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# GWILYM AP GRUFFYDD AND THE RISE OF THE PENRHYN ESTATE

TO students of the history of late-medieval Wales, Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym is now a familiar figure. He is credited with laying the foundations of the first substantial estate in Gwynedd to be built up by purchase and the family which he founded was to dominate the principality of north Wales until the Union. It was the late Glyn Roberts who first drew attention to Gwilym's significance and it was one of his pupils, the late John Rowland Jones, who solved the mystery of his connection with Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur of Llaniestyn near Beaumaris, who died in 1376 and, in his will, left the lands he had acquired in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire in *tir prid* to Gwilym's father.<sup>1</sup> He also cleared up the inconsistencies and anachronisms in the traditional account of the origins of the Penrhyn family. J. R. Jones's thesis has often been cited and quoted; it is certainly one of the significant contributions to the study of north Wales in the later middle ages and of those leaders of the native community who formed the Welsh political nation after 1282 and whose dominance continued after 1536. Glyn Roberts and J. R. Jones based their work on the rich collection of Penrhyn deeds and family papers deposited in the Library of the University College of North Wales in 1939. In 1983 this collection was augmented by a further deposit from Penrhyn Castle, the existence of which was previously unknown; it included a large quantity of medieval documents relating to Anglesey and Caernarfonshire.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances it seemed appropriate to look again at the beginnings of the Penrhyn estate and at Gwilym ap Gruffydd himself, building on the work of J. R. Jones.

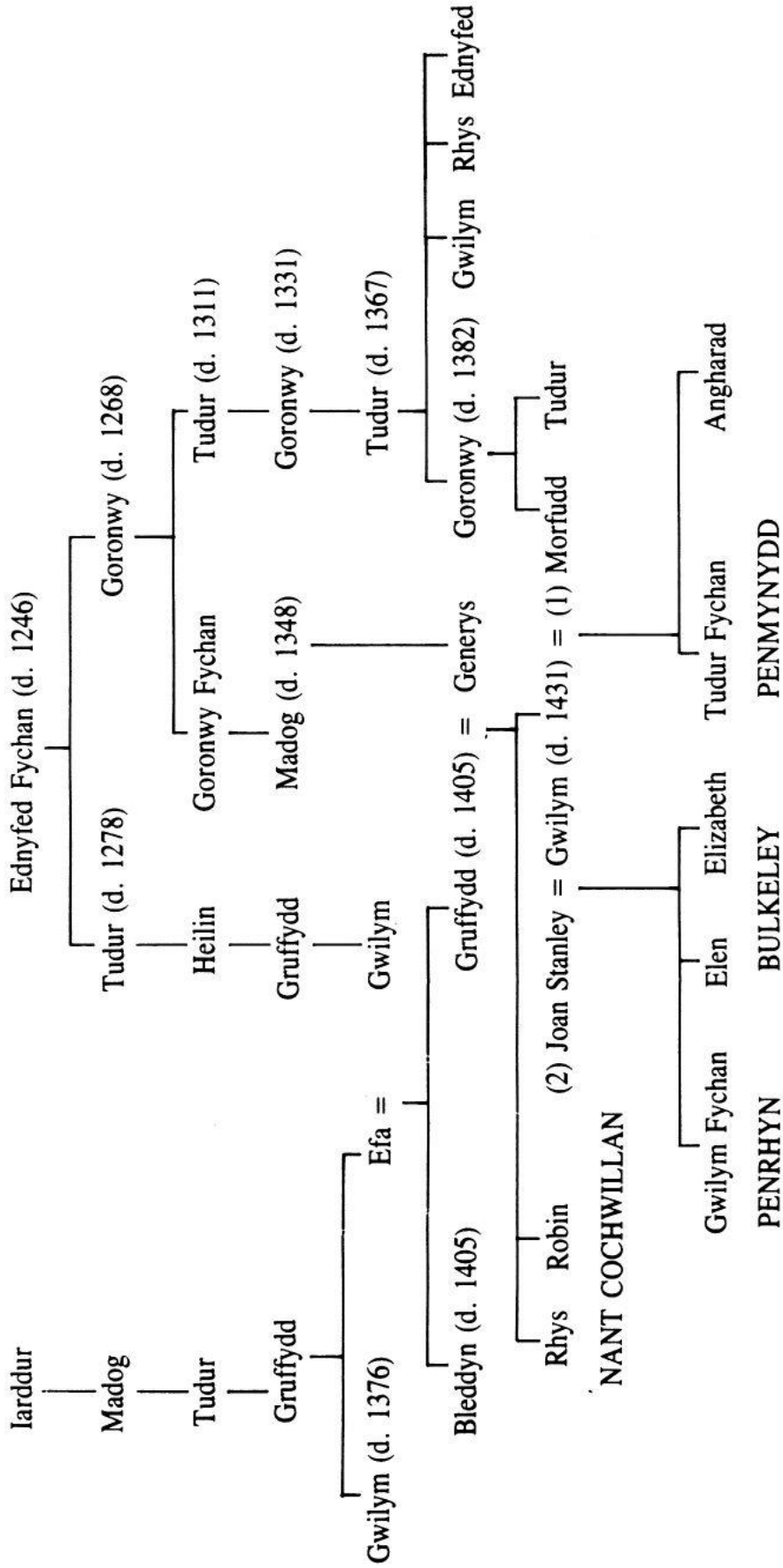
Like so many landed estates, Penrhyn began with a marriage. In about 1340 Gwilym's grandfather, Gwilym ap Heilin ap Gruffydd ap Tudur ab Ednyfed Fychan, married Efa, the daughter of Gruffydd ap Tudur ap Madog ab Iarddur. The origins of both families lay in service to the native princes in the thirteenth century; Tudur ab Ednyfed Fychan was Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's seneschal from 1268 to 1278, and Tudur ap Madog served both

<sup>1</sup> Glyn Roberts, 'Wyrion Eden' in *idem, Aspects of Welsh History* (Cardiff, 1969), pp. 206-14; *idem*, 'Teulu Penmynydd', *ibid.*, pp. 254-58; *idem*, in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, pp. 1123-24; J. R. Jones, 'The development of the Penrhyn estate to 1431' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wales, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> I am particularly indebted to my colleague Tomos Roberts, archivist of U.C.N.W., for access to this collection and for much advice and fruitful discussion while this paper was in preparation.



THE ANCESTRY OF GWILYM AP GRUFFYDD



that prince and Dafydd ap Llywelyn.<sup>3</sup> The descendants of Heilin ap Tudur were traditionally associated with Nant in the commote of Prestatyn in Flintshire and with Llangynhafal in Dyffryn Clwyd, but the latter was, in fact, part of the patrimony of Tudur ap Madog.<sup>4</sup> Tudur's son Gruffydd was described as being of the cantref of Dyffryn Clwyd when he gave evidence to the royal commission investigating Welsh law in 1281; in 1284 he was appointed constable of Dolwyddelan castle by Edward I, and in 1301-2 and 1303-4 he was *rhaglaw* of the cantref of Englefield.<sup>5</sup> The ancestral lands of Tudur ap Madog appear to have been in the township of Bodfaeo in the Caernarfonshire commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf and in Dyffryn Clwyd; he was granted lands in Pennant Gwernogof in Eifionydd by Dafydd ap Llywelyn and he was also granted the two Anglesey townships of Penhwnllys and Twrgarw in the commote of Dindaethwy. Both of these townships contained a single *gwely*, that of Tudur ap Madog, held by privileged tenure in 1352.<sup>6</sup> Gruffydd ap Tudur and his wife Margaret acquired a quarter of the township of Carnychan in the commote of Prestatyn in 1288. Gruffydd was dead by 1311; in that year three of his kinsmen, his brother Hywel and his nephews Gruffydd and Madog ap Dafydd, quitclaimed to his son Gwilym all the lands in Llangynhafal, Gwylgre, Carnychan, Abercain, Bwlch, Bodfaeo, Pennant Gwernogof and Penhwnllys which Gwilym had earlier conveyed to them.<sup>7</sup> These transactions suggest the creation of an entail; if so, it is probably one of the earliest examples in north Wales.

Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur had, therefore, inherited a substantial estate scattered over a large stretch of north Wales; he was also buying land on his own account.<sup>8</sup> He appears from time to time in the surviving records; in 1331 he was one of the sureties for Hywel ap Gruffydd in the action he brought against William de Shalford, accusing him of having brought about the death of Edward II, and in 1335 Gwilym ap Gruffydd was one of those summoned from Anglesey for military service in Scotland. There was a further summons in 1338, this time for service in France. In 1343 Gwilym

<sup>3</sup> For details of the careers of Tudur ab Ednyfed Fychan and Tudur ap Madog, see David Stephenson, *The Governance of Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 1984), pp. 218-21.

<sup>4</sup> J. R. Jones drew attention to this (op. cit., p. 38); the point is also made by D. Stephenson, op. cit., p. 131n.

<sup>5</sup> *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, Various*, pp. 199, 288; Arthur Jones (ed.), *Flintshire Minister's Accounts, 1301-1328* (Prestatyn, 1913), pp. 9, 42.

<sup>6</sup> David Stephenson, op. cit., p. 132; *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, i, 1216-1307, no. 1468; *Record of Caernarvon*, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> University College of North Wales, Penrhyn 404, 405.

<sup>8</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 406 (Gwylgre, Flints., 1316), 407 (bondmen in Bodfa, Angl., 1330), 217 (bondmen, Bodfa, 1347).

ap Gruffydd of Anglesey did fealty to the Black Prince's representatives and two years later he was one of those charged with conspiracy and still at large following the assassination in Bangor of the prince's attorney in north Wales, Henry de Shalford.<sup>9</sup> In 1352 he was one of the heirs of Gwely Tudur ap Madog in Penhwnllys and of Gafael Iarddur in Bodfaeo.<sup>10</sup> He married Gwenllian, the daughter of Madog ap Gruffydd; they had no children and it was this infertility that really laid the foundations of the Penrhyn estate.

At Penhwnllys on 29 October 1375, Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur, who would then have not been far off his eightieth year, made his will.<sup>11</sup> There were the usual pious legacies, to the Franciscans of Llan-faes in whose church he wished to be buried, to the Dominicans of Bangor and to his own parish church of Llaniestyn; there were also some small legacies to friends and relations. But the principal legatee was his nephew, Gruffydd ap Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Heilin, his sister's son, to whom he left all his *tir prid* lands in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire as well as all his bondmen, twenty in number and all named in the will; the bequest of the bondmen suggests that the tenements which they held were also left to Gruffydd. Gwilym died some time before 26 May 1376, when his will was proved. Gruffydd inherited the lands acquired in *tir prid*, but his hereditary lands at Llangynhafal were divided among his male heirs, two first cousins and three first cousins once removed.<sup>12</sup> However, at Ruthin on 4 May 1377 seven first cousins once removed quitclaimed all their rights to lands in Llangynhafal to Gruffydd ap Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Heilin, which suggests that Gwilym had intended Gruffydd to have the entire inheritance.<sup>13</sup> On 25 January 1378 Gwenllian conveyed all her rights in Gwilym's *tir prid* lands in Anglesey to Gruffydd.<sup>14</sup> Some land also appears to have changed hands by purchase; in 1383 the sheriff of Anglesey acknowledged receipt of a fine of ten marks from Gruffydd and his brother Bleddyn for licence to buy lands from Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur.<sup>15</sup> Gruffydd ap Gwilym was not unmindful of his

<sup>9</sup> T. F. Tout, 'The captivity and death of Edward of Carnarvon' in idem, *Collected Papers*, iii (Manchester, 1934), 186; *Rotuli Scotiae*, i, 311b; *Treaty Rolls, 1337-1139*, no. 898; *Archaeologia Cambrensis, Original Documents* (1877), p. clii; J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (Cardiff, 1935), p. 228. At some time in the 1330s Gwilym took the law into his own hands by pursuing and killing an outlawed felon, Ieuan Goch: William Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), pp. 120-21.

<sup>10</sup> *Record of Caernarvon*, pp. 73, 14.

<sup>11</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 5.

<sup>12</sup> R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), p. 424n.

<sup>13</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 4 May 1377.

<sup>14</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 25 January 1378.

<sup>15</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 410.

debt to his uncle; he and Gwenllian were the donors of the effigy of St. Iestyn which is still to be seen in Llaniestyn church.<sup>16</sup>

Gruffydd ap Gwilym of Nant appears for the first time in 1365, when he was a witness to a *prid* conveyance of land in Prestatyn; in 1370 Cynwrig ab Ieuan ap Gruffydd was accused of taking *commortha* to the value of 20 shillings from him and others.<sup>17</sup> Surviving deeds do not record many purchases of land, but he had good reason to be content with what he had; not only did he inherit a substantial estate, but he also married an heiress<sup>18</sup>. His wife was Generys, the only daughter of Madog ap Goronwy Fychan of Gwredog in the commote of Twrcelyn in Anglesey and great-grand-daughter of Goronwy ab Ednyfed Fychan and therefore a distant relative. Madog died in 1348; Generys was under age and in 1356-57 her wardship and marriage were sold for £30 to her second cousin Hywel ap Goronwy, archdeacon of Anglesey and better known for his involvement in the assassination of Henry de Shalford in 1345, and Ithel ap Roppert, another prominent cleric.<sup>19</sup> Generys brought with her part of the township of Gwredog and also a share in Gafael Goronwy ab Ednyfed in the township of Cororion in Arllechwedd Uchaf.<sup>20</sup>

By Generys, Gruffydd had three sons, Gwilym, Robin and Rhys. Despite the extensive lands which he had acquired in north-west Wales by inheritance and marriage, he continued to live in Flintshire and his lands there passed eventually to Rhys. He appears to have conveyed his lands in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire to Gwilym and Robin, from whom was descended the Cochwillan family; the nucleus of the Cochwillan estate was probably Gafael Iarddur in Bodfaeo.<sup>21</sup> One pedigree refers to a deed of 1389, now lost, transferring lands in Bodfaeo to Gwilym, and in the same year Gwilym and his wife, Morfudd, obtained a licence from the Crown to acquire lands and

<sup>16</sup> C. A. Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales* (Cardiff, 1968), pp. 220-23. Dr Gresham suggests that the Efa whose effigy, carved by the same sculptor, is in Bangor cathedral was Gwilym's sister, the wife of Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Heilin (*ibid.*, pp. 235-37).

<sup>17</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 29 September 1365; Public Record Office, Chester 25/24 m.7b. For a detailed account of Gruffydd, see J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-92.

<sup>18</sup> For acquisitions by Gruffydd, see U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 6 October 1381 (Prestatyn), 8 December 1381 (Bodfa and Twrgarw, 2 deeds) and 1 November 1378 (Bodfa and Twrgarw).

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., S.C. 6/1149/5, m.6a.; 1149/7, m.5a.

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 52; according to an endorsement on a document of 20 June 1431 (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, *inspeximus* of an inquisition *post mortem* of Gwilym ap Gruffydd), probably in the hand of Gwilym's son, Gwilym Fychan, 'have in mynde that Ieuan ap Gruff' ap Mortyn tolde to me William Gruffith that the manor of the Penryn that my Fader has bylde stondes vpon the lande of Mad' ap Gron' Vichan Fader to my graunt dame Generes vch Mad' ap Gron' Vichan'.

<sup>21</sup> J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

X bondmen in Penhwnllys and Twrgarw from his father.<sup>22</sup> The marriage of Gwilym and Morfudd was to add in due course to his wealth. Like him and his mother, she was a descendant of Ednyfed Fychan; her father, Goronwy ap Tudur of Penmynydd, died in 1382, leaving lands in Penmynydd and Dinsilwy Rhys in Dindaethwy, a township adjacent to Penhwnllys, and the rest of Gafael Goronwy ab Ednyfed in Cororion. There were also lands in Cwmlannerch in the commote of Nantconwy in Caernarfonshire which Goronwy had acquired in 1377.<sup>23</sup> Goronwy's heir was his son Tudur, who was under age at the time of his father's death. Tudur died some time before 1400 and his lands passed to Morfudd and Gwilym, who had one son, Tudur Fychan, and a daughter Angharad. They then seem to have moved from Penhwnllys to Penmynydd, the seat of the senior line of the descendants of Ednyfed Fychan.

J Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym was certainly well established in Anglesey in the last decade of the fourteenth century. There has been some confusion in the past because another Gwilym ap Gruffydd was active in the county at the same time; this was Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur Llwyd of Eiriannell in the commote of Llifon, who held several local offices, had begun to accumulate an estate on the western side of the island and was killed in the Glyn Dŵr revolt.<sup>24</sup> Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym first held office in 1390-91, when he was steward of the commote of Menai. From 1391 he was farming the township of Nantmawr in Twrcelyn and he was joint-*rhingyll* of Dindaethwy in 1394-95 and *rhingyll* in 1395-96. In the latter year he was appointed sheriff of Anglesey, an office which he held until Richard II granted the county to Sir William le Scrope for life in 1397.<sup>25</sup>

At the end of the century, Gwilym had a respectable estate, with an expectation of more to come. There were some purchases of land in both Anglesey and Caernarfonshire; the most important of these was the acquisition in 1400 from John Hammond of the lands which had come to him through his wife Marured, formerly the wife of Ednyfed ap Tudur, Morfudd's uncle, who had died in 1382.<sup>26</sup> But in 1400 came the event

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 94, citing a pedigree in National Library of Wales, Peniarth 289; U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 4 April 1389.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O., S.C6/1150/10 m.9b; U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 409.

<sup>24</sup> A. D. Carr, *Medieval Anglesey* (Llangefni, 1982), pp. 175, 322-23, 323n.

<sup>25</sup> P.R.O., S.C.6/1151/6, m.7a; 1151/7, m.6a; 1152/1, m.4a; 1152/2, m.4a; 1152/1, m.7a; 1152/3, m.8a; A. D. Carr, op cit., p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> Henry Rowlands, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (2nd edn., London, 1766), p. 136n. For other acquisitions, see Henry Rowlands, 'Antiquitates parochiales' in *Arch. Camb.*, 1846, p. 391 (bondmen, Dwyran, 1400), and *ibid.*, 1849, pp. 110-11 (Bodlew, Angl., 1403); U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 28 October 1405 (Cororion, 2 deeds), 12 April 1409 (Bodewran, Angl., 1409). The deeds in Penrhyn Additional are all conveyances in *tir prid*.

which was to transform his fortunes, the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr. This revolt had a profound effect on the descendants of Ednyfed Fychan. The leading members of the lineage in 1400 were Morfudd's uncles, Rhys and Gwilym ap Tudur; J. R. Jones suggested that had it not been for the revolt 'the succeeding century would witness a trial of strength between Rhys and Gwilym and their descendants and the family of Gwilym ap Gruffydd'.<sup>27</sup> Rhys and Gwilym ap Tudur were involved in the revolt from the start, and it was Gwilym who seized Conwy castle on Good Friday 1401.<sup>28</sup> But neither Gwilym ap Gruffydd nor his father joined at the beginning. In Flintshire the revolt began in the late summer of 1403 and it was presumably then, at the earliest, that Gruffydd ap Gwilym and his brother Bleddyn threw in their lot with the rebels.<sup>29</sup> For them it proved fatal; on 2 October 1406 an inquisition found that Gruffydd ap Gwilym ap Gruffydd had died in rebellion.<sup>30</sup> He had held a messuage, three tenements and twelve acres in Nant; his brother Bleddyn had also died in rebellion, leaving a messuage and forty acres in Gwylgre.

The story of Gwilym's involvement is rather more complicated. It is generally assumed that he joined only when he had no choice, but the nature of his participation remains a mystery. One document which may suggest active involvement for a time is a list of his debtors in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire, drawn up on 14 October 1406.<sup>31</sup> This list includes loans made to Ieuan ap Dafydd ap Goronwy and Maredudd ap Cynwrig at Machynlleth, where Owain Glyn Dŵr held a 'parliament' in 1404. The fact that Gwilym was there some time before 1406 does not of itself prove anything, but he, Ieuan and Maredudd were prominent figures in Anglesey and one would not normally expect to find them so far from home. Ieuan ap Dafydd ap Goronwy was one of those who submitted to the king in 1406 and Maredudd ap Cynwrig was not only a supporter of Owain but one of the most influential figures in Anglesey at that time.<sup>32</sup> It is therefore possible that these three were present at the Machynlleth 'parliament'.

<sup>27</sup> J.R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25; for a detailed account of Gwilym's career to 1413, see *ibid.*, pp. 93-164.

<sup>28</sup> Keith Williams-Jones, 'The taking of Conwy castle, 1401', in *Trans. Caerns. Hist. Soc.*, 39 (1978), 7-43. Rhys and Gwilym ap Tudur are discussed by Glyn Roberts, 'Wyrion Eden', pp. 201-4.

<sup>29</sup> The revolt in Flintshire is discussed by J. E. Messham, 'The county of Flint and the rebellion of Owen Glyndwr in the records of the earldom of Chester', *Journ. Flints. Hist. Soc.*, XXIII (1967-68), 1-34.

<sup>30</sup> P.R.O., Chester 3/23, printed in *Cheshire Sheaf*, July 1922, p. 60. There is a problem over the date of Gruffydd's death here, discussed by J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 68n.; he suggests 27 October 1405 as the date.

<sup>31</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 14 October 1406. This document is not entirely legible.

<sup>32</sup> For Maredudd ap Cynwrig, see Carr, *Medieval Anglesey*, pp. 211-12.



Gwilym's relations with the authorities at Chester and Caernarfon during the revolt reflect a certain lack of communication which was only to be expected in the circumstances of the time. He was undoubtedly equipped with the most sensitive political antennae; by 1405 he seemed to have realised that Owain Glyn Dŵr's long-term political prospects were not very promising and in August of that year he and his brothers made their peace with the Flintshire authorities, possibly even before the death of their father in rebellion.<sup>33</sup> But this information does not seem to have reached the hard-pressed administrators of the principality of north Wales; indeed, it was not generally known in Flintshire. When the men of Anglesey submitted to Henry IV in November 1406, Gwilym was not among them. To Robert Vaughan's transcript of the list of those who submitted is appended a list of 'men of noate' who had been outlawed for rebellion and whose names were contained in a writ of exigent.<sup>34</sup> The names of Gwilym's father and of his brother Robin are near the head of this list along with Rhys, Gwilym and Maredudd ap Tudur; 'William gr' ap William' appears near the end but the transcript is incomplete. An exemplification of the complete writ has now come to light and it reveals that the original was dated 13 October 1405 and that in it Gwilym's son Tudur Fychan, his father and his mother Generys were all named twice and that it also includes his brother Rhys.<sup>35</sup> The same document includes an exemplification of an inquisition dated 9 November 1406 which found that Tudur, the son and heir of Gwilym and Morfudd, formerly his wife, was under age and a rebel and was seised of the manor and of half the township of Penmynydd and half the township of Dinsilwy, and that he also had the mill of Melin Frait and a quarter of the mill of Melin Geraint. This inquisition indicates that Tudur Fychan was born after 1385 and that Morfudd was now dead.

Although Gwilym and his brothers had submitted in the summer of 1405, some of the Flintshire authorities seem to have been unaware of this. On 31 March 1407 the men of the county followed the example of the men of Anglesey in the previous November and agreed to pay 1,000 marks in token of their submission.<sup>36</sup> On 8 April an inquisition at Flint listed those who were still in rebellion; they included the three sons of Gruffydd ap Gwilym

<sup>33</sup> R. R. Davies, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Welsh squirearchy', *Trans. Cymm. Soc.*, 1968, p. 155n., citing P.R.O., Chester 24/245.

<sup>34</sup> Glyn Roberts, 'The Anglesey submissions of 1406', *Bull. Board of Celtic Studies*, XV (1952), 58-60.

<sup>35</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 6 April 1424.

<sup>36</sup> P.R.O., Chester 25/25, m.2.

ap Gruffydd.<sup>37</sup> But by 30 July the matter seems to have been resolved; on that day the brothers received a pardon and Gwilym subsequently made a fine of 100 shillings for the restoration of his father's lands in Nant.<sup>38</sup>

The restitution of his lands in the principality was rather more complicated. Rebellion had meant the forfeiture of his lands which had, on 26 March 1407 (nearly two years after his submission), been granted to the prince of Wales's chamberlain, Hugh Mortimer, along with the lands of twenty-seven other named rebels, mainly in the commote of Dindaethwy.<sup>39</sup> Gwilym's lands and those of his son Tudur were in eight Anglesey townships and in Cwmlannerch (mistakenly described as being in Anglesey); the grant also included the lands in Gwredog which had belonged to his mother's uncle Tudur ap Goronwy Fychan (who had been hanged for murder) and which Gwilym had bought from the prince before he joined the revolt, and also all of his and Tudur Fychan's other lands, both inherited and acquired in *tir prid*.<sup>40</sup> But some time between 26 March and 26 November 1407, Gwilym's position must have been regularised and a pardon granted; on the latter date he obtained the prince's licence to acquire from Hugh Mortimer not only his own lands but also the forfeited lands of the twenty-seven other rebels. In addition to this, he obtained the lands of Gwilym ap Tudur, comprising the township of Trysglwyn and land in five other Anglesey townships and in Cororion; these had been granted to the former chamberlain of north Wales, John Woodhouse, and on 11 January 1410 he released them all to Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Gwilym's return to favour can only be described as spectacular; he emerged from the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr far better endowed than he had been when he joined it. ✓

The career of Gwilym ap Gruffydd can be divided into several phases. The first ends with his emergence from the revolt. Most of those who took part and survived recovered their lands and many were to hold local offices before the end of the next decade. But no one else, at least in north Wales, profited as Gwilym had done; others acquired certain forfeited lands, but not on his gargantuan scale. He was now a widower with a large estate, mainly in the commote of Dindaethwy, and living at Penmynydd. The next phase of his career saw a change of direction and the movement of the centre of gravity to the other side of the Menai Straits. By 1408-9 he was holding office again //

<sup>37</sup> P.R.O., Chester 25/25, m.1a, printed in J. E. Messham, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>38</sup> P.R.O., Chester 30/17, m.1a; S.C.6/1191/7.

<sup>39</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Deeds*, V, A13604 (4).

<sup>40</sup> For Tudur ap Goronwy Fychan, see Carr, *Medieval Anglesey*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>41</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Deeds*, V, A13604 (1); P.R.O., S.C.6/1233/1; U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 10.

as *rhaglaw* of Dindaethwy, and he was also farming the Anglesey avowries and the township of Nantmawr.<sup>42</sup> Before long, he had remarried. His second wife was Joan or Jonet Stanley, the daughter of Sir William Stanley of Hooton in Cheshire; her first husband was Robert de Parys, who had been chamberlain of Chester and subsequently constable of Caernarfon castle and who died probably in 1405.<sup>43</sup> This marriage can almost certainly be dated to 1413; the first conveyance of land to Gwilym and Joan was on 3 May of that year.<sup>44</sup> On 13 May Gwilym, his brothers Robin and Rhys, his cousin Gruffydd ap Bleddyn and his son Tudur undertook to pay 2,000 marks to Sir William Stanley and his son William, a transaction probably connected with the marriage settlement.<sup>45</sup> The settlement itself came later in the year; not all the documents have survived but Gwilym conveyed his lands in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire to his brother Robin and Thomas Chambre, and they conveyed them back to him and Joan in fee tail to descend to their first-born male heir.<sup>46</sup> These documents conveyed his lands in Cororion, Aber, Bodfaeo, Bangor and Maenol Bangor in Caernarfonshire and in thirty-five townships in Anglesey, along with thirty-one named bondmen there. Thus, the Penrhyn estate had come into being and an entail had been created.

Gwilym ap Gruffydd became a new man by marriage, if not by baptism. His first wife had been a kinswoman and that marriage had strengthened his position within his own lineage. By his alliance with the Stanleys, he moved into a new world of patronage; this marriage contributed as much to the rise of the house of Penrhyn as did the frenetic estate-building by himself and his son. A later petition reflects his aspirations; in it he asked that his children and their heirs be allowed to buy lands in England and the English towns in Wales and to be exempt from the penal statutes against Welshmen, adding that during the rebellion and since he and his children had been faithful subjects, that he was married to a daughter of Sir William Stanley who was entirely English, and that he himself was almost entirely of English

<sup>42</sup> P.R.O., S.C.6/1152/6, m.4b, 1b, 3b.

<sup>43</sup> Glyn Roberts, 'Wyrion Eden', p. 209.

<sup>44</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 3 May 1413 (Llangoed, Angl.).

<sup>45</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 13 May 1413. The Stanley connection is discussed by M. K. Jones, 'Sir William Stanley of Holt: politics and family allegiance in the late-fifteenth century', ante 14 (June 1988), 13-15.

<sup>46</sup> Several documents relate to this transaction. U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 29 July 1413, are conveyances in fee tail by Robin and Chambre of the Anglesey and Caernarfonshire lands to Gwilym and Joan. U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 11, is the royal licence to Gwilym to convey his lands and to the feoffees to regrant them to him and Joan, dated 5 October 1413. U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 386, is Gwilym's conveyance of his Anglesey lands to the feoffees on 6 November 1413 and on the same day these were granted back to him and Joan (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional). The repetition of the transaction may be because it was done without a formal licence in July.

descent.<sup>47</sup> Knowing Gwilym's history, one can only marvel at his economy with the truth; not only did he seek denizenship for himself but also for his ancestors.

But there was a reminder of his earlier life in the shape of his son by Morfudd, Tudur Fychan. The entail and jointure of 1413 involved his virtual disinheritance, and as one of the parties to the bond to Sir William Stanley he must have been aware of this. All that was left for him was his mother's inheritance, and he did not even have all of that. Penmynydd and Dinsilwy were not included in the regrants to Gwilym and Joan; although Gwilym retained them for the rest of his life, they do not appear in rentals of the estate after his death, which indicates that they then passed to Tudur.<sup>48</sup> But his share of Gafael Goronwy ab Ednyfed in Cororion did not revert to him; it was added to the part that Gwilym had inherited from his mother to form the nucleus of the Penrhyn estate. Tudur and his father were involved in a dispute in 1424; this is probably why Gwilym obtained an exemplification of the writ of exigent because under normal circumstances it is unlikely that he would have wished to be reminded of his participation in the revolt.<sup>49</sup> From Tudur Fychan were descended the Owen Tudors or Theodores of Penmynydd, a family of small Anglesey squires who played little part even in local affairs and who certainly made no attempt to take advantage of their relationship with the reigning dynasty after 1485.<sup>50</sup>

Why was Tudur Fychan disinherited? The entail was probably the price paid by Gwilym for the Stanley marriage. In the wake of the revolt, it might well have been considered inadvisable for Tudur, who was so closely related to some of Owain Glyn Dŵr's most prominent supporters, one of whom had paid the ultimate penalty in 1411, to inherit such a substantial estate in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire.<sup>51</sup> And if Gwilym were to marry a Stanley, then suitable provision would have to be made for the eldest son of that marriage. Tudur was a link with a past which Gwilym now wished to put behind him; Joan Stanley was the key to a bright future. The Penrhyn

<sup>47</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Petitions*, p. 38; the date suggested here is incorrect, since Gwilym died in 1431.

<sup>48</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional: rental of lands of Joan Stanley in Dindaethwy, 1 November 1432-1 November 1433. Dinsilwy Rhys was sold by William ab Owen Tudur Fychan to Richard Bulkeley in 1509 (U.C.N.W., Baron Hill 954-57).

<sup>49</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 20 May 1424: bond in 200 marks by Tudur Fychan to Gwilym to abide by the judgement of James Strangeways, serjeant-at-law, an arbitrator in a dispute between them. The exemplification, dated 6 April 1424, was obtained at the instance of Gwilym ap Gruffydd; the dispute may have been over Melin Fraint and Melin Geraint, mentioned in the 1406 inquisition.

<sup>50</sup> For the later history of the Tudors of Penmynydd, see Glyn Roberts, 'Teulu Penmynydd', pp. 256-73.

<sup>51</sup> J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-55.

inheritance would pass in due course to Gwilym Fychan or William Griffith, his son by Joan, and to his descendants.

While buying land in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire, Gwilym disposed of his Flintshire inheritance; in 1415-16 his brother Rhys made a fine for a licence to acquire his lands in Nant from Gwilym.<sup>52</sup> These lands were a very small outlier and would have contributed little to Gwilym's wealth. Nor was this wealth based exclusively on land. The roll of debtors of 1406 presents Gwilym ap Gruffydd in a new light.<sup>53</sup> There is nothing in it to suggest why it was compiled, but the date suggests that it may be connected with the temporary sequestration of his assets because of his involvement in the revolt. The total owed him was more than £41 in cash (though not all of the document is legible); in addition, he was owed substantial quantities of corn (mainly wheat) and millstones. The debts ranged from the penny owed by Deicws ap Llywelyn ab Einion *Vlyn* of Pentraeth for wine to the sum of £5 14s. 2d. owed by Hywel ap Gruffydd Trefgoed, formerly deputy-*rhaglaw* and deputy-collector of *amobr* in Dindaethwy. Some were obviously owed him in his former capacity as sheriff of Anglesey; for example, the executors of Madog ab Einion ap Madog still owed 5s. of his relief and *gobrestyn* of 20s. Several sums were due from the executors of debtors since deceased and not a few of the debtors were, or would later be, his own tenants.

What is particularly interesting about this document is the range of Gwilym's business activity. Some owed him money for wine, others for corn. Ieuan ap Dafydd ap Goronwy owed him 11d. for arrows bought at Machynlleth and Deicws ap Dafydd Chwith of Penmynydd owed 5s. 1d. for salt and nails.<sup>54</sup> There were also loans of money; the roll records loans made at Chester, Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Llannerch-y-medd, Clynnog and at the court of the bishop of Bangor, held at Melin Engan in Dindaethwy, as well as at Machynlleth. This suggests that Gwilym travelled extensively as a merchant. One section of the roll lists debts due for corn and flour from Llanddyfnan, Penrhosllugwy and other places; there is also a long list of payments due for the lease of oxen. Some of these were in cash and some in corn; this suggests that he was hiring out oxen for ploughing in return for a share of the crop. Some payments were due for the hire of cows and their milk, a not uncommon practice.<sup>55</sup> Debts of corn include arrears of tithe, which suggests that he bought the tithe from some incumbents for a lump

<sup>52</sup> P.R.O., S.C.6/1192/1.

<sup>53</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 14 October 1406.

<sup>54</sup> The possible significance of the Machynlleth transactions is discussed above.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, A. D. Carr, *Medieval Anglesey*, p. 101, citing N.L.W., Sotheby 26.

sum, collected it himself and possibly sold it; again this was not unusual. A list of millstones owed to him suggests that he was farming the Anglesey millstone quarries and taking a share of the product from each tenant; most of these debtors were from the area around Pentraeth, Llanddyfnan and Mathafarn, where the millstone quarries were concentrated.

This document has a significance beyond its revelation of the commercial activities of Gwilym ap Gruffydd and it merits detailed analysis. It sheds some light on the nature of the local economy in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire and it is particularly interesting to see an *uchelwr* and a member of the leading lineage in north Wales dealing in wine and corn on a substantial scale, buying up tithes, lending money and hiring out livestock. It poses such questions as to what extent indebtedness was a problem at the beginning of the fifteenth century, especially since some of the debtors were men of substance. It would be interesting to know if other *uchelwyr* were as enterprising as Gwilym was; what is certain is that, even before the revolt, he was a wealthy man with substantial liquid assets, which may help to explain his subsequent investment in land. X

Gwilym's landed wealth at the time of his second marriage is shown in the rentals which survive from that period. The rental of his lands in Caernarfonshire and in the commote of Dindaethwy, drawn up in 1413, is well-known but it does not tell the full story.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, this is clear from the rental itself, which states that the total income from rents was about £112; the total of the rents recorded in the document is nothing like that figure and the lands in five Anglesey commotes are not listed. There is, however, a rental for 1410-11 for these commotes, along with Penmynydd and Dinsilwy Rhys in Dindaethwy.<sup>57</sup> If the figures in the two rentals are put together, the total comes to nearly £108, which is close enough to the 1413 total.

Like the roll of debtors, the rentals merit detailed attention in their own right and would also repay detailed topographical analysis.<sup>58</sup> The lands themselves can be divided into several categories. Gwilym's inheritance consisted of the Anglesey lands at Penhwnllys, Bodfa and Twrgarw, and the Caernarfonshire ones at Bodfaeo, which had all come to his father from Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur. The lands inherited from his mother were at Gwredog and in Cororion, and those which had come to him with Morfudd were also in Cororion and in Cwm-llannerch, Penmynydd and Dinsilwy

<sup>56</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 1599.

<sup>57</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, Anglesey rental, 1410-11.

<sup>58</sup> This was done for Cororion by J. R. Jones, who was a native of the district (op. cit., pp. 180-216). He also discusses the Anglesey section of the rental in detail (ibid., pp. 169-78).

Rhys. Some of the other property in Dindaethwy may have been among the purchased lands which Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur had left in his will; lands had also been bought by Gwilym himself in the early years of the century and some of the vendors appear in one or other of the rentals as tenants.<sup>59</sup> Some of the holdings acquired in Dindaethwy and elsewhere in Anglesey in 1407, through forfeiture by others, can also be identified in the rentals and there were probably other acquisitions, the deeds of which have not survived. Many of the bondmen named in the entail of 1413 appear here as tenants; some of them had quite substantial tenements.<sup>60</sup> The 1410-11 rental also includes the former lands of Gwilym ap Tudur which Gwilym had recently acquired; these were in Trysglwyn and Clorach in Twrcelyn, in ten townships in Dindaethwy and in Cororion, where he had held land at Penrhyn along with fisheries, and in Bodfaeo.<sup>61</sup>

Lands seem normally to have been let for four-year terms; this was consistent with Welsh law, which only permitted alienation for four years or less.<sup>62</sup> There are no written leases among the family papers but both rentals include notes of new terms; that of 1410-11, for example, records a lease to Iolyn ap Tudur of the lands of Gwilym ap Hopcyn at Perthgyr in Dindaethwy for four years at an annual rent of 4s. There is also a note that on Tuesday, the feast of St. Iestyn, in 12 Henry IV Ieuan ab Ieuan Goch Wehydd at Penhwnllys, in the presence of various witnesses, received from Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym a tenement called Tyddyn Einion *Bodoros* and land there which had belonged to Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur, to hold from 1 November following.<sup>63</sup> The 1413 rental in some cases notes the year of the tenancy and occasionally the term and several new tenancies are recorded at the end. The tenants of Gwilym ap Tudur's former lands in Trysglwyn were held on four-year terms. The rents varied enormously and presumably reflected the size and quality of the individual tenements; they ranged from

<sup>59</sup> In 1403 Deicws ap Wyn Pais, a free tenant in Llanddyfnan conveyed all his lands there to Gwilym in *tir prid* (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 13 April 1403); in 1413 he was paying an annual rent of 4s. 2d. in the same township (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 1599). For an example of a proprietor in the lordship of Chirk selling out and becoming the purchaser's tenant (1394), see A. D. Carr, 'The making of the Mostyns: the genesis of a landed family', *Trans. Cymm. Soc.*, 1979, 151.

<sup>60</sup> In Ysgeifiog (Menai) in 1410-11, Gruffydd ap Dafydd was paying an annual rent of 6s. 8d. (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 1410-11).

<sup>61</sup> This is the earliest reference to Penrhyn.

<sup>62</sup> *Record of Caernarvon*, p. 132; J. B. Smith, 'Crown and community in the principality of north Wales in the reign of Henry Tudor', ante 3, (June, 1966), 147-48; Llinos B. Smith, 'Tir Prid. Deeds of gage of land in late medieval Wales', *Bull. Board of Celtic Studies*, XXVII (1977), 265.

<sup>63</sup> The date of the feast of St. Iestyn is unknown. The patronal feast was kept at Llaniestyn on 10 October (Baring Gould and Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, III [London, 1911], 294). But that date did not fall on a Tuesday in 1410.

1*d.* due from Gruffydd ab Einion ab Ednyfed for part of the lands in Pentraeth of Madog Ddu, one of the victims of the revolt, to £3 13*s.* 4*d.* for the lease of Melin Gwna in Trefdraeth Ddisteiniad in the commote of Malltraeth. Some rents were payable in corn, and in Cororion Ieuan Tew and Hwlcyn ap Lleucu Goch owed 5,000 slates each as rent for a quarry, a hint of a different source of Penrhyn wealth in the future.

Gwilym's estate in 1413 was, therefore, substantial by any standards. But he was not content to rest on his laurels; the purchase of land continued and thirty-eight deeds record acquisitions between 1413 and his death in 1431. Of these, no fewer than twenty-six refer to lands in Cororion and Bodfaeo; others relate to Anglesey and to the Caernarfonshire commote of Creuddyn. Among the Anglesey deeds are four conveyances to him of shares in the Skerries fishery; his son was to acquire more, and at the end of the century his grandson would be involved in a dispute with the bishop of Bangor over the fishing rights there.<sup>64</sup> There are also conveyances of bondmen, which presumably included their tenements, and there were other acquisitions for which deeds have not survived, though licences to purchase in fee sometimes have done so.<sup>65</sup> Surviving deeds certainly do not record all his purchases in Anglesey; the inquisition *post mortem* for his lands in the county reveals that he had acquired a quantity of land, including some substantial holdings, from various proprietors after his marriage.<sup>66</sup> Most of the lands listed in the Caernarfonshire inquisition are accompanied by deeds and it is also possible to identify those contained in Gafael Goronwy ab Ednyfed, most of which came to him by inheritance or by marriage and were held by suit at the county court and military service, the usual Wyrion Eden tenure.<sup>67</sup>

One of the most interesting deeds is dated 5 October 1415, whereby the heirs of Rhys ap Tudur ap Goronwy, his daughter, Gwerfyl, and his grandson, Gwilym ab Ithel Fychan, conveyed all the lands and other interests which Rhys had had in the commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf to Gwilym.<sup>68</sup> This, coupled with his acquisition of the patrimony of Goronwy ap Tudur by his first marriage and that of Gwilym ap Tudur after the revolt, suggests that one of his aims was to secure for himself as much of the inheritance of the senior Tudor lineage as possible; he had obtained some of Ednyfed ap

<sup>64</sup> A. D. Carr, 'Medieval fisheries in Anglesey', *Maritime Wales*, 3 (1978), 7-8.

<sup>65</sup> Licences tended to be obtained several years after the actual transactions; for example, U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 311, a gift of lands in Cororion in 1415, was not licensed until 1425 (U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 28 July 1425).

<sup>66</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 20 June 1431.

<sup>67</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 15; the tenure is discussed by Glyn Roberts, 'Wyrion Eden', pp. 181-84.

<sup>68</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 5 October 1415.



Tudur's share early in the century, although most of it had gone to Ednyfed's two daughters and their husbands.<sup>69</sup> In his will he particularly mentioned the former lands of Goronwy, Rhys and Gwilym ap Tudur.<sup>70</sup>

There are too many gaps in the series of accounts for Anglesey and Caernarfonshire to make a complete record of the local offices he held. What evidence there is suggests that he was *rhaglaw* of Dindaethwy from 1408 until his death, and of Arllechwedd Uchaf from at least 1414.<sup>71</sup> He was joint *rhingyll* of Dindaethwy in 1419-20 and *rhingyll* in 1420-21, and woodward of Arllechwedd Uchaf from 1416; from 1423 to 1425 he shared the latter office with his brother Robin. In 1424-25 he was deputy-sheriff of Anglesey and for much of the period he farmed the *amobr* in Dindaethwy. From 1391 until some time between 1415 and 1418 he farmed the township of Nantmawr, and he also farmed several depopulated townships in the commote of Menai in the 1420s. It is unlikely that he was interested in office as a source of profit or power; the raglotry was largely a sinecure. But it was important as a reflection of his standing and influence in the local community and this influence was centred on Dindaethwy and Arllechwedd Uchaf.

Gwilym's first home was probably at Penhwnllys. By the end of the fourteenth century he had moved to Penmynydd, possibly following the death of his brother-in-law, Tudur ap Goronwy.<sup>72</sup> But the family is associated with Penrhyn in Cororion, and it was Gwilym who first crossed the Menai Straits and established himself there. Some remains of the medieval house remain in Thomas Hopper's extravaganza at Penrhyn Castle, particularly a cellar. A fourteenth-century dating has been suggested for this and it has also been suggested that the main Tudor line had a house here.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, we have the word of Gwilym's own son that his father built 'the manor of the Penrhyn'.<sup>74</sup> Gwilym certainly lived there for part of the time; in a poem addressed to him by Rhys Goch Eryri, the poet compares the house with Caernarfon Castle.<sup>75</sup> The castle was built by a conqueror to keep men down and to break their hearts; Gwilym's whitewashed tower, built of oak, is far superior to the Eagle Tower. Penrhyn is a place of generosity and

<sup>69</sup> Henry Rowlands, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*, p. 136n.

<sup>70</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 14.

<sup>71</sup> The offices are listed in J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-26.

<sup>72</sup> He is described as 'of Penmynydd' in a deed of 1400 (*Arch. Camb.*, 1846, p. 391).

<sup>73</sup> Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, *Inventory: Caernarvonshire*, III (1964), 123-26; plate 62 in the same volume is a drawing by Moses Griffith of the original house; D. B. Hague, 'Penrhyn Castle; *Trans. Caerns. Hist. Soc.*, 20 (1959), 28-32.

<sup>74</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 20 June 1431; see also n. 20 above.

<sup>75</sup> H. Lewis, T. Roberts and Ifor Williams (eds.), *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill* (2nd ed., Cardiff, 1937) pp. 310-13.

hospitality and is more like the court of God than one of man; he wishes a long life to Gwilym and Joan. Obviously there is an element of poetic hyperbole here, but Gwilym's Penrhyn certainly appears to have been a substantial house, apparently built of timber and whitewashed like most contemporary buildings. The move to Penrhyn and the building of the house cannot be dated with any accuracy, but Gwilym began to buy up lands in Cororion in 1415, which suggests a *terminus post quem*. He does not appear to have abandoned Penmynydd entirely; in a licence to acquire lands in fee in 1430, he is described as 'of Penmynydd' and it was there that he made his will in the same year.<sup>76</sup>

Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Gwilym died early in 1431. His will, made at Penmynydd on 10 February 1430, was proved on 9 April 1431. In it he gave directions for his burial at Penmynydd, Llandygái or in the Franciscan friary at Llan-faes, and he left money for masses for his soul for twenty years as well as £10 for a trental. His daughters Elizabeth and Elen were to have enough money for their maintenance; Elizabeth, according to the pedigrees, was the wife, first of a brother of the lord of Dyffryn Clwyd and, secondly, of Robert ab Edward of the lordship of Chirk, while Elen married William Bulkeley the elder, the first of that family to settle in Beaumaris.<sup>77</sup> Elen and her husband were to show the same enterprise as her father and brother in the land market. Everything else, including what had come to Gwilym by his marriage to Morfudd and all his *tir prid* lands, was left to his wife Joan and his son William and the latter, of course, inherited the entailed lands; Joan and William were named as executors. There is no mention of Tudur Fychan in the will, but it is obvious that some arrangement had been made whereby his mother's lands in Penmynydd and Dinsilwy Rhys should pass to him on Gwilym's death. Nor is there any mention of Gwilym's daughter by Morfudd, Angharad; she does not appear in any Penrhyn document, but she was the wife of Dafydd ab Ieuan ap Hywel of Llwydiarth in Twrcelyn, the victim of the 'Ffrae Ddu' in Beaumaris.<sup>78</sup>

With Gwilym's death came the elegies; one was sung by Rhys Goch Eryri and three by Gwilym ap Sefnyn. Rhys's poem is not couched in the glowing

<sup>76</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn 167, 14. The period between 1413 and 1431 is discussed by J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-30; he suggests that Gwilym settled at Penrhyn c. 1420 (*ibid.*, p. 217).

<sup>77</sup> P. C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies A.D. 300-1400* (Cardiff, 1974), Marchudd 6; Carr, *Medieval Anglesey*, pp. 218, 220. On 13 March 1430, Iorwerth ap Tudur Goch, a burgess of Newborough, conveyed all his property in that town to his foster-child Elizabeth, the daughter of William Griffith of Penmynydd (N.L.W., Carreglwyd 2097).

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 293.

terms of his earlier one in praise of Penrhyn.<sup>79</sup> There is a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the subject of the *cywydd*; Rhys asks that his fellow-poets should not think ill of him for composing it. He is being paid for it and his praise will be carefully measured to the length of Gwilym's foot and no more. His earlier praise of Gwilym and Penrhyn is far more effusive but, as J. R. Jones pointed out, Gwilym was then alive; an elegy was unanswerable.<sup>80</sup> Rhys is believed to have been a supporter of Owain Glyn Dŵr; there is no other evidence of contemporary attitudes to Gwilym ap Gruffydd, but his earlier change of sides in 1405, coupled with his business acumen, his second marriage and consequent change of direction, and his hyperactivity in the land market may well have made him unpopular with his peers. The three elegies by Gwilym ap Sefnyn are in a different vein; they are entirely conventional in content.<sup>81</sup> This was hardly surprising, since Gwilym ap Sefnyn appears to have been a member of the Penrhyn household. He had been involved in the Glyn Dŵr revolt; in 1408-9 his tenement in Llwydiarth Esgob in Twrcelyn was in the hands of the escheator on account of his treason.<sup>82</sup> In 1413 he was one of Gwilym's tenants in Cororion and from 1415 he appears frequently among the witnesses to deeds recording Gwilym ap Gruffydd's acquisitions of land in Caernarfonshire. In 1429 he conveyed all his own lands in Cororion to the young Gwilym Fychan.<sup>83</sup> He also composed at least two poems to Gwilym ap Gruffydd during his lifetime and two survive by another poet, Cynwrig ap Dafydd Goch.<sup>84</sup> These were not poets of the first rank; Gwilym ap Gruffydd does not appear to have been a major patron and it is possible that Rhys Goch Eryri's elegy reflects the sentiments of the leading members of the bardic order. But surviving poetry from this period is not as abundant as it is later in the century and Gwilym's son and grandson certainly redeemed the family's honour as far as patronage is concerned.<sup>85</sup>

Gwilym Fychan was under age when his father died. Until he came of age, the estate was in the care of his mother Joan; before long she had married again, her new husband being John Pykemere of Caernarfon. As a purchaser

<sup>79</sup> *Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, pp. 313-17, xlv-xlvi. The poetry addressed to Gwilym is discussed by J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-47. According to Rhys Goch Eryri's elegy, he was buried at Llan-faes.

<sup>80</sup> J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>81</sup> U.C.N.W., Mostyn 5, ff. 18v-20v, 20v-22v, 105v-107v. The third of these refers to his two sons and three daughters.

<sup>82</sup> P.R.O., S.C.6/1233/1.

<sup>83</sup> U.C.N.W., Penrhyn Additional, 3 December 1429.

<sup>84</sup> U.C.N.W., Mostyn 5, f.114v; N.L.W., Mostyn 148, pp. 548, 495, 542.

<sup>85</sup> Gwilym Fychan, for example, was praised by Rhys Goch Eryri, Cynwrig ap Dafydd Goch, Guto'r Glyn, Robin Ddu and Dafydd ab Edmwnd (Glyn Roberts, *D.W.B.*, p. 1125).

of land in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire, Gwilym Fychan was to leave his father far behind. But it was Gwilym ap Gruffydd who laid the foundations of the Penrhyn estate. He is, by any standards, an interesting figure. He was enterprising but he was also lucky in the marriages of his father and grandfather and in his own marriage; these matches made him the beneficiary of Gwilym ap Gruffydd ap Tudur's childlessness and of his brother-in-law's early death. The evidence suggests that he had already attained a considerable position early in the century, by trade as well as by the possession of land and the holding of office. His part in the Glyn Dŵr revolt is not at all clear, but his sensitivity to a changing political atmosphere led him to make his peace before most of his fellow-rebels and his reward was the forfeited land of several of them. The marriage to Joan Stanley could be described as a master-stroke; the man who, after the revolt, was the dominant figure in the leading lineage in the principality of north Wales married into the leading lineage of north-west England. The Stanley connection was to serve the family well in the future.<sup>86</sup> J. R. Jones, in discussing his estate-building activities after 1413, speaks of his 'insatiable hunger for land'; the phrase could be applied even more appropriately to his son.<sup>87</sup> By the standards of the native Welsh community, he does not cut a very admirable figure; his career displays a good deal of ambition and its concomitant ruthlessness, and Rhys Goch Eryri was to damn him with faint praise. He might, in fact, be described as a hard-faced man who had done well out of the Glyn Dŵr revolt. But by his own standards he was successful and by the end of his life he had managed to reassemble most of the Penmynydd inheritance in his own hands, which may suggest some awareness of his lineage and even a sense of obligation to it.

Gwilym ap Gruffydd's career poses questions. It is fair to ask how typical of his class and his time he was. He was not the first *uchelwr* in north Wales to start building a landed estate by purchase; Tudur ab Ithel Fychan of Mostyn had been doing this in Flintshire in the mid-fourteenth century, although the Mostyn estate did not reach its full extent until the early sixteenth, following a sequence of successful marriages. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Gruffydd ab Aron of Peniarth in Merioneth and his son Rhys had built up a considerable estate by the use of *tir prid*.<sup>88</sup> Some estates

<sup>86</sup> The Stanley connection in north Wales is discussed by Ralph A. Griffiths, 'Richard, Duke of York and the royal household in Wales, 1449-50', *ante*, 8 (June, 1976), 16-19, and M. K. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-18.

<sup>87</sup> J. R. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 221; Gwilym's purchases are discussed, on the basis of the evidence available to the author, in *ibid.*, pp. 218-24.

<sup>88</sup> A. D. Carr, 'The making of the Mostyns', pp. 152-56; Llinos B. Smith, 'The gage and the land market in late medieval Wales', *Econ. Hist. Review*, 2nd ser., 29 (1976), 547. There are very few *tir prid* conveyances among the deeds recording Gwilym's purchases after 1413.

which had begun to develop in the fourteenth century never reached maturity and others may be undocumented. Furthermore, the experience of each family is unique and to generalise may only mislead. There is no contemporary family in north Wales as well-documented as that of Penrhyn, which makes profitable comparison difficult. Yet it is not easy to offer an accurate assessment of Gwilym's wealth in 1431; there are inquisitions *post mortem* for his Anglesey and Caernarfonshire lands, but those in the former are certainly undervalued and that for the latter gives no valuations.<sup>89</sup> All that can be said is that his income at his death was a good deal more than the £112 yielded by rents in 1413 and that he was probably the richest man in north Wales. He seems to have been the first to operate on such a scale and he could be described as the principal legatee of the Glyn Dŵr revolt. The only family in Gwynedd to compare with Penrhyn later in the century was that of the Bulkeleyes, and William Bulkeley, Gwilym's son-in-law, was not of native stock.<sup>90</sup>

One might also ask how it was that Gwilym came to profit so much from the revolt. By 1407 he had not only recovered his own lands but had secured those of several others and it would be interesting to know how he had earned such favour; it suggests something more than an early submission. But unfootnoted speculation is pointless; what is certain is that the descendants of Ednyfed Fychan dominated the principality before the revolt and, through Gwilym ap Gruffydd and the family he established, they did the same after it. In his elegy Rhys Goch Eryri suggested that the justice of north Wales did nothing without consulting Gwilym; this was in the tradition of the stock of Ednyfed. As they survived the debacle of 1282, so he survived the revolt; as they had led the native community in the fourteenth century, so the house of Penrhyn led it in the fifteenth. As so often in the history of medieval and early modern Wales, what first appears as innovation turns out, on further investigation, to be continuity.

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<sup>89</sup> The entailed lands in Anglesey are valued in the inquisition at 20 marks, but the two rentals of 1410-11 and 1413 suggest that his annual income from these lands was about £85.

<sup>90</sup> The growth of the Bulkeley family is discussed by D. C. Jones, 'The Bulkeleyes of Baron Hill, 1440-1621' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1958).