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Welsh Traitors in a Scottish Chronicle:

Dafydd ap Gruffudd, Penwyn and the Transmission of National Memory<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract*

The focus of this article is the capture and execution of Dafydd ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd in 1283. Various texts found in medieval and Early Modern manuscripts (including a notable example from Scotland) show a continuing interest in these events, including the identification of an individual blamed for Dafydd's betrayal. The article will consider the veracity of these texts and also consider the repeated tendency to relate Dafydd's execution to the events of the Glyndŵr rebellion of the early fifteenth century. It will argue that poetry that lies outside the 'mainstream' bardic tradition played a crucial role in the transmission and reinterpretation of national memory.

This article aims to answer a simple question posed by the noted Welsh copyist John Jones of Gellilyfdy (before 1585–in or before 1658) in a letter to his 'loving Cosen' Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt (1591/2–1667) in 1649: 'I would knowe [...] whoe the penwyn and Penhir were

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a paper given on 16 July 2015 at the Fifteenth International Congress of Celtic Studies at the University of Glasgow. I would like to express my thanks for the suggestions made by those present.

that betrayed Dafydd ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn'.<sup>2</sup> It was known then as it is today that Dafydd ap Gruffudd, the brother of Llywelyn (d. 1282), Prince of Wales, had been captured by the forces of Edward I in 1283 before being executed with exceptional ferocity later that same year. Official records and contemporary narrative sources do not name his captors, but John Jones had access to the names of at least two of the men thought to be responsible. In considering the veracity of that information, this article will explore the nature of the Welsh historical memory, especially with regards to certain acts of treachery or betrayal that relate to two crucial historical nexuses: the conquest of Gwynedd in 1282–3 and the Glyndŵr rebellion of the early fifteenth century. It will consider why and how that memory was conveyed and indeed transformed from generation to generation, a process in which individuals such as John Jones were intimately involved.

## I

Far less is known of the career of Dafydd ap Gruffudd than in the case of his older brother Llywelyn and he remains a somewhat elusive figure, despite the valuable work of A. D. Carr in particular.<sup>3</sup> Enough is known, however, for several generations of historians to have expressed strongly worded conclusions about his character.<sup>4</sup> J. E. Lloyd depicted him as

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<sup>2</sup> The letter is transcribed in Nesta Lloyd, 'John Jones, Gellilyfdy', *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society* 24 (1969), 11; also (with the address to Robert Vaughan) in T. E. Parry, 'Llythyrau Robert Vaughan Hengwrt (1592–1667), gyda rhagymadrodd a nodiadau' (MA thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1960), 279–80 (280).

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Carr, "'The Last and Weakest of His Line': Dafydd ap Gruffydd, the Last Prince of Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 19/3 (1999), 375–99. See also J. B. Smith, 'Dafydd ap Gruffudd (d. 1283), prince of Gwynedd', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). [On-line]. Available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed 1 July 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Carr, "'The Last and Weakest of His Line'", 375.

‘Llywelyn’s evil genius’ and as a ‘restless, discontented, shifty schemer, true neither to the Welsh nor to the English side’.<sup>5</sup> Maurice Powicke called him ‘the most restless man of his time’ and Rees Davies referred to his ‘record of defection and treachery’.<sup>6</sup> Writing in Welsh (in an elegy on J. E. Lloyd), Saunders Lewis called him ‘yr ola’ eiddila’ o’i lin’ (‘the last and weakest of his line’).<sup>7</sup> R. T. Jenkins went further, being compelled to state, ‘yn fy myw ni ellais erioed golli deigr yn dros y gŵr diwerth hwnnw’ (‘upon my life, I was never able to lose a tear for that worthless man’); this comment was made in 1934 in an essay on Shrewsbury, the site of Dafydd’s unusually cruel execution.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Jenkins – by no means a political nationalist – was sufficiently angered by Dafydd’s career that in a further article published in the same year he wrote:

Pe byddai’n *rhaid* chwilio am un gwr, a rhoi’r rhan helaethaf o’r bai am golli “rhyddid” Cymru ar ei ysgwyddau, Dafydd yn sicr fyddai’r gŵr hwnnw. Fe werthodd ac ailwerthodd bawb o’i gwmpas, yn hollol ddiogwyddor. Nid “arwain” y mudiad Cymreig yn 1282–3 a wnaeth ef, ond gweled cyfle ynddo i’w ddyrchafu ei hun. Ac os

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<sup>5</sup> J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest* (3rd edn, London, 1939), II, pp. 742–3.

<sup>6</sup> F. M. Powicke, *King Henry and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1973), II, p. 661; R. R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales, 1063–1415* (Oxford, 1987), p. 318.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Marwnad Syr John Edward Lloyd,’ in Thomas Parry (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 463–6 (p. 465). This phrase provides the title for Carr, “‘The Last and Weakest of His Line’” (see n. 3 above).

<sup>8</sup> R. T. Jenkins, ‘Symffoni: “Amwythig”’, *Y Llenor*, 13/1 (1934), 78. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations given are my own.

oedd ar rywun ddyled drom i Edward (nid yw amcanion Edward yn hynny, na drwg na da, yn y cwestiwn), ar Ddafydd yr oedd y ddyled honno.<sup>9</sup>

[‘If one *had* to find one man to put the greatest part of the blame for the loss of Welsh “freedom” on his shoulders, Dafydd would certainly be that man. He betrayed and re-betrayed everyone around him, totally without principle. He did not “lead” the Welsh movement in 1282–3, but rather he saw an opportunity to aggrandize himself. And if anyone was heavily in debt to Edward I (Edward’s own motives, good or bad, are not the question here) then that was Dafydd.’]

Those with a good word for Dafydd are few and far between. One such was T. Jones Pierce who, whilst acknowledging that ‘the weaknesses of his character are evident’, also asserted that ‘there is much in the record of his life which reveals a man of exceptional courage and personal attractiveness’.<sup>10</sup> On the whole, Dafydd remains a minor figure in the modern Welsh imagination, and a reviled one at that.<sup>11</sup> It is not the aim of the article to take sides in that argument or even to speculate whether its terms have any validity. Nevertheless, as the view of Dafydd as a ‘traitor’ is a key theme of this article, a brief sketch of his career will enable us to place his capture and execution in its historical context.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R. T. Jenkins, ‘Llywodraeth y Cestyll’, *Y Llenor*, 13/3 (1934), 133.

<sup>10</sup> *A Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940* (London, 1959), p. 95; for a lively and deliberate attempt to ‘rehabilitate’ Dafydd, see Ralph Maud, ‘David, the Last Prince of Wales’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1968, 43–62 (45).

<sup>11</sup> This is especially true when he is compared to his brother Llywelyn, for whom see, for instance, Llinos Beverley Smith, ‘Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and the Welsh Historical Consciousness’, *Welsh History Review*, 12/4 (1981), 1–18; J. Beverley Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd Prince of Wales* (new ed., Cardiff, 2014), pp. 582–605; Alan Llwyd (ed.), *Llywelyn y Beirdd* (Cyhoeddiadau Barddas, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> The summary below is based on Carr, “‘The Last and Weakest of His Line’”, 375–99.

Dafydd, who was probably born sometime in the second half of the 1230s, spent much of his career from the 1250s to the 1280s moving back and forth from allegiance to his brother Llywelyn (to whom he was heir) and to Henry III and the Lord Edward, later Edward I. He was apparently involved with Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn of Powys in the conspiracy to assassinate Llywelyn in 1274 and later joined Edward I's forces in the war against his brother in 1277. But the fateful events of 1282–3 were initiated by Dafydd's decision to attack Hawarden castle, then in English hands, on Palm Sunday 1282. Whether or not Llywelyn knew of Dafydd's plans beforehand is unclear, but the older brother soon followed the younger in taking up arms. Dafydd's actions may thus be seen as one of the immediate causes of Llywelyn's death, which took place at Cilmeri near Builth in December 1282, possibly as a result of subterfuge by Marcher Lords led by Roger Mortimer (d. 1326) of Chirk. Following his brother's death, Dafydd ap Gruffudd was for a few months his successor as Prince of Wales, although he was never recognized as such by Edward I. During the first part of 1283 English armies (composed largely of Welsh soldiers) tightened the noose around Gwynedd. In April, Dafydd was probably at Castell y Bere in Merioneth but had disappeared before the garrison surrendered to the English forces on 25 April. By early May he was at the castle of Dolbadarn where he granted the commote of Penweddig in northern Ceredigion to Rhys Fychan ap Rhys ap Maelgwn. Rhys Fychan had little to no hopes of ever claiming his patrimony, but it was a recognition by Dafydd of Rhys Fychan's continuing loyalty, and perhaps of fear that he would desert. By then, Edward had scouts and spies scouring the countryside for Dafydd. In another act that must be considered as symbolic rather than material, Dafydd empowered one of his officials, John ap Dafydd, to raise the men of Builth, Brecon, Maelienydd, Elfael, Gwerthrynion and Ceri. But these areas had long since slipped out of Welsh control. With options running out, Dafydd would soon be in the king's hands.

On 22 July he was captured by what one chronicle called ‘the king’s scouts’ (‘per regios exploratores’).<sup>13</sup> Edward himself, in writing to demand the attendance of his barons at Dafydd’s trial, had a specific point to make: Dafydd, ‘the last survivor of the family of traitors’, had been captured ‘by men of his own race’ (‘per homines lingue sue’).<sup>14</sup> In this he may have been simply noting a fact or taking one final opportunity to portray Dafydd’s status as a serial breaker of pledges who could not command the loyalty of his own men. In reality, it was only to be expected that Dafydd should have been captured by Welshmen – Edward’s Welsh soldiers knew the territory better than anyone and numerous parties of Welshmen had been sent specifically to seek him out.

Dafydd was brought to trial and executed with unusual cruelty at Shrewsbury.<sup>15</sup> The details of the execution drew the attention of several chroniclers (there are no official records of the trial itself).<sup>16</sup> Amongst these is the chronicle of Lanercost, whose description of the execution combines barbarity and cold reason:

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<sup>13</sup> *Thomae Walsingham, quondam monachi S. Albani, Historia Anglicana, vol. I, A.D. 1272–1381*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1863), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, Various*, p. 281. The phrase ‘per homines lingue sue’ is used in other sources, see Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 578 n. 232. On the use of Latin *lingua* ‘tongue, language, race’ to refer to the Welsh in particular, see Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 261.

<sup>15</sup> On the trial and the following execution, see J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 24–9.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion, see Matthew Fisher, ‘Dismembered Borders and Treasonous Bodies in Anglo-Norman Historiography’, in Noah D. Gunn and Zrinka Stahuljak (ed.), *Violence and the Writing of History in the Medieval Francophone World* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 83–98 (especially pp. 85–8).

David's children were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, but David himself was first drawn as a traitor, then hanged as a thief; thirdly, he was beheaded alive, and his entrails burnt as an incendiary and homicide; fourthly, his limbs were cut into four parts as the penalty of a rebel, and exposed in four of the ceremonial places in England as a spectacle; to wit – the right arm with a ring on the finger in York; the left arm in Bristol; the right leg and hip at Northampton; the left [leg] at Hereford. But the villain's head was bound with iron, lest it should fall to pieces from putrefaction, and set conspicuously upon a long spear-shaft for the mockery of London.<sup>17</sup>

The chronicle also echoed Edward I's view of Dafydd as a man despised by his own people:

Just as the holy Jeremiah composed metrical dirges for the desolation of Judaea, so the Welsh nation composed a heroic elegy upon the death of their Prince and the desolation of their nation, at the end whereof they always commemorate David with curses, forasmuch as he was the author of this misfortune, whereon they spoke these lines:

‘David of Wales, a thief and traitor,  
Slayer of men, of Church a hater,  
A fourfold criminal in life  
Now dies by horse, fire, rope and knife.  
The ruffian thus deprived of breath  
Most meetly dies by fourfold death.’<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272–1346*, ed. Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow, 1913), p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272–1346*, p. 35 (with the Latin original).



As far as we can see, however, this was not the view reflected in Welsh sources. *Brut y Tywysogyon* (or the Latin version upon which it was based, the main narrative source of this period) comes to an end with the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282. The NLW Peniarth MS 20 version, however, does contain additional annals for the post-1282 period. The entry for 1283 notes unemotionally that Dafydd ap Gruffudd ‘went into outlawry, and the king took hostages from Gwynedd. And the autumn after that, Dafydd ap Gruffudd and Owain, his son, were seized, and they were taken to Rhuddlan as prisoners; and thereupon they were taken to Shrewsbury. And then Dafydd ap Gruffudd was executed, and Owain was taken to prison to Bristol.’ The final acts in the conquest of Wales are noted in the annal for the following year, ‘[a]nd thereupon the king went towards England exultantly happy with victory’. The chronicle continues with the simple statement that ‘after that, there were four years of continued peace at a stretch, without anything to be recorded for that length of time’.<sup>19</sup> The entry for 1283 in the related *Brenhinedd y Saesson* chronicle says that Dafydd, ‘after the Calends of Winter’, was taken a prisoner to Shrewsbury: ‘Ac yno nos Nodolic y llas ef o angav gorthrwm’ (‘And there, on Christmas eve, he was put to a dire death’).<sup>20</sup> The addition of the reference to Christmas eve is of interest; the date of Dafydd’s execution was in fact 2 October, a point to which we shall return below.

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<sup>19</sup> *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, trans. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1952), p. 121. The Welsh text is found in *Brut y Tywysogyon Peniarth MS. 20*, ed. Thomas Jones (Caerdydd, 1941), pp. 228–9.

<sup>20</sup> *Brenhinedd y Saesson or The Kings of the Saxons*, ed. and trans. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 258 and 259.

The other contemporary Welsh-language source of significance is the poetry of Bleddyn Fardd. Bleddyn was a court poet to the princes of Gwynedd: fourteen poems in his name have survived, half of which are elegies to the three brothers Owain, Llywelyn and Dafydd ap Gruffudd. He composed two elegies for each brother and one poem to mourn the three together.<sup>21</sup> In his *awdl* to Dafydd ap Gruffudd, Bleddyn states that he has suffered the loss of six kings: Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, his sons Gruffudd and Dafydd, and Gruffudd's own sons Llywelyn, Owain and Dafydd. He recognizes Dafydd's courage – 'Dewr a was ban llas' ('He was a brave man when killed') – and refers to his execution as 'gwaith gwythlongar' ('a cruel deed'). In the second elegy (a series of *englynion*) he states plainly that Dafydd had been cruelly executed: 'mawrddygn y'i llas'.<sup>22</sup> Although the poems to Dafydd do not approach the majesty of Bleddyn's elegy to his brother Llywelyn, they are testament to the view that Dafydd was a worthy successor to his forefathers of the royal house of Gwynedd.

Bleddyn makes no reference to Dafydd's capture, and it would be strange had he done so. But he would have been fully aware of the shifting allegiances of his patrons in the years around the Edwardian conquest. The last elegy he is known to have composed is that to Gruffudd ab Iorwerth ap Maredudd of Anglesey, a man well known to Dafydd ap Gruffudd. Sometime between 1278 and 1282, Dafydd wrote a letter requesting that Edward return to Gruffudd his lands in Anglesey, noting that Gruffudd (like Dafydd himself) had served the king in the war of 1277. But by the summer of 1283 Gruffudd had been entrusted with the

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<sup>21</sup> On which see Rhian M. Andrews, '*Triwyr a gollais: Yr awdlau marwnad i dri mab Gruffudd ap Llywelyn gan Fleddyn Fardd*', in Morfydd E. Owen and Brynley F. Roberts (ed.), *Beirdd a Thywysogion: Barddoniaeth Llys yng Nghymru, Iwerddon a'r Alban* (Caerdydd ac Aberystwyth, 1996), pp. 166–79.

<sup>22</sup> Rhian M. Andrews *et al.* (ed.), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg* (Caerdydd, 1996), pp. 604 (52.15 and 20) and 612 (53.4). The *englynion* are also edited in Rhian M. Andrews (ed.), *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff, 2007), p. 17.

leadership of a force of royal soldiers tasked with Dafydd's capture. At that time, he was possessed of Maenan in the Conwy valley, an estate he had been given in 1278 for his support for Edward in the war of the previous year. Despite complaints about his behaviour from the men of Maenan later that year, Gruffudd held on to the estate until 1284 when he exchanged it for land near the former royal court of Gwynedd at Aberffraw; Edward wished to move the monks of Aberconwy to Maenan to make room for what would become Conwy castle. It is impossible to know whether Bleddyn Fardd found a commission to compose Gruffudd's elegy to be unpalatable, but after the deaths of his royal patrons he probably had little choice.<sup>23</sup>

The loyalty of another poet to the princes of Gwynedd had wavered before this, however; Bleddyn's contemporary Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch cannot be ignored in a discussion of shifting loyalties. In analysing the initial defeat of Gwynedd in the war of 1277, J. Beverley Smith has written that 'from the evidence relating to the humiliation of Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, no piece is more intriguing than the brief entry which records that Edward I gave the sum of £20 for some service fulfilled by one named Gruffudd ab yr Ynad, who may safely be identified as the person who was to compose the magnificent elegy of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd'.<sup>24</sup> Like others, Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch seems in due course to have returned to the princely fold, but in his case his elegy to the prince offers us the opportunity, should we wish it, to search for evidence of his guilty conscience.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gruffudd's career is discussed in Andrews *et al.* (ed.), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd*, pp. 634–5; see also Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, pp. 432–3; Huw Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 641–2.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 433.

<sup>25</sup> Andrews *et al.* (ed.), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd*, pp. 414–33.

## II

Gruffudd ab Iorwerth ap Maredudd was evidently involved in the final hunt for Dafydd ap Gruffudd, but there is no suggestion that he was responsible for the prince's capture. A. D. Carr has drawn attention to the fact that Archbishop Pecham on 10 July 1284 'instructed the Bishop of Bangor to receive the purgation of two clerks, Gregory and Gervase, portionaries of the church of *Lammeys*'. Both had been accused of making war, bearing arms against the king's peace and killing men, while Gervase had apparently betrayed Dafydd.<sup>26</sup> There may be suggestion that such a deed was not considered acceptable by some in the diocese. It is unlikely, however, that a clerk such as Gervase (possibly for Welsh 'Iorwerth') had been directly involved in the prince's capture.<sup>27</sup> As we have seen, John Jones of Gellilyfdy pointed the finger of blame at two other figures, 'the penwyn and Penhir' ('white-headed one and the long-headed one'). His source for the names of Dafydd's captors is not a chronicle or official records, but rather a somewhat obscure four-line *englyn*, the first two lines of which are quoted in his letter to Robert Vaughan. An earlier and complete version of the *englyn* is found in his hand in NLW MS 3039B [Mostyn 131] 'Llyvyr Englynion Gelli Llyvdy' ('The *Englynion* Book of Gellilyfdy'), a manuscript that he copied sometime around 1610.<sup>28</sup> It contains a variety of short texts, *englynion* in particular, including the following (p. 852):

Y Penwyn ar pennir arbennaic // vnben

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<sup>26</sup> Carr, "The Last and Weakest of His Line", 392.

<sup>27</sup> For a 'Iorwerth' / 'Gervase' associated with the Franciscan Friary of Llan-faes in Anglesey, see Glyn Roberts, *Aspects of Welsh History* (Cardiff, 1969), pp. 220 and 230–1.

<sup>28</sup> *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*, 2 vols, ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans (London, 1898–1910), I, pp. 87–97.

er vnbvnt arbymtheg  
llonaid bvarth o warthec  
newydd o [ʔa] werth Davydd dec

The first five words of this *englyn* are problematic in both versification and meaning, as we shall see below. That aside, it may be transposed into modern Welsh orthography and translated as follows:

[                    ]—unben,  
Er unbunt ar bymtheg,  
Llonaid buarth o wartheg  
Newydd a werth Dafydd deg.

[... lord, for sixteen pounds [and] a stockade full of new cattle, shall sell fair Dafydd.]

The initial words ('Y Penwyn ar pennir arbennaic') are more difficult. The form 'arbennaic', in particular, is problematic: it is not in *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* and does not rhyme in *-eg* as required by the other three lines. Reading 'arbennaic' as a compound of *penaig*, *pen aig* 'chief, nobleman' (stressed on the final syllable) might be a possibility but it does not resolve the problem of the rhyme. A dialectal pronunciation of 'arbennaic' (stressed on the penultimate syllable) might give *arbenneg*, but as the form is unknown the suggestion is of limited use. Neither does 'arbennaic' form *cynganedd* with 'Penwyn', as the /b/ and /p/ do not correspond.

In his letter to Robert Vaughan, Jones quotes the opening two lines of the *englyn* as follows:

Y penwyn ar Penhir arbennaige vnben

am vnbnt ar bymtheg etc.<sup>29</sup>

The change of preposition in the second line ('er' > 'am') has no significant effect on the meaning. But the first line is again problematic, with the spelling 'arbennaige' suggesting that Jones himself was unsure as to the correct form of the word.

Nevertheless, it clear from Jones's desire to know 'whoe the penwyn and Penhir were' that he understood the first four words as referring to two individuals, 'Penwyn' ('the white-headed one') and 'Penhir' ('the long-headed one'). He makes no further comment on 'Penwyn' but asks Vaughan 'Whether the Penhir be Madog benhir?' The genealogies edited by P. C. Bartrum are not helpful in identifying Madog Benhir and searches in official records have also proved fruitless. But amongst the descendants of Gwynedd's own royal house there is recorded a Maredudd Benhir ap Maredudd ap Llywelyn ap Caswallon ap Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170) who would, in chronological terms, be a possible contemporary of Dafydd ap Gruffudd.<sup>30</sup> Otherwise, the trail grows cold. But given that the first line of the *englyn* refers to an *unben* 'a lord' (in the singular), it may well be the case that the verse in fact refers to only one man: Penwyn. That was certainly how it was understood in the nineteenth century, when both the verse and the tradition of Penwyn's treachery was known to such key figures in Welsh intellectual life as William Owen Pughe (1759–1835), the Reverend Walter

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<sup>29</sup> Lloyd, 'John Jones, Gellilyfdy', 11.

<sup>30</sup> P. C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400* (Cardiff, 1974), 'Gruffudd ap Cynan 10'.

Davies (Gwallter Mechain, 1761–1849) and the Reverend Lewis Edwards (1809–87).<sup>31</sup>

Through them, the story of Penwyn’s treachery appears occasionally in Welsh and English-language publications in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>32</sup>

The search for a Penwyn in later-thirteenth and early-fourteenth century Gwynedd is in fact relatively straightforward. The genealogies edited by Bartrum include only a single Penwyn from this period, one of the descendants of Marchudd ap Cynan. He and his family are associated with the upper Conwy and the Lledr and Machno valleys in Gwynedd, and with the estate of Melai in Llanfair Talhaearn.<sup>33</sup> His baptismal name was Iorwerth ap Cynwrig ab Iorwerth, but due to what was presumably either his very fair or prematurely

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Englynion Cov a Chadw’, *Y Greal*, 4 (1806), p. 167; ‘David-y-Penwyn’, *The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory*, 3 (1831), 460; Garmon, ‘Ail Lythyr Garmon’, *Y Gwyllydydd*, 4 (1826), 163; *Gwaith y Parch. Walter Davies, A.C. (Gwallter Mechain)*, ed. D. Silvan Evans (Caerfyrddin a Llundain, 1868), II, p. 195. Via Gwallter Mechain, the story was also known to Lewis Edwards, see his *Traethodau Llenyddol* (Wrexham, [1867]), p. 84. There was uncertainty over Penwyn’s real name, as seen in the references to ‘Dafydd’ or ‘David’ rather than Iorwerth. Both Gwallter Mechain and William Owen Pughe were knowledgeable about the context of Welsh manuscripts and actively sought access to as many collections as they could, including those by John Jones of Gellilfydy and those that would form the Mostyn collection, see Glenda Carr, *William Owen Pughe* (Caerdydd, 1983), pp. 100–111.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, ‘Dafydd y Penwyn’, *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 26 October 1844, p. 4; ‘Englyn i Fradychwr’, *Seren Cymru*, 19 August 1852, p. 6; ‘Antiquarian Excursion’, *Denbighshire Free Press*, 13 July 1907, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400*, ‘Marchudd 26’; see also Sir John Wynn, *The History of the Gwydir Family and Memoirs*, ed. J. Gwynfor Jones (Llandysul, 1990), p. 18; *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families*, ed. J. E. Griffith (Bangor, 1914), p. 347, where he is associated with Betws (Betws-y-coed).

greying hair, he is consistently known as ‘Y Penwyn’ or simply ‘Penwyn’.<sup>34</sup> His wife’s name is given as Angharad the daughter of Heilyn (or Heilin) ap Tudur ab Ednyfed Fychan.<sup>35</sup> Penwyn had thus married into the family that, more than any other, provided the administrative backbone for the thirteenth-century principality of Gwynedd.<sup>36</sup> The high political profile of this family had shaped the upbringing of Heilyn, Penwyn’s father in law, in a most fundamental way, for he spent his early years (from the 1240s onwards) in England as a hostage for his own father’s good behaviour. He was released in 1263 in an act described as ‘surprising’ by David Stephenson, given that his father Tudur had by then returned to Llywelyn’s service. Stephenson suggests that Henry III was ‘convinced of Heilyn’s pro-English sympathies’.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, once free, Heilyn is known to have ‘continued his father’s tradition of service to the princes of Gwynedd’.<sup>38</sup> There is extant a record of a grant of land to Heilyn by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, dated to 7 August 1281 at Dolwyddelan, by which he was to receive lands in Llŷn in exchange for lands in Penllyn that Llywelyn had previously given to Heilyn’s father, Tudur.<sup>39</sup> As we shall see below, Penwyn’s own career in the service of Edward I was underway within some four years of this grant, and so it may be

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<sup>34</sup> The name ‘Penwyn’ is discussed in T. J. Morgan and Prys Morgan, *Welsh Surnames* (Cardiff, 1985), p. 175 and includes references to the Penwyn of this article.

<sup>35</sup> Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400*, ‘Marchudd 5’.

<sup>36</sup> On them, see Roberts, *Aspects of Welsh History*, pp. 179–214 (“‘Wyrion Eden’: The Anglesey Descendants of Ednyfed Fychan in the Fourteenth Century”) and David Stephenson, *Political Power in Medieval Gwynedd: Governance and the Welsh Princes* (2nd ed., Cardiff, 2014), *passim*.

<sup>37</sup> Stephenson, *Political Power in Medieval Gwynedd*, p. 104 n. 47. Smith notes that Tudur ‘certainly served Llywelyn from later that year’ (1263), *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd Prince of Wales*, p. 313 n. 143.

<sup>38</sup> Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, p. 613.

<sup>39</sup> Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, pp. 612–13.



assumed that a young Penwyn would have been close to, if not closely involved with, the events that led to the fall of Gwynedd in 1282–3.

Penwyn, however, may have been too young either to serve Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in a meaningful manner or to have had to make his own choices of allegiance in the difficult years of 1277 and 1282–3. But he appears reasonably regularly in official records from the early years of the Edwardian settlement of North Wales. Associated consistently with the commote of Nant Conwy and the area around Dolwyddelan, he was evidently a trusted royal servant. His service to the Crown is known to have commenced less than three years after the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, as noted in a record of wages paid to him between 1285 and 1287: ‘Penwen de Nanconewey [Nanconwy] receives 16*d.* per week by order of John de Bonovillario: for his wages from St. Martin’s day in the 13<sup>th</sup> year [Nov 11, 1285] to July 8 in the 16<sup>th</sup> year [1287], viz. for 86 weeks, 114*s.* 8*d.*’<sup>40</sup> This shows that he was directly or indirectly in the service of Sir John de Bonovillario (alternatively John de Bevillard or de Bonvillars), a knight who may be identified with the individual named in the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y Tywysogyon* as ‘Jhon Peulard’ and twice in the Black Book of Basingwerk (NLW MS 7006B) version of *Brenhinedd y Saesson* as ‘John Pen[n]ardd’. In both texts he is described as ‘leader of the men of Gwynedd’ (‘tywysauc gwyr Gwynedd’ / ‘tywysoc gwyr Gwynedd’).<sup>41</sup> John was one of a small number of Savoyard knights who played a significant part in the subjugation and subsequent administration of North Wales.<sup>42</sup> He was married to Agnes de Grandson and through her was probably the brother in law of

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<sup>40</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Relating to Wales*, ed. J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1975), p. 118–19.

<sup>41</sup> A. J. Taylor, ‘Who was “John Pennardd”, leader of the men of Gwynedd?’, *English Historical Review*, 91 (1976), 79–80.

<sup>42</sup> Taylor, ‘Who was “John Pennardd”, leader of the men of Gwynedd?’, 79–97.

another leading Savoyard in Wales, Otto de Grandson.<sup>43</sup> Justiciar of North Wales from March 1284, and a veteran of the wars against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Otto was one of Edward I's 'most trusted henchmen'.<sup>44</sup>

Both Welsh chronicles imply that John de Bevillard was 'drowned' ('bodes') at the siege of Rhys ap Maredudd's castle of Dryslwyn which took place in August 1287.<sup>45</sup> In fact, he was buried alive when a tunnel dug under the walls collapsed on him and other men inspecting the progress of the works.<sup>46</sup> At first one might wonder why a knight such as de Bevillard should be undertaking such a dangerous and apparently menial task, but as A. J. Taylor has shown, he was directly and intimately involved in Edward I's castle-building programme in north Wales.<sup>47</sup> In particular, John himself oversaw much of the building work at Conwy castle.<sup>48</sup> This is the likely context for the payments made to Penwyn, who may well have played a role in the defence of the unfinished fortifications. The payments noted above refer to the period immediately before de Bevillard's expedition to Dryslwyn; it is unknown

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<sup>43</sup> Michael G. I. Ray, 'Alien knights in a hostile land: the experience of curial knights in thirteenth-century England and the assimilation of their families', *Historical Research*, 79, 451–76, especially 458, 468, 470, and 473.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> On the siege, see Gildas Research, 'The Siege of Dryslwyn Castle, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, NGR: SN 554203', Report on Historical Assessment, prepared for CADW and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales (Aberystwyth, 2013). [On-line.] Available at: <http://battlefields.rcahmw.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Dryslwyn-1287-Gildas-2013.pdf>, accessed 1 July 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, 'Who was "John Pennardd", leader of the men of Gwynedd?', 88.

<sup>47</sup> Taylor, 'Who was "John Pennardd", leader of the men of Gwynedd?', 95.

<sup>48</sup> A. J. Taylor, *The Welsh Castles of Edward I* (London, 1986), pp. 49–50.

whether Penwyn accompanied him on that fateful journey south. Either way, Penwyn's loyalty was soon to be rewarded by an extension of royal patronage. Records show him receiving further payments in 1292, his name appearing immediately after that of Master James of St George, Edward I's architect and by then John de Bevillard's successor as constable of Harlech castle.<sup>49</sup> On 3 December 1293, Robert de Staundon, the newly appointed justiciar of North Wales, was ordered to deliver to 'Pennan, the king's servant, the bailiwick of the forestship of Naneconewey [Nant Conwy]'. The order noted that the king wished Penwyn to have this bailiwick, 'if he will render therefor as much yearly as any other will give'.<sup>50</sup> Royal generosity had its limits, but the grant was nevertheless a mark of official favour.

Within months of that grant, however, Gwynedd had returned to a state of war: the uprising of Madog ap Llywelyn was underway by Michaelmas 1294.<sup>51</sup> In response, Edward I led yet another campaign into Wales, reaching Conwy by Christmas of that year. An expedition to the Llŷn peninsular followed in the middle of January. Its initial success was tempered when the Welsh captured the provision train with the result that English forces were put on reduced rations when they returned to Conwy. Nevertheless, the overwhelming numbers and resources at the king's disposal soon brought about the end of the uprising.

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<sup>49</sup> John Griffiths, 'Early accounts relating to North Wales, temp. Edward I', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 14/4 (1952), 310–11.

<sup>50</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1272–1307*, p. 333.

<sup>51</sup> The following summary of the revolt is based on A. D. Carr, 'Madog ap Llywelyn: the revolt of 1294–5 in Caernarfonshire', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, 58 (1997), pp. 35–46. See also Craig Owen Jones, *The Revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn* (Pwllheli, 2008); R. F. Walker, 'Madog ap Llywelyn, fl. 1277–1295, rebel', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). [On-line]. Available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed 1 July 2018; and the items quoted in n. 52 below.

Edward progressed triumphantly through Wales and was sufficiently confident in his success that he returned to England before Madog's submission to John de Havering at the end of July.

The presence of the king at the head of an army at Conwy castle over the winter of 1294–5 must have been a key event in the life of Penwyn, whatever the political choice that he had made, either remaining loyal to the Crown or joining forces with Madog. The latter is known to have been active in Penwyn's home territory of Nant Conwy, issuing a grant of land to a certain Bleddyn Fychan at Penmachno on 19 December 1294 in which he called himself 'prince of Wales, lord of Snowdonia'.<sup>52</sup> But the evidence suggests that Penwyn stayed loyal to Edward, for there is a record of a payment made to him at Aberconwy on 26 December.<sup>53</sup> Further grants followed the uprising: on 1 April 1300 the king made a grant to 'Yereward Penwen' of land in Penmachno in the commote of Nant Conwy, 'to the value of 20s. a year [...] and a mill there, extended at 10s., hereforeto granted to him during pleasure'.<sup>54</sup> In 1304/5, 'Iorwerth Penwyn' held the office of *amobrwr* in Nant Conwy.<sup>55</sup> In

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<sup>52</sup> Cledwyn Fychan, 'Bleddyn Fychan a Gwrthryfel Madog ap Llywelyn, 1294–5', *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society*, 49 (2000), 15–22; G. Rex Smith, 'The Penmachno Letter Patent and the Welsh Uprising of 1294–95', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 58 (2009), 49–67 (56–7). Of interest here is a brief English introduction to a Welsh verse that curses Bleddyn Fychan's birth, stating that he was responsible for disinheriting his tenants in Archwedlog in the lordship of Denbigh and creating a park or forest there, presumably with the approval of the earl of Lincoln, see Fychan, 'Bleddyn Fychan a Gwrthryfel Madog ap Llywelyn', 18–19.

<sup>53</sup> *The Book of Prests of the King's Wardrobe 1294–5*, ed. E. B. Fryde (Oxford, 1962), p. 164.

<sup>54</sup> *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292–1301*, p. 507.

<sup>55</sup> E. A. Lewis, 'The Account Roll of the Chamberlain of the Principality of North Wales from Michaelmas 1304 to Michaelmas 1305', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 1/3 (1922), 264. On the *amobr* and *amobrwr*,

1305 the petitions to the Prince of Wales record the grant of the *rhaglawry* of Nant Conwy to Penwyn.<sup>56</sup>

Penwyn was dead by August 1317, for on the second of that month a grant was given ‘during pleasure to Henry Somer of the rhaglawry of the commote of Nauntconewey and the havotry thereof together with the land and mill which Penwen, deceased, held of late in the parts of Wales for life of the king’s grant, at the yearly rent at the Exchequer of Kaernarvan which Penwen rendered’. The justiciar of North Wales, Roger Mortimer of Chirk, was ordered to ensure delivery to Somer.<sup>57</sup> This grant was extended on 20 October 1319.<sup>58</sup> The ‘havotry’ was a vaccary or cattle farm, known in Latin records as a *vaccarium*. The vaccaries of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd at Dolwyddelan in Nant Conwy played a significant part in the princely economy.<sup>59</sup> The havotry enjoyed by Penwyn and his heirs was in the same location.<sup>60</sup>

Penwyn’s sons, however, were evidently unhappy to discover that the grants given to their father were not to be passed on to them. Out of a sense of injustice, they sought remedy from the king. The following petition is by Penwyn’s son Goronwy (Gronow) Llwyd:

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see Lisabeth Johnson, ‘*Amobr and Amobwyr: The Collection of Marriage Fees and Sexual Fines in Late Medieval Wales*’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion*, 18 (2012), 10–21.

<sup>56</sup> *Registrum vulgariter nuncupatum “The Record of Caernarvon”*, ed. Henry Ellis (London, 1838), p. 215.

<sup>57</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1307–1319*, p. 337.

<sup>58</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1319–1327*, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 230.

<sup>60</sup> *The Record of Caernarvon*, p. 10.

His father served the dead King in the conquest of Wales, and afterwards Thudur, petitioner's brother, the present King's esquire (*valettus*) was killed in the battle of Stirling in his service, and also Gronow himself was twice in his expeditions of war and will always be ready, as a faithful and loyal man, for all his commands; wherefore he prays the King to grant him, before all others and for whatever term he shall please, the manor and mill of Tryverew (Trefriw) in Nantkonow (Nantconwy) with their appurtenances, at the farm extended in the Exchequer of Carnarvon.<sup>61</sup>

The petition is undated and although Rees suggests that it was presented in 1330, a date during the reign of Edward II seems more likely. The reference to Penwyn's service 'in the conquest of Wales' is notable, but equally so is the lack of further detail. Had Penwyn been previously recognized for an act of valour in seizing Dafydd ap Gruffudd, a man considered a traitor to Edward I, Goronwy would surely have mentioned it. An obvious parallel would be the claim made by Ynyr Fychan of Nannau of Merionethshire, *rhaglaw* of Tal-y-bont in 1303–4, that the office has been awarded to him (without any fee to the Crown) in recognition of his capture of Madog ap Llywelyn, leader of the Welsh uprising of 1294–5.<sup>62</sup> The claim was dismissed by English officials for lack of evidence, but the episode shows no reticence on behalf of the claimant to draw attention to his role in the capture of a member of Gwynedd's royal house.

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<sup>61</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales*, ed. William Rees (Cardiff, 1975), p. 85.

<sup>62</sup> D. Huw Owen and J. Beverley Smith, 'Government and Society 1283–1536', in J. Beverley Smith and Llinos Beverley Smith (ed), *History of Merioneth, volume II: The Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2001), pp. 69 and 79; *Record of Caernarvon*, p. 220.

Goronwy is specific, however, in giving details of the death of his brother Tudur who is said to have fallen in the king's service at the battle of Stirling. This cannot be the event known today as the Battle of Stirling Bridge, which took place in 1297 during the reign of Edward I. It must rather refer to the Battle of Bannockburn, commonly known in English sources of the fourteenth century as the Battle of Stirling.<sup>63</sup> In Tudur ab Iorwerth y Penwyn (who is not mentioned in the genealogies) we have perhaps the only named Welsh casualty of that most significant of battles.<sup>64</sup>

The undated petition is closely related to an entry in the *Fine Rolls* for 15 December 1330 that orders the justiciar of North Wales to restore various farms of land and offices to the Goronwy Llwyd and his brother Dafydd if it is found that both 'have been of good behaviour towards Edward I, Edward II and the king, and that it is to the king's advantage that they should hold the farms of 'la raglorie' of Nanconwy and the 'avotereie' of Dolwydelan and the mill of Pannan-maghno with the demesne land pertaining to that mill with increment of 2 marks yearly at the Exchequer of Kaernarnvan'. The record proceeds to note that:

they having shewn by their petition before the king and council in Parliament that Edward I for the good service of the said Jorward their father, granted to him the said farm, and that after Jorward's death Edward II granted the same to them, for the good service of the said Jorward, and Tudur their brother, who died in Scotland in the

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<sup>63</sup> G. W. S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 215–16; Philip Morgan, 'The Naming of Battles in the Middle Ages', in Diana Dunn (ed.), *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Liverpool, 2000), p. 41.

<sup>64</sup> On the Welsh at Bannockburn, see Adam Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 38–40.

service of Edward II, but William de Shaldeford, lieutenant of Roger Mortuo Mari, late justice of Wales, having no regard to the good service of their father and brother and themselves to Edward I and Edward II, removed them therefrom'.<sup>65</sup>

Roger Mortimer, earl of March, justiciar of the principality of Wales from 1327, had been executed on 29 November, little more than a fortnight before this order, and like others who had suffered under his rule, Goronwy Llwyd was anxious not to waste time in his search for a remedy.<sup>66</sup> William de Shaldeford was not to be denied, however, and on 3 February 1331 he was given a grant for life, 'for good service, of the rhaglawry of the commote of Nankoneweye and the havotry thereof, with the land and mill which Penwyn, deceased, held in the parts of Wales for life of the grant of Edward II'.<sup>67</sup> The efforts made by Goronwy Llwyd to continue to profit from grants made to his father are beyond the scope of this article. But those efforts were tenacious and doubtless financially costly; had he been able to bolster his claim by stating that his father had captured one of Edward I's enemies he would surely have done so. Equally, the extents of grants that Penwyn did receive, whether in terms of offices or lands, suggests that the role he played in 'the conquest of Wales', to use Goronwy's phrase, was not a negligible one.

### III

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<sup>65</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1327–1337*, p. 209.

<sup>66</sup> On the fall of Mortimer and its impact in Wales, see Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales, 1063–1415*, p. 405–7 and 410.

<sup>67</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1327–1337*, p. 231.



The final source for the career of Penwyn is a truly unexpected one: the *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower (1385–1449), abbot of Inchcolm Abbey, written during the 1430s and 1440s. This chronicle of Scottish history, that has been described as ‘the most elaborate work of Latin literature to survive from medieval Scotland’, was composed as a continuation of the chronicle of John of Fordun that finished in the year 1153.<sup>68</sup> Bower’s work continued up to the death of James I in 1437 so that the later sections relate to events and people contemporary with his own career. He evidently had access to information about the Edwardian conquest of Wales, which he drew upon at a revealing point in his narrative – his account of the Glyndŵr rebellion. As an enthusiast for the liberty of the Scottish kingdom, his treatment of the Edwardian conquest of Wales is presented as a warning of what might befall the Scots themselves should they conduct themselves as the Welsh had done, especially in their disunity. The treachery of the English is also something to be both noted and feared, for it was the immediate cause of the loss of Welsh independence. It is worth quoting Bower’s account of conquest of Gwynedd in full, not only because of its intrinsic interest but also because of the key role it attributes to a certain ‘Penvyn’:

At the start of the conquest of Wales Edward Longshanks acquired it through treachery; for when that king of England was hurrying with an army to Wales there was no easy access open for his army into the interior of the country because of the narrowness and all but impassable rigours of the road, until one of the foremost of the magnates and those of noble blood in all Wales, Penvyn [ ] by name, was bribed to tell the king to cut with axes certain tracks around a wood and by that route to make a passage for the army, so that thus he might easily be able to follow through his plan

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<sup>68</sup> D. E. R. Watt, ‘Walter Bower [Bowmaker] (1385–1449)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). [On-line]. Available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed 1 July 2018.

for the Welsh. This was done, and as a result of this traitor's guidance nearly the whole of Wales was ruined, for within a short time Edward the king of England took Wales, part of which has been conquered [already] and the rest of which was now to be brought into order. He fashioned and constructed thirty-seven strongly fortified castles. Then Penvyn who was a traitor to his own country came very soon to the king to ask for payment of a suitable pension for his opportune advice [as he had been promised]. The king [addressed] him: 'You have earned a pension, Penvyn. Since therefore it seems just that everyone should receive a reward according to his work, and taking into account your bad record and the reputation of your own name, I rank you as more distinguished than others and will hang you more gloriously because you have proved to be more eminent than all the others of your kindred.' A very high gallows was therefore erected on which the traitor was hanged, only after he had been paid the immense weight of gold that had been promised him for his villainy and which swung with him at the [appointed] hour as a warning for all traitors and a disgrace to be heeded. And so Wales was subdued until the time of the second King Richard who for greater merit made it over to the Welsh.<sup>69</sup>

This episode has received relatively little attention from scholars, especially compared to the dramatic account of Abbot John ap Hywel's participation in the Battle of Usk which immediately follows it. The notes of the comprehensive edition of the *Scotichronicon* by D. E. R. Watt refer the reader to a previous discussion of Penvyn's possible identity by Geoffrey

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<sup>69</sup> *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower, vol. 8, ed. D. E. R. Watt (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 99 and 101 (with the Latin original on pp. 98 and 100).

Barrow.<sup>70</sup> Barrow considers the historicity of this tale within the wider context of the relationship between medieval Wales and Scotland.<sup>71</sup> He notes that Bower's story has the 'air of a fable' but also draws attention to the case of John, earl of Atholl, whose execution in 1306 was conducted on a high set of gallows in order to reflect his high birth. He draws a further parallel between 'Penvyn' and Rhys ap Maredudd of Deheubarth, who had submitted to Edward I in 1277 and allowed royal troops to transverse his lands against the king's enemies.<sup>72</sup> After the fall of Gwynedd, however, Rhys's expectations were not met and he rose against the Crown in 1287. He was eventually captured on 2 April 1292 and later executed at York.<sup>73</sup> As in the case of Dafydd ap Gruffudd, his final fate was sealed by Welshmen; as noted by Ralph Griffiths, 'he was betrayed in the woods of Mallaen by four sons of Madog ab Arawdr, Madog Fychan, Trahaearn, Hywel, and Rhys Gethyn, all of them rumoured to be Rhys's own men'.<sup>74</sup> Barrow thus concludes that the story as presented by Bower 'is perhaps not entirely apocryphal'.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower, vol. 8, ed. D. E. R. Watt, p. 195.

<sup>71</sup> G. W. S. Barrow, 'Wales and Scotland in the Middle Ages', *Welsh History Review*, 10/3 (1981), 302–319.

<sup>72</sup> Barrow, 'Wales and Scotland in the Middle Ages', 317. See also Dylan Foster Evans, 'Conquest, roads and resistance in medieval Wales', in Valerie Allen and Ruth Evans (eds), *Roadworks: medieval Britain, medieval roads* (Manchester, 2016), p. 288. Another possible parallel might be the story of Helias Walwyn, who revealed to the English forces a ford on the river Irfon that enabled them to surprise and kill Llywelyn, see Llinos Beverley Smith, 'The Death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: the narratives reconsidered', *Welsh History Review*, 11/2 (1982), 202.

<sup>73</sup> Ralph A. Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 67–83 ('The Revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd, 1287–8').

<sup>74</sup> Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales*, p. 76.

<sup>75</sup> Barrow, 'Wales and Scotland in the Middle Ages', 317.

The key fact that may now be added is that ‘Penvyn’ must surely be our Penwyn.<sup>76</sup> The man who served Edward I and Edward II is surely the man accused of Dafydd ap Gruffudd’s betrayal in the *englyn* copied by John Jones, and he in turn must be the Welsh traitor of Walter Bower’s chronicle. The role ascribed to him by Bower in assisting the English forces to gain access to the Welsh heartlands by felling of trees is perfectly feasible given the huge numbers of wood-cutters and charcoal burners brought to Wales by Edward.<sup>77</sup> The question, though, remains of how Bower came to learn of Penwyn’s treachery.

Firstly, it is likely that Bower was familiar with other narratives of Welsh betrayal as they were common enough in later medieval England. An instructive example is found in the Lanercost chronicle, which covers the years 1201 to 1346 and is associated with the Augustinian priory of Lanercost which held lands on both sides of the Scottish border. For the years 1201 to 1297 the text is in the main a copy of a now lost Franciscan chronicle, compiled in all likelihood by Richard of Durham.<sup>78</sup> One of its recurrent themes is conflict between the king of England and the king of Scotland, wars in which Welsh soldiers, and in particular Welsh infantry, would play a significant part.<sup>79</sup> In the Lanercost chronicle’s account of the siege of Edinburgh castle in 1296, an individual Welshman in whom Edward has placed particular confidence is the subject of a short narrative. From the first, the actions

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<sup>76</sup> This identification is made in Foster Evans, ‘Conquest, roads and resistance in medieval Wales’, p. 300 n. 81.

<sup>77</sup> On this and its cultural impact in Wales, see Foster Evans, ‘Conquest, roads and resistance in medieval Wales’, pp. 287–95.

<sup>78</sup> On it, see Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550–c.1307* (London, 1996), pp. 432–8; A. G. Little, ‘The Authorship of the Lanercost Chronicle’, *English Historical Review*, 31 (1916), 269–70 and 21 (1917), 48–9; Annette Kehnel, ‘The Narrative Tradition of the Medieval Franciscan Friars on the British Isles. Introduction to the Sources’, *Franciscan Studies*, 65 (2006), 461–530 (especially 507–9).

<sup>79</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 24–44.

of this individual Welshman are taken as representative of the nation as a whole: the narrative is explicitly characterised as ‘a memorable instance of the untrustworthiness of the Welsh’.<sup>80</sup> Edward himself is said to have chosen a fleet-footed Welshman, ‘whom he reckoned most trustworthy’, to carry letters to London.<sup>81</sup> ‘This man’, says the chronicle, ‘was named Lewyn (as befitted his fate), which in English is pronounced Lefwyn’.<sup>82</sup> The parenthetical comment nonplussed its translator Herbert Maxwell, who noted that ‘[t]here is here some play on words which is not apparent to modern wits’. But the ‘Lewyn’ of the chronicle presumably represents the Welsh name ‘Llywelyn’ (although the chronicle elsewhere uses a more accurate representation), and the fate associated with the name must be that of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, killed by Edward’s forces on 11 December 1282. Llywelyn’s death had been met with grim satisfaction by the English, who considered him to be a perfidious traitor. An anonymous poem recorded in the annals of Chester described him as ‘the prince of deceptions’, ‘a school of the wicked’ and:

A cruel leader, a murderer of the pious,  
[Sprung from] the dregs of the Trojans,  
From a lying race, a cause of evils.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272–1346*, ed. Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons), p. 142.

<sup>81</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, p. 142.

<sup>82</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, p. 142.

<sup>83</sup> *Annales Cestrienses or Chronicle of the Abbey of S. Werburg at Chester* (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Soc., 1887), p. 110 with translation from p.111; see also Smith, ‘Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and the Welsh Historical Consciousness’, 1.

Lewyn shows himself to be consistent with English perceptions of his namesake (and thus unworthy of the English king's trust) by wasting the money given to him by the king and then by undertaking a more serious act of deception. He spends Saturday night in a tavern, and on the following morning declares that he will not leave until he himself has made an assault on the castle. To the apparent amusement of the English forces, he approaches the castle with one of his comrades carrying his shield (*peltus*) before him. He himself carries a *ballista* (crossbow); his shield-carrying companion is presumably charged with providing protection akin to the *pavisarii* of the Hundred Years War.<sup>84</sup> Upon reaching the castle gates, however, Lewyn calls for a rope to be let down so that he might let the Scots have the letters with which he has been entrusted.

The chronicler informs his reader that what follows was related to him personally by the constable of Edinburgh castle, who was 'taking the air' when Lewyn was brought before him, with the royal letters in his hand:

'Behold, my lord,' said he, 'the secrets of the King of England; examine them and see. Give me also part of the wall to defend, and see whether I know how to shoot with a balista.'<sup>85</sup>

But the constable is so outraged by Lewyn's treachery that he returns both the document and the Welshman himself to Edward. The king plays his part in this chivalric double act, calling

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<sup>84</sup> On the *pavesarii* who protected bowmen with a shield called a 'pavise', see Kelly DeVries, 'The introduction and use of the pavise in the Hundred Years War', *Arms and Armour*, 4/2 (2007), 93–100. Lewyn appears to be using his companion as a *pavisarius*, but the pavise appears not to have been known under that name in England until the middle of the fourteenth century, see DeVries, 'The introduction and use of the pavise', 95.

<sup>85</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, pp. 142–3.

off the bombardment and withdrawing his threat to have the whole garrison killed. Indeed, he even allows the besieged Scots to send to John Balliol to request a relieving force, although in the event, the Scottish king is unable to offer any practical assistance. The narrative then returns to the treacherous Lewyn:

But let me not be silent about the punishment of the aforesaid traitor, Lewyn. He was taken, tried, drawn and hanged on a regular gibbet constructed for his crime. This tale I have inserted here in order that wise men may avoid the friendship of deceivers.<sup>86</sup>

The Lanercost chronicle at times expresses a great distaste for the behaviour of the Scots,<sup>87</sup> but here the narrative situates both the Edward I and the Scottish constable securely within chivalric discourses of war, whereas the Welshman Lewyn's failure to abide by that code leads to his deserved execution. As has been noted by Rees Davies, this exclusion of the Welsh from Anglo-Norman chivalry is a recurrent theme in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>88</sup> The veracity of the account, however, is of little import; indeed, Kellner has said of the work of Richard of Durham that it 'might be called a cross-breed between *exempla*-collection and chronicle, a mixture between "real" history and fable'.<sup>89</sup> But its narrative echoes that of Penwyn, in that an act of treachery committed by a Welshman on behalf of one belligerent is not only unappreciated but leads directly to the protagonist's execution.

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<sup>86</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, p. 144.

<sup>87</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, pp. 438.

<sup>88</sup> R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100–1300* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 51.

<sup>89</sup> Kellner, 'The Narrative Tradition of the Medieval Franciscan Friars', 509.

An account given by Walter of Guisborough, who compiled his chronicle about 1305, of the part played by the Welsh in the Scottish campaign of 1298 also has a good deal in common with the story of Lewyn. He relates that a lack of supplies was partially alleviated by the arrival of 200 tuns of wine which was distributed amongst the troops. The Welsh soldiers, already in low spirits, drank more than their fair share and rioted. English cavalry was required to restore order, resulting in the deaths of eighty of the Welsh soldiers. There were threats that the Welsh would join forces with the Scots, but Edward himself was unconcerned. He declared that both Scots and Welsh were his enemies, and that he would defeat them both. The king went on to a crushing victory over William Wallace at the battle of Falkirk, with the Welsh as passive onlookers until an English victory was assured, at which point they enthusiastically joined the carnage.<sup>90</sup> This story may be juxtaposed with another anecdote relating to Wales which is told in the same chronicle. As noted above, during the war with Madog ap Llywelyn, Edward and his forces were compelled to spend the winter of 1294–5 in straightened circumstances at Conwy. The chronicler relates that the king forewent what little wine that had been kept for him so that it could be shared amongst the troops.<sup>91</sup> Thus by means of two parallel narratives, Edward's temperance and loyal generosity are implicitly compared with the incontinence and feckless treachery of the Welsh.

Walter Bower could thus have had access to more than one tale of Welsh treachery and disloyalty as a model for the character of Penwyn. But as noted by Barrow, certain aspects of his narrative point to a more direct relationship with Wales. In particular, the form 'Brinbiga' (Brynbuga) used for Usk in the account of the Battle of Pwll Melyn suggests a

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<sup>90</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden Soc., 3rd series, lxxxix, 1957), pp. 325–8. See also Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 481.

<sup>91</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, p. 252.



Welsh-speaking informant, as of course does the use of the name ‘Penwyn’.<sup>92</sup> Bower himself supplies us with the names of two such men, both bishops who fled to Scotland in 1406: ‘sir Griffin’ the bishop of Bangor and an un-named bishop of St Asaph.<sup>93</sup> These must be Gruffudd Young, Owain Glyndŵr’s chancellor who was declared bishop by the Avignon papacy on 14 February 1407, and John (or Siôn / Ieuan) Trefor of St Asaph.<sup>94</sup> The story of Penwyn, the traitor who lost everything, may well have reached Bower through men such as these who were familiar with Penwyn’s tale and who had themselves wrestled with their own consciences to join Owain Glyndŵr in the eventful years of the early fifteenth century. It may that they, like Bower, had used the Penwyn to frame their understanding of two different but related events: the Edwardian conquest of the thirteenth century and the Glyndŵr rebellion of their own age.

#### IV

Bishop John Trefor, like Owain Glyndŵr himself, was amongst the patrons of the poet Iolo Goch (*fl.* 1345–97 or later).<sup>95</sup> Iolo, alongside Dafydd ap Gruffudd and Owain Glyndŵr, appears in a further and undated narrative of treachery recorded by John Jones in NLW MS 3039B [Mostyn 131]. This short text opens with a gruesome evocation of Dafydd’s execution (p. 565):

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<sup>92</sup> Barrow, ‘Wales and Scotland in the Middle Ages’, 318.

<sup>93</sup> *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower, vol. 8, pp. 66 and 67.

<sup>94</sup> See also R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 190 and 214.

<sup>95</sup> D. R. Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Iolo Goch* (Cardiff, 1989), pp. 78–80 and 275–285; Dafydd Johnston (ed. and trans.), *Iolo Goch: Poems* (Llandysul, 1993), pp. 70–79 and 170–2.

Davydd ap Gr: ap Ll'n ap Ier: Drwyndwn pan ddihenyddwyd yn Amvythig ac wrth i ddihenyddv y kymerth y kigidd i galon ac ai tafles ir tan ac a neidiodd y galon or tan ac a drawodd y kigidd ar i lygad ac a dynnodd i lygad.<sup>96</sup>

[Dafydd ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Drwyndwn when he was executed at Shrewsbury; in executing him the butcher took his heart and threw it on the fire but the heart leapt from the fire and struck the butcher in his eye and removed his eye.]

The immediate context of this narrative is again one of treachery, though not Dafydd's. Immediately after its account of Dafydd's execution, the text describes a letter written by Henry IV to Owain's enemy, Lord Grey of Ruthin, asking him to betray Owain. Grey agrees and invites Owain to dine with him at a set time and place. Owain accepts but on the condition that Grey bring no more than thirty men with him. At the appointed time Grey arrives with the agreed number of men, but with a large force following from a distance, hidden from view. Owain, meanwhile, has the foresight to send some of his men to camp on a nearby hill, and half-way through the meal they see a forced of armed men filling the vale beneath them. They send the poet Iolo Goch to warn Owain, but in such a way as not to arouse Grey's suspicion. Thus, Iolo sings the following *englyn*, safe in the knowledge that although Grey understands Welsh speech or narration ('traethawd'), he does not understand 'our poetry' ('yn mydyr ni')

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<sup>96</sup> Transcribed in Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Iolo Goch*, p. 174. There is, of course, no evidence that Dafydd's executioner, Geoffrey of Shrewsbury, suffered in any way for his work. He is recorded as having been paid twenty shillings for his services, see Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 579, n. 235.

Coffa ben, perchen parch urddedig – lys,

A las nos Nadolig;

Coffa golwyth Amwythig,

O’r tân a neidiodd, naid dig.<sup>97</sup>

[Remember a lord, the owner of the respect of a noble court, / who was killed on Christmas eve; / remember Shrewsbury’s piece of cooked meat / that leapt from the fire, a leap of anger.]

In evoking the tale of Dafydd’s heart, Iolo is able to warn Owain of impending treachery, unbeknownst to the Englishman who can understand Welsh but not its poetic discourse. The reference to Christmas eve is factually incorrect, but it associates the *englyn* with the entry on Dafydd’s death in *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, which also, as we have seen, dates the execution to Christmas eve. The text of *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, as found in the Black Book of Basingwerk (NLW MS 7006D), was copied by the poet Gutun Owain (*fl. c.* 1451–98), an indication, were one required, that the poets were indeed interested in written historical narratives.<sup>98</sup> The dating of the execution to Christmas eve may have been an innovation of

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<sup>97</sup> Johnston, *Gwaith Iolo Goch*, p. 173. The *englyn* is found in several manuscript copies from which Johnston provides a critical apparatus; the version given here is Johnston’s edition in modern Welsh orthography. He also notes that the *englyn* appears earlier in John Jones’s manuscript, without the prose introduction, but followed by two other *englynion* that also seem to warn of treachery, see p. 174. See also the brief discussion in Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), pp. 102–3.

<sup>98</sup> *Brenhinedd y Saesson or The Kings of the Saxons*, p. xix. On Gutun Owain, see J. E. Caerwyn Williams, ‘Gutun Owain’, in A. O. H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (eds) and Dafydd Johnston (rev.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature, vol. II, 1282–c. 1550* (Cardiff, 1997), pp. 240–55.

either the *englyn* or the chronicle, or it may be that both share a common source. It may also be the case that the *englyn* and its framing narrative are not contemporary with each other. Nevertheless, taken together, both show a reworking of the details of the execution itself, placing Dafydd's death on the eve of the Saviour's birth, and re-presenting it so that it becomes a means of saving Owain Glyndŵr's life, interconnecting the Edwardian conquest and Glyndŵr's rebellion in a thoroughly unexpected manner. Dafydd, the victim of Edward I's cruelty, has a two-fold revenge – on his own executioner and on Glyndŵr's treacherous foe. The date of his death, though incorrect, is meaningful.

## V

The story of Penwyn and its associated narratives of treachery throw light on some of the processes that both transmitted and transformed Welsh historical memory. The question of whether or not he betrayed Dafydd ap Gruffudd is something that we cannot — at least currently — answer with any certainty, although it is evident that he did contribute to the 'conquest of Wales', in the words of his own son. Although the story of his supposed betrayal rests – in a Welsh context – on a single *englyn*, the evidence of the *Scotichronicon* suggest that that verse reflects a narrative with a much wider currency. The *englyn* on Dafydd's heart shows that his execution had assumed something of a folkloric dimension, and yet its mis-dating of the event indicates a connection with a written source belonging to a well established literary genre, the chronicle *Brenhinedd y Saesson*. These *englynion*, anonymous and on the very fringes of the professional poetic culture, hint at the existence of a lively semi-popular discourse that was in all likelihood partly oral and partly literary. That culture was not part and parcel of mainstream bardic culture and was not transmitted via the work of the professional poets, at least not directly so and certainly not under their names. But the bardic poets clearly did have access to narratives – or snippets of narratives – about the

princes upon which they could draw at certain times. For instance, the centenary of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's death was noted by two poets, Gruffudd ap Maredudd (*fl.* 1366–82) and Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen (*fl.* c. 1350–c. 1390).<sup>99</sup> Rhys Goch Eryri (*fl.* 1428–31) could compare post Glyndŵr-rebellion Gwynedd to its condition during the imprisonment of Gruffudd ap Cynan (d. 1137).<sup>100</sup> Dafydd ab Edmwnd (*fl.* 1450–97) had access to traditions about the illness and death of Dafydd ap Llywelyn of Gwynedd (c. 1215–46).<sup>101</sup> In 1485, Lewys Môn (d. 1527) was able to compare the captivity of his patron William Gruffudd of Penrhyn, Llandygái, at the Tower of London with the previous captivity of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (d. 1244) at the same location.<sup>102</sup> Llywelyn ap Gutun could refer to a tradition that the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd has been caused by the betrayal of a certain Madog Min.<sup>103</sup> Some of this material could have been taken from chronicles, but oral traditions, possibly including the re-oralization of written materials, were also important sources of information. The anonymous text known as ‘Y Tri Chof’ (‘The Three Memorials’), which was copied by John Jones of Gellilyfdy, states that the first *cof* that the poets should preserve

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<sup>99</sup> Dafydd Johnston, ‘Tri chyfeiriad at Lywelyn ap Gruffudd’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 38 (1989), 97–101.

<sup>100</sup> Dylan Foster Evans (ed.), *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri* (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 111–15, and 226–33.

<sup>101</sup> Peredur I. Lynch, ‘“Propaganda’r Prydydd”: Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, Dafydd ap Llywelyn a’r beirdd’, in Jason Walford Davies (ed.), *Gweledigaethau: Cyfrol Deyrnged yr Athro Gwyn Thomas* (Cyhoeddiadau Barddas, 2007), pp. 79–120 (especially 100–108); Eurys Rolant (ed.), ‘Cerddi Beirdd yr Uchelwyr’, in Alan Llwyd (ed.), *Llywelyn y Beirdd* (Cyhoeddiadau Barddas, 1984), p. 116.

<sup>102</sup> Eurys I. Rowlands (ed.), *Gwaith Lewys Môn* (Caerdydd, 1975), p. 112; Rolant, ‘Cerddi Beirdd yr Uchelwyr’, p. 119.

<sup>103</sup> Iestyn R. Daniel (ed.), *Gwaith Llywelyn ap Gutun* (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 40–3; Rolant, ‘Cerddi Beirdd yr Uchelwyr’, p. 110.

was ‘the History of the noble Acts of the kings & princes of this land of Bruttaen and Cambria’. The Edwardian conquest, however, has made that *cof* redundant: ‘that there is noe History written by the Bards sythence the death of Llewelyn ap Gruffyth ap Llewelyn the last prince of Cambria for they had noe princes of there owne to sett fourth there acts’.<sup>104</sup> The career of Gutun Owain and others show that to be an exaggeration. But anonymous poets and a flourishing oral culture probably did more to keep memories of the princes alive than did the more formal world of the professional praise poets, whose immediate concern was the representation and performance of the personal honour of their patrons.<sup>105</sup> The tales discussed in this article were not circulated purposelessly but were refashioned and reinterpreted for new generations and new circumstances, forming part of the community’s collective or social memory.<sup>106</sup> That is the best way to understand the narratives of Dafydd ap Gruffudd and Penwyn and their relevance to both the Edwardian conquest and the Glyndŵr rebellion in Wales.

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<sup>104</sup> G. J. Williams, ‘Tri Chof Ynys Brydain’, *Llên Cymu*, 4/4 (1955), 234–39 (235 and 238).

<sup>105</sup> The lack of references by the poets of the *uchelwyr* to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd is noted by Rolant as only to be expected, ‘Cerddi Beirdd yr Uchelwyr’, 105. On personal honour as the key driver of praise poetry (rather than abstractions such as ‘nation’), see Barry J. Lewis, ‘Late Medieval Welsh Praise Poetry and Nationality: The Military Career of Guto’r Glyn Revisited’, *Studia Celtica*, 45 (2011), 128.

<sup>106</sup> On the concept of ‘collective’ or ‘social memory’, see Maurice Halbwachs, *La memoire collective* (2nd revised ed., Paris, 1968); James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992).