countryside was ravaged and the town defenses badly damaged, but the castle held firm.⁴⁶ Somerset was anxious to leave Carmarthen, and wrote to say that he and his men could only stay until the end of October. He was then relieved by Edward, Duke of York.⁴⁷

Cardiff castle was next in line to be overrun and urgent actions were taken to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. The Earl of Devon scheduled to sail from Uphill in Somerset in early November with an army of men to vanquish the besiegers.⁴⁸ Beaumoris and Aberystwyth were in much the same quandary needing immediate reinforcements.⁴⁴ Within three years the Welsh under the leadership of

Glendower had accomplished what no one would have thought possible. With only three castles remaining in English possession, Glendower had restored Wales to her ancient boundaries.⁴⁹

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CHAPTER VI

THE ALLIANCE WITH THE FRENCH

In the years 1402-1404 Glendower reached the height of his influence. He progressed from the position of a local rebel and formidable outlaw to that of a ruling prince. In 1404, several things occurred that changed the direction in which he would move. He seized two castles, Aberystwyth and Harlech, which gave him unchallenged authority in central Wales. A parliamentary envoy representing the new, self-proclaimed Prince of Wales was sent to forge an alliance with France. Glendower's place in history seemed assured. The dream of an independent Wales was within reach. Glendower's star was in the ascendancy and cautious Welshmen too, began to wonder whether it might not be prudent to align themselves with Glendower's rebels.

The assistance given by the French was a factor of primary importance. In November, 1403, a determined attack was made upon the town and castle of Caernarvon by French warships under the command of Jean d'Espange. William of Tranmere mounted a defense with the aid of an English and two Welsh Barons, but in the course of the winter he lost the help of all three. The English Baron, his cousin Richard of Pickmere, fell fighting on the walls in the assault of November 10th. The Welsh Barons, Hwlcyn Llwyd

and Ieuan ap Maredudd who died in the town during the course of siege, were members of two prominent local families.¹

However, it must not be concluded that Glendower was without influential local support. On his side and for the cause fought Ieuan's brother, Robert, with Ieuan ab Einion ap Gruffydd of Bran y Foel, in Eifionydd, a nephew of the famous Sir Hywel of the Battleaxe.² So secure was Glendower's hold on this region that he was able to burn Cefn y Fan and Cesail Cyfarch to the ground, in revenge for their owner's alliance with the English opposition. Furthermore, he destroyed the defenses of Cricieth castle, so that it was not heard of again for many years.³

With Eifianydd burning, Harlech was in serious trouble. Conditions in this region for months had been extreme. In the summer of 1403, the Cheshire magnate, Richard Massy Of Sale, had been succeeded as constable by one John Henmore.⁴ The newly appointed warden of Harlech had been there for only a short time when he was captured by a Welsh follower of Glendower, Robin Holland of Eglwys Fach.⁵ He was then replaced by William Hunt who in turn met with the same fate when he too, on January 8th, 1404, was captured by the rebels.⁶ This news, shortly afterwards, was sent to the authorities at Chester in a dispatch from Conway which described the bleakness of the situation. Reynold Baildon, a warden of Conway, informed the authorities at Chester that the people of Caernarvonshire were preparing to withdraw to

the mountains, a practice with which the Welsh were all too familiar since ancient times.⁷ The French prepared to launch another attack against Caernarvon having already weakened the garrison during the first assault. Furthermore, the defenders had been decimated by pestilence.⁸

It was not only in Ardudwy and Eifionydd that the royal authority was challenged. The situation was a little better in Anglesey, where on January 14th Maredudd ap Cynwrig had set out from Beaumaris castle with a company of men to collect the king's taxes and had been ambushed by two hundred French soldiers who had been dispatched from Caernarvonshire.⁹ During this skirmish Maredudd was mortally wounded and all of his men slain. This was the report which, on the 21st, William Venables sent to the king from Chester.¹⁰ In his view unless help came speedily from England, the French and their Welsh allies would be unstoppable. Glendower's French allies were so confident of success that in February they sent a company of six French ships with provisions for the enjoyment of Glendower and his men.¹¹ By February of 1404 it was rumored abroad that the town of Harlech would soon fall. The defenders of Harlech castle had received an ultimatum from Glendower to surrender or die.¹²

By this time King Henry IV, whose Welsh campaigns had done little to enhance his military reputation, had returned from the contest to London. The expedition to Carmarthen in

the autumn of 1403 was his last attempt to settle in person the problem of Wales. In the parliament of January, 1404, the young Prince of Wales (the future Henry V), now sixteen years of age, had been placed in control of the English army, with Edward, Duke of York, as his lieutenant in South Wales and Thomas, Earl Arundel, in the North.¹³ As time would show the future victor of Agincourt was to become a great soldier, but he had yet to prove himself. Within a few months the long threatened castles of Harlech and Aberystwyth were captured by Glendower.¹⁴ When no news was received from Cardigan, Aberystwyth, Harlech, and Caernarvon by the royal council in the month of April, ships embarked from Bristol for the western coast of Wales to aid the defenders and to discourage Jean d'Espange.¹⁵

Whatever the circumstances under which Glendower became master of these two castles, it was manifest that he thereby greatly added to his prestige and authority. He now had two new strongholds for the storage of arms and provisions. He moved his court and his family to Harlech castle. Between Caernarvon and Cardigan his power was unchallenged and, as Prince of Wales, he was de facto ruler of a considerable area of the country. In this year, 1403, he assembled a parliament of his supporters at Machynlleth, in the heart of the region which he now controlled.¹⁶ The Welsh princes, in the former days of independence, had known nothing of representative institutions, which were only in their

infancy in England at that time, but the House of Commons had now become an established feature of the English system of government, and Glendower wanted to pattern himself after the English government. As a precedent he used the example of the famous assembly summoned to Whitland by Hywel the Good in the tenth century which called together four men from each commote obedient to his rule.¹⁷ At this juncture Glendower was the Prince of Wales for all Welshmen. The ceremony was attended by envoys from Scotland, France, and Spain (Castille).¹⁸

Glendower's military successes now led him to contemplate expanding his ideas to a more broader political base.¹⁹ He was no longer an aggrieved Marcher lord claiming personal rights or a leader of feudal nobles wanting less pressure from the English king. He began to set himself up as the prince of an independent state with a national agenda. Glendower would have to represent more than a successful guerrilla fighter who had gained some independence from English rule. In order to maintain this independence and legitimize his state he would have to gain enough strength to prevent England from re-invading Wales. He looked to France for this assistance and as an ally against England. He needed her sea power, her experienced fighting men, and her siege weapons to overpower fortified castles and towns. France for her part appeared to welcome an ally against her old enemy. If France joined with the

Welsh, England would have to fight on three fronts, Scotland, Wales and then France. England would have to be ready for a sea invasion from across the channel and would have to disperse her forces on several fronts. The stage was now set for the conclusion of a formal alliance between the Welsh and the French.

Charles VI of France and his entourage had never accepted the change of dynasty in England and though the two countries were not actually at war, the French did not miss an opportunity to harass and embarrass Henry IV. The Welsh revolt provided them with such an opportunity. It was to sympathetic ears that Glendower in the spring of 1404 addressed his appeal for support.²⁰ He reminded the French of the gallant part played by Sir Owen of Wales, with whom he claimed some connection. Here was a Welshman, a kinsman of his own, who had shed his blood for France in her long struggle against Edward III. He asked for an ample supply of weapons and for some expeditionary forces under the command of the Count of La Marche. These requests were conveyed to the French court by two special envoys, Glendower's brother-in-law, John Hanmer, and his chancellor, Gruffydd Young, doctor in degrees.²¹ Owen Glendower, as Prince of Wales, wrote a letter to Charles VI from Dolgelly on the tenth of May, 1404, in which he clearly described the events leading to the uprising of September, 1400.²² He empowered his envoys to petition the French monarch to form

an alliance with Wales reminding him of the friendship and affection existing between them.²³ The dispatch carried his privy seal, which bore his title Prince of Wales by the grace of God, the princely coronet and the old royal arms of Gwynedd, the four lions rampant and not the single lion of Powys, his birthplace.²⁴ Here, again, he was the Prince of all Wales and not simply a Marcher lord. This was an additional symbol of his vision of Wales as an independent national state.

The two envoys proceeded to the French court. They were welcomed by Charles VI who wanted to know what present would most please the new Prince of Wales? He was informed that Glendower took great pleasure in the trappings of war, for he was above all else a soldier.²⁵ Accordingly, Charles sent him a gilt casque (helmet) a cuirass (breast plate) and a sword, gifts which were accepted by the Prince with delight and worn in future battles.²⁶

On June 14th, at Paris, James of Bourbon, Count of La Marche, and John, Bishop of Chartres, were formally authorized to conclude an agreement with the envoys of the "magnificent and mighty Owen, Prince of Wales", and negotiations were immediately started.²⁷ An agreement was reached within a month. On July 14th, 1404, at the residence of the French Chancellor, Arnaud de Corbie, the count and the two Welshmen recorded the completed mission in a document witnessed by the Chancellor himself, the Bishop

of Noyon, Meaux and Arras, and the Count of Vendôme.²⁸ The pact bound the King of France and the Prince of Wales in a strong alliance against "Henry of Lancaster", their common foe, and all of his supporters. They promised that neither would make a separate peace or truce with Henry, and that each would give a friendly welcome to the ships and merchants of the other. They agreed that any local discord which might arise would be amicably settled by the appropriate local authority. At this point no mention was made of any French military expedition to Wales, but it was only to be expected after so formal an act of confederacy, that armed help would follow. Glendower had supplied the French with full information as to the ports of Wales, the routes to be travelled and the facilities for obtaining provisions.²⁹

At the same time that this alliance was being formed, the English were still inclined to deal with the Welsh problem in a rather casual and sporadic manner. In North Wales, the castles of Caernarvon, Beaumaris, Conway, Rhuddlan, Denbigh, Flint, Oswestry, and Welshpool still held out, but the open country was at the mercy of Glendower.³⁰ So great was his power that in August the citizens of Shropshire were afraid to conclude a three months' truce with "the land of Wales," (they feared Glendower if they did not, they feared Henry IV if they did) which Glendower had declared an independent state.³¹ The inhabitants of

Shropshire had, earlier in the year, appealed for help to King Henry IV stating that a third of the country had been pillaged by the rebels.³² Many of the citizens had been driven from their homes. Prince Henry came upon the scene in April and it was thought best that he should establish himself at Worcester. The county of Salop was left to fend for itself. The trouble along the southern March was getting more serious. On June 10th the council received news that Archenfield had been overrun by the rebels. From here, Glendower emboldened by his victories proceeded towards the castle of Abergavenny.³³ Plans were swiftly formulated to deal with this latest emergency. The combined forces of Anglesey, Aernarfonshire, Merionethshire, Cardiganshire and of Hereford led by Richard of York,³⁴ the Earl of Warwick, who engaged the rebels at Campstone near Abergavenny and won a decisive victory. This proved to be a major setback for Glendower.³⁵ The Welsh, however, regrouped shortly afterwards at Craig y Dorth in the Trothy Valley and pursued the retreating English to the gates of the town of Manmouth.³⁶ Matters were even less favorable for the English in the region of Glamorgan, where serious fighting erupted next.

In February 1405 a three sided alliance was made between the Earl of Northumberland (Henry Percy), Edmund Mortimer (Glendower's son-in-law) and Glendower known as the Tripartite Indenture.³⁷ Acting as head of an independent

state, Glendower divided up England into three parts between himself and his two allies.³⁸ This was perhaps a bit premature and out of touch with political reality but it is another instance where Wales acted in a national way. Northumberland would get the north of England. Mortimer was to receive southern England and his nephew would be king replacing Henry. Glendower would get all of Wales and much of England along the Severn river, along the eastern borders of Wales. Glendower wanted the border region because of its fortifications as a buffer between Wales and the English territory.³⁹

Meanwhile the French were honoring their treaty with the Welsh insurgents by dispatching a formidable naval expedition. In July, 1404, news was carried to Brugere, and then on to London, that the Count of La Marche was preparing to land in Wales with five hundred armed cavaliers and two hundred crossbowmen.⁴⁰ Sixty ships in all sailed out of Breton and Norman harbors in the month of August and rendezvoused in the English Channel. This was threatening news for the house of Lancaster. However, the alarm was unwarranted. The Count of La Marche spent the summer and autumn of the year 1404 aimlessly cruising up and down the Channel raiding English vessels, and in all probability never came within sight of the Welsh coast. It has been suggested that he loved his comfort too much or that he failed to receive adequate instructions.⁴¹ Glendower saw

his vision of French reinforcements fade before his very eyes, and, with the return of the ships to their native ports in November, his year's struggle had proved futile and abortive.

Glendower's objectives remained largely unfulfilled; neither had the English resolved their difficulties. In the parliament held at Coventry during October and November the most gloomy views were expressed. The Welsh trouble, it was alleged, was increasing from day to day and no decisive action had taken place to remedy it. Still it was feared that at any moment the French might make a landing, either in Wales or elsewhere.⁴²

In 1403 Cardiff was already in Glendower's hands. It was in Cardiff according to Adam of Usk the chronicler where Glendower spared the dwelling of the Franciscan friars for whom he had great regard, only to be informed, that the brothers had transferred their valuable possessions to the castle for safekeeping where of course they were destroyed. The castle was, in Glendower's view the most hazardous place of all.⁴³

At the end of the year the merchants of Haverford West were granted permission to buy supplies in Bristol and thereabouts and transport them by sea, since English traders would not now venture into their country.⁴⁴ About the same time, John Trevor, Bishop of St. Asaph, a Welshman, and until then an active supporter of the crown, came over to

Glendower's side, as though convinced that his countryman's success was no longer in question and that it was time to join the winning side.

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CHAPTER VII

GLENDOWER AND THE CHURCH

Glendower's attitude toward the church constituted an important aspect of his policy as a ruling Prince. (The Middle Ages were coming to an end and with it medieval ideas waned.) The church still had significant influence in Wales over the minds of Welshmen. Certainly the vision for the future of Wales for Glendower encompassed to some degree ecclesiastical as well as national independence from England.

His personal conviction were orthodox. Although a contemporary of Wycliffe, he had little use for revolutionary clerical views. He disdained Lollardy as much as his arch-enemy, Henry of Lancaster himself. He was not averse, however, to making good use of the sharp minds of well educated disciples of the Wycliff doctrine such as the Lollard confessor, Walter Brut, who attached himself to Glendower some years after being tried for heresy before Bishop Trefnant in 1393. He died while in Glendower's service as mention is made of benefits allocated to Brut's widow, Ann.¹ Such connections with Lollards proved nothing other than a mild tolerance for religious heretics. One notorious zealot, Sir John Oldcastle, like Brut a

Herefordshire man, aligned himself against the English side and on the side of Glendower. It clearly shows that in most instances political rather than religious beliefs were the motivating factor before the episcopal court. Brut had boasted of being a descendant of the ancient British Welsh race.²

The church in medieval Wales had been an instrument for extending English authority into Wales. The church hierarchy had held a tight grip on Welsh clerics incurring hostility as deep as that expressed by the laymen against English dominance. Appointment to the highest positions in the church always came from royal English nominees to the exclusion of Welsh clerics. As was the case in all of Europe, the higher clergy were the best educated and were keenly aware of political movements as they developed. As Glendower's military successes led to more stable political positions, these same clergymen saw the possibility of throwing off the English ecclesiastical yoke and making the Welsh church as independent as the Welsh state.

The secular clergy in north Wales had been with Glendower from the beginning of the revolt.³ The regular clergy was as active as the secular clergy in the early stages of the rebellion. The Cistercians, long advocates of Welsh nationalism, were among the first to lend their support. Among those most strongly behind Glendower were the abbots of Conway, Strata Florida, Whitland and

Llantainam.⁴ The Franciscians were also among his early supporters. Richard II enjoyed much popularity with them and they were anxious to join the fight against the usurper, Henry IV. They paid the price for their treason when their monasteries and houses were destroyed at the Abbey of Llanfaes in 1400.⁵

In 1404, when Glendower really put on the mantle of the Prince of Wales and summoned his first parliament at Pennal in Machynlleth, he made Gruffudd Young his chancellor.⁶ Young was one of the special envoys later sent to France to work out the alliance. Gruffudd Young (1370-1435) was an able, ambitious young cleric who had had no success in obtaining favorable advancement from either Richard II or Henry IV. The fact that he was Welsh and of illegitimate birth made him a prime example of the frustrations felt by the Welsh clergy against the English when seeking to advance up the ecclesiastical ladder. He made a good addition to Glendower's rebellion.

Another cleric who joined Glendower and became a part of his inner circle was Ieuan ap Llywelyn (John Trevor). Like Gruffudd Young he had served both Richard and Henry. His support for Henry cost him his church estates and homes when Glendower's forces moved against him early in the revolt and it was not until 1404 that he shifted allegiance from Henry to Glendower. He had served as a legalist and a diplomat in the English court and brought this expertise to

the rebellion and helped Glendower plan his program for a national state. Glendower showed himself to be an astute statesman when he was able to include these two talented clerics in his cause.

Glendower, was first and foremost a soldier with a very practical view of life. Before and after the uprising he requested and obtained from the Holy See privileges pertinent to his rank, which was the custom of that period and which were gladly dispensed at a premium. In 1397, living in retirement as Lord of Glyn Dyfrddwy, he had received from Boniface IX an indult allowing his confessor to grant him and his wife plenary remission in the hour of death. On November 9th, 1403, when at war with the English and self-proclaimed Prince of Wales, Boniface IX substituted "at any time" for "in the hour of death", thereby skirting the issue of sovereignty by circumspectly describing Glendower as "Owain ap Gruffydd of Sycharth".⁷

Glendower lived during the time of the great papal schism. Just as his English foes, he acknowledged the Pope in Rome while France, Spain and Scotland declared themselves for the Pope of Avignon. Thus, Boniface IX (1389-1404) and his successor Innocent VII (1404-1406) had a French counterpart in Benedict XIII (1394-1409). Glendower's alliance with the French now posed a problem in the ecclesiastical realm. There were signs that the decision to

switch camps was arrived at with much reluctance after considerable soul searching.

The see of Llundaff, was occupied by an Englishman, Thomas Peverell (1398-1407), a friend of the Lancastrian dynasty who was afterwards transferred to Worcester.⁸ Both the cathedral and the episcopal palace were destroyed during the revolt.⁹ The Bishop of St. David's, Guy Mone, a former canon of London and a royal official enjoyed that position mostly as an absentee in 1397, finding better things to do in London and at his manor house at Carltot Kent.¹⁰ In the eyes of Glendower, both Mone and Peverell were foreigners with little real interest in the affairs of their respective dioceses. St. David's escaped Glendower's wrath by a mere fluke of geographical location. Other episcopal holdings were not so fortunate.

The history of the bishopric of Bangor during these troublesome times was rather complex.¹¹ The political rivalry between England and Wales also had ecclesiastical repercussions. At one time three concurrent prelates claimed the lawful Bishopric of Bangor. Problems dated back to the closing years of the reign of Richard II. On the death of John Swaffham on June 24th, 1398, Lewis Aber, a Welshman, received it from Boniface IX. This appointment did not please the English monarchy which much preferred to see an Englishman in this position.¹² Neither Richard II nor his successor, Henry IV ever recognized Lewis Aber as

Bishop of Bangor.¹³ Since he died in 1401 he had little time and opportunity to enjoy his appointment under these adverse circumstances.¹⁴

The crown endorsed Richard Young, Archdeacon of Meath and canon of Dublin and of Lincoln, who like Lewis Aber, was a member of the papal court and enjoyed papal favor. In January, 1399, he was officially registered "Richard, elect of Bangor".¹⁵ Richard II leaving for Ireland in May, 1399, named him custodian of the see but did not commit himself further.¹⁶ Young saw his chance when with the accession of Henry IV he became one of the followers of Archbishop Arundel and actively supported the Lancastrian cause.¹⁷ He was promptly rewarded by being chosen envoy to Germany to expound the justification of the accession of Henry IV.¹⁸ His move proved to have been a most advantageous one since he received a grant of the temporalities of the see to which he laid claim. On November 28th the Pope followed suit by confirming his title.¹⁹ On May 20th of that year, the matter was concluded by the appointment by the Pope in 1399 and formal acknowledgement of the crown and the oath of fealty which followed.²⁰

Like most of his predecessors Young was an absentee bishop. Evidence exists that he never set foot in his diocese. The Bishop of Bangor had transacted his affairs from his house in Shoe Lane in London conveniently located

near the church of St. Andrew's Holborn.²¹ He spent most of 1402 and 1403 on the king's missions abroad.²²

On July 28th of 1404 Boniface IX transferred Young to the vacant see after the death of the Bishop of Rochester, John Bottlesham.²³ On the day of the transfer the papal Chamberlain was instructed by the Bishop of London to transfer all revenues of Rochester reserved for the new bishop.²⁴ At this time at the court of Rome there was a Welshman, Lewis ab Ieuan, who took advantage of this opportunity for his own advancement in his native country. Lewis ab Ieuan on November 28th, 1388 became Rector of Byfors in the diocese of Hereford.²⁵ He remained in that position for sixteen years and adopted the name Lewis Byford.²⁶

He received the vacant Welsh bishopric of Bangor provided to it by Boniface on August 14th, 1403.²⁷ He arrived in Wales in support of Glendower who had reached the apex of his power by this time.²⁸ By 1404 Glendower had captured Harlech and Aberystwyth and formed the Machynlleth parliament and made the alliance with France. The new Prince of Wales had gained a Welsh Bishop of Bangor in good standing at Rome. The English did not acknowledge this appointment and the bishopric of Bangor was considered vacant by them to be still occupied by Richard Young.²⁹

Lewis ab Ieuan, like so many another Welshman, had been caught up in the euphoric patriotic zeal to join a losing

cause. In the spring of 1406 Glendower decided to pay obedience to Avignon. A letter from Charles VI received March 8th, 1406 by Glendower reiterated the events which led to the Great Schism. No inducements were left unsaid to persuade Glendower to sever the connection with Rome. Glendower summoned the Welsh magnates and clerics to his side at Pennal. On March 31st a decision was reached. Glendower sent official notice to the King of France of the decision to adopt the French proposal and transfer the ecclesiastical allegiance of Wales to the Pope of Avignon. A wall was set up between Wales and England meant to be as formidable on the ecclesiastical side as on the political side.³⁰

The so-called Pennal policy of 1406 was an additional attempt to strengthen that wall between the English and Welsh clergy. Glendower called his first parliament to meet at Pennal in Machynlleth and with him was one of his leading clerical advisors, and chancellor, Gruffudd Young. The program that came out of this conference was most assuredly the work of Young.³¹ In order for Glendower to align himself with the Avignon pope, Benedict XIII, and to formally break with Rome, certain concessions would have to be made by the church. Included among these concessions were the removal of all ecclesiastical censures on the Welsh; the conferring of church titles on Welshmen; papal appointments would go only to Welsh clerics; an independent

province separate from England would be established with St. David's as the Welsh 'Canterbury'; English clerics would be removed from Welsh benefices; two universities would be established in Wales, one in the north and one in the south; Henry IV would be excommunicated along with his followers; and there would be full remission of sins for Glendower and his men in their fight against Henry.³² The Pennal policy was intended to reverse the trends of the fourteenth century to exploit the church in Wales; to insulate the Welsh church from exploitation by the English; to redirect papal influence back toward the interests of Wales and to stop the flow of church revenues from Wales to England.³³ There was no attempt to free the Church from secular control but to place it squarely under the jurisdiction of the Welsh state and away from English state control. A church independent of England was necessary before the Welsh state could be independent. The two universities were to be established in order to train administrators with the Welsh view paramount. This called for independent Welsh universities for an independent Welsh state.

Glendower made certain stipulations for the recognition of Benedict XIII. Benedict XIII was to retract ecclesiastical denunciations levelled against Wales by him and by his predecessor. He was to grant absolution from all oaths of obedience which had been sworn to the earlier Roman pontiffs, Urban VI and Boniface IX, and was to confirm all

orders, titles, dispensations, etc., which had been granted by the popes of Rome since the onset of the schism.³⁴ These stipulations were but precautionary measures necessitated by the change of allegiance. Glendower emerged a constructive statesman, or, at least, responsive to the constructive ideas of his advisors. He opted for an independent Welsh church as the counterpart of an independent Welsh principality. St. David's was once again to assume a central position as a metropolitan church and was to have among its suffragans, not only the Welsh bishops, but also those of Exeter, Bath, Hereford, Worcester, and Lichfield.³⁵ The pretensions of the Tripartite Indenture should be recalled. Glendower was confident that his influence would extend beyond the borders of Wales and make him the arbiter of the western Midlands.

It would be Benedict's responsibility to appoint only men whose native language was Welsh. The system of papal provision now firmly established, Benedict XIII was to revoke and annul all grants of Welsh parishes to English monasteries and colleges and these parishes returned to their original patrons. Glendower was determined that all church revenues should benefit Welsh causes. Glendower made the stipulation that his "chapel" would be "free" from episcopal control.³⁶ He requested that Wales have two universities, or "studia generalia", one in North Wales and the other in South Wales.³⁷ Henceforth the Welsh clergy was

to be educated in Wales in order to keep intact their devotion and loyalty to Welsh issues. It was an essential element in his vision of a free Wales where there was to be no room for English interference. Benedict XIII was to confer upon the Welsh rebellion his blessing, thereby giving it the status of a holy war. This was to bring to mind the horrible crimes of Henry of Lancaster against churches and churchmen both secular and religious. He was also to grant plenary remission of all sins to all of orthodox faith fighting on the Welsh side in the rebellion. Glendower was a superior statesman at driving a hard bargain and fully understood how much could be extracted from Avignon in return for the promise of his support.

The English prelate, John Trevor, doctor of laws, a prelate of the stature of Guy Mone and Richard Young was appointed by papal authority and consecrated at Rome. From the start he aligned himself with the cause of Henry IV. It was he whom the Lancastrians sent to Spain to announce the accession. He was prominent in parliament councils, accompanied Henry to Scotland in 1400 and officiated as Chamberlain of Chester, Flint, and North Wales.³⁸ However, he was Welsh by birth and more attuned to the affairs of his country's woes than it was possible to be for those whose only link with Wales was their Welsh title.³⁹ He had made an impassioned plea in parliament in October, 1399, when he urged that justice must be done to the claims of Glendower

if only to forestall a Welsh revolt. His bored audience turned a deaf ear to his appeal. History bore out the timeliness of the bishop's warning.⁴⁰ Trevor eventually changed sides and totally committed to it.⁴¹ In 1405, while on a mission to Scotland, he experience the brunt of the king's indignation. As if he were already dead, his see was declared vacant and his episcopal palace was burned to the ground.⁴²

Glendower had capable clerical advisers to assist him with his plans for an independent principality. These were men skilled in the law and in civil and ecclesiastical procedure. They were ready to stake their whole fortune and futures on his success. John Trevor, a prelate of renown was just one member of the clergy prepared to risk all their worldly possession, the favor of King and Pope and, indeed, their very lives for Owen Glendower's cause for a free Wales.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF GLENDOWER AND THE DREAM

Glendower's fortunes began to change after 1407. He had counted on guerrilla tactics to win battles for him. The lightning raids and quick changes in strategy almost always caught his opponents by surprise. He never liked battles in the open where two opposing forces met in pitched battle. He knew he was at a disadvantage against the English because they had more armor, better weapons and outmanned the rebels both in numbers and supplies. He was quick to use the rough terrain and inclement weather to his advantage. His fighters were mainly laborers and peasants who missed home and family and felt the need to return to their fields. The rebellion started to collapse and the enthusiasm for the cause dwindled. At the same time, prince Henry (the future Henry V) was starting to enjoy his role as an English warrior in charge of the 'Welsh question' and approached the pacification of Glendower's rebels with more eagerness and determination.

Glendower had counted on the French and their ships for assistance and when this did not materialize as he had originally planned, he began to lose Welsh support as well. The two key fortresses of Harlech and Aberystwyth were still

in rebel hands in 1407 but were under constant seige from heavily supplied English forces. In mid-summer of 1408 the castle of Aberystwyth fell and Harlech was taken early in 1409.¹ Glendower's family was captured in this attack and taken to London where they were imprisoned and eventually deliberately starved to death. The loss of Aberystwyth and Harlech castles reduced Glendower's status from a ruling prince to a hunted outlaw.

The spring of 1408 had seen the Earl of Northumberland (Henry Percy) decisively defeated at Bramham Moor in Yorkshire . . . "their heads and limbs were suspended from the gateways of various English cities as a testimony to the dismal failure which the great house of Percy had made of its persistent efforts to depose the King".²

During the twelve months following the debacle at Brahman Moor, Glendower suffered two debilitating defeats in the loss of Aberystwyth and Harlech.³ The two castles had been the jewels in his crown as de facto ruler for establishing his authority once and for all in Central Wales. With their recapture by the English he lost his standing as a ruling prince and became once more an outlaw and marauding captain. In the summer, Prince Henry, having recovered from his wounds and commissioned as royal deputy in Wales, resumed the attack upon Aberystwyth.⁴ The fact that he bestowed upon a member of his household on September 23rd the office of 'rhaglaw' (warlord) in the commotes of

Geneu's Glyn and Anhuniog in North Cardiganshire indicated that he achieved his objective eventually.⁵ The capture of Harlech proved more difficult. The castle had been besieged for some time by Gilbert Talbot of Goodrich and his brother John Lord Furnival.⁶ A petition to the crown by a certain John Horne in 1414, citizen of London and fishermonger by trade, graphically illustrated the plight of the besiegers and the defenders.⁷ While delivering a cargo of provisions and in the process of being paid for the same he was attacked by the Welsh and promptly relieved of both money and the remainder of his cargo.⁸ In addition his ship was burned and he himself held for ransom. He asked for compensation to the amount of one hundred marks. In this manner both sides hung on by a shoestring and had it not been for this partial attempt at resupply, the siege would have collapsed. It was archery and persistent cannonading that finally brought this great fortress to its knees.⁹ Thus, Glendower relinquished his last stronghold in the region he claimed to rule.¹⁰

The loss of Harlech meant far more than the loss of a castle. It also represented the immeasurably greater loss of most of his family and family possessions. His family including his wife, two of his daughters, and three granddaughters, the children of Edmund Mortimer, were sent to London where they suffered a slow agonizing death by starvation while being held as a public example of the fate

awaiting rebels.¹¹ Moritmer had died during the siege along with some of Glendower's most trusted supporters.¹² Glendower himself once again escaped capture and with his last surviving son, Moredudd, disappeared into the hideouts known only too well by him in the forest. All that remained behind of his presence at the castle was one small personal item later unearthed from the rubble, a gilt bronze ornamental star from a set of horse harness bearing the four lions rampant which he had adopted as his insignia as the Prince of Wales.¹³ This sad reminder was all that remained of Owen Glendower's once lofty aspirations to power and greatness.¹⁴

Many Welshmen, like Adam of Usk, knew the collapse of Glendower's rebellion was inevitable but did not feel that the end of the uprising had been reached yet.¹⁵ There remained the indomitable spirit of its leader and a group of influential supporters still undaunted by defeats. The most notable of these were Bishop Trevor, Gruffydd Young, Philip Hanmer, Rhys ap Gruffydd of Cardigan, Rhys and Ednyfed of Penmynydd.

Throughout 1407 Parliament remained concerned that the revolt was too firmly rooted to be put down. Again attention was called in the parliament of 1409 for a mandate of paramount importance. The Marcher lords were called upon to defend their own castles and lands and not to look to the crown for protection. On May 16th, 1409, the point was

emphasized by letters addressed to the Lords of Powys, Ewias Lacy, Oswestry, Gower, Ruthin, Maelienydd, Glamorgan, Pembroke, and Abergavenny, in which they were instructed to remain in their Welsh domains and actively commit themselves to the suppression of the Welsh revolt.¹⁶

Glendower's last attempt to turn the tide of war was to conduct a raid on the Shropshire border. This last ditch effort to effect a turnaround in his favor failed.¹⁷ Forces of greater strength led by the constable of Welshpool castle took three rebel prisoners. The redoubtable Rhys ap Gruffydd of Cardigan, known as Rhys the Black, was sent to London for trial and executed as a traitor and his head added to the barbarous trophies of London Bridge.¹⁸ Philip Scudamore of Troy, near Manmouth, son of a noble border family was taken and suffered a like death at Shrewsbury.¹⁹ Rhys ap Tudur, an active leader in the Conway enterprise of 1401 and a cousin of Glendower met a similar fate.²⁰ Glendower was now entirely on the defensive and his energies were spent in the task of eluding his pursuers. The fire of revolt that he had kindled consumed all of his energy but he refused to have it extinguished completely. The English by sheer show of force at such centers as Bala, Cymmer (near Dolgelly), and Strata Florida were able to maintain their positions and thereby keep North Wales subdued.²¹

About this time, 1415, Glendower vanished. Some aspects of his life had always been shrouded in a cloak of

mystery. It was not surprising that he should suddenly disappear.²² For more than a decade his rising star had enthralled the masses hungry for freedom and now it had plummeted to earth along with all hope for an independent Wales. But even now his name was on everyone's lips. The prophets foretold his triumphant return and he became known again as a subject of popular legend.²³ The time and place of his death were never revealed to anyone. The actual place of his burial was kept a secret. Because of this secrecy, neither the date nor the place of his passing can be fixed with any degree of accuracy. Glendower, had he chosen, could have received his pardon from the crown. The new king Henry V was occupied in preparations for the French campaign and was anxious to resolve the Welsh nuisance before departing to wage war abroad. He empowered Gilbert Talbot on July 5th, 1415, to offer Glendower and the remnant of his followers a full pardon.²⁴ When no acceptance was given, the offer was repeated on February 24th, 1416. Talbot was told to renew the offer through Glendower's son, Maredudd, who was expected to be more reasonable than the old warrior. But Glendower remained silent and a year later (1417) he was dead.²⁵

How he spent his last days is unknown. Tradition has persistently placed him in western Herefordshire at the time of his death. One account has it that he died "voppon the topp of Lawton's hope Hill"²⁶ (near Dinmore). Another that

he died in Haywood forest (near Callow).²⁷ These assumptions are based on the theory that he met his end as a lonely wanderer and outcast. One would prefer to believe that the old warrior died under the roof of one of his surviving daughters, of whom there were at least two who had married into Herefordshire families.²⁸ The likeliest place of his death would be Monnington Straddel in the Golden Valley. The manor of John Scudamore stood here and it was well known that he had married Glendower's daughter Alice.²⁹ As a proud Welshman Glendower had held aloft the banner of freedom, and the people in search for a savior left hearth and home to follow him. It is impossible to say with certainty what led to the collapse of his revolt. His enemies charged him with cruelty and avarice while others saw him as a flawed hero, but there is no evidence to sustain either charge.³⁰ Not even his harshest critics could deny his courage. The loyalty and devotion which he inspired was of such magnitude that none of his followers ever betrayed him. He stands alone among all the great figures of Welsh history in that no bard was willing to sing his elegy. The Welsh were mourning their hero in their hearts but wanted to hold on to the comforting belief that he would reappear to lead them once again. To this day every Welsh child is taught to revere his name. Attempts to diminish him to the stature of a "seditious seducer and demented visionary" were never successful. He was the first

leader in Welsh history to command the willing support of north and south, east and west, Gwynedd and Powys, Deheubarth and Morgannwg, the rich and poor alike and Owen Glendower will for all time remain inseparable from Welsh nationalism.

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

By 1410 the longest, fiercest, most popular and the last Welsh war of independence was over. The bards had foretold the coming of Prince Glendower and they never believed he could die. No bard ever wrote or sang his elegy. No elegy, no death--he would return again. No bard ever blamed him for his failures, which was not true of some of his countrymen. For those Marcher lords and other Welsh aristocrats who found homage to the English Crown more beneficial than harmful, Glendower was a disgruntled feudal lord pursuing his own ambitions by exploiting his fellow countrymen. The length of time and the total numbers of people involved suggest, however, that his revolt was the massive protest of a conquered people against the consequences of being conquered. The gentry had given their support to one of their own class who seemed to be fulfilling an ancient prophecy of Welsh resurgence. They had supported him with money, supplies, knights and experienced leadership. After all, the hope of freedom and independence was embodied in the ancient prophecies and a sort of historical legitimacy was given to the rebellion. After 1410 the Welsh knew they had a separate history and

culture from the English and they felt they had the right to be treated with a sense of dignity and consideration. No longer would they consider themselves as a conquered people but rather as a separate political entity or nation.

Counted in the cost to be paid by the Welsh for several generations to come was the disruption of trade and commerce that resulted from the scorched earth policy practiced by both sides. Starvation was a popular policy to gain military advantage and the destruction of foodstuffs was widespread. The confiscation of rebel lands meant displacement of the people who once lived and worked on them. Animosity between Glendower's supporters and the loyalists who supported the forces of the Crown grew and festered. Welshmen lived many years as victims of the harsh penal laws that were reenacted to keep them second class citizens, if citizens at all, since they all lost their English citizenship. A Welshman after the rebellion had no civic rights. They were denied the right to hold responsible public office. Welshmen could not marry English women. Welshmen could not acquire land in England or in English towns in Wales. Excluding Welshmen from the rights of English citizens set them more and more apart and increased the sense of separateness that fed the fires of nationalism. The failure of Glendower's revolt closed the era of conquest for Wales, but the sense of national unity was heightened.

Was Glendower's revolt a voice for Welsh nationalism? The French Revolution was the first historical event where a sense of national uniqueness was first discussed by historians. A definition of nationalism includes a sense of consciousness whereby the individual believes in certain virtues present in a common entity. This translates into a love of culture, language, history, literature and particular religious beliefs. Certainly the sense of Welshness that existed among Glendower's supporters qualifies them as being nationalistic. The ancient Hebrews with their sense of superiority as a chosen people and the early Greeks and their sense of political loyalty to the community qualified them as being nationalistic in design. Welsh historians see Glendower as a national leader and hero and always refer to him and nationalism in the same breath. English historians see him as an "uncommon man", as "magnetic and redoubtable" and "a wonderful man, an attractive and unique figure" but are reluctant to call him nationalistic. Gareth E. Jones, Senior Lecturer in History, University College of Swansea, describes the unique attitude that exists in Wales today:

Welshness, and a sense of Welshness have had a variety of constituents over the centuries. The most obvious mark of nationhood--political independence--has not been essential to allegiance to Wales. Those who have lived in Wales have normally deemed themselves Welsh, though they have combined this allegiance with others. The sense of Welshness is sufficient claim to nationhood. It has always been sustained by a sense of the past.¹

Glanmore Williams, a Welsh historian sees Glendower as a watershed between the feudal and modern world and an instrument for change:

He had done for Wales what William Wallace and Robert Bruce did for Scotland, or Joan of Arc for France. The patriotism he had inspired did much to account for much of the growing Welsh support at the end of the century for Henry Tudor. Henry's victory in 1484 and his accession to the English throne seemed to many Welshman to be Owen's belated triumph.²

R.R. Davies in Conquest, Coexistence and Change in Wales 1063-1415 (1987) called:

The revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr, whatever else it may have been and whatever other grievances and aspirations it drew upon, was ultimately founded on a vision of national unity and national deliverance. The failure of that revolt meant that the prospect of unitary native rule and political independence had gone for good. If the Welsh were to survive as a people, they would henceforth have to cultivate and sustain their identity, as in the past, by other means.³

As late as 1985 Welsh historians were still commenting on the idea of Welsh nationalism and Glendower's role in its early inception. Gwyn A. Williams in When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh makes a statement that summarizes current feeling of Welshmen:

Since 1410 most Welsh people most of the time have abandoned any idea of independence as unthinkable. But since 1410 most Welsh people, at some time or other, if only in some secret corner of the mind, have been 'out with Owain and his barefoot scrubs'. For the Welsh mind is still haunted by its lightning-flash vision of a people that was free.⁴

NOTES

1. Gareth Elwyn Jones, Modern Wales, A Concise History C. 1485-1979, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 304.
2. Glanmore Williams, Owen Glendower, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 59-60.
3. R.R. Davies, Conguest, Coexistence and Change in Wales 1063-1415, (Oxford: University of Wales Press, 1987), 465.
4. Gwyn A. Williams, When Was Wales? A History of The Welsh (London: Black Raven Press, 1985), 113.

APPENDIX
PRINCIPAL DATES

APPENDIX

PRINCIPAL DATES

- 1359 Born at Sycharth
- 1385 Campaigns in Scotland
- 1399 Deposition of Richard II, Henry IV becomes king
- 1400 Rebellion breaks out
- 1401 Penal laws against Welshmen. Glendower attacks in South Wales.
- 1402 Capture of Grey and Mortimer
- 1403 Hotspur defeated at Shrewsbury
- 1404 Harlech and Aberystwyth castles captured. Alliance concluded with France.
- 1405 Tripartite Indenture signed. French troops in Milford Haven
- 1406 'Pennal policy' agreed upon. French troops withdraw Southwest Wales and Anglesey submit to Henry IV.
- 1408 Northumberland defeated at Bramham Moor. Fall of Aberystwyth and Harlech castles
- 1410 Last great raid is defeated
- 1415 Glendower refuses pardon offered by Henry V
- 1417 Death of Glendower??

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