

Welsh Identity and Adam Usk's Chronicle (1377-1421)

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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Adam Usk, a Welsh lawyer, wrote a chronicle during the early fifteenth century. In the work he recounts events that took place during his lifetime including the Glyndŵr rebellion in Wales (1400-1415). In modern scholarship, however, Adam's chronicle has been categorised as an 'English' chronicle for various reasons, not least because of the tradition it belonged to. In this work, I explore this categorisation, and ask questions about how Welsh identity could be expressed within a text following the English tradition.

In order to do this, I have separated the broad framework of 'identity' into subsections. Firstly, I consider Adam's identity as a 'chronicler' and discuss the implications this had for how he expressed his own and other identities in the chronicle. Secondly, I examine his Welsh identity from a variety of different perspectives. I analyse the way he discusses places, relationships, and networks to understand more about how he expressed his own identity. This is particularly related to the locality of the town of Usk, and his national identity as a Welshman. In addition, I explore externally projected negative Welsh stereotypes, particularly how and why Adam used them to describe Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. Finally, I address 'political identity' and how this changed for the Welsh during Adam's lifetime. I draw conclusions about how the various types of identity had implications for Adam's life and the way he wrote his chronicle.

By examining a range of sources, particularly other chronicles, I address the wider discourses around Welsh identity during the late Middle Ages and use this to locate Adam's local, national, legal and political identity. In doing so, I explore what English and Welsh identity meant for Adam, how he expressed it in his chronicle, and offer a framework through which the chronicle can be read and interpreted.

PREFACE

Adam Usk and his chronicle first came to my attention whilst I was working towards my MA in Medieval and Renaissance Culture at the University of Southampton. Throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, I was fascinated by concepts of identity, belonging, and public and private memory. In preparation for my Master's dissertation, I began looking at medieval chronicles through this lens – and it was then that I discovered Adam Usk's work and its potential as a case study for national identity. My dissertation was titled 'A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON IDENTITY IN ADAM USK'S CHRONICLE' and was submitted and approved in 2012.

Only having limited time and space to explore this topic, however, I was left feeling like I had some unfinished business with Adam Usk and his national identity. In 2015, therefore, I began working part-time on my PhD thesis on the same topic. Since the topic's inception as a Master's dissertation, my understanding of Latin chronicles, medieval Britain, national identity, and Adam's life and work has developed and improved, and as a result my approach to the topic has changed drastically. All of the work towards the thesis was undertaken anew, and much of the analysis and evidence (apart from Adam's chronicle) is entirely different. As a result, the conclusions are also substantially different from the Master's thesis. The few areas that bear similarities with the earlier work are noted in the footnotes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adam Usk	<i>The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421</i> , (ed. and trans.) Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
BL	The British Library, London
CCCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
CPR	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</i> : (ed.) the deputy keeper of the records (His Majesty's Stationary Office: London, Various Years).
NLW	The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> : https://www.oxforddnb.com .
PROME	<i>The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275-1504</i> , (eds.) C. Given-Wilson, P. Brand, A. Curry, R. Horrox, G. Martin, M. Ormrod, S. Philips (Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions and The National Archives, 2005).
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
Thomas Walsingham	<i>The St Albans Chronicle; the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham I 1376-1394/ II 1394-1422</i> , (eds. and trans.) John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003/2011).

Introduction

The town of Usk lies in the South East of Wales, roughly ten miles from the border with England. During the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries Usk fell within the bounds of the Norman lordship of Chepstow, located on the border of Norman Gwent and the Welsh lordship of Caerleon. Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, Usk changed between Norman/English and Welsh rule numerous times. Its history provides an insight into the power struggles that afflicted the area. In the early years of Norman control there was some co-operation and allegiance between the Norman and Welsh lords. Rhudderch ap Caradog, ruler of Gwent Iscoed and Ewias, and his Norman neighbour Roger fitz William, who also held land in Gwent including the town of Usk, for example, formed an allegiance to defeat Caradog's enemy Maredudd ap Owain in 1072.¹ Co-operation between the various rulers, however, was neither enduring nor consistent. Over the subsequent two hundred years the English gradually increased their power and level of occupation in Wales until the country was officially annexed to the English Crown in 1284. The town of Usk was shaped physically, administratively, and culturally by the complex and shifting allegiances and identities of those in power.

Usk not only lay on the border between regions under Norman and Welsh control, but it was also located in a position of strategic military importance. It was situated on the Roman road from Monmouth and on the river Usk, two important transport routes. As such, it was necessary that the town was fortified and thus the aforementioned Roger fitz William constructed the castle there during the early twelfth century.² The castle was repeatedly the focus of Welsh rebellions against Norman/English control in the region, and was even captured and held by Hywel ap Iorwerth, a Welsh lord, as a vassal of Henry II, from 1174 until his death in 1185.³ William Marshal, the fourth earl of Pembroke, refortified the castle in the early thirteenth century by building a number of stone structures turning it into 'a major castle in the state of the art defensive mode', most likely as a result of further Welsh rebellions.⁴ During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the town and castle saw further unrest as tensions between the Welsh population and their occupiers sometimes

¹ Jeremy Knight, 'Welsh Space and Norman Invaders: Usk Castle 1136-1245' in *Usk Castle, Priory and Town*, (ed.) Jeremy K. Knight and Andy Johnson (Little Logaston: Logaston Press, 2008), pp. 55-56.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

flared into violence and rebellion.⁵ By the mid-fourteenth century, the lordship of Usk was still under English control, forming part of the estate of the powerful Mortimer family, the earls of March. The history of occupation in the region had implications for the people that lived there, not least for the subject of this research, Adam Usk.

In around the year 1350 Adam Usk was born in the town.⁶ He would go on to become a clerk, lawyer, and chronicler, working alongside many prominent people in Wales, England, and on the continent. In many ways his life is symbolic of the contradictory relationship between the English and Welsh during this period. Throughout his life his relationships with the English ruling elite reflected both collaboration and conflict. It is believed, for example, that he was born in the gatehouse of the castle, a symbol of English occupation, but to Welsh parents.⁷ There is no doubt that the family were well connected. His relationship with the Mortimer family, the Marcher Lords of the region, for example, was particularly advantageous for him. Adam was patronised by his lord Roger Mortimer, fourth earl of March, to study law at Merton College in Oxford. After finishing his studies, Adam worked at the Court of Arches for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, at the Papal Curia in Rome, and was even consulted on legal matters by Henry IV of England.⁸ It is also known that Adam had many Welsh associates and family members, some of whom were also educated and working as clerics.⁹ Adam spent many years of his life away from his hometown of Usk, but he retained an affection for the town and the people who lived there.¹⁰ When rebellion broke out in Wales in 1400, Adam found his loyalties tested, and his Welsh identity became more defining, and frequently limiting.¹¹

⁵ Jeremy Knight, 'De Clares to Herberts: Usk Castle after the Marshals' in *Usk Castle, Priory and Town*, (ed.) Jeremy K. Knight and Andy Johnson (Little Logaston: Logaston Press, 2008), pp. 69-70; Paul Courtney and David Crouch, 'The History and Topography of Medieval and Later Usk' in *Later and Medieval Usk*, (ed.) Paul Courtney (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), pp. 97-101.

⁶ 'Usk Castle History', PDF available at: <https://uskcastle.com/usk-castle/about/> <accessed 22/11/2020>; Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction' in *Adam Usk's Chronicle*, (ed. and trans.) Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. xiii.

⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xiii.

⁸ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xiii-xv.

⁹ Ibid., p. xiii.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. xxv-xxxiii.

¹¹ Alicia Marchant, *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr in Medieval English Chronicles* (York: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), p. 158.

A lot of the information that is known about Adam's life comes from his chronicle. The chronicle covers the years 1377-1421, and Adam wrote it in four phases throughout his life.¹² Little is known about his writing process, but due to the disconnected nature of some of the entries it is likely that he kept notes which were later collated into prose and copied into the manuscript by a number of scribes.¹³ It survives as a unique manuscript which was separated in two and is housed in the British Library (BL Additional Manuscript 10104) and at Belvoir Castle.¹⁴ The manuscript in question is a copy of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* up until 1376 and Adam's chronicle is a continuation of this work from 1377.¹⁵ At some point between the seventeenth and nineteenth century the final quire (fols. 176 and 177) became detached and was only discovered during the late nineteenth century amongst documents at Belvoir Castle belonging to the Duke of Rutland. Whilst it is unclear how the quire came to be at this location (although there are a number of theories), it has remained in the Duke of Rutland's archive.¹⁶

The content of the chronicle covers many of the major political events of the age. It begins in 1377 with the death of Edward III, and the coronation of Edward's grandson, Richard II (Richard of Bordeaux, son of Edward the Black Prince who died 1376). It covers a number of major political events including various rebellions against Richard II (the Peasants' Revolt 1381, the Lords Appellant and the Merciless Parliament 1387-1388), as well as Richard II's deposition and the coronation of Henry Bolingbroke (Henry IV). For the period of Henry's reign, the chronicle covers aspects of international military conflict, particularly against France and Scotland, as well as the Glyndŵr rebellion in Wales (1400-1415). Under Henry V (1413-1422), Adam's chronicle describes the king's successes on French battlefields with great enthusiasm and support.¹⁷

In addition to these politically significant events, Adam also records the highs and lows of his own life and career. He describes his experiences whilst studying law at Merton College, Oxford, the trajectory of his subsequent career working at the court of Arches, and the benefices he obtained

¹² Chris Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk', *Welsh History Review/Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru*, 17:4 (1995), 524-529.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk', 520-533.

¹⁵ This is an (AB) version of the *Polychronicon* with a (C) continuation. See: John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 129.

¹⁶ 'Adam Usk's Chronicle, 1404-1421': Belvoir MS Add. 4. I am grateful to the Duke of Rutland for kindly allowing me access to the manuscript, and to Peter Foden, the archivist at Belvoir Castle, for his help and guidance whilst visiting the archive.

¹⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. lxxix-lxxx.

during this time. He provides descriptions of his personal experiences when travelling with Henry Bolingbroke's army on its way to seize the throne from Richard. He writes accounts of his time working in Rome and France (1402-1409). One aspect of his chronicle that has received a lot of interest is the section related to the rebellion in Wales led by Owain Glyndŵr (1400-1415). It is not, for example, a coincidence that Adam spent this period abroad from England and Wales. His relationship with the English administration, including with Henry IV, deteriorated, and his prospect of promotion and career progression significantly decreased. He thus sought to obtain favour with the Roman Pope, but his problems associated with his Welsh identity followed him, and he was once again side-lined in terms of promotion. He then joined the anti-pope in Avignon, who was an ally of Owain Glyndŵr, and an enemy of the English Crown. Adam eventually returned to Wales, living briefly amongst the Welsh rebels. He received a pardon in March 1411 and returned to his previous role at the Court of Arches, but did not receive any major promotions. He died in 1430.¹⁸

Whilst much is known about Adam, his life, career, and identity as a Welshman, more can be exposed by exploring the 'English' chronicle tradition he wrote in, and his identity as a man from the Marcher town of Usk who describes himself as Welsh.¹⁹ It is clear that both his role as a historian and his identity as a Welshman influenced the way that he expressed identity in his chronicle. He was, for example, a man of learning, whose education in England influenced both his career ambitions and his chronicle writing. He was a Welshman who had both English and Welsh connections in terms of his professional and private associations. In some ways he presented himself as culturally Welsh, in that he was aware of Welsh legends and history and had some knowledge of the Welsh language. He was also part of the Welsh community of Usk. He was politically and legally Welsh and suffered under laws and regulations that limited the rights of the Welsh people as a result of the Glyndŵr rebellion.

Whilst it is easy to express these ideas simply based on an overview of the situation in Usk and the trajectory of Adam's life, the complexity of national identity as a theory and a construct deserves attention. This work asks a number of questions: how was Adam able to express his Welsh identity within his chronicle that followed an English tradition and how can these expressions of identity be interpreted and understood? This question predominantly addresses the identity that Adam

¹⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 14-17, 152-153, 249-251, 56-61, 152-157, 100-101, 174-189, 212-217, 240-241. For a detailed description see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. x-lxxxvi.

¹⁹ For discussions of national identity see below pp. 23-34.

personally associated with and performed. As a result, it is also important to consider how these aspects were also projected on to Adam, the implications that this external identification had for him as an individual, and on the way he wrote his chronicle. Adam's work and life function as a case study and allow for conclusions to be drawn about the wider Welsh experience during the later-Middle Ages and the multiplicity of identities and experiences with the overarching identity of 'Welsh'.

In addressing these questions this work has a number of outcomes. As a wider aim, it demonstrates the value of a variety of methodological approaches applied to various source types to analyse identity discourses. As part of this, it deepens understanding of these discourses beyond the theoretical realm and explores the way that they shaped the world for individual people, using Adam Usk and his chronicle as a case study. In a more specific sense, it provides greater context for scholars who wish to use Adam's chronicle as a primary source, particularly those questioning its reliability and value. It also questions what it meant to be Welsh during this period and explores this issue from a number of different perspectives. Throughout this discussion, I draw conclusions about the relationship between England and Wales during the later Middle Ages, exposing many of the contradictions, stereotypes, inconsistencies, and prejudices that are present in the primary sources.

This introductory chapter provides the rationale for these research questions. It begins with a discussion about how Adam Usk's chronicle has been approached in scholarship. This discussion demonstrates the need for further investigation into Adam's national identity and the national identity of his chronicle, measured in terms of the tradition his chronicle follows, his understanding and presentation of English and Welsh history, as well as the idioms, tropes and stereotypes he used in his writing. Current scholarship on Adam and his chronicle, for example, lacks balance between historical context and theory. There are also numerous examples of scholars who define Adam's chronicle as 'English'. There are a number of reasons for this. The first, and most straight forward, is the fact that Adam Usk's chronicle is a continuation of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, an influential chronicle that provided a foundation for many histories written in England during Adam's period and beyond. In addition, his use of negative Welsh stereotypes in his descriptions of the rebellion in Wales are closely aligned with the rhetoric seen in contemporary English chronicles. This work agrees with the notion that Adam's chronicle fits within an English framework and tradition, but questions whether it is appropriate to describe the chronicle as 'English' considering the Welsh self-identification of the author. As such, it explores the ways in which Welsh identity could be expressed

within this framework. This work also examines the relationship between the written work and the identity of the man that wrote it, questioning the boundaries between English and Welsh literary output and how this can be used as the foundation for determining identity. Next, I turn to theoretical approaches to national identity in the Middle Ages. In doing so, I suggest a way of approaching problematic concepts by looking more closely at Latin terminology to express local, national, and political identity. Finally, I discuss the types of sources that will be addressed in the main body of this work and explain how they will be used. This introduction will provide the foundation for future chapters, particularly in relationship to how Adam Usk's Welsh identity is currently viewed, and the present situation of the theoretical debate about national identity.

Disciplinary approaches to Adam Usk's identity

A wide array of disciplines and sub-disciplines use Adam Usk's chronicle as a primary source. The three main areas that will be discussed are history, literature, and 'chronicle studies'. Each discipline interprets Adam Usk's ability as a history writer and his national identity as Welshman slightly differently. In terms of history and literature, there is often an overlap between the fields in terms of subject matter, objectives, and methodology.²⁰ Despite this, in their approaches to Adam's work there are noticeable differences, as discussed below. There is also the sub-category of chronicle studies, which as a field is interdisciplinary, incorporating aspects of literature, history, and archival studies. In terms of Adam's chronicle, however, the majority of scholars who contribute to the field of chronicle studies come from the discipline of history. In the context of this literature review, chronicle studies will be considered as a separate field from 'history' because the methodologies and outcomes differ significantly from more traditional forms of historical enquiry. Below, I discuss how each discipline has approached and interpreted Adam's work and identity, and demonstrate the issues, pitfalls, and areas that require more research or attention.

The methodologies of each discipline can lead to problematic results in the way Adam's chronicle is used and interpreted due to the different ways his ability as a chronicler is viewed. The discipline of history has frequently relied on the chronicle to address a wide range of themes, for example the

²⁰ Angelique Chettiparamb, *Interdisciplinarity: a literature review* (Southampton: Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Group, 2007), pp. 4-6; John Aldrich, *Interdisciplinarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 13-25; Geoffrey Squires, 'Interdisciplinarity in Higher Education in the United Kingdom', *European Journal of Education* 27:3 (1992), 202.

reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V.²¹ In these circumstances, historians often look for ‘facts’ to function as building blocks for a particular theory or event. The various stories, characters, and statistics in the chronicle, for example, are used to ‘reconstruct’ events or exemplify a thesis. As a result, the value of Adam’s chronicle and the works of his contemporaries are often measured by the ‘accuracy’ of the statistics, places, and events. ‘Accuracy’ in these instances is determined by the cross-checking of various sources to establish a common narrative.²² Based on this methodological approach, Adam Usk’s chronicle has not always been well received as a primary source. Historians, finding that some information in the chronicle differs to other sources, have described Adam as ‘unreliable’ or even ‘hysterical’ and ‘inaccurate’.²³

Adam, for example, describes a number of key battles between Owain Glyndŵr’s followers and Henry IV’s army, citing places, the number of people involved, and other important statistics. He describes the Welsh victory over the English that took place at Bryn Glas, near the border with England, on 22 June 1402. This description has proven to be one of the more contentious in Adam’s chronicle. The battle is famous for the high number of fatalities, which are reported in a number of contemporary chronicles.²⁴ The number of dead cited by Adam is over six thousand more than any of the other chronicler estimates. It is this kind of scenario that has led to Adam’s reputation as an unreliable historian, and his chronicle an unreliable primary source. Other chroniclers writing during his time, on the other hand, are described as ‘more reliable’ because they suggest figures that are deemed as more realistic.²⁵ In the context of ‘reconstructing’ an event, it makes sense to choose a figure that is closest to the true number. Adam, however, should not be judged as ‘reliable’ or not as a result of the number he provides. Instead, it is important to understand chronicle writing from the

²¹ For examples see: A. K. Grundy, *Richard II and the Rebel Earl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997); Bryan Bevan, *Henry IV* (London: Rubicon, 1994); Chris Given-Wilson, *Henry IV* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016); Anne Curry, ‘The Making of a Prince: The Finances of ‘the young lord Henry’, 1386-1400’ in *Henry V: New Interpretations*, (ed.) Gwilym Dodd (York: York Medieval Press, 2013).

²² Gabrielle. M. Spiegel, ‘Historical Thought in Medieval Europe’ in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, (ed.) L. Kramer and S. Maza (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p. 78.

²³ G. Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr: England, France and the Welsh Rebellion in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2017), p. 57; R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 107.

²⁴ *Adam Usk*, pp. 158-161; Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 320-323; *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, (eds.) M. C. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, in ‘The Deposition of Richard II’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 13 (1930), pp. 176-177; ‘Continuatio Eulogii’ in *Eulogium (historiarum sive temporis) chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXVI a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum*, (ed.) F.S. Haydon (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858-1863), p. 396; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, (ed.) George. B. Stow, Jr (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 172-173.

²⁵ Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 57.

perspective of the Middle Ages, rather than projecting modern standards of 'accuracy' on to historical works. By addressing Adam's motivations and objectives as a historian, this work challenges the idea that he was unreliable or that the chronicle is inaccurate.²⁶

Literary scholars, on the other hand, have gone some way to rehabilitate Adam Usk's ability as an accomplished chronicler. Analysis in the discipline of literature is often less about 'accuracy' of information, and more about understanding the chronicle as a literary composition, with aspects that could potentially have been considered as 'inaccurate' recontextualised within various frameworks. This is seen particularly in Adam's use of prophecy, which in the past precluded the chronicle from being considered a legitimate historical work, but is now seen as demonstrating Adam's rigour as a chronicle writer.²⁷ Understanding that chroniclers were not motivated by the simple recording of 'facts' means that the 'inaccuracies' in Adam's chronicle can instead be read as symbolic or allegorical. Adam's accounts of certain events of national importance, for example, have been seen as a reflection of either biblical or prophetic texts; the meaning is not in the events and actions recorded, but in the source type it alludes to.²⁸ In terms of the type of information recorded about the Glyndŵr rebellion, Adam's chronicle has been heralded as one of the more accurate chronicles. Alicia Marchant, for example, analyses the language used by chroniclers to describe places in Wales. Her premise is that chronicles written in England are less precise and accurate with their naming of locations (referring to landscape features, but not specific towns).²⁹ Marchant, however, considers Adam's chronicle to be more detailed and accurate in this aspect due to his 'personal association with Wales'.³⁰ She describes Adam's chronicle as 'unique in this regard' and that the descriptions of the revolt provide 'a rich and vibrant setting for the events of 1400 to c.1415'.³¹

Interpreting Adam Usk's chronicle, rather than mining it for facts, has been beneficial in advancing understandings of his motivations and ability as a chronicler. Literary readings of the chronicle,

²⁶ See particularly: below chapters One, Three, and Five.

²⁷ For those criticising Adam Usk's use of prophecy see: Edward Maunde Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Henry Frowde, 1904), pp. xix-xx. For works contextualising it see: Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1-31; Yandell, 'Prophetic Authority in Adam of Usk's Chronicle', pp. 79-100; Helen Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', *Studia Celtica* 39 (2005), 105-121; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 12 and 87.

²⁸ Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, pp. 1-31.

²⁹ Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 186-194.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p. 193.

however, have also proven problematic. The chronicle, for example, is frequently compared to literary works rather than to other works in its genre, which means that some of the conclusions are not fully contextualised. Much focus has been placed on the style of Adam's prose, particularly the use of the first-person (described as a 'collapse of his historical objectivity'³²), and the personal and autobiographical content of the chronicle, such as his self-presentation as a man of learning and a lawyer.³³ These aspects are deemed as somehow unique or unusual in the genre of chronicles from his period.³⁴ It is often suggested that the chronicle shares certain characteristics with 'Ricardian poets' such as William Langland, John Gower, Geoffrey Chaucer, and the *Boke of Margery Kemp*.³⁵ By comparing a chronicle with works from another genre, however, the conventions and traditions of the chronicle are not prioritised in the analysis, and Adam's motivations as a chronicler are not fully considered.

Longer comparative studies between Adam's chronicle and works of literature have been made. Andrew Galloway, for example, published a detailed study of the parallels between Adam Usk's chronicle, and Thomas Usk's literary work, *Testament of Love*.³⁶ Galloway argues that there are certain parallels between the works and lives of the two men. Both men wrote narratives that give 'examples of late-medieval authorial self-presentation'.³⁷ They also both had 'intellectual careers during politically dangerous times'³⁸ which can be traced in detail through surviving sources.³⁹ Galloway acknowledges that the works produced by the two men differ greatly in terms of genre, but describes them as 'the two most explicit and extensive examples of personal *apologiae* we have from late fourteenth and early fifteenth century England'.⁴⁰ Galloway applies a detailed theoretical framework related to 'self-definition' and 'self-making' in the intellectual marketplace to both works. He concludes that, whilst the works were very different, the similarities demonstrate a connection 'between self-definition and cultural economies' which existed in various strata of society.⁴¹ The

³² Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 38-42.

³³ Andrew Galloway, 'Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace in Late Fourteenth-Century England: The Case of the Two Usks', *New Literary History* 28:2 (1997), 305-314.

³⁴ Andrew Galloway, 'Crisis and Nation in Fourteenth-Century English Chronicles' in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500-1500*, (eds.) Jennifer Jahner, Emily Steiner and Elizabeth M. Tyler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 465-466.

³⁵ Galloway, 'Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace', 291; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 41.

³⁶ Galloway 'Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace', 291-318.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 291.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 294.

³⁹ Waldron, Ronald. "Usk, Thomas (c. 1354–1388), scrivener, author, and administrator." *ODNB*, accessed 21 May 2021.

⁴⁰ Galloway, 'Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace', 294.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 314.

overall outcome of the study is a detailed and influential interpretation of Adam Usk's chronicle. Even so, Adam's work is not considered in the context of its genre, and as a result an over emphasis is placed on 'literary self-definition'.⁴² This conclusion, for example, does not take into account many of the conventions of chronicle writing, which will be explored later in this work.

Unlike some of the examples in the field of literature, scholars in the field of chronicle studies make comparisons between Adam's chronicle and other chronicles from the period. Even with this more appropriate contextualisation, however, the reaction to Adam Usk's ability as a chronicler has been mixed. Antonia Gransden, for example, describes Adam as 'conceited, boastful' and 'perhaps rather paranoid'.⁴³ Despite her concern with the tone of the work, however, Gransden admits that a result of Adam's tendency to 'parade his learning' was the detail he included. She recognises, for example, his significant knowledge of other chronicles, and how he used this 'to draw typological parallels between the great men of his own day and those of the past'.⁴⁴ Indeed, Adam's account of Richard II's reign has been called 'vivid' as a result of his first-hand experience and detailed descriptions of events he recorded.⁴⁵ Such a level of detail was not unique to Adam's work, but it is only in comparison to other chronicles that this aspect of his work is recognised.

Chris Given-Wilson has completed the most detailed analysis and contextualisation of Adam Usk's work, both in his monograph *Chronicles: the writing of history in medieval England*, and in the introduction to his edition of Adam Usk's chronicle, published in 1997.⁴⁶ In these works, Adam is treated more favourably, and aspects of his work which were previously viewed as negative are reframed as positive, particularly in relation to his ability as a historian.⁴⁷ It was Given-Wilson who first acknowledged that Adam's use of prophecy, for example, was evidence of his learning. Indeed, it is now widely accepted that Adam's frequent use of prophecy was a demonstration of how widely read he was.⁴⁸ Adam's use of first-hand accounts, as a further example, was not autobiographical as asserted by others, but a way of verifying information as accurate before it was included in the

⁴² Ibid., 292; this theme is discussed in more detail: below chapter One.

⁴³ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii: to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 176.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 176-177.

⁴⁵ John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 130-131.

⁴⁶ Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: the writing of history in medieval England* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); Given-Wilson, 'Introduction' in *Adam Usk's Chronicle*.

⁴⁷ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp 27-32; Steven Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 53-65; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 81-90.

chronicle. Given-Wilson's assertions are based on a detailed analysis and comparison to other chronicles written during the later-Middle Ages.⁴⁹ This methodological approach leads to more appropriate conclusions than comparing the chronicle to literary works. Rather than noticing how Adam's chronicle is significantly different to other chronicles in terms of 'accuracy', 'facts' or narrative style, a deeper understanding of the genre emphasises how Adam's chronicle is typical, valuable, and a useful primary source.⁵⁰ Whilst Given-Wilson has written extensively about Adam's chronicle, not all of his analysis of chronicle conventions have been applied to Adam's chronicle. My work, therefore, builds on Given-Wilson's in this respect. I provide an analysis of Adam's use of chronicle writing conventions. Additionally, I make the connection between Adam's understanding of the past and how this influenced his portrayal of Welsh identities, as well as how Welshness could be expressed within the framework of the Latin chronicle writing tradition.

The way in which the different disciplines have approached the issue of Adam Usk's identity as a Welshman is also pertinent to this study. One thing that is noticeable in the discipline of history, however, is that Adam's Welsh identity is rarely addressed. On the whole, only historians working on Wales during the Glyndŵr rebellion, such as Rees Davies make any mention of the fact that Adam was a Welshman.⁵¹ The discipline that has focused most on the 'national identity' of Adam's chronicle, is the field of literature. This field, which by definition is focused on textual analysis, however, has frequently defined Adam's chronicle as 'English'.⁵² This approach is based on the fact that Adam's patron, the earl of March, was a member of the English aristocracy, and that the chronicle was produced whilst Adam was living in England and should therefore be described as 'English'.⁵³ Elissa Henken, for example, describes Adam Usk's chronicle as 'English-oriented' and that his chronicle reflects 'primarily English views'.⁵⁴ She also aligns a lack of support for the Welsh rebellion in various chronicles written in Wales as the result of infiltrating 'English views'.⁵⁵ Adam's communal identity is also sometimes articulated with deliberate vagueness by scholars; he is

⁴⁹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 284-285.

⁵² Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 12-13; Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 10-12 For other references to Adam Usk as English see: Margaret Harvey, *The English in Rome 1362-1420: portrait of an expatriate community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 133-137, 140-141. Harvey makes a number of references to Adam Usk as an Englishman or an English clerk before eventually addressing his Welsh identity.

⁵³ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Henken, *National Redeemer*, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

described as having ‘connections with Wales’ or that he was ‘born in Wales’, rather than stating that he was Welsh.⁵⁶

The main work that addresses identity in Adam’s chronicle is by Alicia Marchant, who uses an interdisciplinary approach founded in literary theory to assess the narratives of chronicles which record details of the Glyndŵr rebellion.⁵⁷ One aspect of her comprehensive and wide-ranging study is a discussion about national identity during the Welsh revolt, in which Adam Usk’s chronicle plays a pivotal role.⁵⁸ Structuring analysis around theory, however, can prove problematic. Theoretical frameworks related to national identity have been applied to the fourteenth and fifteenth century by both historians and literary scholars. One of the key areas of contention for historians is that literary theory is not always grounded in historical context. Andrea Ruddick argues this in relation to postcolonial and language theory, writing:

*There is now an abundance of analyses of medieval English identity by literary scholars influenced by literary theory, but the challenge remains for historians of medieval England to ground these findings more fully in their historical, geopolitical context, and to examine the material basis for expressions of national identity in medieval England.*⁵⁹

To some extent, this is the case with Marchant’s analysis of Welsh national identity in Adam Usk’s chronicle. Marchant, for example, applies a theoretical framework regarding language and descent to three short passages in Adam’s chronicle, and draws the conclusion that he was introducing a ‘pro-Owain Glyndŵr argument into his chronicle narrative’.⁶⁰ The conclusion itself is an interesting one which deserves further exploration, but the chronicle, its author, and the notion of being ‘pro-Owain Glyndŵr’ would benefit from greater historical contextualisation and analysis in order to fully support this claim. As a result, in this work, I address Adam’s relationship with the rebellion in the context of his political obligations and limitations, and the way that Welsh people were increasingly defined as ‘foreign’ within the law. By separating cultural expressions of Welshness from definitions created within the political structure at the time, I situate Adam’s Welsh identity within a geopolitical, historical context.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Fulton, ‘Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy’, 118; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 161-174.

⁵⁹ Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 21.

⁶⁰ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 168.

⁶¹ See below: Chapter Four.

Scholars in the field of chronicle studies have also failed to acknowledge Adam's Welsh identity. Until Given-Wilson's edition of Adam Usk's chronicle in 1997 his Welsh identity was often treated as inconsequential. Chronicle scholars instead tended to focus on Adam's relationship to his hometown of Usk. John Taylor, for example, in his work on Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, does not mention the fact that Adam was Welsh. He instead suggests that Adam's connection with the locality of Usk was more notable because it was here that Adam obtained patronage from the Mortimer family, who Taylor claims 'decided Adam's life'.⁶² Antonia Gransden likewise suggests that it was Adam's patronage by the Mortimer family and the Archbishop Thomas Arundel that had the greatest impact on his perspective throughout the chronicle, only referencing Wales as an inconsequential backdrop to Adam's life and experiences.⁶³ Both scholars categorise Adam's work as 'Ricardian', and compare it to other chronicles written during or about Richard II's reign. The English or Welsh identity of the chronicler, however, does not feature in the debate. On the other hand, both scholars acknowledge the way that Adam expressed his identity as a lawyer and a man of learning, specifically in relation to his knowledge of history and other chronicles.⁶⁴ These studies rely entirely on historical context. They do not engage with any theoretical frameworks about how identity is either constructed or expressed.

Given-Wilson has been more forthright in addressing Adam's 'Welshness' and the way that it is expressed in the chronicle. Whilst Adam's Welsh identity is not mentioned in Given-Wilson's monograph *Chronicles: the writing of history in Medieval England*, he does pay attention to it in his edition of Adam Usk's chronicle.⁶⁵ The main angle explored is Adam's conflicting loyalty and allegiance to both the English Crown and the rebel cause during the Glyndŵr rebellion. He describes Adam as 'drenched in Welsh history and genealogy' who 'bitterly resented the English attempt in 1401 to suppress the Welsh tongue'.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, Given-Wilson acknowledges the fact that Adam's hometown had been 'under continuous Anglo-Norman rule for nearly two centuries', which meant that Adam had to secure the patronage of powerful Englishmen, including the English king, in order to be successful in his chosen career.⁶⁷ In Given-Wilson's overview, aspects of Adam's world view and experiences are placed within the context of his Welsh identity. This includes how Adam

⁶² John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 129-131.

⁶³ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 181-186.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177; Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁵ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction' in *Adam Usk's Chronicle*.

⁶⁶ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxiii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

describes places in Wales, demonstrating prejudice against North Wales.⁶⁸ He also discusses the role that anti-Welsh legislation played in Adam's decision to leave England and seek favour in the court at Rome in 1402.⁶⁹ Given-Wilson's exploration of Adam's Welsh identity is the most detailed, specifically in the way that it draws evidence directly from the chronicle itself, which is supported by the author's in-depth knowledge of Adams life and career.

Given-Wilson like Gransden and Taylor, however, does not base his conclusions on any theoretical frameworks or definitions of identity and instead anchors his analysis in Adam's own words and other documentary evidence regarding Adam's life, actions, and motives. By doing this, his discussions about Adam's 'Welshness' do not explore what the term means and instead present it as implicit and uncomplicated. Whilst many of the discussions in this work benefit from the contextual evidence Given-Wilson has uncovered about Adam's life, a greater emphasis is placed on exploring national identity as a theoretical framework and concept, as well as what it meant to be Welsh. It also draws on a wider range of sources to understand the Welsh experience in order to locate Adam's experiences as a Welshman.

In the literature, the line between 'Welsh' and 'English' in reference to Adam Usk is drawn between his own national identity (Welsh) and his chronicle (English). This categorisation is logical; Adam Usk was trained at Oxford, he writes in Latin, and his *Polychronicon* continuation is part of a tradition that was dominant in England and frames the history of the world in a dominant 'English' narrative.⁷⁰ A number of chronicles contemporary to Adam Usk's, such as Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* and the Westminster Chronicle, which can only be described as 'English', were also *Polychronicon* continuations.⁷¹ Adam's chronicle, as part of this tradition, is naturally closely aligned, and frequently compared, to these English chronicles in scholarship.⁷² Indeed, he does not seem to have been directly influenced by any Welsh chronicles or other written texts and appears to know most of his Welsh history through Gerald of Wales and Geoffrey of Monmouth via Ranulf Higden.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. lxxx.

⁶⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxiv.

⁷⁰ Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 39-45.

⁷¹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 59.

⁷² For the most notable example see: Marchant, *The Revolt*.

His links to the English ruling elite also complicated not only personal identity, but also the type of history that he wrote. He was patronised by the Mortimer family, who supported his education at Oxford and subsequent career. This would have brought him into contact with a range of legal sources and texts, which he references frequently in his chronicle, but also an English perspective on history and society.⁷³ There is no indication, however, that he was writing his chronicle for a specifically 'English' audience. In an entry dated 1400, Adam writes 'I should hate this account of my present follies to be seen during my lifetime'.⁷⁴ It is thus not clear whether the chronicle was intended for a wider audience or whether he hoped it would be read by his kinsmen alone.⁷⁵ All the above demonstrate the strong influence that English traditions, culture, society, and politics had over the way that Adam wrote his chronicle.

His chronicle is certainly not easily associated with the Welsh tradition of chronicle writing. This tradition predominantly based its history on the foundation story of Wales, tracing it from Troy to the occupation beginning in 1282.⁷⁶ By the time Adam was writing, the Welsh tradition had been heavily influenced by invasion and occupation, reflecting the political and historical frameworks of both the Norman and English occupiers.⁷⁷ The subject matter of chronicles written in Wales is notably different to that of Adam Usk's. The fifteenth-century *Brut y Saesson* (the History of the English), a Latin chronicle that can be dated to 1404, and a Welsh language chronicle known as *Blwydyn Eiseu*, all focus their narrative on the foundation story of the Britons, including characters such as Brutus and Cadwaladr.⁷⁸ If the 'national identity' of a chronicle is defined by the language of the chronicle, the intended audience, the tradition that influenced it, and the education and community of the person that wrote it, there is little to suggest that Adam's chronicle was anything other than English. It is here that the contradiction of the Marcher identity, discussed in more detail below, is important. In this work, I explore how Adam's Welsh identity was expressed within an English tradition and framework. It explores how his life and chronicle were influenced by his experience of the Welsh identity, one that was heavily influenced by his place in Marcher society

⁷³ For Adam's sources see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. I-lx.

⁷⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 118-119.

⁷⁵ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxxiv.

⁷⁶ Huw Price, 'Chronicling and its Contexts in Medieval Wales' in *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: new contexts, studies and texts* (eds.) Ben Guy, Owain Wyn Jones, Georgia Henley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 2-5.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 6.

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 23-25.

and the contradictions and blurred lines that this created, influencing his perspective on both the past and his present.

In the literature, it is thus clear that the difference in objective, methodology, and approach between the various disciplines has influenced the way Adam's identity, and the identity of his chronicle is viewed. For some, the chronicle is a dubious primary source, which is used only with the caveat that the chronicler tends to over-exaggerate or be self-promoting. When the chronicle's value is recognised, scholars have tended to either focus on the application of theory or on contextualising the chronicle historically. Adam Usk's identity as both a historian and a Welshman are also discussed differently depending on the individual study. For some, he is a second-rate chronicler whose standards fall below that of his contemporaries. For others, his chronicle is typical for its time. Conclusions about Adam's Welsh identity vary depending on the requirements and understandings of the scholar. Both Adam and his chronicle are sometimes categorised as 'English', which overlooks the realities and complexities of being Welsh in the later Middle Ages. When his Welsh identity is recognised, it is often addressed without the full context of national identity theory, or historical contextualisation. As of yet, no scholarship has attempted to apply both in a meaningful way; this study aims to fill this particular methodological gap.

Theoretical approaches to national identity, medieval and modern

Adam Usk was born into a world full of contradiction. He was a Welshman who spent his childhood and adolescence in Wales. Yet, in order to follow the career path that he so greatly desired, he interacted with the English authority in his region, Roger Mortimer, third Earl of March who acted as his patron. He also studied law at Merton College, Oxford, and later worked in England.⁷⁹ For Adam, this was not a compromise. He instead actively sought promotion to an English benefice and showed great affection for his English lords.⁸⁰ This demonstrates the challenges of analysing and quantifying national identity; the English and Welsh identities are often presented as being opposite to one another, but in reality, there were many areas of assimilation, cooperation, and integration. The history and culture of the town of Usk led Given-Wilson to describe it as 'anglicized', which suggests that it was not fully Welsh, or that the Welsh identity of the town was compromised.⁸¹ This

⁷⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 46-47.

⁸⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xiv-xx.

⁸¹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxxii.

definition implies that Adam Usk's life experiences were only representative of certain aspects of a 'Welsh culture' which was altered by a separate and defined 'English culture'. I instead argue that Adam saw himself as Welsh (as will be discussed in later chapters of this work) and as a result, it is important that the complexity of this identification is acknowledged and explored.

Indeed, it is undeniable that Marcher society influenced Adam Usk's perspective on the world. The March of Wales, a series of foreign Lordships in Wales created between the Norman conquest and 1283, was administratively, socially, and politically diverse, both between the various lordships in the March and other areas of Wales.⁸² The March was not confined by the English/Welsh border, but also encompassed areas of England such as regions of Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Cheshire, and during the conquest functioned as militarised zone between the two countries.⁸³ The town of Usk fell within the March in Wales. During Adam's lifetime it was ruled by the Earls of March before passing to the Lord of Powys in 1398. The position of the March is challenging to quantify; it was both part of Wales, and therefore part of the English Crown's dominions, but it was also separate.⁸⁴

The identity of Welsh people living in the March of Wales was complex. Their lives were shaped by its history and their relationship with the foreign Lord. Adam clearly profited from this relationship as he received support from the Mortimers for his education, and later benefitted from the protection of the Lord of Powys, Edward Charlton, when finding himself in trouble during the Glyndŵr rebellion. This inevitably influenced his outlook on the world; his political framework was solidly rooted in the English system, and during the first half of his life, there is little evidence that his Welsh identity was limiting for him.⁸⁵

The English and Welsh people living in that region retained their separate national identities, and whilst integration and intermarriage was common, there is also evidence that English and Welsh people lived in separate communities.⁸⁶ The Marcher Lordship of Usk was in Wales, and was

⁸² Max Lieberman, *The Medieval March of Wales: the creation and perception of a frontier, 1066-1283* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-22; R. R. Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066-1272', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 29 (1979), 45.

⁸³ Lieberman, *The Medieval March*, pp. 22-55.

⁸⁴ Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', 53.

⁸⁵ See below chapter 4.

⁸⁶ Lieberman, *The Medieval March*, p. 55; Jane Laughton, 'Mapping the Migrants: Welsh, Manx and Irish settlers in fifteenth-century Chester' in *Mapping the Medieval City: space, place and identity in Chester c.1200-1600* (ed.) Catherine Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp. 169-183.

ultimately under the overlordship of the English Crown.⁸⁷ People like Adam, who had both a Welsh mother and a Welsh father, were marginalised in the official ordinances and statutes of the English parliament, forbidden to hold office, carry arms, or buy property in border towns.⁸⁸ As is discussed in chapter 4 of this work, these regulations were rarely enforced until the outbreak of rebellion in Wales in 1400. Adam Usk, as a member of a Welsh community in a Marcher Lordship, found himself both privileged and subjugated at various stages of his life. In this thesis, I argue that Adam's experiences as a member of a Marcher community were Welsh experiences, and that his perspectives and interpretations of events were influenced by his identity as a Welshman from the Marcher lordship of Usk.

In order to evaluate the 'Welshness' of Adam's chronicle, this work utilises aspects of the 'national identity' theoretical framework. Modern ideas of nation and nationalism, however, cannot be applied to medieval Europe without qualification but need to be carefully defined in the medieval context. Below, I argue that national identity theory is an appropriate framework for analysing Welsh identity in Adam Usk's chronicle despite the controversies of applying it to the Middle Ages. The way that other scholars of the medieval period have approached national identity theory and its problems is also explored. I demonstrate that the concepts also present in national identity theory are evident in later medieval Latin chronicles and argue that this a beneficial framework for assessing cultural and political identity in Adam's chronicle.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the controversy of using the term 'nation' to describe a medieval setting. This is because the inherent link between nations and nationalism stems from philosophical thought that developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and as a result the theory was specifically tied to the social and cultural climate of that time, and has developed into the modern age.⁸⁹ Nations, according to Rousseau writing in the eighteenth century, were political formations, strengthened through man-made institutions and implemented through

⁸⁷ Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', 53.

⁸⁸ See below chapters 3 and 4.

⁸⁹ For an overview of this argument see: Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 3; Steven T. Engel, 'Rousseau and Imagined Communities', *The Review of Politics*, 67:3 (2005), 515; Brian Jenkins and Spyros A. Sofos, 'Nation and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe: a theoretical perspective' in *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 9-32; Michael Keating, *Nations Against the State: New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 1-18; Johan Schimanski, 'Cultural and Political Nationalism in Wales' in *Nationalism in Small European Nations*, (ed.) Oystein Sorensen (Oslo: The Research Council of Norway, 1996), pp. 89-100.

law.⁹⁰ The environment that Rousseau describes is determined by a self-consciousness in the organisation of the nation that is reliant on the institutional structures of the modern nation-state, that simply did not exist in the medieval period.⁹¹ In a separate eighteenth-century strand of philosophical thought regarding nationalism, Herder promoted the role of a common language and culture in the creation of the self-aware nation.⁹² Described as ‘ethnic’ or ‘cultural’ nationalism, Herder was one of the forebears of the late nineteenth-century theoretical approach to race, ethnicity, and nationhood.⁹³

As a result, some have claimed that ‘nation’ as a concept could not exist in the Middle Ages because it is inherently modern.⁹⁴ This assertion, however, has been refuted by medievalists.⁹⁵ Rees Davies, for example, has successfully demonstrated that the idea of ‘peoples’ and ‘nations’ were interchangeable during the later-medieval period, and as a result it is valid to use the term ‘nations’.⁹⁶ He argues that ‘there could be no doubting that for medieval authors the world was, and had always been, a world of peoples’.⁹⁷ In the medieval mindset, a people was a communal group descended from a ‘founding patriarch’, and held together by the existence of a ‘national character’.⁹⁸ Aspects of this definition are comparable to those discussed above. This form of identity, for example, was based on descent, and can therefore be described as ‘ethnic identity’.⁹⁹ It was also a ‘political identity’ and ‘legal identity’ because an individual’s rights, freedoms, and relationship with ruling elites were often defined by which ‘people’ they belonged to.¹⁰⁰ For someone to be defined as

⁹⁰ Erica Benner, ‘The Nation-State’ in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century (1790-1870)*, (eds.) Allen W. Wood and Songsuk Susan Hahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 700. See: J. J. Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social* (Ligaran Éditions, 2015); J. J. Rousseau, *Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne* (Paris: Valade for Cazin, 1782).

⁹¹ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), pp. 2-5. Discussed in: Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 3.

⁹² Susanne Wiborg, ‘Political and Cultural Nationalism in Education. The Idea of Rousseau and Herder Concerning National Education’, *Comparative Education* 36:2 (2000), 235; Benner, ‘The Nation-State’, p. 704.

⁹³ Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 3.

⁹⁴ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 18; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

⁹⁵ For example, and most explicitly: Susan Reynolds, ‘Nations, Tribes, Peoples, and States’, *Medieval Worlds* 2 (2015), 79-88.

⁹⁶ R. R. Davies, ‘Presidential Address: The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400. I. Identities’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4 (1991), 4-5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁹⁹ Robert Bartlett, ‘Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001), 39-56. Although he is a modernist, Anthony Smith defines pre-modern ‘proto-nations’ in ethnic terms: Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1988).

¹⁰⁰ Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Identities’, 6. These terms are discussed in Chapter 4 of this work.

‘Welsh’ in a legal sense, they were required to have two Welsh parents.¹⁰¹ Applying this example to Adam Usk, nothing is known about his father or his father’s identity, other than through the fact that Adam is considered to be legally Welsh.¹⁰²

Adam’s identity, however, was not only considered in terms of his rights and privileges. The cultural aspects of his identity would also have been perceived as innately inherited.¹⁰³ The Welsh cultural identity, for example, was defined by a number of different markers such as ‘language, law, life-style, dress, personal appearance, agricultural practices, [and] codes of social values’.¹⁰⁴ These markers of identity function in two ways. On the one hand they were perceived, believed, and performed by individuals who associated with a particular group. A Welsh person, for example, might have dressed in a certain way or worn their hair in a specific way as a result of their local customs.¹⁰⁵ The prevalence and strength of these defining customs was linked to ethnicity or race in the Middle Ages as they were considered to be inherited by birth.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, these markers of local or national identity created a sense of homogeneity amongst the communities that practiced them.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, these markers were also used to define a person or community by people that were not part of it. In the case of Wales in the medieval English mindset, the customs and culture were often perceived as negative.¹⁰⁸ The Welsh were, for example, considered to be uncivilised and backwards in most of the traits listed above. This rhetoric is repeated consistently in the chronicles written by Adam’s contemporaries.

Davies’s definition of peoples and nations is the most widely cited by scholars addressing peoples and nations in the Middle Ages. Davies’s research was published in a series of presidential addresses between 1994 and 1997.¹⁰⁹ He only touches briefly on other major works exploring national identity,

¹⁰¹ This definition was used in Welsh law to privilege the rights of Welsh people, and in English law to exclude the Welsh from certain privileges. Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Identities’, 6.

¹⁰² Discussed below in chapter Four.

¹⁰³ Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Identities’, 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ R. R. Davies, ‘Race Relations in Post-Conquest Wales: confrontation and compromise. The Cecil-Williams lecture for 1973’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1974-5), 32-55.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 36; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷ Davies, ‘Race Relations’, 36-38.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36. Also see: below chapter Three.

¹⁰⁹ R.R. Davies, ‘The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: I. Identities’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6:4 (1994), 1-20; R.R. Davies, ‘The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: II. Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6:5 (1995), 1-20; R.R. Davies, ‘The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: III. Laws and Customs’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6:6 (1996), 1-

such as the influential monograph *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson. The title phrase is used to support Davies's already developed definition of what constitutes a people. He argues that a community is imagined, and multiple communities can exist simultaneously.¹¹⁰ Davies's definition of people and nation is influential in this work, particularly in relation to the various cultural markers of identity such as a belief in a shared history, and language. His practical model for assessing national identity, however, does not take into consideration some of the wider definitions of local and national belonging that are relevant to the discussions in this work. As a result, other theoretical models, particularly Anderson's definition, are used to structure the analysis.

Benedict Anderson's modern definition of 'nation' includes both cultural and political belonging to a nation. He describes nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.¹¹¹ This definition allows for a more fluid description of nation than Rousseau and Herder's as it permits multiple ethnicities, languages, and religions within one unifying identity.¹¹² Additionally, for Anderson, there is no inherent connection between the definition of 'nation' and the concept of nationalism, which makes it less problematic for medievalists.¹¹³ For this reason, it is frequently used as the foundation for discussions about national or communal identity in the Middle Ages.¹¹⁴ Many studies acknowledge that English and Welsh identity in the Middle Ages were both political and cultural, an integral aspect of Anderson's definition. Indeed, Davies presented a paper about how the English and Welsh were defined by their laws and customs, which manifested in both cultural and political terms.¹¹⁵ The two, according to Davies, were interlinked. Andrea Ruddick draws similar conclusions. In her book on English political identity, for example, she connects political identities with Anderson's definition of a people as 'imagined', and focuses on the 'national character' of the English, as well as their political definition.¹¹⁶ Susan Reynolds also acknowledged the connection between the two, defining kingdoms in political terms whilst

23; R.R. Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: IV. Language and Historical Mythology', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6:7 (1997), 1-24.

¹¹⁰ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Identities', 4.

¹¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6,

¹¹² S. T. Engel, 'Rousseau and Imagined Communities' p. 517, pp. 523-524.

¹¹³ Discussed by: Ruddick *English Identity*, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ For example: Euryng Rhys Roberts, 'A Surfeit of Identity? Regional solidarities, Welsh Identity and the Idea of Britain' in *Imagined Communities: Constructing Collective Identities in Medieval Europe*, (eds.) Andrzej Pleszczyński, Joanna Sobiesiak, Michał Tomaszek, Przemysław Tyszka (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 247-78.

¹¹⁵ R.R. Davies, 'Presidential Address: The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: III. Laws and Customs', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6 (1996), 1-23.

¹¹⁶ Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 10.

acknowledging that they were made up of more than their institutions and relied on the self-belief of the people that lived there.¹¹⁷

In this work, the connection between cultural and political identity is made, particularly the reflection of negative Welsh cultural stereotypes in legislation. Political and cultural identity, however, are also explored as two separate phenomena with differing implications for Adam Usk and other Welsh people during the later Middle Ages. This model for understanding national identity is drawn from the vocabulary and concepts used in medieval chronicles, as will be discussed next, but it also aligns with Anderson's definition of nation as both an imagined and political concept. In this work, cultural identity provides a framework for assessing Adam Usk's belonging to the community of Usk and gives an insight into his interpretation and expression of a wider Welsh identity. This uses the 'imagined' aspect of national identity theory and assesses the ways in which Adam felt connected to his community through an understanding of locality, language, a shared history, as well as obligation, trust, and loyalty.¹¹⁸ The cultural identity framework also provides insight into the other side of the issue, namely the negative cultural stereotypes imposed onto the Welsh in the English narrative. Aspects of these stereotypes and negative tropes are also used by Adam Usk in his chronicle. These again focus on similar issues regarding language, landscapes, loyalty and a shared history, but are used to subjugate the Welsh and portray them as barbaric.¹¹⁹ In chapter 4 of this work, I focus on Adam's legal and political identity. Building on research around immigration and the rights of foreigners in medieval England, this chapter addresses the shifting legal status of Welsh people during Adam's lifetime. It explores how the rights of Welsh people were curbed by the English crown, and how Owain Glyndŵr's rival political system appeared to champion Welsh rights, providing an alternative to the Welsh crown.¹²⁰ The way that diminishing rights in one political structure, and the potential for greater opportunities in another affected Adam's decisions is explored.

There are a number of historians, such as Susan Reynolds, who use alternative phrases to describe concepts of belonging. In Reynold's case, the modern etymological association between the terms 'nation' and 'state' led to her avoiding the word 'nation' or 'national', and use the term 'regnal'

¹¹⁷ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 253.

¹¹⁸ See below, chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ See below, chapter 3.

¹²⁰ See below, chapter 4.

instead.¹²¹ Despite this, Reynolds has argued that the vocabulary used to describe 'nations' should not be viewed as problematic if it is used to discuss concepts that existed during the Middle Ages.¹²² Indeed, this argument has been supported and developed by Andrea Ruddick, who has argued that scholars only have modern vocabulary at their disposal to describe non-modern concepts, and as a result they should not shy away from using terms like 'nation' and 'nationality'. Such an approach, however, comes with the caveat that terminology should be defined and analysed before use.¹²³ Taking these arguments into consideration, the definition of 'national identity', as will be applied to Adam Usk and his chronicle is based around three concepts that appear frequently in Adam's chronicle and in the chronicles of his contemporaries. The terms *regnum*, *gens*, and *patria* were used to express political boundaries, characteristics pertaining to a specific people or community, and an affiliation or connection with a local 'home town'. Below, they are explored in the context of medieval chronicles and are thus considered not simply as 'terms', but as 'concepts' that relate to definitions of national identity.

The term *Regnum* (kingdom or realm), for example, is frequently used by Adam and his contemporaries to describe the geographical location of England and Wales. It emphasises the political aspect of communal or national identities; the behaviour, rights, and obligations of individuals and groups were controlled by their legal definition and the political frameworks that structured their lives. This framework was created by the political structures and culture that existed within the kingdom, such as economic structures, structures of governance, and legal restrictions placed on people in a specific kingdom.¹²⁴ Adam, for example, uses the phrase *regnum Anglia* (the kingdom of England) and *regnum Francie* (the kingdom of France).¹²⁵ Adam Usk's contemporaries describe other kingdoms: *regnum Norwegie* (the kingdom of Norway), the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, Scotland, and Sicily.¹²⁶ Within the island of Britain there was a disputed yet clear boundary between the kingdom of England and the kingdom of Scotland. It effectively meant that the people belonging to each kingdom were governed by a specific constitutional and legal framework. Living in, and coming from, the kingdom of England had implications for people's day-to-day lives. In Adam's chronicle, and in the chronicles of his contemporaries, the phrase *rex et regnum* (king and

¹²¹ Susan Reynolds, 'The idea of the nation as a political community' in *Power and the Nation in European History*, (eds.) Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 56.

¹²² Susan Reynolds, 'The idea of the nation as a political community' p. 55.

¹²³ Discussed by Andrea Ruddick in her unpublished paper: 'Beyond 'Nationalism': Historical Terms, Analytical Categories, and Problems of Terminology', presented at IMC 2018, paper 527-b.

¹²⁴ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, pp. 250-331.

¹²⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 40-41, 114-115.

¹²⁶ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, (eds.) Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 168-169; *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 333, 341; Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 36-37, 728-729, 736-737.

kingdom/realm) is commonly used.¹²⁷ The collocation connects together the land or geographical location and its political status. The frequency of this phrase demonstrates the way that these two concepts were connected in the medieval mindset.

What is not clear, however, is what this meant for Wales. Wales, which was under the power of the English crown, was not a separate kingdom. Wales was annexed to the English Crown in 1284, and as such the people of Wales were subjects of the English Crown.¹²⁸ When a chronicler described an event that affected the kingdom, therefore, it is rarely clear whether this included Wales or not. In Adam's chronicle he only uses the term *regnum* in connection to Wales on one occasion. In this example he describes how Owain Glyndŵr began his rebellion in 1400, and then retreated into the Welsh countryside, hiding from 'king and kingdom'.¹²⁹ In this simple phrase, the complexity of the political position of the Welsh is apparent. It is unclear, for example, whether the Welsh people were included in the word 'kingdom', and whether Adam was insinuating that Owain Glyndŵr was also in hiding from them. Adam's use of this phrase raises more questions than it answers, specifically regarding the relationship between Wales and the English Crown. When describing events within Britain more generally, however, chroniclers often use phrases such as *pluribus regni partibus* (in many regions of the kingdom) *omni parte regni* (in every region of the kingdom), *totus regnum* (the entire kingdom).¹³⁰ Again, these uses of the term *regnum* do not make it clear whether the Welsh are included in the account or not. The notion of the kingdom is intrinsically political, and yet the way that it is used in these chronicle examples shows how it could also be abstract and imprecise. Indeed, the way that political frameworks were imposed on different groups of people living under the rule of the English Crown was equally nebulous and subject to frequent redefinition and change. The redefining of the Welsh national identity is a key theme in chapter four of this work.

Where the word *regnum* refers to the political definition of a geographical location and the people who inhabit it, the term *gens* encompasses the 'imagined' or characteristic part of identity.¹³¹ This

¹²⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 262-263, 266-267; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 111, 148, 154, 164, 165; Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 142-143, 224-225, 512-513, 584-585.

¹²⁸ For details of the implications see: R. A. Griffiths, 'This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle': *The English realm and nation in the later Middle Ages, an inaugural lecture delivered at the University College of Swansea on November 1 1983* (Swansea: University College Swansea, 1983), pp. 4-27; R. A. Griffiths, 'The English Realm and Dominions and the King's Subjects in the Later Middle Ages' in *Aspects of Late Medieval Government and Society: essays presented to J. R. Lander*, (ed.) J. G. Rowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 83-98.

¹²⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 262-263.

¹³⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 6-7, 8-9; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 119, 155.

¹³¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

term is often translated as ‘nation’ or ‘people’. Rather than being a political status, this expression denotes the ethnic or racial aspect of national identity. Whilst it does not appear with the same frequency of *regnum*, the term *gens* is used by Adam Usk’s contemporaries. It refers to people from a kingdom or region, and it often signifies specific behavioural traits or characteristics. Certain definitions of ‘peoples’ were considered to be enduring and timeless, continuing from generation to generation, and it is in this way that they could be described as ‘imagined’.¹³² There are many examples of *gens* being used to describe fairly small communities, as well as larger ‘nations’ (such as *gentis Angligene* – English people/nation).¹³³ The people of St Albans, for example, are described as a *gens perfida* (a treacherous race), and the people of Northumberland were also a *gens*.¹³⁴

The term *gens* again creates problems for scholars trying to unpick the relationship between Wales, England, and the English king. There is no doubt that the Welsh were considered to be a separate people from the English in terms of their habits and customs, but this difference is not always reflected in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chronicles. Chronicles which do not cover the events of the Welsh rebellion because they finish before 1400, such as *the Westminster Chronicle* or Henry Knighton’s *Chronicle*, barely mention Wales.¹³⁵ This trend is seen in other chronicles, such as Thomas Walsingham’s *Chronica maiora*, *the Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, and *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*; each of these chronicles dedicates some attention to the rebellion in Wales, but before 1400 (the year the rebellion broke out) Wales is mentioned infrequently if at all.¹³⁶ This erasure of Wales in contemporary sources has been discussed by numerous historians, most comprehensively by Simon Meecham-Jones and Tim Thornton.¹³⁷ It has most convincingly been argued that Wales was ‘written out’ of history as a result of the proximity and dominance of England since the fourteenth century.¹³⁸ Despite this, when the *people* rather than the *location* of Wales do appear in the chronicles, generally in relation to the Glyndŵr rebellion, it is clear that they were considered as

¹³² Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Identities’, 6.

¹³³ *Gesta Henrici*, pp. 126–127.

¹³⁴ Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 540–541, 728–729.

¹³⁵ *The Westminster Chronicle 1381–1394*, (eds.) L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); *Knighton’s Chronicle 1337–1396*, (ed. and trans.) G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹³⁶ Thomas Walsingham, vol. I; Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 2–305; *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381–1403*, pp. pp. 164–181; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 49–175.

¹³⁷ Tim Thornton, ‘Wales in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Histories: neglect, rediscovery, and their implications’ *Historical Research*, 90:250 (2017) 683–703; S. Meecham-Jones, ‘Where was Wales? The erasure of Wales in medieval English culture’, in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing Medieval Wales*, (eds.) R. Kennedy and S. Meecham-Jones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 27–55.

¹³⁸ Thornton, ‘Wales in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Histories’, 686–689.

a separate *gens* to the English. The Welsh are presented as having a distinctive character born from their habits, traditions, and belief in a shared past.¹³⁹

Regnum and *gens* both provide an insight into the way Adam Usk and his contemporaries thought about identity as both political and imagined. In both cases, the concepts denote cohesion and homogeneity; the *regnum* exists as a single body often working towards a shared outcome, and a *gens* was united by their imagined characteristics. Despite the apparent unity of people or places, the terms disguise the divisions that exist within a larger identity and fail to acknowledge diversity and fragmentation within it. In order to better represent diversity, medieval Latin chroniclers used flexible terminology that acknowledged multiplicity or outliers within an identity. The word *patria* (country), for example, was applied to both larger regions, as well as smaller areas and communities. Even in smaller locations there is evidence that people felt a sense of belonging and obligation to their *patria*.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, in the chronicles the word is sometimes used with a possessive pronoun, insinuating that the country belonged to someone, with similar connotations to how 'home' might be used in modern English. Adam, for example, uses the word *patria* for his chronicle entry in 1413 in which he describes people from Ireland and Wales being expelled from England. He writes that a decree was issued 'against the Welsh and Irish ordering them all to go back to their own countries (*suas proficiscerentur patrias*).¹⁴¹ Indeed, on one occasion the editors of Thomas Walsingham's chronicle translate *patria* as 'homeland' to demonstrate this sense of belonging (*Est autem pater eius eque Scotus tam gente quam patria*).¹⁴²

Patria was different from *regnum* in the sense that it was not a region defined by its political system, but rather a place with which a person felt an affinity or sense of belonging. Significantly, it could be a smaller locality, rather than a larger entity. This notion allows for a diverse array of identities and communities within a larger 'whole'. A sense of local belonging and regional fragmentation has been noticed within Adam's chronicle. Given-Wilson, for example, has demonstrated that Adam acknowledges regional variation in Wales more than any other chronicler from his period.¹⁴³ Adam distinguishes between the north and south of Wales writing that Snowdonia (in the north) was 'the

¹³⁹ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology', 16-24; Davies, *Conquest, coexistence and change: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1987), pp. 412-428.

¹⁴⁰ M. L. Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', *Parergon*, 23: 1 (2006), 50.

¹⁴¹ Adam Usk, pp. 244-245.

¹⁴² Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 224-225.

¹⁴³ Given-Wilson, Introduction', p. xxiv.

source of all the evils in Wales'.¹⁴⁴ He also demonstrates a deep affection for the town of Usk, which he describes as 'my native country'.¹⁴⁵ From this, the complex relationship between local and national identities is apparent; within the larger *imagined community* existed smaller identities and loyalties. It is also interesting to note the additional complexity that Adam, a man from a Marcher lordship with a dominant English influence, looked so negatively on the regions of Wales that had been ruled by Welsh princes. Indeed, in the medieval mindset, local and national identities did not exclude the one another, and prejudices within an overarching identity were still apparent.

There are some aspects of overlap between philosophical descriptions of nation developed during the eighteenth century, and the language used to express identity and place during Adam Usk's lifetime. Rousseau's description of nation as a 'self-conscious' political entity, for example, is mirrored in the term *regnum*, which finds its boundaries where the power of the political system (e.g., the Crown's authority over its subjects) ends. Herder's 'ethnic' or 'cultural' nationalism shares some common ground with the term *gens*, which reflects a people who shared common traits as a result of their ethnic lineage. Despite the overlaps, it is clear that the theories of the eighteenth century were entirely different to the way nation and identity were considered in the Middle Ages. This is particularly the case with the conflation of 'nation' and 'nationalism', a philosophical concept which certainly did not exist outside of the modern age. Anderson's definition of nation as being both an imagined and political entity, however, does not make this connection. Instead, his definition reflects the imagined and political aspects of identity that are seen in the chronicles themselves. These two important aspects will be used to structure the analysis and discussion of national and communal identities in this work.

Methodology and outline

In terms of the methodological approaches utilised by this work, the types of sources lend themselves most naturally to qualitative research methods. In order to understand how Adam Usk expressed Welshness, his chronicle is compared to other histories that followed the English historical tradition. The main criteria for selection are that the chronicles were written during Adam Usk's lifetime (1350-1422), that they cover similar events to Adam's chronicle (events of political or

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. xxiv; Adam Usk, p. 240; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 188.

¹⁴⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 240-241; J. D. Evans, 'Adam of Usk in his native place', *Gwent Local History: the journal of Gwent Local History Council* 70 (1991), 15-18.

national significance 1377-1421), that they were composed in Britain and are mainly written in Latin.¹⁴⁶ In doing so, it becomes apparent when Adam deviates from a traditional English narrative or chooses to emphasise something related to his identity. This is seen in the way the chroniclers are influenced by their locality or the languages they choose for writing their chronicles.¹⁴⁷ For events involving Wales and the Welsh, vocabulary is examined in detail. This is particularly telling for the way that the Welsh people and their habits and traditions are described in contrast to English customs and behaviours.¹⁴⁸ Adam's understanding of the past, particularly the foundation story of Wales, is examined.¹⁴⁹ This is done by exploring a range of chronicles that Adam Usk and his contemporaries used to construct their histories. The conclusions both demonstrate how Adam was fully immersed in an English narrative and does not deviate from it, but was able to express his own understanding of Welshness within this context.

In addition to the chronicles, a range of other documents are examined to provide clarity and context. This includes letters, poems, and wills, as well as a range of documents generated by political infrastructures, which are particularly important for assessing Adam Usk's legal and political identity in chapter four (such as the parliament rolls, patent rolls and number of episcopal registers). These sources are written in a variety of different languages, including Latin, French, English, and Welsh, depending on the context in which the source was produced. The source types allow for the comparison of a variety of narratives and perspectives on the events that Adam writes about.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ The chronicles were selected as they are thought to be written near contemporaneously, are mainly written in Latin, and cover some or all of the time period covered by Adam Usk's chronicle: *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, (eds.) M. C. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 13 (1930), pp. 164-181; 'Continuatio Eulogii' in *Eulogium (historiarum sive temporis) chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXVI a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum*, (ed.) F.S. Haydon (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858-1863); *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, (ed.) George. B. Stow, Jr (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 49-175; *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, (ed. and trans.) G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); *The St Albans Chronicle; the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham I 1376-1394*, (eds. and trans.) John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); *The St Albans Chronicle; the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham II 1394-1422*, (eds. and trans.) John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011); *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, (eds.) L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); 'Cronica de Kirkstall': Cotton MS Domitian A XII; 'John Strecche's Chronicle': Add. MS 35295.

¹⁴⁷ See below: Chapters One and Two.

¹⁴⁸ See below: Chapters Three and Five.

¹⁴⁹ See below: Chapters Two and Five.

¹⁵⁰ Steven J. Taylor, Robert Bogdan, and Marjorie DeVault, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: a guidebook and resource* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2016) pp. 18-21.

Identity, however, is not only expressed in the words people use, or the stories they tell. It is also expressed in the objects they own or create. In the context of this study, the *material culture* methodological approach is particularly important for understanding how Adam Usk performed the role of historian and presented himself as a man of learning. His chronicle, which is written in the back of a *Polychronicon* manuscript, is a physical object (or physical objects, as the original manuscript is now separated into two), which can be held, touched, and carried. As a result, Adam Usk's chronicle is analysed not only as a collection of accounts and stories, but also as a physical object that reflects the culture in which it was made.

The chapters of this thesis are organised around different aspects of Adam Usk's identity. The first chapter provides context by exploring how Adam performs the role of a chronicler. This allows a greater insight into the genre of chronicle writing and provides the setting for further analysis to take place, particularly in considering how the Welsh are represented in the *Polychronicon* tradition. The second and third chapters both address Adam Usk's Welsh identity, but from different perspectives. Chapter two looks at how he expressed his *own* local and national identity, and explores the relationship between his local affiliation as a man from the Marcher town of Usk, and his identity as a Welshman. Chapter three, however, addresses the influence of English historical narratives on Adam's perception of Welsh identity, exploring the way he perpetuates negative stereotypes against the rebels involved in the Glyndŵr rebellion. The fourth chapter looks at Adam's political identity, and how legal and political frameworks, such as legislation, limited the opportunities of the Welsh. The implications that these limitations had for Adam's life and career are then explored. Finally, a number of the aspects already addressed are pulled together into the thematic chapter about medieval Welsh prophecy. This chapter looks at how understandings of the past and future could be used to create connections within a communal group, as well as alienating others. It also explores how the emotive power of prophetic discourses could be used to form political alliances. By addressing these various aspects of Adam Usk's identity, it is possible to draw conclusions about how he saw his own identity, and how others projected the Welsh identity on to him.

Conclusion

Adam's place of birth, the gatehouse of Usk castle, serves as a metaphor for his national identity. He was born in Wales, was of Welsh heritage, defined himself as Welsh, but was born into a symbol of

English power and administration in his 'native country'.¹⁵¹ As an adult, he moved comfortably within both English and Welsh circles, obtaining patronage and support from a number of renowned nobles, as well as maintaining connections and relationships with people from his hometown. In the dichotomous discourse of English and Welsh identities, this appears to be contradictory. Yet Adam's life and career demonstrate that the two identities were not always in opposition. Despite this, scholarship has sought to define Adam: he is a secular, second-rate chronicler, someone born in the Welsh March with little experience of Welsh culture. The tradition, subject matter, and language of his chronicle have led to it being categorised as 'English'. What follows is an exploration of Adam's identity, as a historian, as a person born into the community of the Marcher lordship of Usk, and as a Welshman. In order to fully contextualise Adam's experiences, and to develop the background for accurate analysis, many aspects of the English and Welsh political and cultural lives are depicted, as well as the rituals, customs and landscapes that serve as a backdrop to the drama recounted in the chronicles.

¹⁵¹ Adam Usk, pp. 240-241.

Chapter One

Adam Usk's Chronicle in Context: identity and the medieval tradition of chronicle writing

On the twentieth day of January, 1429, an elderly man penned his will.¹ 'I, Adam Usk' he wrote, 'of sane mind, fearing that the danger of death is coming to me, compose my testament in this fashion'.² Adam, who was nearing eighty years of age, began to list the items he wished to bequeath. He started by bequeathing his soul to God and the 'blessed Virgin Mary and all [God's] saints', and his 'body to burial in the parish church of Usk, before the image of the blessed Virgin Mary'.³ The rest of the will was largely made up of financial gifts. The vicar of Usk, for example, was to be left three shillings and four pence. Each nun at the priory of Usk was to receive twenty pence, and the cathedral church of Llandaff was bequeathed three shillings and four pence. The friars minor of Cardiff and the Augustinian friars of Newport were left payment for a trental, a set of thirty requiem masses said for the deceased. In addition to the items relating to his religious life, he also bequeathed a number of personal gifts. His brother, who is unnamed, and his sister Joan, were both left forty shillings. He bequeathed varying amounts to his friends and associates, such as Thomas Went of Castle Combe, where Adam had held benefices. He granted twenty shillings to John ap David ap Griffith, which the will states had already been lent to him.⁴

Amongst the financial gifts, the elderly man made arrangements for his other possessions. The goods that he did not bequeath in his will, he left to the disposition of his kinsman Edward ap Adam.⁵ The exact identity of Edward is unknown. Perhaps Edward was a blood relative of Adam's. They certainly had a close relationship, demonstrated by the fact that Adam made Edward the executor of his will.⁶ It is also possible that he is the Edward mentioned in a pardon in the patent

¹ 'Adam Usk's Will' TNA, PROB-11-231/ Somerset House, Probate Registry, Luffenham register, fol. 13. Transcribed and translated in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Chris Given-Wilson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 272-275; Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Henry Frowde, 1904), pp. xxix-xxx; E. Owen, 'The Will of Adam of Usk', *English Historical Review*, 18 (1903), 316-317. The year was 1430 by the new calendar: Given-Wilson, *Adam Usk*, p. 272, fn. 2. See Appendix B.

² My own translation *ego, Adam Vsk..., compos et sanus memorie, timens mortis periculum michi euenire, condo testamentum meum in hunc modum.*

³ 'Adam Usk's Will' TNA, PROB-11-231; Adam Usk, pp. 272-273.

⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 272-273.

⁵ Ibid. *Residuum uero omnium bonorum meorum non legatorum lego dicto Edwardo et sue disposicioni*

⁶ Ibid. *quem ordino, facio et constituo, ad exequendum presens testamentum, meum executorem.*

rolls for 16 June 1403.⁷ Some twenty-five years prior to writing his will, Adam Usk had been indicted for stealing a horse from Walter Jakes in London. He was pardoned for this act on the 18 January 1403, and two of his servants also received a pardon; Richard Edvyn and Edward Usk.⁸ If this is the same Edward, the two men would have known each other for at least thirty years. The bond between the two was sealed by the bequest of a special possession. 'Also' Adam wrote, 'I leave to Edward ap Adam, my kinsman, a book called *Policronica*.'⁹

Adam Usk's ability as a historian and a man of learning has been widely discussed in modern scholarship, based on his chronicle written into the back of his *Polychronicon* book. In the introduction to this work, the disciplinary approaches to Adam as a historian were addressed. It was established that studies in the field of history tend to consider Adam's chronicle as 'unreliable' because there were certain inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the way he reported events. What is also clear in the previous analysis, however, is that this is not an appropriate measure of whether or not Adam considered himself to be a man of learning, and whether this was a role that he was deliberately performing. Instead, such an interpretation projects modern standards of 'accuracy' or 'facts' onto medieval chronicle writing.¹⁰ This chapter explores the way that Adam Usk viewed himself as a historian, and how he 'performed' this role. It also establishes the influence that this had on the way his chronicle was written. It is important to establish Adam's relationship with his chronicle before any deeper readings can be made, particularly an assessment of his local, national, and political identity, and how he expresses these in the chronicle. The *Polychronicon* book provides the setting for this analysis.

In this chapter, it is argued that Adam viewed himself as a historian, and performed a variety of different actions to execute this role and status. Definitions of performativity rely on notions of 'self-conception' and 'self-presentation', also known as the 'social self'.¹¹ The concept of performativity has been applied to the medieval period, mostly in relation to interactions and behaviours in social spaces such as towns.¹² Catherine Clarke, for example, makes the connection between 'place and

⁷ Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. xxi, fn. 1.

⁸ CPR: Henry IV, 1401-1405, p. 188; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxvii.

⁹ 'Adam Usk's Will' TNA, PROB-11-231; Adam Usk, pp. 272-273. My own translation, *Item, lego Edwardo ap Adam, consanguineo meo, unum librum uocatum policronica*.

¹⁰ See: above, p. 13.

¹¹ David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: the Social Self in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 1-20; Catherine A. M. Clarke, 'Place, identity and performance: spatial practices and social proxies in medieval Swansea', *Journal of Medieval History* 41:3 (2015), 257.

¹² See: Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: the Social Self in Medieval England*, pp. 21-46.

performance' in medieval Swansea, 'exploring how the witnesses [of the hanging of William Cragh] navigated the urban landscape and acted within various different settings'.¹³ She addresses the cultural expectations that influenced the performances, particularly in association with the way individuals 'sought to present their own status and identity to others'.¹⁴ Susan Crane, additionally, describes identity as 'both material and conceptual' and defines performances as 'heightened and deliberately communicative behaviors, public displays that use visual as well as rhetorical resources'.¹⁵ Aspects of performance can include the spoken and written word, and I argue that behaviours can include owning specific possessions, which in Adam's case is his *Polychronicon*. The act of owning the *Polychronicon* and writing his own history, for example, were deliberate acts by Adam to demonstrate his status in society. As an educated man, Adam was aware of the conventions and traditions of history writing. Through material possessions and the noticeable history writing techniques used in the chronicle, Adam partook in 'deliberately communicative behaviours' to portray his identity and status as a man of learning and a historian.¹⁶ These themes are explored through the context of the book he left behind in his will, the *Polychronicon*. In addition, I argue against modern categorisations and interpretations of the chronicle, particularly that it was a chronicle entirely separated from the *Polychronicon* tradition, that his work is an anomaly due its personal accounts, and most importantly, that his work was 'unreliable'. Instead, it is established that Adam saw *himself* as a chronicler, and that this had implications for the way the chronicle was written and physically presented.

Before beginning the analysis, the *Polychronicon* book should be described in more detail, leaving the portion containing Adam Usk's chronicle to one side for now. The *Polychronicon* left in Adam Usk's will is now known as BL Add MS 10104 and is housed at the British Library.¹⁷ It is fairly large in size measuring 365x250 mm, begins with a *mappa mundi*, and the text runs from fol. 9r to 154v.¹⁸ The brown, leather casing decorated with a dark brown chequered pattern was added at some point

¹³ Catherine A. M. Clarke, 'Place, identity and performance: spatial practices and social proxies in medieval Swansea', 257.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 1-4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104.

¹⁸ 'Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon* – online catalogue entry'

[http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS032-002107887&indx=1&reclds=IAMS032-002107887&recldxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=0&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1566398067088&srt=rank&mode=Basic&&dum=true&vi\(freeText0\)=Add%20MS%2010104&vid=IAMS_VU2](http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS032-002107887&indx=1&reclds=IAMS032-002107887&recldxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=0&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1566398067088&srt=rank&mode=Basic&&dum=true&vi(freeText0)=Add%20MS%2010104&vid=IAMS_VU2), accessed 21/08/2020.

after the seventeenth century, but the wooden covers are part of the original binding.¹⁹ It is a fairly elaborate work. The gothic script is neat and uniformly spaced. In some places it is written in a single column, in others two columns. There are some examples of capital letters and borders illuminated with blue and gold, and dates added to the margins are in red ink.²⁰ Adorning folio 35v are two images of Noah's ark.²¹ Throughout the *Polychronicon* there are marks and annotations in the margins left by the owners and readers of the book, some highlighting points of interest, others clarifying dates or themes. Adam Usk, as presumably the book's first owner, also left his mark. On the first page of the text, he drew his badge, the image of a naked man digging. The naked figure represents Adam Usk's namesake: Adam from the book of Genesis.²² This manuscript is unique owing to the fact that Adam Usk had his own chronicle copied into the back of it. As such, the book is a symbolic representation of Adam's identity as a historian and a man of learning.

Image of BL Add. MS. 10104 f. 9r removed for copyright reasons. Image copyright of the British Library.

BL Add. MS. 10104 f. 9r. The ornate initial and border, and Adam Usk's shield at the bottom. Image copyright of the British Library.²³

¹⁹ Thompson, 'Introduction' *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. vii.

²⁰ 'Ranulph Higden, Polychronicon – online catalogue entry', accessed 21/08/2020.

²¹ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 35v. A diagram of Noah's ark at this stage of the *Polychronicon* is standard.

²² '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS. 10104 fol. 9r; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxix.

²³ 'Detailed record for Additional 10104', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*:

<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=2081&CollID=27&NStart=10104> accessed 05/12/2019; Image also published in Alicia Marchant 'Adam, you are in a Labyrinth': The First-Person voice as the Nexus Between Body and Spirit in the Chronicle of Adam Usk' in *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment*, (ed.) Danijela Kambaskovic (London: Springer, 2014), p. 62.

Many aspects of Adam's book reflect contemporary attitudes towards chronicle writing. The *Polychronicon* is a universal history written during the first quarter of the fourteenth century. It was compiled by Ranulf Higden, a monk at St. Werburgh Abbey in Chester. Like all universal chronicles, it records divine acts throughout time, and considers the past of numerous nations and peoples. In these histories there is one God, that of the Christian tradition, and this God presides over all the peoples on earth. Universal histories also present 'truth' as universal and enduring; if an act or action was deemed reprehensible in the past, this would apply to all of time.²⁴ The *Polychronicon* is divided into seven books, representing the creation of the earth according to Genesis.²⁵ The first book focuses on the world, its dimensions and its position in relation to paradise. It also describes different regions of the world, with a number of chapters dedicated to the regions of Britain.²⁶ The subsequent books include Greek, Roman, and British history. The Norman invasion of England in 1066 only appears in the seventh and final book.²⁷ Only a very small amount of the chronicle is based on Ranulf Higden's own time.²⁸ Medieval chroniclers produced their histories within the clear framework of a tradition. They looked to previous histories to obtain knowledge. Chronicles of their own time were required to mirror pre-existing histories, both in their content, and also in their values.

This particular copy of the *Polychronicon* manuscript contains a unique copy of Adam Usk's chronicle copied into the back.²⁹ Covering the years 1377-1421, Adam Usk continues Ranulf Higden's history into his own time. Beginning with the death of Edward III in 1377, he records the reigns of Richard II (1377-1399), Henry IV (1399-1413) and Henry V (1413-1421), focusing on major political events and international affairs. Revolts, rebellions, warfare, and the implications of bad governance take centre stage. He describes the proceedings of parliaments, the wars in France, and the rebellion in Wales,

²⁴ John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, p. 33.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁶ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden, Monachi Cestrensis: together with the English translations of John Trevisa and an Unknown writer of the Fifteenth Century*, vols. I and II, (ed.) Churchill Babington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, digitally printed 2012).

²⁷ Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 39-45. This list has been updated: A. S. G. Edwards and James Freeman, 'Further Manuscripts of Higden's Polychronicon' *Notes and Queries* 63:4 (2016), 522-524.

²⁸ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden, Monachi Cestrensis: together with the English translations of John Trevisa and an Unknown writer of the Fifteenth Century*, vols. VII-VIII, (ed.) Churchill Babington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, digitally printed 2012).

²⁹ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fols. 155r-176v. The separated quire: 'Adam Usk's Chronicle, 1404-1421': Belvoir MS Add. 4.

to name just a few.³⁰ None of these things are particularly surprising and can be seen in the chronicles written by his contemporaries. His narrative, however, is frequently influenced by his own experiences. As a lawyer and a clerk, he regularly witnessed the events that shaped the chronicle. In 1399, for example, Adam Usk joined the army of Henry Bolingbroke (who later became Henry IV) as it progressed through England. The years 1402-1406, are focused on the political situation in Rome, which is where he resided at the time.³¹ The events of the Glyndŵr rebellion in Wales (1400-1415) are more detailed than the accounts of his English contemporaries.³² Adam's chronicle, extant at the end of his own copy of the *Polychronicon*, reflected his life and experiences. It carries Adam's voice, and reflects his attitudes and cultural perspectives.

Adam Usk's *Polychronicon* and continuation: the manuscript in context

The *Polychronicon* owned by Adam Usk is attractively presented in the manuscript.³³ It is neatly written and illuminated. It contrasts greatly to Adam's continuation, which has been described as an 'insult' to the 'pleasantly decorated' *Polychronicon*.³⁴ As a material object, Adam's book containing the two visually juxtaposing chronicles reflects the cultural significance of each work.³⁵ Below is a discussion about Adam's book, the *Polychronicon*, and its material production. It addresses the physical clues to Adam's self-presentation as a chronicler, as well as indications that he perceived his work to be part of a bigger tradition.

³⁰ Adam Usk, parliaments: pp. 8-9, 20-41, 48-49, 70-71, 76-77, 78-79, 82-85, 120-127, 176-177, 240-241, 244-245, 250-253, 256-259, 262-263, 264-265; wars in France: pp. 94-95, 142-145, 254-257, 264-271; Rebellion in Wales: 100-101, 128-129, 134-135, 144-151, 158-161, 172-173, 176-177, 212-213, 240-241.

³¹ Ibid., Bolingbroke: 52-61, 86-87; Rome: pp. 154-211.

³² Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 61-63.

³³ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fols. 9r-154v.

³⁴ Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk', 529.

³⁵ For a detailed outline of the development of the field see: Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry 'Introduction: Material Culture Studies: a Reactionary View' in (eds.) Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 3-5.; Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio* 17:1 (1982), 1-19; Valerie L. Garver, 'Material Culture and Social History in Early Medieval Western Europe', *History Compass* 12 (2010), 784; Ryan M. M. Perry 'Objectification, Identity and the Late Medieval Codex' in *Everyday Objects: medieval and early modern material culture and its meanings*, (eds.) Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), pp. 309-320; For general examples see: Kathryn M. Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment: The Social Lives of Medieval Books*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Alan Coates, *English Medieval Books: The Reading Abbey Collections From Foundation to Dispersal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). For more on 'thing theory' see: Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 1-22.

A wide range of people owned books in the Middle Ages. Of course, there were the libraries of religious institutions, but merchants, clerks, and nobility also owned books including the *Polychronicon*.³⁶ Roles in society, such as clerk and historian in Adam's case, are connected to an individual's identity through an 'awareness of roles and group affiliations' which dictated how a person might behave or interact with others.³⁷ For Adam, his professional status which included clerk, clergyman, and lawyer, was centred around his education and learning, a significant part of which was a knowledge of the past. It is perhaps not a surprise then, that other men of his status and occupation also owned, read, compiled, added to, and wrote chronicles.³⁸ As material objects, the manuscripts that contain these works vary significantly in appearance. Some are lavish, professionally produced pieces, whilst others are roughly compiled copies, possibly transcribed by the owners themselves.³⁹ For Adam, whose career ambitions significantly impacted his life, the production quality of his *Polychronicon* book reflected the value that he placed on it.

The connection between the *Polychronicon* history and Adam's status and career indicates that owning the book was a performative act. The fact that he included it in the will shows that he considered it be either financially or socially valuable, or both. It has been noted, for example, that books of little financial worth were often left in wills as generic 'books' or not mentioned at all.⁴⁰ Some of the *Polychronicon* books would have been expensive to buy and only a wealthy individual

³⁶ Kathleen L. Scott, 'Past Ownership: Evidence of Book Ownership by English Merchants in the Later Middle Ages' in *Makers and Users of Medieval Books: essays in Honour of A. S. G. Edwards*, (ed.) Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), pp. 150-177; Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: religion and secular life in late medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell press, 1988), pp. 199, 201-208, 292-295; John Taylor, 'The Use of Medieval Chronicles', *Helps for Students of History* 70 (1965), 3-24.

³⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31:1 (1980), 3. Like discussions surrounding national identity, individual identity has been the subject of much debate, particularly regarding for which time periods this term can be used. For an overview see: Sverre Bagge, 'The individual in the Middle Ages and the renaissance: introduction' *The European Legacy: The individual in European Culture* 2 (1997), 1305-1312.

³⁸ For example: *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*; *Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, (ed.) Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge Library Collection - Rolls. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); 'Thomas Favent, *Historia siue narratio de modo et forma mirabilis parlamenti [1386-1388]*': MS. Bodl. Rolls 9; *Gesta Henrici Quinti*; Bower, W., 'Scotichronicon', (ed. and trans.) Watt, in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, (eds.) Michael Livingston and John K. Bollard (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 198-199; 'Elmhami liber metricus de Henrici quinto' in *Memorials of Henry the Fifth, King of England*, (ed.) Charles Augustus Cole (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts (Rolls Series), 1858), pp. 77-166.

³⁹ Curt F. Bühler, *The Fifteenth Century Book: The Scribes, the Printers, the Decorators* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), p. 22; John Scattergood, 'Trinity College MS 516: a clerical historian's personal miscellany' in *Makers and Users of Medieval Books: essays in Honour of A. S. G. Edwards*, (ed.) Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), p. 122.

⁴⁰ P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership in Late Medieval York: the evidence of wills', *The Library Sixth Series*, 16:3 (1994), 184.

would have the means to do this.⁴¹ Roughly 150 manuscripts or fragments of the *Polychronicon* have been identified as still existing, which is likely to be only a fraction of those that circulated during the medieval period.⁴² The manuscripts range in appearance. The physical difference reflects not only the way they were produced, but also the reason for their production.⁴³ The pleasing visual appearance of Adam's copy is a reflection of his education and status in society. It is neither the highest quality manuscript, nor the lowest, and it is possible that it was 'mass produced'. In order to demonstrate this point, three *Polychronicon* books have been selected for comparison. They were chosen in order to demonstrate the differing appearances of *Polychronicon* manuscripts from this period, and provide a comparative sample to discuss the various reasons for production. The three manuscripts that will be discussed are as follows. A manuscript similar in production quality to Adam's is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 21. The similarity in production between this manuscript and Adam's suggests that they may have been purchased, rather than commissioned. The lowest in quality is the Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 259. The low quality of the manuscript suggests that this *Polychronicon* was copied for individual use. Finally, BL Royal MS 14 C IX is a higher quality manuscript. It is unique and represents how expensive manuscripts could be commissioned to demonstrate wealth and the importance of knowledge to an institution. In each case the physical aspects of the books will be described and compared to Adam's *Polychronicon*, before an analysis is made of how the material form reflects the values and motivations of the individuals or institutions that owned them.

The *Polychronicon* manuscript which is the most similar to Adam's is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 21, which is a *Polychronicon* with a continuation to 1377. In terms of its physical appearance and construction, it is an equal standard to Adam's, and was created in the second half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁴ They are similar in size, with Adam's *Polychronicon* measuring 365 x

⁴¹ P. J. P. Goldberg 'Lay Book Ownership in Late Medieval York', p. 182, 187-188; Kathleen L. Scott, 'Past Ownership: evidence of book ownership by English Merchants in the later Middle Ages' in *Markers and users of Medieval Books: essays in honour of A. S. G. Edwards*, (eds.) Carol M. Meale and Derek Pearsall, (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 150-177.

⁴² Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 39-45. This list has been updated: A. S. G. Edwards and James Freeman, 'Further Manuscripts of Higden's *Polychronicon*' *Notes and Queries* 63:4 (2016), 522-524.

⁴³ This point has often been made about the maps in the *Polychronicon*. See: Cornelia Dreer and Keith D. Lilley, 'Universal Histories and their Geographies: navigating the maps and texts of Higden's *Polychronicon*' in *Universal Chronicles in the High Middle Ages* (eds.) Michele Campopiano and Henry Bainton, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), pp. 275-302. Also see: Lynda Dennison and Nicholas Rogers, 'A medieval Best-Seller: some examples of decorated copies of Higden's *Polychronicon*', *The Church and Learning in Late Medieval Society: Studies in Honour of Professor R. B. Dobson*, (eds.) Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), pp. 80-95.

⁴⁴ 'Ranulf Higden OSB, *Polychronicon* (continued to 1377)', Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 21.

250mm, compared to 378 x 262mm of the CCCC manuscript.⁴⁵ Both manuscripts are written in a gothic cursive script, and have a generally neat appearance in terms of equal line spacing and borders. Both have similar levels of illumination, with chapters presented in a contents list at the beginning, a map of the world of a similar quality, and illuminated initials, particularly on the first folio of the chronicle. The second *Polychronicon*, is the Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 259, which is produced to a much lower standard. This early fourteenth century version of the *Polychronicon* does not include a map of the world or a contents page. It is smaller than CCCC MS 21, measuring 275 x 172 mm.⁴⁶ The cursive hand is cramped and uneven, and the illumination on initial letters, and borders is rough and low in quality.⁴⁷ Despite its comparatively lower standard, it still has aspects that demonstrate care in the production. For example, initials are highlighted in red and green ink throughout, and there is some illumination in the borders, albeit rough. The original owners of these two manuscripts are unknown.

The third *Polychronicon* is the BL Royal MS 14 C IX, which is an example of a higher quality *Polychronicon*. In size it is similar to Adam Usk's copy, measuring 360 x 245 mm. It is a highly finished manuscript, written in a gothic, anglicana hand. It contains two maps of the world.⁴⁸ This copy of the *Polychronicon* was created for the Abbey of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire (originally Huntingdonshire) and dates to the mid-fourteenth century.⁴⁹ The fifteenth-century abbot, John Wardeboys, has inscribed the first folio of the manuscript, writing, 'the book of John Wardeboys, abbot and bachelor of theology'.⁵⁰ Many physical aspects of the manuscript are of a higher quality including the quantity of illumination and the quality of the materials used (such as gilding). Adam's copy of the *Polychronicon* is neither the most elaborate, nor the lowest in quality. The similarity between his copy, and the CCCC MS 21, suggests that they were 'mass produced' items rather than uniquely commissioned items or copied by an individual for personal use.

⁴⁵ In both cases the dimensions were provided by the online catalogues. See: 'Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon* – online catalogue entry', accessed 21/08/2020; 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 021: Ranulph Higden OSB, *Polychronicon* (continued to 1377) – catalogue entry': <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fn144fw3359> accessed 11/05/2020.

⁴⁶ 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 259: Ranulph Higden OSB, *Polychronicon* (to 1338) – catalogue entry': <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/wr788qx9113>, accessed 11/05/2020.

⁴⁷ 'Ranulph Higden OSB, *Polychronicon* (to 1338)' CCCC, MS 259.

⁴⁸ '*Polychronicon*' BL Royal MS 14 C IX, fols. 1v-2r, 2v.

⁴⁹ '*Polychronicon*' BL Royal MS 14 C IX.

⁵⁰ Ibid., fol. 1r. *Libre jo. Wardeboys Bachil Thes et abbatis*

The maps in *Polychronicon* manuscripts also indicate the purpose of their production. Adam's *Polychronicon* contains a map before the main text, which is a standard feature of the *Polychronicon*.⁵¹ Of the three comparative manuscripts only the lower-quality CCC MS 259 does not include one. The maps that are present in Adam's book, and the other two manuscripts discussed here, demonstrate the way that books were produced to fulfil a specific purpose; they could either be considered decorative or practical, or a combination of the two. The BL Royal MS 14 C IX is famous for having two maps at the front of the manuscript, rather than the traditional one map.⁵² The maps demonstrate the high quality of the manuscript. The first map, which spreads over two folios, is detailed, containing text and pictures. The edge of the world is illustrated with faces that represent the winds of the earth, their cheeks puffed, lips pursed, and lines of air extending from their mouths.⁵³ Apart from the faces, the majority of illustrations on the map represent towns and cities, often with the image of a castle or fortification. The *mappa mundi* found in BL Add. MS 10104, Adam Usk's personal copy of the *Polychronicon*, is much cruder. It is oval in shape, and was drawn using three colours of ink, covering one folio of the manuscript.⁵⁴ The outer margin of the map is coloured green. The map in Adam's chronicle is similar to that found in CCC MS 21.⁵⁵ This map has a few small drawings of castles, but most of the detail is given in words, rather than images. Unlike the Royal MS, the outer margins of the Corpus Christi map and Adam's map do not include any illustrations.⁵⁶

It has been argued that the differing levels of detail in the maps in the *Polychronicon* manuscripts are a result of the different interests and purposes of those making or commissioning them.⁵⁷ Cornelia Dreer and Keith Lilley identify the large Royal map as 'a work of art in itself', which is intended to be read and interpreted separately from the *Polychronicon*. The smaller map, however, is designed to aid the reader in their comprehension of the text by visually displaying the location of places

⁵¹ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 8r.

⁵² '*Polychronicon*' BL Royal MS. 14 C.IX, fols.1v-2r, 2v; Dreer and Lilley, 'Universal Histories and their Geographies', pp. 275-302; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 96-103.

⁵³ '*Polychronicon*' BL Royal MS 14 C IX, fols. 1v-2r; 'World Map by Ranulf Higden': <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/world-map-by-ranulf-higden>, accessed 20/07/2020.

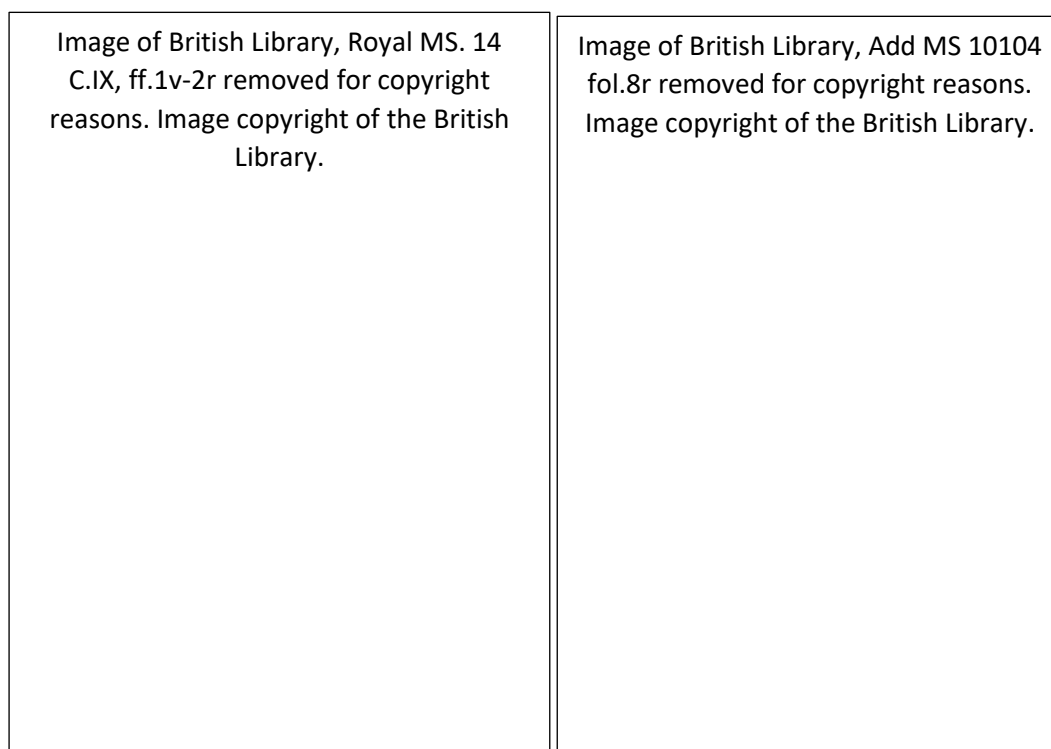
⁵⁴ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 8r; for more on maps of the world in *Polychronicon* manuscripts see: John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 63-68; Dreer and Lilley, 'Universal Histories and their Geographies', pp. 275-302.

⁵⁵ 'Ranulf Higden OSB, *Polychronicon* (continued to 1377)', CCC MS 21, fol. 9v.

⁵⁶ 'Detailed record for Additional 10104', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*: <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=2081&CollID=27&NStart=10104>, accessed 05/05/2020.

⁵⁷ Dreer and Lilley, 'Universal Histories and their Geographies', pp. 278-281.

discussed in the chronicle.⁵⁸ The map in Adam's chronicle fulfils this second criterion. It exhibits the basic information for the reader to understand the descriptions of place in the chronicle, and 'does not invite readers to linger'.⁵⁹ The combined material evidence suggests that the Royal manuscript was deliberately created to a higher quality than the other three manuscripts discussed here and exhibits an elaborate finish that could only be associated with a financial demonstration of wealth and status. It was also considered to be a physical expression of knowledge learning and for the community at Ramsey Abbey, the book expressed a scholarly interest in the past. The high-quality finish demonstrates the value placed on learning by the community. Adam's own *Polychronicon* can also be considered to be a high-quality book. Whilst the map is practical, other physical aspects of the book suggest this was not the only purpose of the chronicle. The illumination, the clear hand, the regular layout and the size of the book all indicate Adam valued the *Polychronicon* and its content. Possessing the expensive book, and bequeathing it in his will, demonstrates that Adam placed value on a knowledge of the past.



British Library, Royal MS. 14 C.IX, ff.1v-2r; British Library, Add MS 10104 fol.8r. Images copyright of the British Library.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 290.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ British Library, Royal MS. 14 C.IX, ff.1v-2r; British Library, Add MS 10104 fol.8r. Images copyright of the British Library.

Adam's chronicle, located in the same book as the *Polychronicon*, differs greatly in production quality to the chronicle it continues. The fact that the two chronicles lie side by side makes the contrast in quality all the more jarring. There is no evidence that Adam's chronicle was ever copied, or that it was even read until the sixteenth century.⁶¹ Despite the lower quality, however, there are some physical indications that Adam saw his work as a continuation, and thus as part of the *Polychronicon* tradition.⁶² The transition between the *Polychronicon* and its official continuations to Adam's section of the book occurs on folio 154v. The transition is more chaotic than between the other continuations in the manuscript. There is a phrase indicating the end of the *Polychronicon* continuation, written in an ornate gothic hand in red ink.⁶³ Immediately below the hand changes. It is messy and the text highly abbreviated. The initial is an imitation of those found in the *Polychronicon*, but it is not executed to the same standard. A single, roughly drawn block red 'A' begins the word 'Adam'. What follows is a short treatise on the name 'Adam', beginning with Adam the first man. Adam the first man was expelled from the garden of Eden and Adam Usk likens his loss of benefices to this experience.⁶⁴ It is possible that this is an imitation of a paragraph found at the beginning of Ranulf Higden's chronicle, which describes the five ages of man before Christ, beginning with Adam.⁶⁵ If this is the case, then it indicates that Adam was imitating the style of the chronicle that he was continuing.

On the next folio, there is a copy of a letter, and then Adam's chronicle begins with the death of Edward III in 1377.⁶⁶ In this section, the physical cohesion with the previous work ends. The first initial, rather than being ornate and highlighted in gold as on the first page of the *Polychronicon*, is a block red 'P', beginning the word *Predicto*.⁶⁷ There are no illuminations at all in Adam's section of the manuscript. The regular change of hand gives it a disorganised and irregular appearance, particularly on folios 171v and 172r. On these facing leaves, the hand changes six times.⁶⁸ In addition to this, the

⁶¹ Many of the marginals in both the BL Add. MS 10104 and Belvoir MS Add. 4 are written in sixteenth and seventeenth century hands. For this identification see: Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk', 529.

⁶² Many chronicles contemporary to Adam's were also *Polychronicon* continuations. This includes works by Thomas Walsingham and Henry Knighton, as well as *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*. See: J. Taylor, *The Universal History*, pp. 124-133; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 157-191; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 59.

⁶³ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 154v, *explicit liber septimus et ultimus historie policronice*.

⁶⁴ A translation of this can be found in: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xl.

⁶⁵ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 7v.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 155r.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 155r.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 171v-172r.

consistent layout of the *Polychronicon*, which is created by a regular, pencil drawn apparatus for the scribe to follow, also becomes irregular in Adam's chronicle. On the first pages, the apparatus appears to be similar to the previous work. Perhaps the scribes creating the *Polychronicon* had marked up additional pages at the end of their text. From folio 159v, however, the lineation becomes irregular, with the borders changing in size, and the width between lines varying.⁶⁹ This is particularly noticeable in the Belvoir portion of the manuscript. On the first page of the manuscript, the hand is cramped and highly abbreviated. Whilst the borders are maintained to a good size, there is limited space between the lines, making it difficult to read.⁷⁰ The scribe who worked on folio 5r, however, wrote in a larger, less abbreviated hand. The spaces between the lines are wider and more regular, making it more comprehensible.⁷¹

Whilst there are some material indications that Adam's chronicle was intended to be part of the preceding chronicle, on the whole it is visually different. The appearance of Adam's chronicle is heavily influenced by the individual scribes who worked on it. It was a product of its environment, copied into the chronicle periodically over a number of years by many different scribes. This serves as a reminder that Adam's chronicle was a working copy and was never copied as a 'finished product'. It never officially became part of the *Polychronicon* tradition, even if this had been Adam's intention. For Adam Usk, implementing history writing conventions, and therefore presenting himself as a historian, did not include producing a contemporaneously famous work. Producing a working copy of his chronicle was perfectly satisfactory. Indeed, in the first section of his chronicle he wrote 'I should hate this account of my present follies to be seen during my lifetime'.⁷² Adam Usk and his contemporaries understood that to be a chronicler, they needed to have an understanding of the past and the universal truths transmitted through universal histories. For Adam, this was fulfilled by both owning a copy of the *Polychronicon* and having his work copied alongside it. His own chronicle was added to the expanding history, which would inform later generations of the continuity of universal experiences and 'truths'.

⁶⁹ Ibid., fol. 159v.

⁷⁰ 'Adam Usk's Chronicle, 1404-1421': Belvoir MS Add. 4, fol. 1r.

⁷¹ Ibid., fol. 5r.

⁷² Adam Usk, pp. 118-119.

Performing the role of historian in the text

The writing of history goes back to the beginning of antiquity and took many different forms. Indeed, by the time Adam was writing, a set of assumptions about how history should be written, was well established.⁷³ In addition, whilst there are examples of histories written by secular clerks during the twelfth century, the majority of chronicle writing before Adam's period had been undertaken in monastic settings.⁷⁴ Of the Latinate chroniclers writing between 1377-1422, it is notable that they were almost all churchmen. This, however, does not mean uniformity of experience. The most common way to interrogate this group is to separate them into monastic and secular clerks, but recent scholarship has successfully argued that such categorisations are overly simplistic.⁷⁵ Within the 'monastic' category, the chroniclers belong to different religious orders and have different roles within the monastery. Within the 'secular' category, there are a range of experience, with some clergy, like Adam, holding benefices and others, like Thomas Favent, who did not. There are also shared experiences that cut across these categorisations.⁷⁶ Both Thomas Walsingham and Adam Usk, for example, studied at Oxford University and even monastic clerks who did not attend a university were likely to have had a high level of education.⁷⁷ Below is an examination of how Adam's approach to chronicle writing compared to that of his contemporaries, particularly regarding his attitude to recording the 'truth'.

The analysis of Adam's *Polychronicon* manuscript has revealed that he performed the role of 'historian'. In addition to the material evidence, the words Adam used to construct his accounts in his chronicle also demonstrate that Adam was aware of, and able to execute, chronicle writing conventions. Firstly, there are numerous examples of Adam creating continuity between his own account and the chronicles that precede it, demonstrating that he saw his work as part of the same tradition. The very first line of his chronicle is an example of this. Describing the death of Edward III, Adam wrote:

Predicto gracioso Edwardo in uigili natalis sancti Iohannis baptiste anno regni sui quinquagesimo secundo ab hac uita subtracto, ipsius nepos Ricardus, Edwardi principis Wallie dicti regis primogeniti

⁷³ Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, 'Introduction' in *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (ed.) Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 1-13.

⁷⁴ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. xix-xx.

⁷⁵ Henry Marsh, *Each According to His Manner: Latinate Chroniclers in England 1377-1422* (University of Exeter: Unpublished Thesis, 2019), pp. 31-75. Marsh uses the categorisation 'regular' and 'secular' clerks.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid.

*filius, undecim annorum pupilus, inter omnes mortales ac si secundus Apsalon pulcherimus, ei successit apud Westm' in festo sancti Kenelmi coronatus.*⁷⁸

Thompson, in his 1904 edition of the chronicle, provides an incorrect translation of this extract. His translation of the first line of the chronicle reads 'Our gracious king Edward departing this life on the eve of the Nativity of Saint John Baptist.'⁷⁹ Thompson is preoccupied with the fact that the date is incorrect, noting that Edward died on the 21 June 1377, not the 23 June as suggested here.⁸⁰ The translation, however, overlooks the significance of the adjective *predictus*.⁸¹ Meaning 'afore mentioned' or 'previously named', the term is used frequently by chroniclers to link together ideas, people, and events throughout their histories. In this case, it is used in the first line of Adam's chronicle. As such, the phrase refers to the previous section of the chronicle, linking Adam's continuation to the work that precedes it in the manuscript. Adam consciously composed his chronicle to create a linear, unbroken narrative of events. It was not a standalone history, but part of something much bigger.

Some aspects of Adam's chronicle writing bear similarities to that of Ranulf Higden's work. Both chroniclers, for example, describe themselves as compilers, which whilst being a common humility trope for chronicle writers was also an inaccurate term in Adam's case.⁸² A compiler constructed their histories using existing sources, effectively stitching together a narrative. This definition is only technically true for Ranulf Higden but not for Adam Usk. Ranulf uses the term *compilator* to describe himself in the prologue to his *Polychronicon*.⁸³ He was, however, conscious that there were risks involved with constructing a history from other people's accounts. 'According to St. Paul', he wrote 'not everything that is written is true'.⁸⁴ Ranulf wished to distance himself from the material that he used to compile his history. There are risks to this kind of compilation, he writes, and he would not take it upon himself to verify the truth of his sources. Aiming to avoid personal scrutiny for

⁷⁸ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 155r; Adam Usk, pp. 4-5: 'The aforesaid noble Edward having departed this life on the eve of the Nativity of St John the Baptist [23 June] in the fifty-second year of his reign, his grandson Richard, a child of eleven years, the son of the same king's first-born child Edward prince of Wales, and the fairest of men, like a second Absalom, succeeded him and was crowned at Westminster on the feast of St Kenelm [17 July].' – translated by Given-Wilson.

⁷⁹ *Chronicon Adae de Usk*, p. 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Given-Wilson's translation acknowledges the significance of '*Predicto*', translating it as 'The aforesaid noble Edward': *Adam Usk*, pp. 2-3; For a discussion of the significance, see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xlii.

⁸² Ibid, p. lxxxiv.

⁸³ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, pp. 18-21; the term is discussed in by Given-Wilson in: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxxiv.

⁸⁴ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 18, my own translation *Nam et apostolus non, "Quaecunque scripta sunt vera sunt", ait*.

information for which he is not responsible, he instead marks his own voice with the letter 'R'.⁸⁵ He does not refer to himself as a 'compiler' in the text of the chronicle, as Adam does. Instead, he takes care to attribute the material to various authorities, such as Bede, Gildas, Gerald of Wales and many others. He highlights his voice with his own initial, something that Adam never does in his chronicle.

Ranulf Higden acknowledges the risks of being a compiler and seeks to mitigate them. Adam, however, uses the term differently to Ranulf, often juxtaposing the term against eyewitness or personal accounts. There are only two occasions when Adam uses documents as the foundation of his narrative in the way of a traditional compiler. His account of the 1397 parliament, for example, is based on a parliamentary tract, also used by the author of *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*.⁸⁶ In 1401, he copies the writ from the king into his chronicle. This is also the case for the letter he writes to the king, and a petition to the pope in 1405. What is noticeable, however, is that whenever he uses the term, it is in relation to personal experience. It is he, the compiler of the work, who personally witnesses events and uses this as his evidence. An uncomfortable juxtaposition is created with phrases like '*quo audito, presencium compilator*' [upon hearing, the compiler of this present work...].⁸⁷ A compiler would collate existing accounts, and so Adam recording his own experiences as a compiler is illogical. Yet throughout the chronicle, the phrase *presencium compilator* is surrounded with *vidi*, (I saw) and *audivi* (I heard) and other phrases suggesting Adam's own voice and experiences were the primary source of information.⁸⁸ The use of the term suggests that Adam could have been creating continuity between his chronicle and the preceding chronicles in his book, or if he was not, that he was aware of both commonly used terminology in the chronicle tradition and the methodological approach to writing histories. If Adam were creating continuity between his work and the *Polychronicon*, his use of the term *presencium compilator* would conversely be an indication that his work is different to the works proceeding it in the manuscript. It is the 'present' work that his voice infiltrates. Yet the phrase 'compiler', inaccurate and obscure when used by Adam, creates an overarching authority for the universal history as a whole.⁸⁹ As far as Adam's chronicle can be seen as a history of his time, it is just as much part of a universal history.

⁸⁵ Ibid., *Quum vero compilator loquitur, sub hac figuracione 'R' littera praescribitur*.

⁸⁶ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lii; Chris Given-Wilson, 'Adam Usk, the monk of Evesham and the Parliament of 1397-8', *The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 66 (1993), 329-335; Usk adds his own perspective and experiences to the information, rather than just copying it.

⁸⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 216-217.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 58-59; pp. 126-127.

⁸⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxiv.

It is also possible, however, that the contradiction between Adam's use of the term 'compiler' and his use of eyewitness accounts results from an intersection in his methodology; he was simultaneously continuing Ranulf Higden's work and mirroring his terminology, as well as closely following the standard convention of verifying accounts through the use of eye witness testimony. The concept of 'truth' was important to medieval history writers, not least because this was one of the singularly defining aspects of the chronicle genre.⁹⁰ The fact that historians were recounting true stories set them apart from legends or fables. Modern historians, however, have been keen to point out that medieval understandings of 'truth' or even the purpose and method of including eyewitness testimony in history writing, were not universal.⁹¹ Instead, each text requires individual analysis to extrapolate the context and motivation of the writer, as well as to draw out their interpretation of historical writing traditions and the influence such an interpretation had over their writing.⁹²

In terms of the events covered by Adam's chronicle, it is unremarkably similar to other chronicles covering the same period. This suggests that history writers across the spectrum had a similar interpretation of appropriate material to include in a chronicle. Key national and international events take centre stage. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381, for example, is recounted in detail on the opening folio of Adam's chronicle.⁹³ The event is also described in Henry Knighton's chronicle, written in Leicester and covering the years 1337-1396, Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, and in the opening pages of the *Westminster Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*.⁹⁴ Adam writes about rebellions that occurred under Richard II, and his eventual deposition.⁹⁵ These issues faced by Richard II are prominent in other chronicles. The Lords Appellant even starred in their own chronicle written to justify their actions. Thomas Favent, who probably worked in London during the 1390s, wrote a history of the Merciless Parliament of 1388, in which the rebel lords accused a number of Richard's favourites of treason.⁹⁶ The Deposition of Richard II in 1399 is also treated as a

⁹⁰ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 1; Peter Ainsworth, 'Legendary History: *Historia* and *Fabula*', in *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (ed.) Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 388.

⁹¹ Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, 'Introduction', in *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (ed.) Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 5; Peter Ainsworth, 'Contemporary and 'Eyewitness' History', in *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (ed.) Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 249-276.

⁹² Ainsworth, 'Contemporary and 'Eyewitness' History', p. 275; Björn Weiler, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Britain: The Case of Matthew Paris', in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500–1500*, (eds.) J. Jahner, E. Steiner, and E. M. Tyler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 322-323.

⁹³ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 115r.

⁹⁴ Knighton, pp. 208-241; The Westminster Chronicle, pp. 2-23; Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 410-501; *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, pp. 165-166.

⁹⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 50-71.

⁹⁶ 'Historia siue narratio de modo et forma mirabilis parlamenti [1386–1388]', Bodleian Library, Ms. Bodl. Rolls 9. The heading reads *Hic incipit historia siue narracio de modo & forma mirabilis Parlamenti*. Thomas Favent

moment of high drama by chroniclers such as Thomas Walsingham, the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, the *chronicle of Kirkstall Abbey*, and John Strecche's chronicle.⁹⁷ Adam Usk gives detailed accounts of the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr, which began in 1400 and had run its course by 1415. This rebellion is also widely reported by various chroniclers. Thomas Walsingham is particularly detailed and vocal about different aspects of the rebellion, as is the author of *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* and the continuer of the *Eulogium Historiarum*.⁹⁸ Finally, aspects of Henry V's reign beginning in 1413, with particular praise for his achievements in France, are seen in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, Thomas Elmham's *Liber metricus* and John Strecche's chronicle.⁹⁹

Recording facts accurately was important for medieval historians. So too was ensuring that sources and evidence were reliable. Adam's tendency to use the first-person and allow his own voice and experiences to infiltrate the text are common traits amongst secular chroniclers but are less frequent amongst those in a monastic setting. Adam has a strong authorial presence in his chronicle. His use of the first person is dominant throughout, which has been noted as unusual amongst his contemporaries.¹⁰⁰ Details of his own experiences and emotions appear frequently and are often used to structure the narrative of politically significant events that occurred during his lifetime. The first of these can be found on the third folio of his chronicle.¹⁰¹ He recounts events that occurred whilst he was 'an extraordinary in canon law living in Oxford' in 1387.¹⁰² He claims that he saw the Lords Appellant, namely the earls of Warwick, Derby, Arundel and Nottingham, and the duke of Gloucester, march through Oxford with their army on their way to London.¹⁰³ The fact that the army marched through Oxford has little relevance to the rest of Adam's account. He only includes this information because he saw it. Indeed, personally witnessed details, no matter how extraneous to the account, are common in Adam's work. He is his own most reliable witness, and his personal

names himself in the title of the document, *per Thomam Fauent clerici(cum) indictata*; also see: Taylor, John. "Favent, Thomas." *ODNB*, accessed 26 Sep 2019.; The Westminster Chronicle, pp. 320-343; Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 850-852; *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, pp. 167-168.

⁹⁷ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 201-209; *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, pp. 170-175; 'John Strecche's chronicle', BL Add MS 35295 fol. 260v; Kirkstall Abbey Chronicle, BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII fol. 133r.

⁹⁸ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, p. 75; 'Continuatio Eulogii', pp. 388-408; Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-381.

⁹⁹ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, eds. Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); John Strecche's chronicle, BL Add MS 35295 fols. 265v-279v; 'Elmhami liber metricus de Henrici quinto' in *Memorials of Henry the Fifth, King of England*, pp. 77-166.

¹⁰⁰ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 41; Given-Wilson, 'The Date and Structure', 527.

¹⁰¹ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 156v.

¹⁰² Adam Usk, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

experiences demonstrate that these events really did occur. He thus establishes that his narrative was true.

Further to this, Adam exerts authorial control over the structure of his chronicle. He comments on this in the chronicle, and explicitly connects this to his desire to promote truth. The first section of the chronicle is written in a single hand up until 1401. This section highlights connections between events and their consequences, and thus lacks chronology. Adam is conscious that this might be considered poor practice. 'Be tolerant reader', he writes, apologising for the lack of chronology up to that point, 'for I have simply set down from memory what I saw and what I heard'.¹⁰⁴ He justifies this, stating that he wrote 'with more thought for the truth of what happened than for the order in which it happened'.¹⁰⁵ Adam is conscious that in order to take on the role of historian effectively, the structure and content of his text should follow a specific framework. Whilst chronology was important, reliable sources and *veritas* (truth) were more so. Adam equates truth to reliable evidence in the form of his own personal experiences.

Truth, authorial presence, and eye-witness accounts are evident in a number of other secular chronicles. The author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, for example, frequently places himself in the narrative of politically significant events.¹⁰⁶ The chronicle covers the early part of Henry V's reign, finishing in 1417. It survives in two manuscripts, both copies, with the original now lost.¹⁰⁷ The writer is unknown, but it has been speculated that he was a member of the clergy, who was somehow associated with the King's court, possibly as a royal chaplain.¹⁰⁸ He travelled with the king and was present at some of the events recorded in his history. Thus, the chronicle reads akin to an adventure story, describing stealthy landings on the French shore, duplicitous dealings with the enemy, and eventual victory for the English king. The writer does not make his identity known in the chronicle. He does not refer to himself by name, and gives little away about his age, or place of origin. He instead leaves his mark by using verbs in the first-person plural. The verb *relinquere* becomes

¹⁰⁴ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fol. 157r; Adam Usk, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Also discussed in Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 198-202.

¹⁰⁷ 'Gesta Henrici Quinti', BL Cotton MS. Julius E IV, article 4, fols. 113-127; 'Gesta Henrici Quinti', BL Sloane MS. 1776, fols. 50-72; see Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell, 'Introduction' in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, (eds.) Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. xv.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor and Roskell, 'Introduction' in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, pp. xviii-xix. When describing a battle, the writer states that he was sat with the baggage at the back of the battle with 'the other priests present'. *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, pp. 84-85.

reliquimus [we left].¹⁰⁹ Terms like *ascensionis nostre* [our ascent] and *offensionem nostrum* [our displeasure] put the writer in the middle of the action.¹¹⁰ It is clear from the writer's style that this is not a form of abstract 'we' such as 'we the English' or 'we the subjects of the king', because the author is precise in his terminology. He refers frequently to the 'English' or the 'French' when talking about the conflict in France. When the writer gives his opinion on a certain situation, or emotional response to an event, the phrase *ego qui scribo* [I who write] is used.¹¹¹ Episodes in the chronicle where the author uses his experiences as evidence, are treated at much greater length than those he was not present at.¹¹² Medieval historians believed in a connection between personal experience, reliability and truth.¹¹³ The events that this chronicler witnessed were based on the most reliable evidence, and could therefore be recorded in more detail.

Even though the accounts based on the chronicler's experience are longer, they were based on his memory of events after they had occurred. The chronicler is open about this fact. In 1415, while marching across the difficult terrain of Northern France, he describes a conversation between Sir Walter Hungerford and Henry V. Walter Hungerford was concerned about the comparatively diminutive size of their army. Henry replied that the English army had God on its side, its members pitted humility against French arrogance, and faith against doubt.¹¹⁴ The chronicler writes '*Et inter cetera que tunc dicta notavi*'.¹¹⁵ Rather than using terms like *vidi*, or *audivi*, the writer uses *notavi* [I noted].¹¹⁶ The phrase is translated by the editors of the edition as 'which I noted as said at that time'.¹¹⁷ The turn of phrase is ambiguous. It could mean 'noted', as in 'to take notice of something' or 'to observe'. Conversely, the verb is also associated with 'marking', as in 'to inscribe' or 'write'.

The notion of the author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* writing his own memories is expressed again in the phrase 'And now to let my pen interpose'.¹¹⁸ The verb *interponere*, as used here, can also mean 'to introduce', 'to insert' or 'to intervene'. The pen is used to add a detailed description of the

¹⁰⁹ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11, 66-67, 84-85, and 174-175,

¹¹² Taylor and Roskell, 'Introduction' in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, p. xxviii.

¹¹³ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 11-14.

¹¹⁴ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, pp. 78-79.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Et inter cetera que tunc dicta notavi*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103. *Calamus interponat*.

London pageant of 1415.¹¹⁹ The description interrupts an account of the action of the French campaigns and the successes of the king and his men in battle. The writer suggests that the narrative is diverging, and that the description of the pageant does not belong there. Yet it is his authority that allows it to be recorded. Digression and deviation from the primary purpose of the chronicle occurs again in the twenty-second chapter of the chronicle. 'And now', writes the chronicler, 'lest I should seem to digress too far, I return to proceed with my former theme.'¹²⁰ The narrative theme of the chronicle is important. It is disrupted by a short interlude from the chronicler, who praises God for his role in the English victory and speaks of the king's obedience to Christ.¹²¹ The writer's voice, perspective, and objective are inserted into the narrative of the history. He had witnessed many of the events himself, and took authority over the structure, content, and narrative. Each of these points also apply to Adam's chronicle, whose presence and authorial control are apparent throughout. The similarities between Adam's chronicle and the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* are striking. Both chroniclers, from a secular background, exhibit similar traits.

Even so, evidence suggests that not all secular historians wrote in this style and that a lot of the similarities were purely circumstantial. The chronicle of Adam Murimuth is an example of this. Adam Murimuth was a lawyer and was educated at Oxford. He had graduated as a doctor of civil law by at least 1308.¹²² He was a cleric and a diplomat, and like Adam Usk and the writer of *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, travelled within Britain and Europe as a result of his occupation. He undertook his first foreign mission abroad in 1311, acting as proctor for his university at a suit at the court of Rome against the black friars.¹²³ There are a number of similarities between the lives of Adam Usk and Adam Murimuth. For example, they both spent periods of their lives working away from England, acting as lawyers in France and Italy.¹²⁴ In the opening stages of the chronicle, Adam Murimuth also draws upon his own experience as evidence. He places himself into the narrative, highlighting his role in politically significant moments. Referring to himself in the third person, he describes 'Adam Murimuth' as the archbishop's clerk in 1312, how he was sent by the king to the pope in Avignon to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 102-113; Adam also provides a description of this pageant. See Adam Usk, pp. 260-263.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 154-155. *Iam vero, ne nimis remote digredi videar, regredior ad pristinam materiam proseguendam.*

¹²¹ Ibid.; Gransden states that many of the chronicles of Henry V's reign treated him 'eulogistically': Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, p. 197.

¹²² E. M. Thompson, 'Introduction' in 'ADÆ MURIMUTH CONTINUATIO CHRONICARUM' in *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, (ed.) Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge Library Collection - Rolls. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. x.

¹²³ Ibid.; C. L. Kingsford, 'Murimuth, Adam (1274/5–1347)', *ODNB*, accessed 4 Jan 2017.

¹²⁴ Kingsford, 'Murimuth, Adam (1274/5–1347)'.

obtain a grant for the clergy in 1319, and as a member of a diplomatic mission against the Scots in 1323.¹²⁵ His voice, presence and authority frequently infiltrate the early years of the chronicle.

Adam Murimuth also demonstrates authorial control over the structure of the chronicle in a number of ways. He breaks with the usual conventions of starting a new chronicle year at either Christmas or Lady Day (25 March), and instead begins the chronicle year at Michaelmas. He explains that it is the custom in the Roman court to start at Michaelmas, and he is reluctant to break his old habits.¹²⁶ Between 1338 and 1346, he makes an unusual habit of including his age. In 1338, he writes 'the age of the writer is 63'.¹²⁷ He is an older man, unwilling to change comfortable and practised behaviours. His age is also apparent in the overall structure of the chronicle. He mentions his own experiences three times, the last time being in 1323.¹²⁸ If Adam Murimuth is 63 in 1338, then he is into his seventies during the closing years of the chronicle. From 1339 onwards, Adam Murimuth includes a large number of letters and proceedings copied directly into the text.¹²⁹ He was unlikely to be travelling at this time of his life, and as such, took his information from other sources and compiled it into a narrative. Throughout the chronicle, despite the shift in style, he demonstrates an interest in diplomacy, particularly with Rome, Scotland, and France. Both his age, and his occupation ultimately influence the structure and content of the chronicle. Throughout, he chooses evidence to support his accounts; eyewitness accounts when possible, but documentary evidence when it was not.

Like the writer of *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, Adam Murimuth gives some information about his processes as a writer of history. In the opening phrases of his chronicle, Adam Murimuth wrote an apology for the brevity of some of his entries, claiming that they were based on 'the book of my days'.¹³⁰ In a statement that echoes the concerns of Ranulph Higden and his *Polychronicon*, Adam Murimuth then

¹²⁵ *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*, p. 18, p. 30 and p. 41.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87; E. M. Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicum*, p. xiv.

¹²⁸ *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicum*, p. 41.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91, a letter from the king to the college of cardinals; p. 110, a letter from the king of England to the king of France; p. 129 a letter by the cardinals about a truce; p. 136, letters patent regarding peace; p. 138, letter to the pope about provisions; p. 143, a letter from the English king to the pope, about papal provisions; p. 149, a letter to the king regarding provisions; p. 153, 'proclamation against provisors'; p. 165, letters accusing the French king of breaking the truce; p. 177, The pope's letter to the king regarding the war in France; p. 193, an ordinance for 'better administration by justices'; p. 200, a letter from Bartholomew Burwash to the archbishop of Stratford; p. 201, 'Similar letter from the chancellor of St. Paul's'; p. 202, Letter from Bartholomew Burwash to the archbishop of Stratford; p. 205, an ordinance concerning Normandy; p. 212, 'Latin translation of a letter from the king's confessor on the progress of the army from its first landing'; p. 215, a letter of Richard Wynkeley.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, *libro dierum meorum*, my own translation.

discusses the need for reliable information. He would not base his accounts on the word of unreliable informants or their memory, but from 'true writing', and honest witnesses.¹³¹ Part of this, for Adam Murimuth, is to follow the information provided by the chronicles at Westminster Abbey for the first three years of his history, which he states in his prologue. He then explains that the rest of the evidence would be 'from the things seen and heard at my time of writing'.¹³² As such, it is tempting to assume that 'the book of my days' was a series of notes, or a diary, in which Adam Murimuth recorded his experiences before transferring them to the chronicle. An abstract and vague term, it could equally be a turn of phrase rather than a literal book.¹³³ Regardless of what is meant by *libro*, it is significant that he wrote *dierum meorum*. They were *his* days, and *his* experiences. Adam Murimuth had a predefined understanding of how a chronicle should be written. He apologises for the length of some of the entries. This suggests that he deviated from his own impressions of how a chronicle should be constructed and was concerned about what a future reader might think.

There are similarities between the three secular chroniclers. Adam Usk appeals directly to the reader to forgive his inconsistency in chronology, stating that he wrote with 'more thought for the truth of what happened than for the order in which it happened'.¹³⁴ For Adam, the digression in his narrative was not for the length of entries, but rather for their chronology. The writer of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* equally acknowledges that he has become distracted from his main narrative and must return to the theme.¹³⁵ There is a self-conscious tone to these apologies. Each writer wishes to make it clear that they know how a history or a chronicle should appear. When they diverge, they do so by design, rather than through ineptitude. In each case, the chroniclers were composing their accounts several years after the events took place. It is not easy to write about distant memories with accuracy and clarity. Where Adam struggles to get events in the correct order, he instead places them together with a focus on 'truth' or themes. Adam Murimuth, who is worried about accuracy, writes shorter accounts that do not include details he cannot remember or verify. The writer of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, looks back with hindsight, and interrupts the narrative flow with his own opinions and

¹³¹ *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicum*, pp. 4-5. 'Et ab anno Domini MoCCCmoVto., quo ego tantae eram aetatis quod facta praecipua ponderavi et ea scripsi breviter meo modo ex libro dierum meorum, scripsi ulterius ea quae mihi videbantur utilia ad scribendum, nec personas nimium commendando, nec earum memoriam, ut quidam faciunt, diffamando, sed facta vera scribendo, ut opus uniuscujusque ipsum, prout meruit, possit sibi afferre laudis praeconium uel famae suae, quam meruit, laesionem.'

¹³² *Ibid.*, *residuum vero ex visu et auditu mei temporis ipse scripsi*. My own translation.

¹³³ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, p. 30; C. L. Kingsford, 'Murimuth, Adam (1274/5–1347).

¹³⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁵ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, pp. 154-155.

commentary. These aspects, however, are the result of similar circumstances combined with a common desire to provide credible and verified accounts.

To further support this, there are multiple examples of monastic chroniclers being equally concerned with themes of 'truth', eye-witness testimony, and reliable evidence. Whilst not with the same frequency, monastic chroniclers did use eye-witness accounts. Thomas Walsingham does this in 1385. A parliament took place in London in mid-November of that year. In the parliament, the Commons granted the king permission to tax the people on the condition that the clergy were also taxed.¹³⁶ Thomas Walsingham's concerns about taxing the clergy are clear in the narrative. The account is written as a struggle between the Church and the nobles. The Church stood its ground, with the archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay, demanding that the Church should not be taxed.¹³⁷ The nobles were almost beside themselves with excitement at the thought of making money from the Church. Gleeful knights discussed the matter 'as if the temporalities of the whole Church had already been divided up for them to misuse'.¹³⁸ Specific churches and monasteries were discussed, their value reduced to financial wealth. 'I heard one of these knights' writes Thomas Walsingham, 'make a fervent declaration that he wanted to make a thousand marks annually from the temporalities of the house of Saint Albans'.¹³⁹ The king calmly stepped in. He listened to both sides of the argument. The matter was resolved when the clergy voluntarily offered a grant to the king. It is a similar amount to the proposed tax, but it is given willingly, not under duress.

Thomas Walsingham uses the first person in the phrase *audiui egomet* [I personally heard]. He does not give any other information about the incident. The reader is left questioning where the declaration took place, who the knight was, and how Thomas came into contact with him. The most likely scenario is that the knight was within the walls of the monastery itself. Parliaments are commonly reported in medieval chronicles. They generated a range of sources. Word of mouth would have provided some detail, but written accounts could also be used to construct a narrative.¹⁴⁰ For Thomas, witnessing an event that directly related to the proceedings in the parliament validated the other sources he may have used. Eye-witness testimony plays an important role in creating authority in this narrative. This is the only time that Thomas claims to have witnessed

¹³⁶ Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 778-781.

¹³⁷ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 778-779.

¹³⁸ Ibid, vol. I pp. 778-781.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 176-177.

a politically significant event personally, and even though it is a rare occurrence, he records it in the chronicle.

All the evidence from Adam Usk's *Polychronicon*, and his own chronicle copied into the same manuscript suggests that he implemented the contemporary conventions of history writing. He, like others writing at that time, was preoccupied with concepts of the truth. Each chronicle interpreted and presented 'truth' and eyewitness account differently, a result of the individual's circumstances, such as their personal exposure to the events they were writing about, or access to documents. Thomas Walsingham's name, for example, appears in the *Liber Benefactorum* of St. Alban's Abbey, listing him as precentor and *scriptorarius*.¹⁴¹ He was involved in the daily worship at the monastery, and was in charge of the writing room. Thomas Walsingham was therefore largely confined to the monastery at St Alban's. It is believed that Thomas may have studied at Oxford, and he also acted as prior of Wymondham 1394-1396. These are the only occasions during his adult life that he is known to have left St. Alban's.¹⁴² Yet eye-witness accounts were still an important source for Adam's less-mobile contemporaries. Where the chronicler witnessed something themselves, they felt compelled to record it. It created authority and released the chronicler from the perils of false testimony or unreliable accounts.

Adam, as a secular chronicler travelled extensively in order to further his career as a clerk. As a result of his travels, the reader experiences the things that he experienced, meets the people he met, and learns of the things that he saw, heard, and observed. What appears to be an uncommon trait in Adam's work, is merely a product of his career and circumstance. It is not a coincidence that there are similarities between his chronicle, the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, and parts of Adam Murimuth's chronicle; all three travelled as part of their careers.¹⁴³ Parliaments, court cases, and personal successes and failures, fell in line with major political events of the day. Therefore, when recording the events that are seen in a wide range of other chronicles, Adam includes his own perspective. Both the material and textual evidence confirms that Adam's chronicle writing was performative. The act of owning the *Polychronicon* book and adopting particular vocabulary and conventions

¹⁴¹ 'The Benefactors' Book', BL Cotton MS Nero D. vii, fol. 82v; John Taylor, "Walsingham, Thomas (c. 1340–c. 1422), historian and prior of Wymondham." *ODNB*, accessed 4 Oct. 2019.

¹⁴² Taylor, "Walsingham, Thomas (c. 1340–c. 1422), historian and prior of Wymondham." *ODNB*.

¹⁴³ Gransden makes the connection between eye-witness accounts and *foreign* travel, noting the similarities between Adam Usk, Jean Creton and Jean Froissart: A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii* pp. 163, and 171-178.

communicated Adam's position as an adept, knowledgeable historian. Indeed, this counteracts scholarship that deemed Adam Usk as 'unreliable' or lacking 'historical objectivity'.¹⁴⁴ Adam, by the standards of his own time, was consciously and successfully performing the role of historian.

Published editions and their representation of Adam Usk's chronicle

It is clear that Adam's chronicle was influenced by the context in which it was written, both in terms of the fact that it was a *Polychronicon* continuation, and also within the tradition of history writing. Printed editions, however, whilst making the text of the chronicle more accessible, also decontextualise them from the manuscript. This point could prove to be problematic, especially considering the fact that there is a significant amount of research that relies exclusively on the printed edition, and not on the manuscript at all.¹⁴⁵ In cases where the chronicle is considered in its manuscript context, it is usually the British Library portion, which includes the *Polychronicon* and Adam's chronicle up until 1404.¹⁴⁶ The final quire can be found in the Duke of Rutland's private archive at Belvoir Castle, and there are no digital versions of this available.¹⁴⁷

Of course, most historical scholarship relies on editions, and published materials; it would be difficult, and perhaps foolhardy, to ignore such a wealth of readily available resources. This does not mean, however, that they should be used uncritically. The very nature of editions decontextualizes the history from its original setting and renders it consumable to the modern scholar. In Adam's case, his chronicle is detached from the *Polychronicon* and presented as an individual work. It is given a title, which does not exist in the manuscript.¹⁴⁸ The eleven scribal hands that often give the chronicle a messy appearance become uniform typed text.¹⁴⁹ Marginal notes are converted into headings, or comments in the rubric. Punctuation, highlighting, and various forms of illumination are

¹⁴⁴ Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 57; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 38-42.

¹⁴⁵ In some cases, entire chapters and monographs have been produced without referencing the manuscript. See: Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret*; Galloway, 'Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace in Late Fourteenth-Century England: The Case of the Two Usks', 291-318; Yandell, 'Prophetic Authority in Adam of Usk's Chronicle', pp. 79-100.

¹⁴⁶ There is some evidence of manuscript analysis completed by Alicia Marchant in *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr*, pp. 98-99, although the main focus of this is confined to the *Mappa mundi*. This is of course due to issues of access, as only select images from the British Library are available digitally.

¹⁴⁷ 'Adam Usk's Chronicle, 1404-1421': Belvoir MS Add. 4.

¹⁴⁸ The first and second editions: '*Chronicon Adae de Usk*'. The third edition: '*The Chronicle of Adam Usk*'.

¹⁴⁹ For a detailed description of the different hands see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xlii.

either translated into a modern equivalent or described.¹⁵⁰ Adam's chronicle has also been translated into English and is presented together with the Latin text.¹⁵¹

The decontextualization of Adam's book as a printed edition has contributed to the debate about Adam's identity as a historian. The main issues arise from contemporary values being projected onto the book as a material artifact, and failing to see it as product of the culture in which it was made. There are three published editions of Adam Usk's chronicle. The first and second were both edited and translated by Edward Maunde Thompson and represent the early academic interest in Adam and his work.¹⁵² The first edition was published in 1876 by The Royal Society of Literature. This work only included a transcription and translation of the chronicle up until 1404. The final quire of the work, which contains the chronicle from 1404 to 1421, had become detached from the now BL Add. MS 10104 sometime before it was bound in its present cover. Thompson had assumed that the quire, and the information detailed on its leaves, had been lost forever.¹⁵³ Nine years after the first edition was published, however, a small unbound bundle of folded vellum leaves was discovered at Belvoir Castle. Eventually it was recognised as the final section of Adam Usk's chronicle. Once it had been identified, Thompson began to work on the second edition, which included the full timeframe covered by Adam Usk's work, 1377-1421 and was published in 1904.¹⁵⁴

Thompson's labour provided the academic community with an accessible format through which Adam's chronicle, his career, and his life could be better understood. Along with this pioneering scholarship, however, Thompson incorporated some of his contemporary assumptions and prejudices towards chronicles and medieval history writing, largely based on a material analysis of the manuscript. Adam's identity as a non-monastic chronicler partly played into this. In his introduction to the chronicle, Thompson wrote 'as a contribution to history, Adam of Usk's chronicle is too brief and too disconnected to take a very important position'.¹⁵⁵ Instead, he argued that the history's main value is its 'personal interest', because it was written by a non-monastic clerk and

¹⁵⁰ For more on the Given-Wilson's editorial practices see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xciii.

¹⁵¹ Thompson's editions present the Latin and English chronicles separately, Given-Wilson's presents the texts as facing.

¹⁵² *Chronicon Adae de Usk: A.D. 1377-1404*, (ed. and trans.) Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Murray, 1876); Thompson, *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Henry Frowde, 1904).

¹⁵³ Thompson, 'Introduction' *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. v.

¹⁵⁴ Thompson, *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Henry Frowde, 1904).

¹⁵⁵ Thompson, 'Introduction' *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. xxxv.

lawyer.¹⁵⁶ The messy appearance of the chronicle in the manuscript led him to describe the early years of the chronicle as ‘imperfect notes’, which are brief, ‘scanty’ and lacking in chronology.¹⁵⁷ For the later years, he criticises them as ‘roughly-cast compilations’.¹⁵⁸ As a result of Adam’s identity as a clerk, and not as a monk, Thompson concluded that Adam was unable to fulfil the role of historian, and did not produce a chronicle of historical value. If Adam had revised the work himself, Thompson states, these errors and imperfections would have been resolved. Instead, Thompson believed that he had left it up to his successor, Edward ap Adam, to copy the chronicle into the manuscript. According to Thompson the scribe did so without revising it, which ultimately devalued the chronicle in its present form.¹⁵⁹ Thompson unconsciously projected the standards of his own society onto Adam’s chronicle, and as result concluded that Adam was an unsatisfactory historian. Despite this, Thompson’s editions of the chronicle made Adam’s work accessible. The messy, indecipherable hands and the inconsistency of the Latin are testament to Thompson’s skill as an editor and translator.¹⁶⁰ Without them, Adam’s work and life may have remained largely unknown throughout the twenty-first century.

Thompson’s misreading of the material culture of Adam’s book was the motivation for the third and most recent edition. Produced by Chris Given-Wilson, and published in 1997, the content of the transcription and translation mainly differ from Thompson’s in style.¹⁶¹ Given-Wilson, as one of the leading authorities on medieval chronicle writing, was able to analyse the physical manuscript with a greater understanding of its historical context. As a result, his analysis of Adam’s identity as a historian was also much more positive. Rather than being an inadequate chronicler, Given-Wilson highlighted areas in which Adam was consciously performing this role well.¹⁶² Given-Wilson also disagrees with Thompson on Adam’s physical interaction with his book. As stated above, Thompson believed that Edward ap Adam oversaw the copying of the chronicle into the manuscript. Given-Wilson, however, deduced that Adam had the chronicle copied himself, and that a small section of the chronicle may even have been written in his own hand.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. xxxvi.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Given-Wilson, ‘The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk’, 521.

¹⁶¹ Given-Wilson, ‘Preface’, in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*, (ed. And trans.) C. Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. viii.

¹⁶² Given-Wilson, ‘Introduction’, pp. x-xciii.

¹⁶³ Given-Wilson, ‘The Dating and Structure of the Chronicle of Adam Usk’, 531.

The difference between the two interpretations of how or when the chronicle was written has implications for understanding Adam's identity. Given-Wilson's theory, which is the most compelling and is supported by textual and material evidence, creates a direct, physical connection between Adam, the manuscript, and his chronicle. For Thompson, the fact that the chronicle was written later showed that Adam did not understand the need to edit the book, and therefore how to write an appropriate history. It was instead a series of disorganised, chaotic notes, that were organised many years after his death by his kinsman.¹⁶⁴ As this, however, was unlikely to have been the case, as demonstrated by Given-Wilson, the opposite can be assumed.

The book as an object demonstrates that Adam worked methodically and persistently over many years to create a complete narrative. He is likely to have made the decision that his chronicle would be copied into the book with the *Polychronicon*. This in itself is a performance, communicating that he understood the role of a historian. Adam was demonstrating his knowledge of the past, and his desire to continue the universal chronicle into his own time. The physical construction of his chronicle demonstrates his identity as a historian. For this reason, the editions are extremely useful resources, but should be used carefully. They disconnect the text of the chronicle from the artefact of Adam's *Polychronicon* book.

Conclusion

As the elderly Adam Usk planned out his will, he would have considered the value of the bequests that he was leaving. For those that received money, the benefit was financial. Other gifts had religious significance and ensured that he would receive prayers after he died. In the case of the *Polychronicon*, however, it held a different value. Of course, it was partly financial. Had Edward ap Adam wished to sell the book, he could have received a payment that reflected its market price. Its primary worth for Adam, however, was cultural. Reflecting the value that his society placed upon history and learning, the *Polychronicon* was part of a performance of Adam's identity. It was a physical manifestation of his role as 'chronicler' or 'historian'. The quality of the *Polychronicon* manuscript reflected this; whilst it was not the most lavish manuscript available, it was certainly finished to a high quality because the *Polychronicon* text was perceived as warranting a befitting

¹⁶⁴ Thompson, 'Introduction' *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. xxxv.

physical setting. It also eventually served as the manuscript for Adam's own chronicle. Indeed, he followed the principles necessary to assume the identity of a historian, following the requirement for universal truth and reliable evidence. All of these aspects left their mark on the physical book, as well as the text of the chronicle.

Adam evidently saw his chronicle as part of a larger history, and presented himself as a continuator in the text. This is an important factor when considering how he presented his local and national identity in the next chapters. As Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* describes places and people, there is no doubt that Adam's continuation was influenced by this. Characteristics ascribed to various peoples were enduring and inflexible in the medieval mindset. Since Adam performs the role of continuator and historian, his descriptions of peoples and places reflected the descriptions in the earlier work he was continuing, and was heavily influenced by English interpretations of history.

Chapter Two

Constructing Sameness: Local and National Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle

According to the writer of the *Continuatio Eulogii*, when the Welsh *uchelwr* Owain Glyndŵr made a complaint to parliament in 1400, he was met with indifference and ridicule. The complaint was regarding his neighbour, Lord Grey of Ruthin, who he claimed had unrightfully taken possession of some of his lands in Wales. The Welsh bishop of St. Asaph, John Trevor (Siôn Trefor), apparently predicted that the parliament's dismissive attitude would be dangerous, advising the parliament that they should not completely ignore Owain Glyndŵr's complaint. Such action, he advised, could lead to insurrection in Wales. The members of parliament, however, claimed that they did not care about 'barefooted buffoons'.¹ Accusing Owain Glyndŵr of being little more than one of the *scurris nudipedibus* demonstrates that the others in parliament at that time considered him to be foolish and backward.² These characteristics were attributed to him purely because of his identity as a Welshman, a trope that is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. This stereotype was projected onto the Welsh population by some of their English neighbours; it is clear already from the previous chapter to this work, that Adam Usk did not perceive himself as someone who was backward, but rather an accomplished and learned cleric, lawyer and historian. There is thus a paradox in Adam's identity; he was a Welshman who worked in England and was heavily involved in the English administration, which raises questions about how he viewed his identity and the identity of the Welsh people. This chapter examines the relationship between Adam's local identity as a man from the Marcher town of Usk, and his self-expressed Welsh identity.

National and local identities, as presented in Adam Usk's chronicle, are the key themes of this chapter. For some theorists, the notion of national and local identities existing simultaneously in the medieval period is contentious. Based on erroneous assumptions about the simplicity of the Middle Ages in both its political structures and the cognitive processes of individuals, it has often been asserted that the role of the universal church, universal institutions and the rigorously observed

¹ '*Eulogium Historiarum*', BL Cotton MS. Galba E VII, fol. 202r; '*Continuatio Eulogii*', p. 388. Also see: Marchant, *The Revolt* p. 152; R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, reprinted 2006), p. 437.

² Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 437.

social structure left little room for unilateral connections across either large or small areas.³ Local identities are dismissed as a result of larger universal identities, and national identities are dismissed as a result of local ties, obligations, and allegiances. Indeed, belonging to both a local community and a larger cultural and political entity such as 'Wales' or 'England' would be impossible within this paradigm. For many years this was a historiographical battleground, with modernists on one side, and medievalists on the other.⁴ In recent times, however, research has stepped away from demonstrating that an individual could identify as being from a small local community, as well as a larger region or country, and also be influenced by structures and institutions, and has instead focused on the form that this identity took, how it was expressed, how it can be measured, and how a complex multiplicity of identities were connected.⁵

Adam Usk expressed multiple emic (self-expressed) identities, which are often seemingly contradictory. Indeed, this is connected to the derogatory assertion that Owain Glyndŵr was a 'barefooted buffoon'. This negative portrayal of a Welshman was certainly not something Adam wished to be associated with. In some cases, it was beneficial or accurate for Adam to describe himself as Welsh, and to express a Welsh identity. In others, he wished to disassociate himself from negative Welsh traits, particularly regarding the rebellion, and so emphasised the fragmented regional variation that existed within Wales.⁶ He was a Welshman who expressed various prejudices against other regions in Wales.⁷ For the town of Usk, Adam's hometown, however, the descriptions are different. The tie to home was emotional, devotional, and based on kinship and personal relationships.⁸ Adam's chronicle contains Latin terms that denote this plurality of sentiments; *patria* (country) is used to determine both specific regional locations within Wales, as well as Wales as whole. Whilst *patria* is used to indicate the region of Usk on one occasion in his chronicle, Adam only

³ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: a study of its origins and background* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), pp. 78-81, 84-85; Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an enquiry into the origins of nations and the politics of nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 17-18, 418-419.

⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁵ For the works by R. R. Davies on this topic see: Davies, 'Presidential address: Identities' 1-20; Davies, 'The 'Presidential address: Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities', 1-20; Davies, 'Presidential address: Laws and Customs', 1-23; Davies, 'Presidential address: Language and Historical Mythology', 1-24. For an overview see: Ruddick, *English Identity*, pp. 1-22. See above: pp. 23-34.

⁶ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxiv; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 158.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', 47-70.

uses it to signify a non-specific region devoid of sentimental connotations.⁹ For emotionally charged terminology about the town of Usk, he employs phraseology such as *partes proprias* (my own country), and in relation to the personal connections he has there *antiquos amicos* (old friends), *cognattos* (kinsmen).¹⁰

Locality in medieval Britain has been viewed through a number of different methodological and theoretical lenses. The most prominent and widely discussed strand concerns political and legal institutions, administrative structures, and communally organised political activities.¹¹ National political structures, such as the king's influence, his parliament and his court, for example, can be viewed as composite of networks functioning primarily on a local level.¹² For landowners, their private lives (such as associations with their locality, neighbourhood, and family), had an influence over their public lives.¹³ In this way their moral perspectives and motivations had an impact on broader political life in England. Such was the importance of locality and its coinciding social networks, that in studies of political life in the Middle Ages, understanding its relevance adds depth and dimension to the national infrastructure. These types of studies face numerous challenges, including the complexity of reconstructing local political structures within the specific environment of their local context. The fact that sources encapsulating local networks are limited in number is also a frequently cited issue.¹⁴ Despite the challenges, the field has successfully highlighted the importance of local networks and their relationship to national institutions. They were mutually influenced by each other, rather than cancelling each other out.

⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 52-55 (the region of Usk); pp. 128-129 (the area surrounding Conway Castle); pp. 146-149 (the region surrounding the Lordship of Ruthin); pp. 160-163 (the land of Wales); pp. 244-245 (referring to Wales and Ireland). For discussions of the term '*patria*' see: Holford, '*Pro patriotis*: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', 49.

¹⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 240-241.

¹¹ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*; Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401-1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Timothy Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, (ed.) Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); R.R. Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities in Wales and the Western British Isles, c.1100-c.1400', in *Land, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, (eds.) Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson, and Jane Martindale (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 172-87.

¹² Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 286; Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, pp. 100-108.

¹³ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10; Michael J. Bennett, 'Sources and Problems in the Study of Social Mobility: Cheshire in the Later Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 128 (1979), 59-95; Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities' pp. 174-175.

The value of local structures and their interconnectivity with the larger national polity not only applies to political networks. It is equally relevant for social and cultural identity concerning a self-expressed sense of belonging to a community. Whilst the markers of a national cultural identity and communal belonging have been integrated with historiographical discourse for many years, this has not been the case for local affiliations and bonds. There are numerous indicators of national identity that have been recognised as prevailing in the later medieval period. Language, a belief in a common descent, and an imagined horizontal connection to others sharing the identity are all well-established concepts, although each is contentious in its own right. Uses of vernacular language, for example, have frequently been cited as being associated with a shift towards a 'nationalist' agenda towards the end of the Middle Ages, and a stirring of mass patriotism. It is now assumed, that whilst there are examples where this really does appear to be the case, as will be discussed below, such a sweeping assessment of language selection is overly simplistic. Using vernacular language, however, can sometimes be interpreted as an expression of identity, but it should not be assumed that it always was. The issue in the belief of a common descent was problematised by medieval historians themselves. England and Wales were perceived as separate cultural entities, and yet their histories were irrevocably intertwined (specifically by Geoffrey of Monmouth), and a number of mythical historical figures, such as Arthur, were claimed by both identities. Finally, the imagined horizontal ties that create community amongst those within it are an abstract and complex concept. Many of these aspects will be considered in this chapter, specifically connected to English and Welsh national identities.

Interpreting cultural markers of community in connection to locality is one of the less explored strands of enquiry in this field, and one to which an analysis of Adam Usk's chronicle can contribute. Scholarship has not only established that locality is part of a bigger political structure, but that it can take the form of an emotional connection to the community and institutions of the country or region where one was born.¹⁵ Indeed, local identity and national identity overlap; just as a larger national identity was imagined and based on an intangible sense of belonging, so too was local identity. Family, kinship, and neighbours contributed to the sustenance of social networks, even when someone moved away from their place of birth. In addition to this, scholarship has identified a more abstract sense of belonging to local communities. Patterns of obligation, charity, and patronage, linking individuals to a wider community, not simply the people they knew, have been observed.

¹⁵ Roger Virgoe, 'Aspects of the County Community in the Fifteenth Century', in *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, (ed.) Michael Hicks (Gloucester: Sutton, 1990), pp. 1-13; Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England'.

Those who received benefits from their locality, such as through patronage, often returned favour to their place of birth through 'frequent benefits'.¹⁶ Most commonly seen through gifting in wills, this way of understanding locality also suffers from a lack of consistent sources. Like with social and political networks, sources are regularly drawn from a range of times and places to show general trends, and specific examples demonstrating how both national and local identities could exist simultaneously are infrequent.¹⁷ Adam Usk's chronicle, however, shows how an individual could perceive themselves as belonging to both national and local communities simultaneously and as a result contributes to this debate.

The physical dimensions of a locality, however, can be challenging to define. Geographically speaking, communal activities and locality have been studied in a wide range of contexts, spanning the length of Europe and beyond. These studies repeatedly identify that communities, whether defined by political activity, institutional organisation, or a cultural imagined belonging, were not limited to predefined geographical borders; for example, a social network, real or imagined, was not contained within the boundaries of a parish, the walls of a town, or even the borders of a country.¹⁸ Research with a wide geographical range, however, is silent on locality in Wales, usually as a result of scholars' perceiving Wales as peripheral, irrelevant, or even a bit of a 'mystery'.¹⁹ There are numerous studies that examine the social networks within a specific area of England, such as Christine Carpenter's work on landed society in Warwickshire, or Michael Bennet's analysis of social mobility in Cheshire.²⁰ Research into locality in Wales has been reactive, either as a result of Wales being left out of larger bodies of research, or challenging notions that places in the border regions were either 'English' or 'Welsh'.²¹

¹⁶ Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England'.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 55; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 286.

¹⁹ Discussed in Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities', p. 173. For examples of Wales not being discussed see: Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, p. 105.

²⁰ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*; Bennett, 'Sources and Problems in the Study of Social Mobility: Cheshire in the Later Middle Ages' pp. 59-95.

²¹ Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities', pp. 172-187; Euryon Rhys Roberts 'A Surfeit of Identity?' pp. 247-78; Helen Fulton, 'The Outside Within: Medieval Chester and North Wales as a Social Space', in *Mapping the Medieval City: space, place and identity in Chester c.1200-1600*, (ed.) C. A. M. Clarke (Cardiff: University Wales Press, 2011), pp. 149-168; R. A. Griffiths, 'Crossing the Frontiers of the English Realm in the Fifteenth Century', in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages*, (eds.) H. Pryce and J. Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 211-225.

In addition to the problems in conceptualising locality, understanding Adam Usk's emic projection of locality in his chronicle as 'Welsh' is also problematic. Adam was a clerk, trained in England, writing a chronicle within a tradition that had its roots in England. It was written in Latin, not Welsh. Rees Davies noted the problem with sources produced by 'English-trained clerks' for assessing locality in Wales. Firstly, he notes that they wrote within a specific framework adjusting 'their formulae of economic and social descriptions and accountability to characterise the very different patterns of social organisation and economic practice of the western British Isles in an age of English conquest.'²² The context of their training, the language and terminology they used, and the genre of the material they produced straddled the English and Welsh cultures, and they saw the society through the gaze of two conflicting structures of political authority and cultural assumptions.²³ Expressions of belonging to a local region in Adam Usk's chronicle are very different from those frequently highlighted in scholarship on 'Welsh sources'. Studies that focus specifically on Welsh localities run the risk of contributing to the persistent problem of defining identity as a universally applied, universally expressed, universally believed absolute. Traditional aspects of Welsh identity come to the forefront, such as the role of kinship in justice systems and customary practices regarding the inheritance of land and general peace-keeping. In each case, these are explicitly Welsh phenomena based on ancient practices, retained in the shadow of English imposed administrative systems. Compounding the English/Welsh difference, the relationship between the Welsh communities and their 'foreign' lords is largely presented as unanimously fraught with tension. Adam's chronicle, however, expresses his connection to locality not as a politically strained discourse of Welsh and English, but as a place to which he belonged, maintained social networks, owed certain obligations, and benefited from the patronage of his local lord.

The implications of the English occupation of Wales for the communities of the Welsh people who lived there, however, creates a complexity when conflating locality with Welshness. The town of Usk had been under English rule for nearly two hundred years.²⁴ The administrative systems and cultural and social interactions that developed from the system had grown roots and embedded itself in the town. From the large stone castle, to the allegiance owed to the Earls of March, the fact that this was a Marcher town played out in many arenas. Marcher towns were essentially 'Englishries', historically designed to subjugate the Welsh people living there in favour of the English lord and his

²² Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities', pp. 174-175.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxiii.

community based on a desire to control the region militarily.²⁵ From their inception, the towns were designed to economically and militarily benefit the English elite, although by the thirteenth century many Welsh people had found ways to prosper in this sometimes hostile environment.²⁶ Adam Usk's experience of the town of Usk as a Marcher town, living under a Marcher lord was not necessarily one of oppression or subjugation, but it is inevitable that the English nature of the town would have had an influence on the form of his local identity. In this chapter, I demonstrate that Adam Usk's social network in the town was exclusively Welsh despite the influence of English structures and frameworks on his life, and explore the ways that he expressed belonging to the local community.

Therefore, this chapter aims to critically examine the way that Adam expressed and constructed self-expressed identities in the chronicle. As such, it examines two major themes; his expression of local identity as a Welsh man from Usk, and his construction of, and interaction with, the wider identity of 'Welsh'. In order to do this, the chapter will begin by exploring the allusions that Adam makes to his hometown of Usk. His personal networks and obligations are addressed and his imagined sense of belonging to his locality is demonstrated. Following this, Adam's expression of Welsh identity is explored, along with analysis regarding how this can be understood and measured in the chronicle context. The two main areas focus on Adam's belief in the widely held Welsh origin myth, and how the multiplicity of languages in medieval society functioned as a marker of identity. Finally, the chapter addresses the way that the two identities influenced Adam's chronicle writing. In this way, the chapter contributes to understandings of the interconnectivity between local and national identities in the form of social belonging and imagined community. It does this with a demarcated case study, which provides evidence for the practical aspects of identity and how they were expressed. This chapter advances the purpose of the thesis as a whole, by establishing which identities Adam expressed *himself*. This has implications for how modern scholars categorize his chronicle based on his identity and indicates the influence that local and national identities have on chronicle writing as a whole.

²⁵ Matthew Stevens, *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales: ethnicity, gender and economy in Ruthin, 1282 – 1348* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), pp. 7-12.

²⁶ Helen Fulton, 'Introduction: the impact of urbanization in Medieval Wales' in *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales*, (ed.) Helen Fulton (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 3.

Local networks and obligations in Adam Usk's chronicle

In the modern-day town of Usk, Adam Usk's presence is still felt. The ruined castle overlooks the town from the north. The gatehouse stands intact at the entrance to the ruins, and the visitors guide indicates that this is where Adam Usk, the 'somewhat unreliable' chronicler, was born.²⁷ It is a five-minute walk to the priory church of St. Mary, where a brass epitaph to Adam hangs on the roodscreen. Just as Adam is remembered in the town today, he also remembered his place of birth throughout his chronicle.²⁸ Adam, however, spent a large portion of his life living and working away from Usk, so the interactions that he had with his birthplace took a specific form. Despite his absence he refers frequently to Usk, the surrounding area, and the people that he knew there. He constructs a narrative of belonging that manifests in a number of ways. He expresses a sense of obligation to the people that he knew in the town, helping them to obtain promotion, or providing assistance and charity at a time of need. Adam also wished to be remembered by the community as a whole, suggesting that his local identity expanded beyond relationships with the people he knew and included imagined horizontal ties with people he did not know there.

Before establishing how Adam's local identity was expressed, the geographical extent of his 'home' should be established. As noted above, social spaces were not limited to political or administrative boundaries, and Adam provides information about the region that he considered to be his 'native country'.²⁹ There are two noteworthy entries that occur consecutively in his chronicle account of 1399, both recollecting experiences from his childhood. The first details the birth of a calf born with two heads at Usk. As Adam recounts this event, he reminisces 'I remember seeing a similar one, which had been aborted, in my youth, in the parish of Llancayo, in the house of a woman called Llugu the daughter of Watkyn'.³⁰ Llancayo lies less than two miles from the centre of Usk. Also, in the year 1399 Adam records that 'in the parish of Llanbadoc a boy was born with only one eye, and that in his forehead'.³¹ Llanbadoc lies less than a mile from Usk castle. Whilst both Llanbadoc and Llancayo are very close to the town of Usk, Adam also reports information about Llantarnam as a place of interest connected to his locality, which lies slightly further from Usk, roughly eight miles away. Adam describes the death of John ap Gruffydd, the abbot of the town, 'who had splendidly re-

²⁷'Usk Castle' <<https://uskcastle.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Usk-Castle-history.pdf>> accessed 28/07/2020.

²⁸ J. Daryll Evans, 'Adam of Usk in his native place', 15-18.

²⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 240-241.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 86-87.

³¹ Ibid.

built his monastery in just a few years following its accidental destruction by fire'.³² In the chronicle, these experiences and places read almost as nostalgic recollections. Adam Usk's imagined 'home', which he had an emotive connection to, spanned beyond the administrative boundaries of Usk and incorporated other nearby places.

Notably, the geographical range of Adam's imagined 'native place' provides information about his social network. Not including the boy with one eye, he mentions two people with Welsh names; Llugu, the daughter of Watkyn, and John ap Gruffydd. Adam mentions a number of other Welsh kinsmen and neighbours in his chronicle. Despite living away from the region in which he grew up, he makes it clear that he retained connections within the town through kinsmen and family members. For example, in 1399 he explains that the archbishop of Canterbury conferred upon him the church of Kemsing and the prebend of Llandygwydd. He claims that he held 'the church of Shirenewton in Netherwent, which with dispensation from the apostolic see, [he] had held together with other benefices with cure conferred upon [his] cousin-german Thomas ap Adam ap William de Weloc, and his church of Panteg conferred upon another of [his] kinsmen, Matthew ap Hoel, to be held by them'.³³ Adam makes reference to more family members which indicate his status in society, stating that the nuns in the priory of Usk were of noble stock and that some of them were his blood relatives.³⁴ Finally, there is an emotional passage written in 1400 regarding the death of the Abbot of Chertsey. Adam alleges that he was there at the death of the Abbot, John of Usk, who had been born and baptized in Usk and who Adam clearly held in great esteem. He describes him as a 'man of holy memory and surpassing sanctity, who incepted in theology, and lived his life as a servant of the blessed Virgin'.³⁵ Given-Wilson believes that because of John's place of birth and Adam's reaction to his death, it was likely that they were relatives.³⁶ Within the region that Adam considers his 'native place', he had social connections with family members, as well as other members of the community.

Adam Usk's will also indicates that his most significant relationships were with Welsh people:

Also, I bequeath a book called the Polychronicon to Edward ap Adam, my kinsman. Also, I bequeath a hundred shillings to Philip Went. Also, I bequeath forty shillings to Griffith ap William. Also, I bequeath four pounds to Meurig ap Ieuan ap M[eredith?] and his wife. Also, I bequeath forty shillings to my sister Joan. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to John ap Iorwerth. I also, I bequeath one noble to each of the four sons of the aforesaid Griffith. I also I bequeath three shillings and fourpence to Griffith

³² Ibid., pp. 94-95.

³³ Ibid., pp. 84-85; CPR: 'Henry IV 1399-1401', pp. 22, 108.

³⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 192-193.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

³⁶ Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 98-99, fn. 1.

*Vaghan, chaplain. Also, I bequeath forty pence to John ap William. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to Thomas Went of Castle Combe. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to John ap David ap Griffith, which sum I leaned to him. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Thomas ap M[eredith?]. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Gwenllian daughter of David ap Griffith. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Alice daughter of David ap Griffith. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Iorwerth ap Hopkin. Also, I bequeath five nobles to M[eredith?] ap Iorwerth.*³⁷

Only two people are of uncertain origin in the above extract. Philip and Thomas Went, presumably related and from Castle Combe where Adam held benefices between 1396-1407, could also have been from Went in Wales.³⁸ All the other people are referred to as either direct family members (his brother and sister) or as being Welsh or being related to a Welsh person.³⁹ In addition to Llugu, the daughter of Watkyn from the story about the one-eyed boy, Adam's will demonstrates that his network consisted of both men and women, bequeathing five nobles each to Gwenllian and Alice.

Based on the names of Adam's associates, it is clear that he belonged to the Welsh community rather than the English community that inevitably existed in the Marcher town. Obviously, Adam's own name derives from his place of birth, which suggests the significant implications it had for his identity. In his chronicle, he only makes an allusion to his name in the prelude, nowhere else. He does this during a treatise in which he discusses Adam the first man as a metaphor for his own life experiences.⁴⁰ In the second passage relating to this theme, he writes 'with his manly qualities becomes Adam! Usk: the prophet Merlin says of this name...' and continues to describe a prophecy regarding the river Usk, thus revealing his name to the reader.⁴¹ Whilst Adam, like his potential family member John of Usk, takes his name from the place of his birth, his kinsmen were named using the patronymic system that was customary in Wales, using the word 'ap', which is short for

³⁷ 'The Will of Adam Usk', *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans.) Chris Given-Wilson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 272-275.

³⁸ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxvii.

³⁹ For details of Adam's benefices see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xx.

⁴⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xl-xli.

⁴¹ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fols. 154v-155r; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxxix – xlii. In the Patent Rolls of 1382, Adam Usk is referred to as 'Adam Porter' in a grant to Adam of 100 shillings a year for his studies at Oxford, during the minority of Edmund Mortimer. See: *CPR: Richard II 1381-1385*, p. 115. Also see: J. Tait, 'Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office', *The English Historical Review* 13 (1898), pp. 354-357; Jeremy Catto, 'Masters, Patrons and the Careers of Graduates in Fifteenth-Century England' in *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, (eds.) Anne Curry and Elizabeth Matthew (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 56-57; Stephen Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret*, p. 12.

mab meaning 'son', before their father's name.⁴² Whilst it was common for Welsh names in medieval documents to be 'Latinised', Adam does not do this, and instead uses the Welsh version of Welsh names.⁴³ This can be compared to Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, which despite focusing on events in Wales, does not include any Welsh names using the Welsh '*ap*'. He instead uses the Latin *apud* (at or in).⁴⁴ In choosing to record the names in their original Welsh form, Adam demonstrates his connection to his place of birth and his belonging to the Welsh community that lived there.

The manifestation of Adam's relationship to his local community took multiple forms. Firstly, there are personal social connections that he maintained with individuals in the community, and secondly a sense of obligation to the wider, imagined community of Usk. The notion of obligation to one's community has been seen in studies of locality in England.⁴⁵ Many of the same obligations are seen in Adam's interaction with his local community in Wales. Matthew Holford's study on emotional and obligational connections to local *patria* in England, established that those who had left their place of birth often retained ties with their original locality. The ties manifested in charitable giving, patronage or bequests in wills, the obligations were 'long enduring' and served both the close social network of the individual, as well as the wider community of the locality.⁴⁶ Indeed, many of the kinsmen mentioned in Adam's chronicle received some kind of benefit as a result of their familial relationship with Adam Usk. His cousin, Thomas ap Adam ap William de Weloc and his kinsmen, Matthew ap Hoel both benefitted from exchanging and holding benefices with Adam Usk. The churches which the two held as a result of their association with Adam Usk, are within close proximity of his birthplace; Shirenewton and Panteg are both less than ten miles from Usk.⁴⁷

The nuns who were blood relations to Adam Usk, residing at the Benedictine monastery 'in the town or borough of Usk', also benefited as a result of their association with Adam Usk.⁴⁸ In 1405, Adam was residing and working in Rome, and presented a petition to Pope Innocent VII on behalf of the nuns. In the petition, Adam claims that the war in Wales had left the nuns destitute, and in such poverty that they would have to beg for provisions, or leave the monastery, both of which would

⁴² David Moore, 'The Indexing of Welsh Personal Names' in *Centrepiece to The Indexer*, 29:2 (2011), c8. *ap* is used before a consonant, and *ab* before a vowel. In Welsh the genitive is formed by 'the juxtaposition of nouns'.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, c9.

⁴⁴ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 520-521.

⁴⁵ Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', 49-55.

⁴⁶ Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', 51-52.

⁴⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

lead to scandal. Adam asked the pope to allow the monastery to collect money for indulgence when Christians visited the chapel of St Radegund at the monastery. The pope granted the request for five years.⁴⁹ Finally, Adam Usk's will shows the provisions he confers to his family and people in his close social network in Usk. John, the vicar at Usk, is named personally and left three shillings and fourpence. His brother (unnamed) and his sister Joan are left forty shillings each. He mentions twelve names that are Welsh in origin in the will, bequeathing them varying amounts of money.⁵⁰ The above examples of generosity and charity span the timeframe of 1399 to 1430. It is thus evident that Adam used his successes in his career and his financial wealth to benefit the people in his social network throughout his life, even though he was not residing in Usk for the whole period.

Adam's connection to his hometown was also based on a sense of belonging to his wider community, not only the people he knew. His belonging to the town of Usk, in this case, was imagined and emotive. Adam emphasises the role of the priory church of St Mary, which lies in the centre of the town, as a symbol of the community. In 1400, for example, Adam records in his chronicle that he had already left to the church of Usk, which he describes as 'my birthplace', many gifts to ensure his memorialisation there.⁵¹ The list of gifts is extensive, including a 'missal, gradual, tropary, sequentiary, and antiphonal... a full suit of vestments... [and] three copes'.⁵² The copes, a type of vestment, were 'ornately embroidered with [his] badges, namely a naked man digging on a black background'.⁵³ This badge was also drawn onto the first page of Adam's *Polychronicon*.⁵⁴ He states that he donated these gifts as '*memorial meum*' (my memorial) so that he would be remembered in the prayers of those visiting the church. He also claims that he did not do this for praise, only that he should be remembered by his community.⁵⁵ The act of gifting the church with these items in 1400, some thirty years before Adam's death, suggests that he wished to be remembered there during his lifetime. Decorating the copes with his badge ensured the longevity of Adam's presence and visibility in the church. In his will, Adam also left a book, the *Racionale Diuinorum* to the parish church and left the vicar there, John, three shillings and fourpence. He also

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 192-193.

⁵⁰ 'Adam Usk's Will' TNA, PROB-11-231/ Somerset House, Probate Registry, Luffenham register, fol. 13. Transcribed and translated in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421*, pp. 272-275; Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, pp. xxix-xxx; E. Owen, 'The Will of Adam of Usk', 316-317.

⁵¹ Adam Usk, pp. 118-119. '*in mei originis*'

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)' BL Add. MS 10104 fol. 9r; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxix; Adam Usk, pp. 118-119.

⁵⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 118-119.

requested that he should be buried there.⁵⁶ Clearly, the role that the church played in the community of Usk held significance for Adam as an individual. He chose the church in Usk specifically to be remembered, not Merton College in Oxford where he studied for a number of years, or in any of the other regions where he held benefices.⁵⁷ Adam wanted to be remembered in prayer by his community, not only by the individuals with whom he had a personal relationship.

Gifts and charitable acts towards one's local community were often considered a reciprocal act. Just as patronage and financial aid could be found in the community, there was an expectation that it would be returned by those who benefitted from it.⁵⁸ Indeed, when Adam found himself in financial hardship, he looked to his kinsmen in Usk for help. Adam went abroad for a number of years from 1402, and found himself out of favour with Henry IV, a circumstance that is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four of this work. As a result of his fraught relationship with the king, he lost his benefices and thus his income. In 1411, Adam was granted a pardon from the king of England who had spent a number of years denying Adam promotions and obstructing his return to England. Adam had experienced a number of distressing ordeals in Rome and then France, which included being robbed and falling seriously ill. Upon returning to Wales, he claims that he lived amongst the Welsh rebels in order to obtain a pardon before living as a penniless chaplain for a number of years.⁵⁹ After all of the hardship he had suffered, he thought that he could rely on the people of his hometown to support him on his journey back to his former status:

*I returned to my native country, among old friends and kinsmen, men for whom I had secured promotion, or had helped in other ways, or to whom I had lent money, hoping that they in turn might help me; but not only were they ungrateful and reproachful, they actively sought my ruin, so that I would not be able to claim from them anything that was rightfully mine.*⁶⁰

Unfortunately for Adam, the community in his *partes proprias* (own region) did not respond to him in his moment of need. He claims that they not only did not meet his request with reciprocal generosity, but that they tried to undermine him. In fact, Adam was only truly able to rebuild his life to something that resembled his former success when he crossed the border into England.⁶¹ After

⁵⁶'The Will of Adam Usk', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421*, (ed. and trans) Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 272-275.

⁵⁷'*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)' BL Add. MS 10104 fol. 9r.

⁵⁸ Holford, 'Pro patriotis: 'Country', 'Countrymen' and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England', 56.

⁵⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 240-241.

⁶¹ Ibid.

this experience, he does not mention his hometown again in his chronicle. It is possible that the idealised nature of locality had not functioned in the way he had expected it to, and so his imagined connection to the community began to fade. Too much, however, should not be made of this point. Adam still remembered a number of family members and kinsmen in his will. It could be significant, however, that his cousin, Thomas ap Adam ap William de Weloc and his kinsmen, Matthew ap Hoel, whom he had helped to secure benefices prior to 1400, did not receive anything. Local community was expected to be a reciprocal relationship, and unfortunately for Adam, in this case it was not.

Adam Usk's connection to his place of birth, and the social networks that he had developed there, mirror the experiences of many who left their hometown for employment during the later Middle Ages. For Adam, the boundaries of his imagined locality were not confined to the administrative, institutional or geographical boundaries of Usk. His connection, based on childhood experiences and the abodes and benefices of associates, stretched some ten miles from his birthplace. On numerous occasions, Adam Usk used his position to help those within his community, and suggests that he lent money to people in Usk. Equally, he expresses hurt and disappointment when the obligation was not reciprocated. Adam's local community was Welsh. Every name that he relates to his locality is Welsh. One facet of Adam's identity was a man from Usk, and this had an effect on his priorities, motivations, and values.

Welsh identity in Adam Usk's chronicle

The fact that Adam Usk expressed a strong local identity in no way impeded his ability to convey a sense of belonging to Wales as a larger cultural entity. The discussion that follows alludes to Adam's own interpretation of what that identity meant and the influence this had over his associations, decisions, and writing. There are a number of examples of Adam identifying as Welsh throughout his chronicle. In some cases, he explicitly describes himself as Welsh and creates social networks based on the fact that his associates were Welsh, even when he was not living in Wales. These are the most explicit examples of Welsh communal belonging because he acknowledges the imagined aspect of his Welsh identity, the sense of community this creates, and the perils that this could sometimes bring. There are, however, more subtle expressions of Welshness throughout his chronicle. His understanding of the past, and the Welsh origin myth, for example, demonstrates his involvement in Welsh culture, albeit through his understanding of the English chronicle tradition. His attitude and use of language in the multilingual world of late medieval Britain also points towards an

emotional connection to the Welsh language. The combination indicates a significant emic expression of Welsh cultural identity, which exists parallel to his local identity.

Adam describes himself as Welsh on a number of occasions throughout his chronicle. He employs this definition when he directly interacts with a group of people from an external cultural identity, such as English. This is seen for the first time in his account of the incident at Merton Hall, Oxford in 1389, where Adam was studying law. He describes a series of violent clashes that occurred in the city over two years beginning in 1388 and reigniting the following year with an increased brutality.⁶² The fighting took place between two groups, with scholars from southern England allied with scholars from Wales on one side and scholars from the north of England on the other. In the initial outbreak of violence the scholars from northern England were forced out of the city but then returned the following year, laying siege to the lodgings of their enemies and restarting the violence.⁶³ The exact extent of the disorder is unclear, however Wood's *Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis* records a summary of an inquisition that took place after the incident, which suggests that at least two people were killed and many scholars, including those from Wales, were expelled from the university for the part they played in the unrest.⁶⁴

Adam Usk does not shy away from his role in the outbreak of violence, despite its severity, but implicates himself as the 'chief instigator and leader of the Welshmen'.⁶⁵ He puts himself in the centre of the narrative, claiming that it was '*nostratum hospicia*' (our lodgings) that were surrounded by the northern aggressors, and that '*Pacificari non potuimus quousque nostrum quamplures de insurrexione proditoria indictati fuimus*' ('We were not pacified until several of our number had been indicted for treasonable insurrection').⁶⁶ Adam's use of the first person plural places him directly within the group that was involved in this incident. This is particularly interesting since the opposing groups were determined not by a national identity, but by more regional identities, such as people from the north or south of England. The Welsh scholars, however, were presented as a single homogeneous group. Whilst this occurs because their identities were defined in contrast to the English identity, the identification of 'Welsh' was not only in the minds of the English but also a

⁶² Adam Usk, pp. 14-17. Also see: A. Wood, *Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis*, (Oxford, 1679), pp. 194-6; Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, p. 15, fn. 3; Knighton, pp. 528-529.

⁶³ Adam Usk, pp. 14-17.

⁶⁴ A. Wood, *Historia*, pp. 194-196. Upon expulsion, according to the Wood's account, the Welsh scholars were urinated upon and forced to kiss: '*quas imprimis lotio mingentes perfudissent, deinceps deosculari coegerunt*', p. 195.

⁶⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 14-17: *principalis Wallencium dux et fautor*

⁶⁶ Ibid.

belief that Adam shared himself. In this instance, Adam's Welsh identity was more relevant than his local identity, undoubtedly because it was in contrast against the wider English identity.

It was not only the English identity, however, that functioned as an opposition to that of Welsh. Adam was confronted with a range of different regional and national identities throughout his life, an experience that was amplified in the years he spent outside Britain between 1402 and 1411. He first left Britain in an attempt to further his career, hoping to escape the prejudice towards Welshmen that was growing as a result of the rebellion in Wales.⁶⁷ After four years in Rome with little success, he parted ways with the Roman Curia and went to France, seeking the support of the anti-pope Benedict XIII, with whom Owain Glyndŵr had a political allegiance. Associating with Owain's allies resulted in Adam being excommunicated by the Roman pope and stripped of his benefices in 1407.⁶⁸ In 1406 when travelling through Flanders, France, Normandy and Brittany, Adam complains of poverty, only earning a wage by providing council to bishops, abbots, and noblemen.⁶⁹

During this time Adam records that he was robbed, 'stripped clean by Welshmen' whom he had trusted. He claims that this happened to him twice, the second time occurring while he slept, which gave the thieves the opportunity to take everything including his breeches.⁷⁰ Since he is not forthcoming about the identities of the other Welshmen, it is impossible to know how he came to know them and whether he had reason to trust them or not. It is unlikely that Adam knew these men from interactions in Wales, because elsewhere in the chronicle he refers to his family and associates as '*consobrino meo*', '*coganato meo*', and '*antiquos amicos et cognattos*'.⁷¹ On this occasion he does not use this terminology and instead describes his companions as '*Wallicos*' rather than kinsmen or friends, and says that he put his trust in these men entirely.⁷² Whilst it is unknown which part of Wales these man came from, unless they were the locality of Usk with its culture developed specifically within the Earl of March's lordship, it is likely that their lived experience of

⁶⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction' p. xxiii; see 'Close Rolls, Henry IV: February 1402', in *Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry IV: Volume 1, 1399-1402*, (ed.) A. E. Stamp (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1927), pp. 498-510. 'Memorandum of a mainprise under a pain of 40l., made in chancery 17 February this year by William Echyngham and Thomas Lytewyn of Kent for Adam Huske clerk, that he shall make no attempt in the court of Rome which may tend to prejudice of the king or the laws and customs of the realm, or of the statute of provisors'. Given-Wilson sees this assurance to the chancery as evidence for Adam Usk's intention.

⁶⁸ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction, pp. xxx-xxxi.

⁶⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 212-215.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 212-215.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 84-85, and 240-241.

⁷² Ibid., *Et bis interim, per Wallicos in quibus fiduciam habui, totaliter, altem altera uice, dormiens usque ad braccas inclusive, spoliatus fui.*

Welshness would have been significantly different to Adam Usk's. As a stranger in a foreign land, however, Adam felt a sense of community with other Welshmen abroad and perhaps it was for this reason, a shared sense of cultural identity, that he misguidedly placed his trust in them. At this point, when confronted with a complex array of identities, it was the Welsh identity, rather than the local identity, that gave these men a sense of comradeship.

As with local identity, belonging to a larger cultural identity was also based on social networks and a sense of belonging. Local belonging was founded on a sense of place, community, and obligation. 'Place' in the larger cultural identity of 'Welsh' was partially constructed through a shared belief in history, most commonly referred to as an 'origin myth'.⁷³ The myth refers to a legendary past, which included numerous fabled characters, who contributed to the creation of Wales. In Adam's chronicle, his understanding of Welsh cultural aspects, such as the origin myth, is stated less explicitly than in his sense of locality. Even so, there is some evidence of his interaction with it. As discussed in the first chapter of this work, Adam's understanding of history, as presented in his chronicle, was predominantly based on his involvement in the *Polychronicon* tradition, which presented history from an English perspective, thus it is possible to establish Adam's knowledge of Welsh history based on Ranulf Higden's work.

Ranulf's description of the Welsh alludes to their origin myth, suggesting that they had 'Trojan blood', a commonly believed trope about the roots of the Welsh people.⁷⁴ He draws on the commonly held beliefs about the origin of the Welsh name, in his chapter '*De Cambria, Sive Wallia*'.⁷⁵ '*Cambria*', the Latinised form of the Welsh *Cymru* is juxtaposed against '*Wallia*' in this title. *Wallia* is the most common Latin term used for Wales during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and derives from the Old English for [land of the] foreigners.⁷⁶ *Cymru*, however, stems from Celtic word *Cymry*, meaning compatriots.⁷⁷ In his rhyming poem about the Welsh, Ranulf writes about a different etymology of the two names, stating that the land obtained its name from the foundation myths about how Wales came into existence. He claims that the term '*Cambria*' derives from

⁷³ Marjorie Dexeer, 'Fluid Prejudice. Scottish Origin Myths in the later Middle Ages' in *People, Politics and Community*, (ed.) J. Rosenthal and C. Richmond (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1987), pp. 60-76.

⁷⁴ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 408.

⁷⁵ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fols. 24v-26r; Ranulf Higden *Polychronicon* vol. I, p. 394. The title translates as '*Of Cambria or Wallia*'.

⁷⁶ Old English *Wahl* (singular), *Walas* (plural) John Everett-Heath, "Wales" in *The Concise Dictionary of World Place-Names*: <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780191866326.001.0001/acref-9780191866326-e-7917>, accessed 23/07/2019.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Camber, who was Brutus's son. Brutus of Troy, as legend had it, was the founder of Britain. The term *Wallia*, however, was given later, developing from the name Gwaila, who was a daughter of King Ebraucus, the founder of York.⁷⁸ Both of these foundation myths are found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*.⁷⁹ In Geoffrey's description, Wales was contemporaneously called '*Gualia*', but had previously been known as '*Kambria*', reflecting the fact that it was called '*Kambro*' in the native language of the people living there.⁸⁰ The daughter of Ebraucus, Gwaila, also appears in *Historia Regum Britanniae*. She was one of thirty children, and was described by Geoffrey of Monmouth as the most beautiful woman in Britain, as well as Gaul.⁸¹

Both the Latin terms *Cambria* and *Wallia* were used in chronicles contemporary to Adam's own work. This demonstrates the way in which terminology, positive or negative, was repeated as a result of the tradition the chronicles were following. The assumed connection between the words and the place in Ranulf Higden's work overlooked the true etymology of the words. *Cambria* was a term derived internally in Wales, which the Welsh used to define themselves. *Wallia*, however, was externally derived, and had been used to describe the fact that the Welsh were effectively foreigners in their own land.⁸² The original etymology of the words was seemingly unknown by Adam Usk and his contemporaries, and as a result *Wallia* and *Cambria* were used interchangeably in the later medieval period. Both Thomas Walsingham and the author of *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* use both the terms *Wallia* and *Cambria*, without any obvious innate connotations.⁸³ Adam Usk uses the term *Wallia* exclusively, seemingly without any knowledge of its original significance. Another term that is seen in chronicles contemporary to Adam's time, is *Brittonis* or *Britannus*. It is seen in the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, in which the chronicler describes how the Welsh rebelled, 'in the manner of the Britons'.⁸⁴ The term is also used by the chronicler at Kirkstall Abbey, who aligns the terms *Brittonis* and *Wallia* side by side when talking about Welsh rebels.⁸⁵ The reference to the Britons is close to Ranulf Higden's use of Geoffrey of Monmouth's foundation myth. The Britons had

⁷⁸ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fols. 24v-26r; Ranulf Higden *Polychronicon* vol. I, pp. 394-399.

⁷⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, (ed.) M. D. Reeve and (trans.) N. Wright (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 30-37.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37, '*omnia pulcherrima quae tunc in Britannia siue in Gallia fuerant*'.

⁸² Everett-Heath, John. "Wales." In *The Concise Dictionary of World Place-Names*.

⁸³ Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 824-825; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, p. 59; Alicia Marchant argues that Thomas Walsingham's use of the term is because he was emphasising the ancient foundations of the country: Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 165-166.

⁸⁴ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 175. My own translation, '*uidam maleficus et rebellis cum suis complicitibus Wallencium de genere Brtonum*'.

⁸⁵ *Cronica de Kirkstall*, BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII fol. 134v. My own transcription and translation.

lived in Britain before being driven out by the Saxons. It demonstrates how the communal past, and the foundation myth of Wales, created a communal identity for the contemporary time.

Aspects of the Welsh foundation myth, as presented by Ranulf Higden, can be seen in Adam Usk's chronicle. The most notable occasion of this is as part of genealogy pertaining to Roger Mortimer. On 20 July 1389, Roger Mortimer, the earl of March and Adam Usk's lord and patron, was killed in battle in Ireland, at Kellistown, near Carlow.⁸⁶ Adam, whose affection for his lord is evident throughout the chronicle, laments the death of the earl, noting not only Roger's military prowess but his popularity. He states that the earl's death caused 'great distress of the English kingdom, though doubtless to the unbounded joy and delight of his rivals and enemies'.⁸⁷ The shock waves of the earl's death were clearly felt by others in the Welsh community, with Iolo Goch, a renowned poet who was a contemporary of Adam's, composing a poem in tribute to the deceased earl.⁸⁸ In the poem, Roger Mortimer is described as the 'heart of the angels of England' as well as the 'bud of Usk'. The first stanza finishes with the line 'it is time for you to come to Wales where you deserve praise'.⁸⁹ Through his role as the Earl of March, Roger Mortimer was presented as both an Englishman, a Marcher lord, and someone who was welcome in the Wales, with the literature suggesting he was accepted and mourned by both communities. Adam's own tribute to Roger Mortimer, was to record a detailed genealogy of his lineage, following a number of routes through the earl's family's past in order to prove his eminence.

The genealogy is an example of an English-trained Welsh clerk adopting a 'foreign' framework and model, as well as the complexity of identity discourse in the Welsh marches.⁹⁰ Adam's expression of Welsh history is heavily influenced by his knowledge of sources created outside Wales. It should be noted that Adam Usk did not write Roger Mortimer's genealogy, instead it was created because the Mortimer family had tried to strengthen their claim to the English throne during the latter half of the fourteenth century. As a result of this, the Mortimer family took a vested interest in their heritage, patronising both a chronicle and a genealogy.⁹¹ The Mortimer genealogy survives as part of the

⁸⁶ R. R. Davies, 'Mortimer, Roger, fourth earl of March and sixth earl of Ulster (1374–1398), magnate and soldier', *ODNB* 2008, January 03, accessed 18 Jul. 2018.

⁸⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 41–42.

⁸⁸ Iolo Goch, 'Moliant Syr Rosier Mortimer' in *Iolo Goch: Poems* (ed. and trans.) Dafydd Johnston (Llandysul: Gomer, 1993), pp. 82–89; Davies, Mortimer, Roger, fourth earl of March and sixth earl of Ulster (1374–1398).

⁸⁹ Iolo Goch, 'Moliant Syr Rosier Mortimer', p. 82.

⁹⁰ Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities', pp. 174–175.

⁹¹ M. E. Giffin, 'Cadwalader, Arthur, and Brutus in the Wigmore Manuscript', *Speculum*, 16 (1941), 111.

Chicago MS 224.⁹² Roger Mortimer's lineage, as provided in Adam's chronicle, is very similar to the Chicago MS, but displays a number of inaccuracies, including skipping several generations and recording that Ralph, husband of Gladws Duy, was the son of Hugh Mortimer, rather than the brother.⁹³ Both genealogies follow the same chronology of the Wigmore Chronicle, the history, or series of histories documenting the Mortimer family beginning with the family's arrival in England with William the Conqueror in 1066.⁹⁴ The similarities between the chronicle, the Mortimer's genealogy, and the genealogy in Adam Usk's chronicle are hardly surprising since Adam commented that he found some of the information for the genealogy in the chronicles of Wigmore Abbey.⁹⁵

The errors in Adam's genealogy do not mean that it is diminished in value as an indicator of identity. Genealogies were not attempting to genuinely trace the history of a person or a family but were rather a political statement about the power and rights of a family. They were based partly on historical research, partly on legend and partly on myths and fiction.⁹⁶ The genealogy found in Adam's chronicle traces several lines of the Mortimer family's history. The first succession that is presented is that of the Welsh lineage. Adam follows the Chicago genealogy closely, presenting the bloodline as connected to numerous prominent Welsh characters through the lineage of Gladws Duy, daughter of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, the thirteenth century Welsh prince of Gwynedd who also went by the name Llywelyn Fawr (Llywelyn the Great).⁹⁷ These prominent figures, both historical and legendary, include the likes of Cadwallader and Brutus going back to Adam the first man, and continue a trend within the Mortimer history of connecting the family to mythological figures such as Arthur, in order to obtain power and prominence in Wales.⁹⁸ Before going on to describe how Philippa, daughter of Lionel duke of Clarence, and mother to Roger Mortimer earl of March, was

⁹² P. M. Remfry, 'Introduction' to *The Wigmore Chronicle 1066-1377: a translation of John Rylands Manuscript 215, fols. 1-8 and Trinity College, Dublin, MS. 488, fols. 295-9*, (ed.) P. M. Remfry (United Kingdom: Castle Studies and Publishing, 2013), p. iii.; 'Wigmore Abbey chronicle and Brut chronicle', Codex Ms 224, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, fols. 51v-52r.

⁹³ 'Wigmore Abbey chronicle and Brut chronicle', Codex MS 224, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, fols. 51v-52r. Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 40-41 fn. 4; Adam Usk, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁴ *The Wigmore Chronicle 1066-1377: a translation of John Rylands Manuscript 215, fols. 1-8 and Trinity College, Dublin, MS. 488, fols. 295-9*, (ed.) P. M. Remfry (United Kingdom: Castle Studies and Publishing, 2013).

⁹⁵ This information was missed in the original translation by Thompson, but included in Given-Wilson's version of the chronicle. P. M Remfry, 'Introduction', pp. ix-x; Adam Usk, pp. 45-47.

⁹⁶ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Gildas, Maelgwn and the Bards' in *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical Essays Presented to Glanville Williams*, (eds.) R. R. Davies, R. A. Griffiths, I. G. Jones and K. O. Morgan (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), p. 32. Also see P. C. Bartrum, 'Introduction', in *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, (ed.) P. C. Bartrum (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966), p. vii.

⁹⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 41-49. Also see A. Carr, 'Llywelyn ab Iorwerth [called Llywelyn Fawr] (c. 1173–1240), prince of Gwynedd', *ODNB*, accessed 18 Jul 2018.

⁹⁸ Giffin, 'Cadwalader, Arthur, and Brutus in the Wigmore Manuscript', p. 113.

connected to the kings of England, Adam exclaims 'Besides this glorious descent from the noble kings of Britain, Italy, Troy, England, France, and Spain, what more can be said?'.⁹⁹ Adam Usk is clearly keen to emphasise the history of the Mortimer family in order to pay respect to the recently deceased earl, rather than emphasising the heritage of the Mortimers as a means of demonstrating political strength, as was the original intention of the genealogy. By following the Chicago genealogy so closely, and not seeming to make any changes that disrupt the initial intention of the genealogy, Adam Usk shows his admiration for the Welsh heritage of the Mortimer family, and places value in the shared Welsh history as something that marked status and prestige. The fact that Adam celebrates the Welsh history in the genealogy demonstrates the embedded cultural sharing in the March.

Indeed, from Ranulf Higden's description of the origins of the Welsh, it is possible to ascertain that Adam too would have connected the people and places in the genealogy to his own identity as a Welshman. The genealogy includes a number of figures from Ranulf Higden's description. For example, Roger is described as descending from 'Brute the first king of the Britons'.¹⁰⁰ This is not through the line of Brutus' son Camber, who traditionally founded Wales, but through Locrinus, who was traditionally believed to have founded England. In the genealogy, Roger is also described as being descended from 'Ebraucus who built the city of York'.¹⁰¹ According to Ranulf Higden, the Latin name for Wales, *Wallia* was derived from Ebraucus' daughter, Gwaila. The reality of identity is never as straightforward as is presented in the sources, or is often expressed by an individual. In this case, Roger is presented as simultaneously English and Welsh. His own identity was based on being descended from the great founders of *Britain*, before the English and Welsh identities had been established. Even so, there are enough legendary Welsh figures in the genealogy, and a sufficient connection between the founders of Britain and the founding of Wales, for Adam to associate this with his own identity. For Adam, Roger Mortimer's connections to the Welsh foundation myth only added to his illustriousness and station. This commonly known, and widely believed history of the Welsh people, contributed towards the horizontal ties that created the Welsh communal identity. It is notable that Adam's access to Welsh history, and therefore his understanding of what it meant to be Welsh, was accessed entirely through sources produced in England that followed an English tradition. The only way for Adam to express his Welshness was within this framework.

⁹⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 41-49.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

The fact that Adam demonstrated an identity associated with a locality situated in the Welsh March did not preclude him from asserting a Welsh identity. Indeed, in the above examples, he clearly self-identifies as Welsh, stating this explicitly whilst describing events at Merton College. His affiliation with other Welshmen whilst abroad highlights that he felt like he was part of their community particularly when confronted with a variety of opposing or contrasting identities. In this case, the trust that he placed on these people as a result of their shared identity was misguided, and they robbed him. Adam demonstrates his involvement in Welsh culture and shared belief systems, presenting knowledge of Welsh legendary characters in Roger Mortimer's genealogy with no indication that this was contradictory. Just as he expressed an identity as someone from Usk, he was equally a Welshman who felt a sense of belonging to the cultural community of Wales. His understanding of what this meant in a historical sense was taken from the English narrative, which he repurposed in his chronicle.

Language as an Identity Marker

Another aspect that may have made Adam feel a sense of belonging to a wider Welsh community was a shared spoken language, namely Welsh. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both Wales and England were multilingual societies, and Adam Usk's interaction with language reflected this. Before looking more closely at Adam's knowledge and use of the Welsh language, it should first be established how the multiple languages in later medieval Britain were utilised and in what contexts. Like mythological beliefs in a shared past, language in the Middle Ages was also portrayed as a marker of ethnic identity.¹⁰² Despite this, the relationship between language and national identity in medieval Britain is complex. Research into uses of English, Latin, and French have addressed how each performed a specific function within society. Simply put, the British vernaculars, including Welsh and English, were perceived to be the language of the people. Latin was the language of the church and the clergy, and French the administrative language associated with the legal system.¹⁰³ As such, the connection between identity and language is problematic. On the one hand, diverse uses of vernacular languages before and during Adam's lifetime appear to reflect a growing sense of

¹⁰² Davies, 'Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology', pp. 1-24; Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 9, 17; Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 43-70.

¹⁰³ V. H. Galbraith, 'Nationality and Language in Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (1941), pp. 118-120; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 8.

patriotism.¹⁰⁴ On the other, the specific social and political role of each language in the multilingual society has led some scholars to completely dismiss the connection between language and national identity. Medieval society, after all, cannot be compared to the emergence of nation states such as Germany and Italy during the nineteenth century, which so stringently sought unity through the imposition of a common language.¹⁰⁵ As with most polarised arguments, the reality falls somewhere in the middle; language may not have created national unity in the Middle Ages, but it can, in some cases, be seen as marker of communal identity, as will be discussed below.¹⁰⁶

Running parallel to the debate about national identity and language, is a discussion about identity and language in medieval chronicles. This debate is no less divisive. It has already been established that a belief in a communal past promoted a sense of communal belonging. Medieval chronicles and histories have been cited as promoting specific histories and thus ‘developing a consciousness of the nation’s past’.¹⁰⁷ Chronicles in Britain were written in a number of languages, including English, Welsh, Latin, and French.¹⁰⁸ A large number of chronicles are written in a combination of these languages, sometimes as a result of the author reporting sources in their original language, rather than translating them. Chronicles written largely in the vernacular have been cited as additionally promoting a form of national unity by the way they excluded those who did not speak the language from accessing their history, although this has been shown to be a too simplistic interpretation particularly in the case of Britain.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the waxing and waning of linguistic trends was

¹⁰⁴ Galbraith, ‘Nationality and Language’, p. 125; Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology’, p. 12; Daisy Delogu, ‘“Aucuns de ma langue”: Language and Political identity in Late-Medieval France’, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 39: 2 (2013), 97-112; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 11, 14-17; K. Brownless, T. Hunt, I. Johnson, N. Palmer and J. Simpson, ‘Vernacular Literary Consciousness c. 1100- c. 1500: French German and English Evidence’ in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism vol. II*, (eds.) A. Minnis and I. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 423.

¹⁰⁵ Serge Lusignan, ‘French Language in Contact with English: Social Context and Linguistic Change (mid-13th- 14th centuries)’ in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100- c. 1500*, (eds.) Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Carolyn Collette, Mayanne Kowaleski, Linne Mooney, Ad Putter, David Trotter (York: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), p. 29; Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Davies, ‘Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology’, pp. 2, 10-11; Brynley F. Roberts, ‘Writing in Wales’ in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, (ed.) David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 182-207.

¹⁰⁷ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 138. For early examples of English language chronicles: Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, (ed.) W. A. Wright (London: Rolls Series, 1887) 2 vols.; Layamon, *Brut: edited from British Museum MS. Cotton Caligula A. IX and British Museum MS. Cotton Otho C. XIII*, (eds.) G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1963-1978). For a French language Chronicle written in England: Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: 1272- 1363*, (ed. and trans.) Andy King (Durham: Surtees Society, 2019). For a Welsh language continuation of *Historia Regum Britanniae: Brut y tywysogion or The Chronicle of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest version*, (ed. and trans.) Thomas Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955).

¹⁰⁹ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 21-22; Lauryn S. Mayer, *Worlds Made Flesh: reading medieval manuscript culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 35-36.

influenced by a number of issues. This included the preference of patrons, including royalty, and the background and motivations of the individual writing the history.¹¹⁰ Latin, however, remained a consistently popular language of choice for history writing throughout the Middle Ages.¹¹¹

In a social and political context, language is also associated with power and a marker of status. Across Britain this would have had different meanings depending on the community of the individual, the local political situation and the regional dialect or spoken vernacular. Within the March, therefore, the hierarchy of languages was inherited from the English system, but with the additional spoken and written vernacular of Welsh. In this scenario, Welsh was the least respected language, falling below Latin, French, and English.¹¹² As will be discussed below, it is clear that Adam was familiar with all these languages, and as was typical in the multilingual world of the Welsh March, was able to employ different languages for different purposes.

Textual evidence in Adam's chronicle demonstrates his attitude towards the languages used in his society. Like those of many of his contemporaries, the chronicle is largely written in Latin. There are a number of factors that may have influenced his choice, not least the tradition he was partaking in and the sources that he used. Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, for example, was written in Latin, and to create consistency between the works, Adam's continuation was also written in Latin. There are other chronicle sources mentioned in his work, such as the 'Passion of the French according to the Flemings', an account of the 1302 battle of Courtrai which Adam accessed at Eekhout monastery in Bruges in 1406.¹¹³ As discussed above, he also used the Wigmore chronicle to construct the genealogy of the earls of March.¹¹⁴ Both of these chronicle sources were written in Latin. There is no evidence to suggest that Adam had access to chronicles in any other language, although this possibility should not be ruled out. The influences over his own understanding of chronicle traditions, however, promoted Latin as the main language of history writing and he followed this example.

In addition to Latin, Adam Usk demonstrates his familiarity with French in the chronicle. As a canon lawyer, Adam worked in Latin. Throughout his life, however, he was also consulted on points of civil

¹¹⁰ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, p. xii. Gransden notes that a shift in the way that history was written coincided with the shift in the language used. Before the fourteenth century the histories were largely written by religious institutes, which naturally used Latin. During the fourteenth century secular clerks began writing histories using Anglo-Norman, and by the fifteenth century lay-men began writing histories in English.

¹¹¹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 137-143.

¹¹² Helen Fulton, 'Negotiating Welshness: Multilingualism in Wales Before and After 1066' in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, 800-1250*, Elizabeth M. Tyler (ed.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 145-170.

¹¹³ Adam Usk, pp. 218-24; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lviii.

¹¹⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 40-46.

law, and as a result worked in French.¹¹⁵ Adam's approach to the Latin and French languages in the chronicle demonstrates a preference for Latin as the most scholarly language. This is evidenced in his account of Henry IV's coronation in 1399. In the account, Adam describes how he provided legal support to Sir Thomas Dymoke against Sir Baldwin Freville.¹¹⁶ The dispute was over who would act as the king's champion, a hereditary role tied perhaps erroneously to Philip Marmion who died in 1291. The king's champion was obliged to provide a mounted knight who would fight anyone who expressed doubt at the king's right to the throne. Both Sir Thomas Dymoke and Sir Baldwin Freville believed they had this right at Henry IV's coronation. As descendants of Marmion, the Freville's and the Dymoke's claimed that the role was tied to the tenures of Scrivelsby and Tamworth respectively. The Dymokes won the case and the family performed the service at the coronations of Henry IV, V and VI.¹¹⁷ Adam wrote a petition supporting Thomas, which he translated from French into Latin and had copied into his chronicle. At the end of the petition Adam writes: 'This translation from French into Latin does not do justice to the style of the original, therefore be tolerant reader'.¹¹⁸ Clearly Adam felt that the way he had written the petition in French was more elegant than his Latin translation. Despite this, he still made a choice to include the Latin translation since the petition was lending credence to his account of Henry IV's coronation. The use of Latin not only elevates the legitimacy of the account, but demonstrates Adam's authority as a historian.

There is only one occasion in Adam's chronicle where he includes a document in a language other than Latin. In 1401, when the Glyndŵr rebellion appeared to be a genuine threat to English dominance in Wales, he includes a copy of a letter supposedly written by Owain Glyndŵr to Robert III of Scotland. The letter is copied into the chronicle in French and asks the Scottish king to assist the Welsh with their pursuit of independence.¹¹⁹ On this occasion, Adam maintains the original language of the document. Why he decides to preserve the language is unclear. Perhaps because he did not produce the original document, he did not feel obliged to translate it. It was not, after all, his own work. Perhaps he simply handed a copy of the letters to his scribe to add directly into the chronicle. Perhaps he did not have time. Without the commentary that he provides for the Dymoke petition, it

¹¹⁵ R. Hemholz, 'Adam Usk (c. 1360-1430)' *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 19 (2017), 53.

¹¹⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 72-73.

¹¹⁷ A. J. Musson, "Dymoke [Dymmok] family (per. c. 1340–c. 1580), king's champions." *ODNB*, accessed 20 Aug 2020.

¹¹⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 74-75. *Translatio ex gallico in latinum hic non patitur modum endictandi, ideo lector parcere dignetur*. The French version of this petition survives in 'Miscellaneous papers (originals and transcripts) concerning England, reign of King William I (1066–1087) to that of King Charles I (1625–1649), arranged alphabetically by subject', BL Cotton Vespasian C. xiv, fol. 137v. See Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, p. 74, fn 1.

¹¹⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 148-151. Discussed in more detail: below chapter Five.

is impossible to know. Adam is unlike his contemporaries in this respect, who regularly retain the original language of a document, or report a conversation in its original vernacular (both English and French), rather than translating them into Latin.¹²⁰

There is some evidence that the unifying nature of the English vernacular meant that it could be exploited for political means. Henry V, who, whilst at war with France, wrote dispatches from France to London in English, in order to deliberately appeal to 'nationalistic' sentiments amongst the people at home in England, is a frequently cited example of this phenomenon.¹²¹ In relation to Henry's victory in France, Adam records information of the pageant held in London on 23 November 1415 to celebrate Henry's return from the battle at Agincourt. Adam describes how the victorious king was welcomed into London with great ceremony, being played into the city by choirs.¹²² It is possible that one of the songs played on this occasion was the 'Agincourt Carol', a piece of polyphony with lyrics written in English that celebrated the English successes at the battle.¹²³ If, as suggested, this piece of music was indeed played, it was certainly written with an audience in mind; English vernacular enabled universal comprehension, regardless of one's status or level of education. The lyrics of the carol call the English to give thanks to God for their victory, before describing the strength and victory of the king and his nobles at Harfleur in English.¹²⁴ A rousing carol, it was designed to unite the English in support for their king, and allowed them all to equally engage with the victory. It was not just a victory for the English king, but for all the English people. This demonstrates how the

¹²⁰ ¹²⁰ 'The Westminster Chronicle', CCCC, MS 197A, pp. 130-210; The Westminster Chronicle, pp. 166-177 (1386 both the king's council and parliament request that king Richard reduce the size of his household), pp. 236-307 (proceedings of the 1388 parliament), pp. 356-369 (the Cambridge parliament, 1388), pp. 416-431 (proceedings of the Westminster Parliament held in January 1390); Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 452-455 (1381, the King's letter to the abbot of St. Albans regarding royal charters), pp. 466-469 (The king's letter of protection addressed to the abbot of St. Albans); Knighton, pp. 31-37 (1340, Edward III grants a truce), pp. 78-79 (a letter from the captain of Calais to King Philippe of France), pp. 114-115 (The duke of Brunswick writes a letter challenging the duke of Lancaster to a duel), pp. 150-151 (a two-line verse mocking favour conferred upon the French by the Pope, and the advantage this gave them), pp. 164-165 (1358, a self-deprecating verse about the success of Robert Knollys in France), pp. 330-333 (1383, Bishop Despenser's ordinances for the crusade), pp. 362-369 (1386, The arraignment of Michael de la Pole, made at that year's parliament), pp. 372-387 (1386, an ordinance of parliament), pp. 408-415 (1387, a letter sent by the duke of Gloucester to the citizens of London), pp. 442-451 (1388, a letter from the commons to the king relating to the 'wicked oppressions made by some of the king's advisers') pp. 452-497 (1388, the proceedings of parliament), pp. 508-527 (1388, proceedings of the Cambridge parliament).

¹²¹ Galbraith, 'Nationality and Language in Medieval England', p. 125.

¹²² Adam Usk, pp. 260-261.

¹²³ 'Trinity Carol Roll', Trinity MS O.3.58, part 7r; 'Selden Carol Book', Bodleian Library, MS. Arch. Selden B. 26 fols. 17v-18r; H. Deeming, 'The Sources and Origin of the 'Agincourt Carol'' *Early Music*, 3 (2007), 30.

¹²⁴ 'Selden Carol Book', Bodleian Library, MS. Arch. Selden B. 26 fol. 17v. For an audio version of the song: Christopher Page and Andrew Lawrence-King, *The service of Venus and Mars: music for the Knights of the Garter, 1340-1440*, (London: Hyperion, 1986), track 16.

vernacular could be used for inclusivity; messages and themes that were related to the popular events or themes were transmitted through the most commonly spoken language.

Of course, Adam had to negotiate the linguistic hierarchies and practices that existed in the Welsh marches.¹²⁵ Language as form of cultural capital had the power to enable and promote relationships within communities, as well as exclude and disempower those that did not understand it. Latin, French, and English, for example, were used in a similar way in Wales as they were in England. Even before Wales was officially annexed to the English Crown in the 1280s, Latin and French were official and administrative languages used for political or diplomatic reasons. This is evident in correspondence written by Welsh leaders and groups, to officials in England. For example, in around 1220, Llywelyn, a Welsh prince, wrote to Hubert De Burgh, the justiciar of England. The correspondence, written in Latin, details how the men of Worcester were repeatedly attacking his men, and he asks Hubert to order the sheriff of Worcester to deal with the matter.¹²⁶ In May 1220, Llywelyn corresponds with Pandulf Verraccio, the Bishop of Norwich and a papal legate, complaining about the rights to land of which he had previously had custody.¹²⁷ This letter is also written in Latin. In addition to the letters written by Llywelyn, there are letters written by other members of Welsh society to the English king. This includes letters from the men of Ceri to King Henry III, written in 1259. The men of Ceri first request that the king's laws be used in the marches, and secondly inform the king how much the lands of Ceri were worth yearly. Again, both letters were written in Latin.¹²⁸ As well as the Latin letters, official letters were also written in French. In the mid-1280s Rhys ap Maelgwn and Cynan ap Maredudd wrote to the treasurer of the king. They were being held at a castle in Wales, and the sheriff would not authorise the money to buy them cloaks without the permission of the treasurer.¹²⁹

Adam's use of French and Latin did not, therefore, have any specific implications for his Welsh identity. A more conspicuous language marker is the Welsh vernacular. There is, however, no evidence that Adam was familiar with the Welsh literary tradition, undoubtedly a symptom of his English education. There is evidence that suggests that Adam's interaction with the spoken Welsh language was linked to both his Welsh identity, and his local identity. In addition to Adam's use of

¹²⁵ Fulton, 'Negotiating Welshness: Multilingualism in Wales Before and After 1066', p. 159.

¹²⁶ *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales*, (ed.) J. Goronwy Edwards (Cardiff: University Press Board, 1935), p. 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Nicholas Vincent, "Pandulf [Pandulph, Pandulph Verraccio] (d. 1226), bishop of Norwich and papal legate." *ODNB*, accessed 6 Aug 2019.

¹²⁸ *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales*, pp. 20-21.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Welsh forms of personal names, the only other example of Welsh in his chronicle is the Welsh place names for Anglesey, *Mon* in 1401, and for Barmouth, *Abermo* in 1408.¹³⁰ Whilst he neither writes in Welsh in the chronicle, nor records any conversations that he had in Welsh, he does mention his relief when in 1401 the 'people of Cardigan' abandoned the cause of the Welsh rebellion with few repercussions. One such leniency, according to Adam, was that the people were allowed to continue speaking Welsh, even though it had previously been decreed by the English that the language should be abolished.¹³¹ This is clearly a great relief for Adam, as he finishes this section with 'for God the omnipotent, the king of kings and infallible judge of all things, had revoked this decree in response to the prayers and complaints of the afflicted'.¹³² In addition to the words themselves, the hand that this final phrase was written in has been identified by Given-Wilson as the hand most likely to belong to Adam himself, since it is the hand that also annotates both the *Polychronicon* and parts of his own chronicle. If it is indeed Adam's own hand, it would suggest that he felt an emotional connection to the Welsh language, and therefore is likely to have used it himself.¹³³ The connection to the Welsh language in this example links Adam to the wider Welsh community in Wales. His emotional connection to the language places him within the imagined community in Wales.

The Welsh language also connected Adam to his local community in Usk. An analysis of the above-mentioned epitaph provides evidence for this. The epitaph to Adam Usk that still hangs to this day in the parish church of Usk, is made of brass, measures 1ft 7in long and is written in Middle Welsh.¹³⁴ It is embossed in black letters that stand at half an inch tall and is engraved in a formal book-hand.¹³⁵ The epitaph proved enigmatic for many years. The illegibility of the engraving, combined with the impurities in the Welsh, meant that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, there was debate about whom the epitaph was for and what it meant.¹³⁶ It was not until a report released in 1885 that Canon D. R. Thomas officially identified the brass plate as being a memorial to Adam Usk.¹³⁷ The epitaph is not only written in Middle Welsh, it is also a poem composed in the traditional Welsh *cywydd* metre, the style of poetry frequently used by Dafydd ap Gwilym during the mid-

¹³⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 128-129, 238-239.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147. This decree no longer exists, but it does ring true with other anti-Welsh legislation passed by the 1401 parliament; Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, p. 147, fn. 4 and Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change*, pp. 458-459.

¹³² Adam Usk, p. 147.

¹³³ Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure', 529-531.

¹³⁴ The epitaph is discussed in my MA dissertation 'A New Perspective on Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle', pp. 5-7 as a basis for exploring Adam Usk's life and career.

¹³⁵ J. Morris-Jones, 'Adam Usk's Epitaph' *Y Cymmrodor* 31 (1921), 124.

¹³⁶ Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae de Uske*, pp. xxi-xxii. Both Morris-Jones and Thompson attribute the spelling errors to the scribe rather than to the author.

¹³⁷ Morris-Jones, 'Adam Usk's Epitaph' p. 117.

fourteenth century, which remained popular until the end of the sixteenth century. Each line of the two lines of the epitaph contained four lines of the poem.¹³⁸ In the poem, Adam's career as a lawyer and a man of learning are promoted. He is wise, educated and worthy; an advocate in London, and a light 'in the world of letters'.¹³⁹



Adam Usk's epitaph, taken at St. Mary's Parish Church, Usk on 30 December, 2017.

Using an epitaph to demonstrate Adam's involvement in a Welsh-speaking community is problematic. It is unclear whether Adam wrote the epitaph about himself or whether it was composed by a neighbour, relative, or associate.¹⁴⁰ Morris-Jones, who first transcribed and translated the epitaph, believed that Adam Usk was unlikely to have written the epitaph himself, but was likely to have written it down to pass on to the engraver.¹⁴¹ As demonstrated above, selecting the vernacular language was often a mark of inclusivity rather than exclusivity. The fact that the epitaph was placed in the church is a sign that it was intended for the community who frequented it, and the most accessible language for this community was Welsh. Thus, in this instance the Welsh language was more closely associated with Adam's local community, rather than the wider Welsh identity. There is no evidence in Adam's case that uses of the vernacular *created* community, but rather the use of a shared everyday language was a *marker* of identity. By speaking in Welsh, Adam would have recognised, and been recognised, as part of both a local and national identity in Wales.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 119. Also see: D. M. Lloyd and T. V. F. Brogan, 'Cywydd' in *The New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, (eds.) A. Preminger, T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 1383. See Appendix A for Morris-Jones' transcription and translation of the epitaph.

¹³⁹ Evidence from Professor Rhys quoted in: Thompson, 'Introduction', p. xxxiv.

¹⁴⁰ Morris-Jones, 'Adam Usk's Epitaph', p. 121.

¹⁴¹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxviii.

Local and national identities and their influence on chronicle writing

The complex interrelation between local and Welsh identity in Adam Usk's chronicle has a deeper impact than simply on his relationships with people within the two communities. Equally, it forms the structure of the narrative in his chronicle and influences Adam's perspective of certain events.¹⁴² It is within this framework that the tensions between Adam Usk's local and Welsh identity are most apparent. In this final section of the chapter, Adam's identity is explored in the context of the Glyndŵr rebellion, which began in 1400. This was a time when the relationship between England and Wales became particularly tense and negative stereotypes about the Welsh become common-place in a number of the chronicles written contemporaneously to Adam Usk's. Adam's local identity became a tool through which he was able to separate himself from the situation that was occurring in Wales. Indeed, scholarship frequently refers to the fact that Adam presented regional difference in his narrative of the revolt, in a way that his contemporaries did not.¹⁴³ Here it is argued, however, that regional geographical variation is fairly commonplace in other chronicles and their narratives of the rebellion. Adam's chronicle differs in the fact that he describes various local *communities*, and the characteristics of the people living there, rather than simply a multiplicity of geographical regions in Wales.

Before analysing how Adam reports events in Wales in general, it is useful to understand how Adam's local identity influenced his chronicle writing. Indeed, interspersed amongst the events of political importance that structure the chronicle, the narrative frequently returns to the town of Usk. One such notable example is seen in 1399 when Bolingbroke returned from exile to regain his inheritance, and ultimately take the English throne. Adam Usk explains that a number of notable people came to Bolingbroke's aid, which resulted in the support of an army of one hundred thousand men.¹⁴⁴ Adam claims that he was among this number, in the company of the 'newly-returned archbishop of Canterbury', Thomas Arundel, Adam's former patron.¹⁴⁵ Adam records his experiences with the expedition, including nights spent with the company at various locations on the way to Chester. Embedded in the narrative of the unfolding drama that eventually led to the deposition of Richard II, the town of Usk makes an unexpected appearance; Adam gives an account of how the people at Usk were planning to oppose Bolingbroke upon the orders of Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Holland, who had been married to Roger Mortimer, earl of March before his death in

¹⁴² Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xiii.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. lxxx; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 157-158.

¹⁴⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 52-53.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

1398, who was also Richard II's niece. According to Adam Usk, the hostilities in the town provoked Bolingbroke to make plans to devastate the township. Adam claims that he played a role in making peace between Eleanor and Bolingbroke effectively saving the people of the town.¹⁴⁶ In addition to this, Adam claims that he arranged for Edward Charlton, Eleanor's husband and the future Lord of Powys, to join Henry's campaign against Richard II.¹⁴⁷

In his chronicle, Adam Usk names the various locations that Bolingbroke went to during his progression across England. A number of other chronicles corroborate the itinerary in Adam's chronicle. They agree, for example, that Bolingbroke landed in Yorkshire and subsequently headed south to Berkeley and Bristol, and from there proceeded north to meet Richard.¹⁴⁸ None of the other chronicles, however, mention the situation in Usk and the fact that Bolingbroke changed his plans and did not cross the border into Wales to subdue this pocket of opposition. This is possibly because the town of Usk did not have any influence on the unfolding situation and was considered peripheral in terms of the major events of Richard II's deposition. In addition to this, at the time of the event none of the characters were influential enough to be worth mentioning; Edward Charlton, the youngest son of John Charlton, third lord of Powys did not become the fifth lord of Powys until 1401 when his elder brother died childless. The peerage and estates of Powys only passed to Edward two years after Bolingbroke took the throne.¹⁴⁹ For Adam, however, even though the threatened events did not occur, the fact that they were set in a place of personal significance determined its appearance in his work. The town of Usk, as part of Adam's identity, therefore influenced his perspective on an event of major national significance. His connection to locality moulded his perspective on the world, and infiltrated the narrative of his history.

The influence of locality on history writing can be seen in the chronicles of Adam's contemporaries. Indeed, some of the most prominent chronicles of the later fourteenth century obtained a large part of their value as a result of their location. *The Westminster chronicle*, which covers many of the major political events between the years 1381 and 1394 is heavily influenced by its proximity to

¹⁴⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 52-55.

¹⁴⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 52-55. Also see: T. F. Tout, "Charlton, Edward, fifth Baron Charlton of Powys (1370–1421), nobleman." *ODNB*, accessed 20 Apr. 2018. Edward Charlton's father, John Charlton, third Baron of Powys joined Bolingbroke's army in at Leominster on 3 August. *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 151-160.

¹⁴⁸ *Chronicles of the Revolution 1397-1399; the reign of Richard II*, (ed. and trans.) C. Given-Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 114 – 135. Thomas Walsingham and the Monk at Evesham both support this itinerary through England. The writer of the Kirkstall Chronicle emphasises Bolingbroke's success at taking the king's castles as he progressed towards Bristol.

¹⁴⁹ Tout, 'Charlton, Edward, fifth Baron Charlton of Powys' *ODNB*.

parliament, and therefore the parliamentary sources on which the narratives were based.¹⁵⁰ The information is thought to have derived from two possible sources; the clerk of parliament, John Scarle, who was a pensioner at the abbey, and the abbot of Westminster, who was either in attendance, or sent someone to attend the majority of parliaments that occurred during the years that the chronicle covers.¹⁵¹ In addition to the written sources the writers of the Westminster chronicle may have had personal contact with a number of the people written about in the chronicle. This was a result of the abbey's function as a place of hospitality and sanctuary for those visiting the royal court, meaning that the chronicler had a unique insight into the comings and goings of important characters. Richard II, for example, is recorded as visiting St. Edward's shrine (located at Westminster Abbey) during significant moments of his reign, such as the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.¹⁵² The geographical location of the chroniclers therefore had a significant impact on the information that they could verify as legitimate, and therefore worthy of record. In this instance, the local surroundings of the Abbey influenced the chronicle in a practical way and determined aspects of its content.

The location of St. Alban's, the home of Thomas Walsingham, similarly influenced the content of the chronicles produced at the abbey.¹⁵³ St. Albans, situated on a busy route only twenty miles from London, was frequently visited by high profile guests which meant that the inhabitants of the abbey were able to gather important news of the time. The location of the abbey gave Walsingham access to news about the current affairs.¹⁵⁴ Some of Thomas Walsingham's works, such as the *Chronica Maiora*, were largely focused on national and international events. Intertwined in the narrative of political events of the later fourteenth century, however, Thomas Walsingham demonstrates how he perceived the world through the lens of his locality, frequently detailing events that involved either the abbey at St Albans, or its abbot.¹⁵⁵ The great array of chronicles produced under the supervision of Thomas Walsingham also include those that focus primarily on the Abbey and its saint, such as his *Liber benefactorum*, which presented a list of benefactors, and the rights and patronage of the abbey, from the time of Offa, up until the end of the fourteenth century, and the *Gesta Abbatum*

¹⁵⁰ L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey, 'Introduction' in *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. xlvii-xlviii.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. John Scarle was a pensioner at the abbey for at least ten of the thirteen years covered by the chronicle, and during that time the abbot was only excused attendance in three of the parliaments.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. lv.

¹⁵³ For a general overview of the influence of place on Walsingham's writing on Wales see: A. Marchant, "'In Loco Amoenissimo': Fifteenth-Century St Albans and the Role of Place in Thomas Walsingham's Description of Wales' Place: An interdisciplinary e-journal 2 (2008), 1-18.

¹⁵⁴ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 142-5, 156-7, 698-701.

which details the history of the abbey and its Abbots.¹⁵⁶ Clearly the locality of St. Alban's shaped the kind of histories that Walsingham worked on, as well as determining the information and events that were included in his work of national events.

Both *The Westminster Chronicle*, and the *Chronica Maiora*, like Adam's chronicle, were continuations of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, a work that is also notable for the chronicler's connection to place and locality.¹⁵⁷ Ranulf Higden, a monk at Chester's St. Werburgh Abbey, wrote a universal world history. Being from England, he dedicated a far greater proportion of space to his home country, than to any other country in the world and included chapters that focus on the miracles of England.¹⁵⁸ Within the narrative as a whole are sporadic references to Ranulf's hometown of Chester and when describing how Chester got its name, he claims that both the English and Welsh held the town in high esteem and boasts of its productivity and trade.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, by placing his identity in Chester, it has been argued that this gave him leeway to be more critical of the English, which the men of Chester saw as a separate identity to their own.¹⁶⁰

The fact that Ranulf Higden's regional identity allowed him to externally project traits and characteristics onto the English identity, is seen in Adam Usk's relationship with his local identity and the wider Welsh identity. The reference to Owain Glyndŵr as a 'barefooted buffoon', as detailed in the introduction to this chapter, demonstrates the negative stereotypes that were externally assigned to the Welsh. From an external perspective, the Welsh were an object of mockery; they were fools who were so uncivilised they did not wear shoes. When rebellion broke out in Wales in 1400, many chroniclers considered it to be a 'Welsh rebellion', a belief that had adverse consequences for the Welsh political position in England, which is discussed in more detail in chapter four of this work.¹⁶¹ Adam, however, never describes the rebellion as 'Welsh', never characterises

¹⁵⁶ 'The Benefactors' Book', BL, Cotton MS Nero D VII; *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani a Thoma Walsingham, regnante Ricardo Secundo, ejusdem ecclesiae praecentore compilata*, (ed.) H. T. Riley (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1864). J. G. Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered: Books and Learning at Late-Medieval St. Albans', *Speculum* 77 (2002), pp. 847-848;

¹⁵⁷ K. Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: geography, literature, and English community, 1000-1543*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 71-92.

¹⁵⁸ Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, *De Hibernia* chapter xxxii, begins p. 328; *De Albania sive Scotia* chapter xxxvii, begins p. 382; *Cambria sive Wallia* chapter xxxviii, begins p. 394. For the English see: Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. II, Chapters xxxix – lx.

¹⁵⁹ Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. II, pp. 80-83.

¹⁶⁰ Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World*, pp. 71-92.

¹⁶¹ Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 153-161; below: chapter Four.

Owain Glyndŵr and his followers as ‘rebels’, and uses his local identity as a man from Usk to create distance between himself and the insurrection.¹⁶²

This is particularly noticeable in Adam’s description of the outbreak of rebellion in Wales in 1400. His account begins with the king hearing the news that Owain Glyndŵr had been championed as prince by ‘the men of *North Wales*’.¹⁶³ Adam records how the rebels started taking castles, burning towns, and generally causing chaos. Henry IV, according to Adam, responded by leading his army into ‘*North Wales*’ in order to subdue the rebels, and as a result Henry IV and his army took a number of prisoners and Owain Glyndŵr went into hiding in Snowdonia (located in North-West Wales).¹⁶⁴ In 1401, Owain Glyndŵr and his followers continued to make military challenges against castles, towns and people in Wales. Adam’s region of Wales, however, according to his account, was separate to the area where the rebellion was occurring. Adam comments that ‘*South Wales*, however, and especially the whole diocese of Llandaff, remained undisturbed by any kind of trouble, either hostile or defensive, at this time’.¹⁶⁵ The diocese of Llandaff, at this time, included the town of Usk. It is notable that Adam repeatedly uses local and regional variation in Wales to distance himself and his local community from the insurrection. He does this in two ways. The first is geographical; the king enters Wales in the north, and Owain Glyndŵr hides in Snowdonia, which is approximately one hundred and fifty miles away from the town of Usk. The outbreak of rebellion was physically distant. The second is related to community; the rebellion belonged to ‘the men of North Wales’. This was not a community to which Adam belonged. He was a man of Usk, a man of the diocese of Llandaff and thus a man of South Wales, a place which, to Adam’s mind, had little to do with the instigation of the revolt. The rebellion was occurring in a physical place, and an imagined local community, much removed from Adam’s own identity.

Numerous other chronicle accounts mention regional geographical variation in the outbreak of the Glyndŵr rebellion. The *Continuatio Eulogii*, for example, describes how the king entered North Wales, and proceeded to the Isle of Anglesey, off the North West coast of Wales.¹⁶⁶ *The Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey* explains that Owain Glyndŵr first attacked the English in Welshpool in North East

¹⁶² Given-Wilson, ‘Introduction’, p. lxxx; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 157-158.

¹⁶³ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101. Italics added for emphasis.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Italics added for emphasis. Adam Usk’s account of the outbreak of the rebellion is addressed in more detail below in chapter 3.

¹⁶⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 144-145. Italics added for emphasis.

¹⁶⁶ *Continuatio Eulogii*, pp. 388-389.

Wales, and so Henry IV entered Wales to subdue the rebellion there.¹⁶⁷ Thomas Walsingham states that when the king entered Wales, Owain Glyndŵr and his followers hid in Snowdonia so that they would not have to face him or his army.¹⁶⁸ From this sample, only the writer of the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* does not mention a specific regional location, stating that the king entered Wales and left again without coming into contact with Owain Glyndŵr or his followers.¹⁶⁹ It is evident that chroniclers writing from an English perspective were aware of regional geographical difference in Wales. The above examples are not dissimilar to Adam's account in this respect. They all differ from Adam's account, however, in the fact that they do not present diverse local identities in Wales. All of the above accounts state that it was the *Welsh* who rebelled against the king. By Adam's emic projection of identity, this would have included him. As a man from Usk, however, he was able to conceptualise the different communities within the larger Welsh identity, and separate his own local identity from those involved in the rebellion.

Individuals who were defined by both a local identity, and a Welsh identity simultaneously, were sometimes persecuted twice as a result of the two co-existing identities. Adam demonstrates this in his description of the rebellion in 1403:

*...Owen, seizing his chance, emerged with his manikins from caves and the woods and marched with a great host right across Wales as far as the Severn sea; those who resisted him he either drove across the sea - where, being Welsh, they were persecuted by the local people - or forced with fire and sword into surrender.*¹⁷⁰

Adam presents an alternative to the English vs Welsh dichotomy which is common in chronicle descriptions of the revolt. It is evident here, that some people suffered at the hands of the rebels as a result of their local loyalties or identities within Wales, and received no special protection simply because they were Welsh. In this extract 'Welsh' attitudes to the rebellion are presented as divided and tension is derived as a result of local or individual loyalty. Additionally, those victimised by followers of Owain Glyndŵr's cause, were persecuted again when they reached England, this time for their Welsh identity. Other chroniclers demonstrate some knowledge of diverse identities or loyalties within Wales, but it is limited. Thomas Walsingham, for example, suggests he had some

¹⁶⁷ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 176.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305.

¹⁶⁹ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 167-168.

¹⁷⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 172-173. Also see: Davies, *Revolt*, p. 226.

conception of Wales as a heterogeneous society. Also writing about the rebellion in 1403, he notes that Owain Glyndŵr 'inflicted considerable harm upon his countrymen'.¹⁷¹ This contradicts his usual presentation of the rebellion as 'Welsh'. Whilst Thomas Walsingham's presentation of the rebellion is clouded by patent contradiction, this does not appear to be problematic within the narrative as a whole. Instead, it suggests that Thomas Walsingham did not perceive the 'Welsh' identity as overriding local identities, rather that the two could exist simultaneously.

The plurality of identities experienced by chronicle writers, both local and national, influenced what they wrote and how they wrote it. The narrative course of a chronicle was directed through the channel of locality. This had influence in terms of practical aspects, such as the types of sources and information the chronicler had access to, but it was also connected to local community and an imagined sense of belonging. For Adam, this meant that his hometown infiltrated accounts of nationally significant events. Adam's chronicle is not unusual in this sense. Even in the context of the Glyndŵr rebellion, Adam's references to geographical location do not differ significantly from his contemporaries. The major difference is his acknowledgement of diverse local identities, communities, and loyalties. He expressed local and regional difference in a way that his contemporaries in England did not. Indeed, Adam Usk's and Thomas Walsingham's accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion demonstrate how a national and a local identity could exist simultaneously without contradiction.

Conclusion

The connection between local and national identity in the Middle Ages is often considered controversial. Adam Usk's chronicle, however, demonstrates how an individual could have both a local and national identity simultaneously. For local identity, Adam's social networks and obligations to his community demonstrate his sense of belonging. In the case of Welsh identity, he associated with other Welshmen when not in Wales, and showed a knowledge and belief in the origin myth of Wales. Indeed, in both the case of the town of Usk, and of Wales, Adam expresses his belonging explicitly. Identity markers, such as using the vernacular language to promote inclusion, indicate the complex and rich interaction between locality and national identity. Far from preventing the existence of the other, local identity fed into Adam's sense of Welsh identity and vice versa. Adam Usk's understanding of Welshness in the sense of a shared tradition and foundation myth was learnt

¹⁷¹ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 380-383.

from an English tradition, and his replication of the myths, tropes, and stories were also within this framework. This works as a metaphor for the town of Usk as a Marcher town; Welsh people lived and even prospered there, but their outlook and opportunities were controlled or influenced by the enduring English rule in that region.

From the final section of this chapter, it is clear that both local and national identities had implications for Adam Usk's perspective of the world and the events occurring around him. He had a greater awareness of difference and divide within Wales, and did not present the Welsh as a homogenous group as other chroniclers did. This is potentially a result of his local, Marcher, and Welsh identities; as a Welshman he did not wish to be implicated in the rebellion, and as a man from Usk he was sensitive to the diversity of regional and local communities in Wales as a whole. As a man from a Marcher town, he viewed events in non-Marcher regions of Wales as disconnected from his own experience.

These conclusions have implications for how Adam Usk's chronicle should be used and categorised. Indeed, the methodological approach of this chapter follows the example of numerous other studies which have created criteria for assessing belonging to local and national imagined communities. In every aspect, Adam belongs to Welsh communities. In Usk, his social network consisted of people with Welsh names, and by his own admission, he was a Welshman. Certainly, Adam's interaction with his own Welshness as a self-expressed identity does not resemble the degrading 'barefooted buffoons' comment detailed in the introduction of this chapter. In addition, as a clerk trained in England, his chronicle resembles many of the chronicles created in England at the same time. What is evident, however, is that Adam's Welsh identity was often conceived of and expressed through an English framework. Indeed, his interaction with Welsh history and the Welsh language were all heavily influenced by English perspectives. Despite this, his relationship with the locality of Usk and the Welsh people that lived there demonstrates that within the English influence, he most closely associated himself with the Welsh identity of the town. The relationship between images of Owain Glyndŵr and his followers, and the tradition Adam was following, is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Constructing Difference: Uncivilised Rebels in Adam Usk's Chronicle

The village of Glyndyfrdwy is located on the River Dee, roughly thirty miles to the east of Snowdonia. The undulating terrain of the village does not compare in magnitude or drama to the mountains of the neighbouring Snowdonia national park, but the naked hills and dense woodland create their own theatre. On top of a hill that overlooks the river, the remains of a Norman castle lie below a mound of grass and trees. What was once a commanding structure built to control the region, is now barely recognisable as a military feature. The mound is now known as *Owain Glyndwr's Mount*.¹ Vast swathes of this region, including the fortified manor that once lay next to this mound, belonged to the Welsh nobleman known by the names Owain ap Gruffudd, Owain of Glyndyfrdwy, or most famously, Owain Glyndŵr.² Glyndyfrdwy was just one of Owain's three estates. Another, Sycharth, lies fewer than twenty miles to the south, in a similarly hilly region. It too is on a river, the Cynllaith. The earthworks of a motte-and-bailey castle still remain, which in its day was one of Owain Glyndŵr's hereditary homes, and also his main residence.³ On a modern map it lies roughly a mile from the North-Eastern border with England and roughly thirty miles south west of Chester.⁴ Further afield, Owain's final estate, Isocoed, came to the family through marriage rather than inheritance. It is distant and remote compared to the other two estates, situated in the west of Wales, near Cardigan.⁵

The estate at Glyndyfrdwy not only gave the famous Welsh nobleman his name, but it played host to a significant moment in Welsh history: the Glyndŵr revolt which began in 1400. The significance of the estate lay in its location. It was an island of Welsh rule, surrounded by a sea of English lordship and administration imposed on the region from the time of Edward I.⁶ The district shared its largest border with the lordship of Ruthin, which belonged to the English noble family, the Greys of Ruthin.⁷ Whilst the two domains lay side by side in the strikingly rural and remote landscape, a wide cultural

¹ J. Wiles, 'Owain Glyndŵr's Peacocks: Fourteenth Century Designed Landscapes at Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy' *Landscapes* 17:1 (2016), 28.

² Ibid. Davies, *Revolt*, p. 1; Gruffydd Aled Williams, 'Owain Glyndŵr: The Name' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 431-434.

³ Wiles, 'Owain Glyndŵr's Peacocks', 27; Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 131.

⁴ Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 131.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁷ Ibid., p. 132.

gulf separated them. There were administrative differences between the two estates, with one following English custom and the other Welsh. The void was not only administrative; the lords of the two lands were descended from different cultures, with different practices, different native languages, and different political statuses. It was the expanse between the two communal identities that placed the small village of Glyndyfrdwy at the heart of Henry IV's greatest crisis, and a significant moment in Welsh history.

A number of chronicles attribute the outbreak of rebellion to a dispute over land between Reynold Grey of Ruthin and Owain Glyndŵr.⁸ Thomas Walsingham states that Owain claimed that certain lands belonged to him by hereditary right. His protests were disregarded by the English authorities, so he initially attacked his neighbour as a means of asserting his authority in the local area.⁹ The *Continuatio Eulogii* claims that Owain Glyndŵr's complaint about land was taken to parliament in 1400, but was scornfully rejected.¹⁰ If this version of events is to be believed, land played a significant role in instigating the rebellion. There is, perhaps, an irony in this; the mental boundary between the two estates and two identities was definitive and clear, and yet the physical landscape was desired by both powers. Land was a signifier of power and dominance. It could provide financial strength through customary payments and rents, military advantage through the control of hill forts and river passages, and symbolic supremacy visible for all to see. For Owain Glyndŵr, this land was also his birth-right. Owain Glyndŵr's status was a result of his lineage. In the poem *Moliant Owain Glyndŵr* (Praise of Owain Glyndŵr), Iolo Goch writes that his grandfather was 'king over the barons' and that his father had been an 'exemplum of Wales'.¹¹ He was descended from two of the ancient princely dynasties that had ruled over areas of Wales before the English conquest.¹² The land was part of Owain Glyndŵr's identity and position and the loss of part of his inheritance was not only a great insult, but it threatened the nature of his status in North Wales. It is therefore not a coincidence that one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the outbreak of revolt is an edict from Henry IV, confiscating Owain Glyndŵr's lands.¹³ Land was associated with income, status, and power.

⁸ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305; '*Eulogium Historiarum*': BL Cotton MS. Galba E VII fol. 202r/ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 388. For a discussion of the land dispute see: Robert Ian Jack, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the lordship of Ruthin' *Welsh History Review* 1 (1964), 303-322.

⁹ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305.

¹⁰ '*Eulogium Historiarum*', BL Cotton MS. Galba E VII f. 202r/ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 388.

¹¹ Iolo Goch, 'Moliant Owain Glyndŵr' in *Iolo Goch: Poems*, pp. 34-37.

¹² Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 130.

¹³ "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: July-December 1400." *Rymer's Foedera Volume 8*. Thomas Rymer, (ed.) (London: Apud Joannem Neulme, 1739-1745) pp. 163-164 O. viii. 163. H. iii. p. iv. 191. The lands were confiscated as a result of treason, and granted to John, earl of Somerset on 8th November 1400; Kelly DeVries 'Notes on Confiscation of Owain's Lands' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, p. 298.

Wishing to strip Owain Glyndŵr of these three features, the king began by taking his land. The above examples also expose a reality of the rebellion not often acknowledged in chronicle accounts. Firstly, there is little evidence that this was a deliberate national uprising designed to overthrow English rule in Wales. Based on this fact, the rebellion cannot accurately be described as Welsh vs English; there were many Welsh people who did not support the rebels. As will be explored in more detail later, there were also English defectors to Owain Glyndŵr's side.

Despite this, a number of chronicle accounts that describe the outbreak of rebellion use language and imagery suggesting that there was a national cause, and that it was the *Welsh* that were rebelling, rather than simply Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. Adam Usk, for example, claims that Owain Glyndŵr was 'put forward by the men of North Wales to be their prince', although he is clear that this is an issue with North Wales, not his own region in the south.¹⁴ The *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey* agrees that Owain Glyndŵr was styled as a prince, but states that he claimed to be a prince, 'pretending' that it was his hereditary right as a result of his ancestry.¹⁵ This is supported by a plea that was heard by the King's Bench in Shropshire, 1401. The plea accuses Owain Glyndŵr, along with his son and 13 other named men, of plotting to kill Henry IV, to destroy all the nobles in England and obliterate the English language.¹⁶ Whilst it was understood that Owain Glyndŵr could not be brought to trial in England for his offences in Wales, it stated that he attacked numerous towns in Wales starting with Ruthin.¹⁷ Ruthin bordered Owain Glyndŵr's hereditary lands of Glyndyfrdwy, and was a natural symbol of English power in Wales. The plea to the King's Bench links Owain Glyndŵr's ancestry to the land; it was a place that had once been the stronghold of Welsh princes and on this spot that Owain Glyndŵr once again expressed this right. In addition, this narrative recognises the rebellion as a direct attack on the king's authority in Wales. Unlike the accounts that state a land dispute led to the rebellion, styling Owain as a Welsh prince highlights the tensions in Wales. It acknowledges the Welsh people as a separate culture and recognises their distinct heritage, as well as a potential desire to question the rule of the English in Wales. The narrative challenges Adam Usk's Welsh identity; his career was intertwined with the system that was being challenged and the identity of the challenger was Welsh, like Adam himself.¹⁸

¹⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101.

¹⁵ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 175. Translation my own - *figens se iure progenitorum suorum principem Wallie*

¹⁶ *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench under Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V*, (ed. and trans.) G. O. Sayles (London: Seldon Society, 1971), pp. 114-116; Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench*, pp. 114-116.

¹⁸ See chapter Two for Adam Usk's identity as a man from South Wales, and Usk.

Where the previous chapter explored how Adam constructed both a local and a Welsh identity, this chapter analyses negative imagery that Adam uses to depict Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. The imagery is most frequently connected to the wildness of the landscape and the resulting uncivilised national character of the Welsh people. This trope was utilised by many of his contemporaries and was used disparagingly against the entire Welsh population as an 'assigned' identity.¹⁹ Adam's accounts of the revolt are often derogatory. He presents Owain Glyndŵr and his followers as inhabiting a remote, inaccessible landscape, fleeing to the caves, woods, and mountains of Wales. He describes how they hid there, cowardly and avoiding direct contact with the king's army.²⁰

Portrayals of the Welsh landscape during the Glyndŵr rebellion have been discussed in modern scholarship. Indeed, Rees Davies' influential work *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* begins with a description of the Wales through the eyes of two travellers. He describes how during this period Wales was 'largely unknown, inaccessible, and uninviting' as a result of the 'horrid and frightful' terrain.²¹ The landscape, according to Davies, was only part of the concern for the traveller. They were equally wary of the Welsh people and would have perceived them as 'hardy and brave... generous, hospitable, and devout; but also totally unreliable, 'wild', [and] backward'.²² Indeed, the connection between landscapes, agricultural practices, and architecture and the character of the people inhabiting the terrain is now well established. Robert Bartlett, for example, describes perceptions of place in the medieval period as a predictive science; upon learning of someone's place of origin, for example, the character of the individual would have been immediately presumed based on this information alone.²³

The studies mentioned above acknowledge both the realities of the sometimes-harsh terrain of Wales and the imagined cultural identity markers that it raised in the minds of medieval people. In more recent times there have been calls to read the chronicles of Adam Usk's era as 'sophisticated

¹⁹ Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 183-218. Roberts, 'A Surfeit of Identity?', p. 252.

²⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101.

²¹ Davies, *Revolt*, p. 5. Also: Roberts, 'A Surfeit of Identity?', p. 252.

²² Davies, *Revolt*, p. 5. Also: Llinos Beverly Smith, 'On the Hospitality of the Welsh: a comparative view' in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: essays in memory of Rees Davies*, (eds.) Huw Pryce and John Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 181-194.

²³ Robert Bartlett, 'Heartland and Border: the mental and physical geography of medieval Europe' in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: essays in memory of Rees Davies*, (eds.) Huw Pryce and John Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 23-25.

political and cultural literary works'.²⁴ In the introduction to this study, it was ascertained that such readings of Adam's chronicle were beneficial because they acknowledged the value of the chronicle, rather than its unreliability as a source or Adam's inadequacies as a chronicler.²⁵ Alicia Marchant's work on narratives of the Glyndŵr rebellion in chronicles certainly perceived Adam's chronicle in a more positive light through her literary readings of the chronicle. Her work is also the most detailed study of the Welsh landscape and negative cultural markers in the medieval mindset during the Glyndŵr revolt. Her source base for the discussion begins with chronicles contemporary to the revolt and then traces the landscape features mentioned into chronicles of the Tudor age. The conclusion is that landscape is used to create 'otherness' in these chronicles.²⁶ The study is valuable for a several of reasons. Firstly, it compares the narrative across a number of chronicles and views them in the context of their genre. It also draws links between the location of the individual chronicler and their perspective on Wales, noting in particular that Adam Usk was able to give more detailed information as a result of his relationship with Wales.²⁷

In the previous chapter, it is demonstrated how Adam Usk used the English tradition of chronicle writing to construct his understanding of the Welsh past, reasserting his Welshness within this specific framework. In this chapter, the influence of this tradition is explored in the way that negative stereotypes of the Welsh are perpetuated in his work, particularly in reference to the rebellion in Wales. The negative tropes about Welsh cultural identity are explored in Adam's chronicle and those of his contemporaries, as well as in older works that directly influenced Adam and his contemporaries. Building on the work by Alicia Marchant, this work traces the negative stereotypes back through time, and emphasises how the English occupation of Wales and the English dominance in historical narratives had implications for how the Welsh cultural identity was perceived.

In this chapter, I therefore emphasise the link between chronicle writing and national identity; that a *people* were defined by an enduring national character linked to descent and a shared understanding of history.²⁸ Other aspects of chronicle writing and medieval perceptions of history

²⁴ Henry Marsh, 'Richard II's Rejection of Counsel in the Westminster Chronicle and Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*', *The Medieval Chronicle* 13 (2020), 221.

²⁵ See: above pp. 15-16.

²⁶ Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 183-211.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Identities', pp. 1-9.

are applied to the descriptions of landscape and national character in descriptions of the revolt, such as ‘formulaic’ battle descriptions and the enduring existence of ‘universal truths’.²⁹ This chapter, therefore, argues that aspects of Adam’s depiction of the Glyndŵr rebellion should not simply be interpreted as an overt expression of ‘English’ identity, or even loyalty, but a symptom of the tradition to which his work belongs. This is not to say that individual loyalties, proximity to events and genuine information related to the rebellion did not infiltrate chronicle accounts. It is certain that they did, as will be explained in more detail below. In addition, this research takes inspiration from the works of Davies and Bartlett by acknowledging that the harsh landscape was not simply a literary trope but a reality that was exploited and even celebrated by the rebels.

This chapter begins with an analysis of how the English and Welsh relationship was portrayed in chronicles earlier than Adam Usk’s. The images and stereotypes of the ‘uncivilised’ Welsh are traced through a number of works, including those by Gildas, Gerald of Wales, and Ranulf Higden. The conclusions are then tested against visual portrayals of Welsh people, from both a Welsh perspective and an English perspective to assess how these tropes played out in the wider discourse. Once the images and tropes of the ‘uncivilised’ Welshman have been established in the earlier chronicles, they are then assessed in Adam’s chronicle and the chronicles of his contemporaries. Next, I explore these stereotypes in the context of the Glyndŵr rebellion, challenging them as purely negative tropes; indeed, a number of examples related to the military tactics of the rebels are shown to exemplify the way they used the landscape to aid warfare as a positive trait. As way of a comparison, I then turn to the way the English are presented in chronicle accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion. This highlights the contrast in the way that the two identities are presented, which demonstrates the choices the writers made when describing the two identities. I also demonstrate that Adam Usk was writing within a specific framework that influenced the way he wrote about the rebellion in Wales.

Welsh cultural characteristics and landscape in the *Polychronicon* tradition and wider discourse

Negative characterisations of the Welsh in Adam’s chronicle are a reflection of both the sources that he used to construct his history and wider contemporary discourses involving the Welsh. Adam Usk’s

²⁹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 2-3.

chronicle was written as a continuation of the *Polychronicon* into his own time. The *Polychronicon* was widely known during Adam's period, and many of his contemporaries also wrote continuations.³⁰ The *Polychronicon* was therefore influential, and some of the themes and motifs regarding Welsh identity were passed down through the tradition.³¹ Evidence also exists that aspects of the stereotype were present in the wider discourse, as will be explored below. Two main elements from Ranulf Higden's description of the Welsh can also be seen in Adam's chronicle. The first of these is the connection between the Welsh and their landscape and the stereotype of the Welsh as 'uncivilised'. The second is the connection between the Welsh landscape and their behaviour in military combat. Ranulf Higden and his sources perpetuated an existing negative identity which was imposed on the Welsh. They also promoted a formulaic way of presenting the Welsh, which became representative of the Welsh people and their character.

Ranulf Higden's universal history is made up of seven books. The first book describes many regions of the world, focusing on the landscape, notable features, and the characteristics of the people who lived there.³² The key chapter that had the potential to influence Adam Usk's interpretation of Welsh identity, is chapter XXXVIII 'De Cambria, Sive Wallia', occupying fols. 24v-26r of Add. MS 10104, in which Adam's chronicle is found. The chapter is embedded in a section of the *Polychronicon* which describes various countries and regions of the world. Ranulf Higden begins his account of the British Isles with Ireland, basing his descriptions of the landscape and its inhabitants on Gerald of Wales' descriptions. Chapters XXXII to XXXVI are all concerned with the Irish, followed by a single chapter on Scotland and just one chapter on Wales.³³

In his chapter on the Welsh, Ranulf explores both positive and negative aspects of Wales and the Welsh. He describes the landscape positively, claiming that it was a fertile land, rich in fruit, meat and fish.³⁴ In addition, he claims that there was a level of domesticity amongst the Welsh, who had access to both wild and domesticated animals as a source of food. Indeed, the landscape is

³⁰ Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, pp. 39-45. This list has been updated: Edwards and Freeman, 'Further Manuscripts of Higden's *Polychronicon*', 522-524.

³¹ Meecham-Jones describes Gildas, Bede, and Geoffrey of Monmouth as 'mythmakers' by the way that stereotypes were perpetuated-this can equally apply to Ranulf Higden: Meecham-Jones, 'Where was Wales', p. 27.

³² Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle*, p. 39.

³³ Ireland, '*Polychronicon* (to 1377)' BL Add. MS 10104, fols. 22v-24v; Scotland, *Ibid.*, fol. 24v; Wales, *Ibid.*, fols. 24v-26r.; Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. I, pp. 328-282, 382-394, 394-431.

³⁴ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fols. 24v-26r; Ranulf Higden *Polychronicon* vol. I pp. 394-399.

presented as a prosperous commodity, with the valleys providing sustenance and food for the Welsh people, and the mountains and hills similarly proving a source for natural materials, such as metal, and the ground providing coal.³⁵ Despite noting that the land was plentiful and rich, and contained the materials and sustenance to support human life, Ranulf Higden is quick to point out that the Welsh were different from the English in a number of ways. According to Ranulf Higden, the Welsh people were culturally less sophisticated than the English. He first describes their choice of clothes, which he states was a shirt and mantel, with their legs bare despite the harsh conditions of the Welsh climate.³⁶ Ranulf suggests that the crudeness of the Welsh dress is emphasised in the way that they would not change their bare legged attire, or put on a cap or a hood, even if they were to meet the king.³⁷ In Ranulf's account, the image of the Welsh as uncultured and crass is accentuated in the simplicity of their diet despite the richness of their landscape and the assertion that they only serve water to their guests.³⁸ Ranulf's account is mixed. It is not overtly negative about the Welsh and appears to be descriptive rather than wholly derogatory.

Ranulf Higden's chapter on the Welsh, however, was not based on his own opinions or experiences, but relied heavily on the works of Gerald of Wales. Gerald wrote two works concerning Wales in the twelfth century. The first was a description of a journey through Wales, which he took in 1188. Gerald was of both Welsh and Norman descent and spent the early years of his life in Wales. He describes his journey, the landscape he saw, the people he met, and the local customs that he witnessed, each linked to a specific region of Wales. The second work is a description of Wales and is a more general overview of the Welsh and their character, designed as a supplement *the journey through Wales*.³⁹ This work is split into two books. The first describes positive aspects of the Welsh character, and the second the more negative attributes. Many of the features presented by Ranulf Higden, as described above, appear in both the journey through Wales and the first book of the description of the Welsh.⁴⁰ For example, Gerald of Wales describes many areas that were fertile, producing large amounts of corn. He specifically mentions the fertility of Anglesey, which he says

³⁵ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fols. 24v-26r; Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. I, pp. 394-399.

³⁶ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104 fols. 24v-26r; Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. I, pp. 400-401.

³⁷ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. I, pp. 400-401.

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 404- 409.

³⁹ Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales/The Description of Wales*, (ed and trans) Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Classics, 1978), p. 211.

⁴⁰ Aspects of the discussion regarding Gerald of Wales and his descriptions of the Welsh character and landscape can be found in discussed in my MA dissertation 'A New Perspective on Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle', p. 29.

could produce grain to feed the whole of Wales if it were required.⁴¹ The wild and domesticated animals were in Llanthony, and fish, corn, and wine were all abundant in Pembrokeshire.⁴² None of these aspects, as described by Gerald, were intended to be derogatory. In Ranulf Higden's use of this imagery, many aspects of it were simply repeated.

There is, however, a different tone to Ranulf Higden's work. Where Gerald was describing a landscape and people he at least partially identified with, Ranulf Higden was not.⁴³ Many Welsh characteristics described in Ranulf's chapter are presented in comparison to the English. This created a contrast, in which the Welsh were less sophisticated and more backwards than their neighbours and occupiers. Ranulf does this repeatedly throughout the poem. He begins by stating that he would talk about the Welsh 'before turning to England'.⁴⁴ He compares the two countries in size, explaining, that while Wales had good soil, England was larger in circumference.⁴⁵ The manners in Wales, according to Ranulf, differed from the manners in England even though they had managed to assimilate to some English ways, such as living in towns, riding horses, and sleeping in beds.⁴⁶ For Ranulf, England and Wales were two distinct geographical places with two distinct peoples. The English were the dominant identity, whose practices and customs represented 'civilised' behaviour. The Welsh were subordinate and their traditional behaviours and habits needed 'anglicising' in order to make them acceptable. Ranulf's work acknowledges that the Welsh way of living had changed since Gerald was writing, but repeats many of the characteristics regardless of this fact.

Ranulf and Gerald also pass comment on the way that the Welsh dressed, perpetuating the stereotype that the Welsh did not wear shoes. Gerald of Wales wrote 'They go barefoot or else wear boots made from untanned leather roughly sewn together.'⁴⁷ Ranulf stated that their legs were always exposed.⁴⁸ In the previous chapter it has already been seen that the phrase 'barefoot

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 102-103, 150.

⁴³ Gerald's identity has been the source of much attention. For an overview of the field see: A. Joseph McMullen and Georgia Henley, 'Gerald of Wales: Interpretation and Innovation in Medieval Britain' in *Gerald of Wales: new perspectives on a Medieval Writer and Critic*, (eds.) A. J. McMullen and Georgia Henley (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp. 20-32; Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 9-25.

⁴⁴ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. 1, p. 394, '*Prius tangit quam Angliam*'.

⁴⁵ Ibid., '*Cujus circumferential, Quamvis sit minor Anglia, Par tamen glebae gloria, In matre et in filia*'.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 400, 410, '*Convictus hujus patriae, Differt a ritu Angliae*'; '*Hortus et agros excolunt, Ad oppida se conferunt, Et loricate equitant, Et calceati peditant, Urbane se reficiunt, Et sub tapetis dormiunt, Ut judicentur Anglici, Nunc potius quam Wallici*'.

⁴⁷ Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, p. 234.

⁴⁸ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. I, p. 402. *Nudatis semper tibiis*

buffoon' was used to describe Owain Glyndŵr in the English parliament.⁴⁹ This had clearly developed into a negative stereotype over the course of two centuries. Concerning the description of Welsh attire as either inappropriate or uncivilised, two manuscripts allow analysis of the internal (Welsh) and external (English) views on dress in medieval Wales. Both manuscripts are copies of the laws of Hywel Dda, the first codified text of native Welsh law. The earliest of the two manuscripts is the thirteenth century Peniarth MS 28, an illustrated Latin copy of the laws.⁵⁰ The second is the NLW MS 20143A, from the mid-fourteenth century and contains an illustrated copy of the laws in Welsh.⁵¹ Both manuscripts are small in size, and would have been created as portable, functional objects that could assist lawyers or ecclesiastics in their day-to-day practices of law.⁵² The languages of the texts suggest that they were created for different audiences. Peniarth MS 28, as a Latin text, is likely to have been made for an ecclesiastic, or even an English lawyer who needed to interact with or have a detailed understanding of Welsh law. NLW MS 20143A, on the other hand, was written in Welsh, which limits the audience to literate Welsh speakers, presumably from the Welsh community. In both cases the fact that the manuscript is illuminated suggests that it was created for someone of importance or notable standing.⁵³

The different languages of the manuscripts suggest different audiences, but they both contain the same law text. In addition, each manuscript contains illuminations that accompany the laws. The Welsh language manuscript contains just two, an illumination of a king and a foot soldier. The Latin language manuscript contains many more, as will be described below. As such, it is possible to deduce how an English audience and a Welsh audience represented the Welsh people. Perhaps surprisingly, the image of a foot soldier in NLW MS 20143A, the Welsh text, partially agrees with Ranulf Higden's description of the Welsh customs regarding their attire. The image only portrays the foot soldier's torso, head, and arms. He is wearing a red tunic with sleeves and holding a spear with a decorated banner reading *royneu*. Despite holding a lance, the soldier has an uncovered head and

⁴⁹ See: above p. 65; Continuatio Eulogii, p. 388. Also see: Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 152.

⁵⁰ 'a Latin text of the Laws of Hywel Dda': NLW Peniarth MS 28.

⁵¹ 'A Welsh text of the Laws of Hywel Dda': NLW MS 20143A.

⁵² 'A Welsh text of the Laws of Hywel Dda – catalogue entry': <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/a-welsh-text-of-the-laws-of-hywel-dda/>, accessed 15/06/2020.

⁵³ Ibid.; 'Peniarth 28: a Latin text of the Laws of Hywel Dda – catalogue entry': <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/laws-of-hywel-dda/>, accessed 15/06/2020.

is only wearing a light cloth. The image seems to support Ranulf Higden's assertion that the Welsh did not change their style of clothes even in situations when it might be deemed necessary.

Image of NLW MS 20143A, f. 71r removed for copyright reasons. Image copyright of the National Library of Wales.

Image of NLW MS 20143A, f. 79v removed for copyright reasons. Image copyright of the National Library of Wales.

NLW MS 20143A, f. 71r and f. 79v. Images copyright of The National Library of Wales.⁵⁴

The illustrations of the soldier and the king in the Welsh language manuscript are also present in the Latin version of the laws, along with numerous other characters. The images in both manuscripts correspond with the text, providing visual demonstrations of the laws being described. The only two drawings of people in NLW MS 20143A show the bodies from the waist up, meaning that they do not show what the Welsh wore on their feet or legs. Peniarth MS 28, however, seems to place an emphasis on this point. The first image in the manuscript is of a king dressed in regal attire, including a crown, with his legs covered and shoes on his feet.⁵⁵ On folio 5v there is an image of a *drysor* (doorkeeper) and a *porthor* (gatekeeper). The clothes worn by both men are not entirely dissimilar in style to the other illustrations, but the feet are coloured in black to symbolise shoes and no part of their legs is visible. The king's outfit is fitting of his status; it represents his regal status and power. The *drysor* (doorkeeper) and *porthor* (gatekeeper) were also jobs of higher responsibility, which

⁵⁴ Images from the digital manuscript published online by the National Library of Wales: 'A Welsh text of the Laws of Hywel Dda, NLW MS 20143A': <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/a-welsh-text-of-the-laws-of-hywel-dda>, accessed 15/06/2020.

⁵⁵ 'a Latin text of the Laws of Hywel Dda', Peniarth MS 28, fol. 1v.

could perhaps have been undertaken by Englishmen rather than Welshmen. The other images of people in the manuscript depict Welshmen undertaking specific tasks, duties or roles. For some of the roles the law text provides information as to their identity; there is a *Penteulu* (mod. Welsh *penteulu*, English - head of the household), a *disteyn* (*distain* or steward), a *hebogyt* (modern Welsh *hebogydd*, English - falconer), *iuidcia curie* (Lat. English - a court judge), *pengwastmut* (modern Welsh – *pengwastrod*, English - chief groom) a *penkenyt* (modern Welsh - *pencynydd* English - chief huntsman), who appears on a folio alongside a kissing couple, a *gwastraut* (modern Welsh – *gwastrawd*, English - groom), *cocco* (Latin - *coquus*, English - cook), and a *fabro* (Latin. English - smith). In addition, there is a *rhingyll* (serjeant). Later in the manuscript there are illustrations of two people fighting, and a woman with a dish, introducing a section entitled '*de lege puellae*'.⁵⁶

Some of the people depicted in the law text are of fairly high standing. This includes the court judge, whose title is recorded in Latin, not Welsh, and the steward, whose tunic is half red and half green. The *penteulu* sits in an ornately decorated chair and the cook, the smith, and the groom carry out skilled domestic tasks. Despite this, all of the illustrations portray the Welsh people with bare feet. The resulting images are a juxtaposition between the skilled jobs that the Welsh people undertook, and their lack of domestication and sophistication. The motif was used to demonstrate that these people were Welsh, not English. The Latin law book shows that in the thirteenth century, when it was created, the Welsh were characterised by the demeaning barefooted image. It is telling that the Latin manuscript, written for an audience wider than just Welsh speakers, includes this negative trope about the Welsh, whereas the Welsh language manuscript does not. It is indicative of the fact that the Welsh did not promote this stereotype as part of their own identity. This was instead a piece of imagery that was imposed on the Welsh from the external perspective of the English commentator.

⁵⁶ For the list of illustrations and their descriptions (including modern Welsh titles or standardised spelling) see: Daniel Huws 'Peniarth 28: illustrations from a Welsh Lawbook': <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/laws-of-hywel-dda/daniel-huws-article-peniarth-28-illustrations-from-a-welsh-lawbook/>, accessed 15/12/2019.

Image of NLW Peniarth MS 28 f. 1v removed for copyright reasons. Image copyright of the National Library of Wales.

Image of NLW Peniarth MS 28 f. 6v removed for copyright reasons. Image copyright of the National Library of Wales.

NLW Peniarth MS 28 f. 1v and f. 6v – The king and a *rhingyll*. Images copyright of the National Library of Wales.⁵⁷

The idea of the Welsh not wearing shoes was evidently still relevant during Adam's period. When the writer of the *Continuatio Eulogii* gives his account of the parliament of 1400, he does not explain what is meant by the phrase 'barefooted buffoons'.⁵⁸ The inherent connection between the phrase *scurris nudipedibus* and the Welsh was evidently well-known. It invoked an image of someone who was outside the realms of civilised society, who lacked knowledge of decorum, and respectability. The fact that the negative connotations in *Continuatio Eulogii* were used against Owain Glyndŵr shows the distance between the stereotype and the reality. The connection between the Welsh identity and being barefooted was linked to the notion of a negative characteristic that transcended time; the Welsh had been backwards and uncivilised in their dressing practices in the past, and this lack of decorum still characterised them some one hundred years later.

The negative imagery projected onto the Welsh during Adam's time is mainly found in chronicle descriptions of the Glyndŵr rebellion. Military manoeuvres by the English and Welsh are described in some detail, with the Welsh frequently associated with their wild landscape in these descriptions.

⁵⁷ Images published on the National Library of Wales website: 'The King on his throne holding a sceptre': <http://delwedd.llgc.org.uk/delweddau/lhw/lhw00013.jpg>, accessed 12/06/2020; 'The *rhingyll*, serjeant, holding the lance which pertained to his office': <http://delwedd.llgc.org.uk/delweddau/lhw/lhw00023.jpg>, accessed 12/06/2020.

⁵⁸ '*Eulogium Historiarum*' BL Cotton MS. Galba E VII, fol. 202r/ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 388.

The *Polychronicon* makes several statements about Welsh military behaviour. Ranulf Higden connects their defensive structures with their landscape, writing:

*The woods are like towers,
The swamps like ramparts*⁵⁹

Ranulf's description demonstrates how the Welsh utilised the natural formation of the terrain for protection. This imagery demonstrates how attitudes towards warfare, the Welsh landscape, and the lack of sophisticated technology were all linked. The harshness of the Welsh landscape was reflected in the characters of its Welsh inhabitants. This description of the Welsh use of their environment for security is embedded in a section that actively aims to portray the Welsh as uncivilised, particularly compared to the English. In this description, Ranulf shows in descriptive terms how the Welsh might practically become one with their landscape in order to defend themselves against aggressors. The implication in the description is that the Welsh were militarily and technologically 'backward' when compared to the English, who built castles in Wales.⁶⁰

Describing Welsh military structures as unsophisticated creates a power balance between the Welsh and the English. The Welsh were wild and unsophisticated, whereas the English were technologically advanced and civilised. Descriptions of the Welsh in battle are equally disparaging. Ranulf Higden references Gildas for his description of the Welsh temperament in battle. Gerald of Wales uses the same quote as Ranulf, and cites Gildas as the inspiration for his *Description of Wales*.⁶¹ It is, thus, likely that Ranulf quoted Gildas from Gerald of Wales' work. Gildas' sixth century work, *De exicidio et conquestu Britanniae*, tracks the invasions of Britain, first by the Romans, and then by the Saxons. Gildas describes the negative characteristics of the Britons that led to their repeated defeats. They are portrayed as disorganised, disobedient, and cowardly. In relation to the Romans, Gildas explains how the Britons were unprepared when the Romans attacked. They had not protected the coast or organised the army, and when the battle began, they turned and fled. According to Gildas 'it became a mocking proverb far and wide that the Britons are cowardly in war and faithless in peace'.⁶² The Britons in the story eventually occupied the Western side of the island and became the Welsh. Ranulf Higden unquestioningly applies the negative military behaviour of the Britons to the Welsh. He states that according to Gildas, the Welsh were instable in both war and peace, and they would

⁵⁹ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 402. '*His silvae sunt pro turribus, Paludes pro aggeribus*'.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

⁶¹ Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, p. 214.

⁶² Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, (ed.) Michael Winterbottom, (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), p. 18; quoted by Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, p. 257.

flee in battle if the opportunity arose.⁶³ He goes on to state that in his time, the early fourteenth century, there were (English) castles surrounding the coast, implying that it was too late for the Welsh to overthrow their occupiers.⁶⁴

The history of the Britons, as presented by Gildas, was still relevant in Ranulf Higden's day. Their disorganisation, cowardice, and instability meant that they had once again been occupied, this time by the English. There is a formulaic inevitability in this construction of the Welsh character. They had repeatedly been invaded and occupied, and their continued occupation in the fourteenth century meant that the characteristic was still relevant. This form of 'universal truth', which created a moralistic connection between behaviour in battle and the outcome of the battle, was thus perpetuated in the universal chronicle genre.⁶⁵ Aspects of the Welsh uncivilised character, such as their lack of shoes and bare legs, was a widely known symbol of Welshness both inside and outside the chronicle tradition. It showed the Welsh as being backwards, unsophisticated and uncivilised. In Ranulf Higden's work, the Welsh utilisation of their wild landscape was connected to their style of military defence. It enabled them to defend themselves whilst fleeing from their enemy. Before even looking closely at Adam's chronicle and those of his contemporaries, it is clear that the use of this imagery ranges in motive and meaning. It is sometimes descriptive, particularly when describing the landscape. It is sometimes using an identity marker to indicate an identity, such as with the bare feet in the law texts. It is sometimes used in a formulaic way to show continuity, such as the behaviour of the Britons/Welsh at war. When these are all combined, however, there is always at least an undertone of mockery or disparagement. Indeed, this enduring motif of the Welsh character as backwards, uncivilised, and unstable was prominent in early fifteenth-century chronicle descriptions of the Glyndŵr rebellion.

Negative portrayals of the Welsh and 'universal truths' in Adam Usk's Chronicle

Many aspects of Adam's account of the Glyndŵr rebellion can be connected to Ranulf Higden's description of the Welsh. He portrays the Welsh landscape as wild and uncivilised and explains how Owain Glyndŵr and his followers occupied the landscape to their military advantage. In addition, there are numerous examples of amoralistic acts committed by Owain Glyndŵr and his followers in

⁶³ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 402, *Fugam ut pugnam capiunt, Cum opportunum sentient. Hos dicit Gildas fragiles, Et nec in paces stabiles.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

⁶⁵ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 2-3.

Adam's chronicle, as well as in the chronicles of his contemporaries. The outbreak of rebellion in September 1400 created a moment of conflict and tension between the English and Welsh identities, which allows for these negative tropes and stereotypes to be explored. The full extract of the outbreak of rebellion according to Adam is as follows:

On the feast of the Decollation of St John the Baptist [29 August] the king returned to England; while at Leicester he heard that Owen lord of Glendower, being put forward by the men of North Wales to be their prince, had risen up with them in armed rebellion and had seized numerous castles, and was everywhere plundering and burning the towns inhabited by the English who lived amongst them, and forcing the English to flee; so, assembling his young warriors, the king led his troops into North Wales, where he overcame them and put them to flight, leaving their prince to spend almost a year hiding away on cliffs and in caverns with no more than seven followers. Those who submitted peacefully to him, however, the king treated mercifully, executing only a very few, and taking their chieftains away with him as captives to Shrewsbury, where he later released them on condition that they would pursue and capture the others who were still holding out in Snowdonia and elsewhere.⁶⁶

The first aspect to explore from this extract is the description of the way that the Welsh interacted with their landscape, which is reminiscent of Ranulf Higden's assertion that the Welsh used woods and swamps as military structures. In Adam's account, rather than fortifying their buildings and building walls, Owain Glyndŵr and his followers utilised pre-existing natural formations by taking refuge on the 'cliffs and in caverns'.⁶⁷ The lack of precision in the description suggests that the cliffs and caverns are not a specific location, but a form of imagery representing remoteness and wilderness, just like the woods and swamps in Ranulf Higden's description. The second landscape feature mentioned in this extract is more specific, suggesting that Owain Glyndŵr and his followers were 'in Snowdonia and elsewhere'. Adam uses the Latin *Snowdona*, and it is unclear whether this would have referred to Snowdon the mountain, or Snowdonia, the mountainous region, which could have incorporated a wide area of land in north-west Wales.⁶⁸ Regardless of how precise Adam is being in his mention of *Snowdona*, his addition of the phrase '*et aliunde*' translated by Given-Wilson as 'and elsewhere', makes his description of Owain Glyndŵr's hideout or stronghold generic and non-specific and as a result likely to be representative rather than definite.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101. Translation by Given-Wilson.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ A. D. Mills, 'Snowdonia', *A Dictionary of British Place Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199609086.001.0001/acref-9780199609086-e-12093> accessed 10 July 2019.

⁶⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101.

The imagery of wilderness is seen throughout chronicle accounts of the outbreak of rebellion in 1400. The symbolic expression of remoteness takes a number of forms; Owain Glyndŵr is presented as taking refuge in mountains, caves, cliffs, caverns, and woods. Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* includes a detailed description of the outbreak of rebellion, dedicating roughly one hundred and fifty words to the unfolding events. When speaking about Henry IV entering Wales to subdue the rebellion shortly after its outbreak, Thomas Walsingham states that the Welsh 'took to the mountains of Snowdonia', using the Latin term *montes Snowdonie*, which is also used by Adam Usk.⁷⁰ The *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, which also gives a detailed account of the rebellion, states that Owain Glyndŵr was in the 'caves and mountains of Wales', but with no mention of where the caves and mountains could be found.⁷¹ In both the chronicles, the king realises that there was no way that he would face the rebel leader in battle because of his location, and thus returned to England.⁷²

Adam Usk's chronicle, Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, and the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, all give a detailed account of the outbreak of rebellion. Other chronicles, however, which provide much briefer accounts of the outbreak still include this trope. Both John Strecche's chronicle and the *Cronica de Kirkstall* were written before 1450.⁷³ Rather than providing events recorded year by year, they separate the chronicle into the different reigns of English kings and describe the main events. Both chronicles record the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr as a major event of Henry IV's reign. Despite the brevity of the accounts, they include the imagery of the Welsh landscape as seen in the longer chronicles. The *Cronica de Kirkstall* alludes to mountains and forests, and John Strecche's chronicle to the mountains.⁷⁴ A later chronicle, the *Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, written in the fifteenth century, is a Welsh language chronicle.⁷⁵ The accounts are brief and provide limited detail and even though it is a Welsh chronicle written in the Welsh language, the author still describes how Owain took to the woods after the king entered Wales.⁷⁶ Another Welsh chronicle, written by Elis Gruffudd sometime before 1550, gives a more narrative account of the revolt. Compared to the *Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, the Elis Gruffudd chronicle is more positive about Owain

⁷⁰ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305. ...

⁷¹ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 167-168. Translation my own: *in speluncis et montibus Wallie*.

⁷² Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 167-168.

⁷³ John Strecche's chronicle, BL Add MS 35295; *Cronica de Kirkstall*, BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII.

⁷⁴ John Strecche's chronicle, BL Add MS 35295, fol. 264v, *montibus*; *Cronica de Kirkstall*, BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII, fol. 134v, *montibus/silvis*.

⁷⁵ 'Annales of Owen Glyn Dŵr; extracted from Peniarth MS. 135' in J. E. Lloyd, *Owen Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 150-154.

⁷⁶ 'Annales of Owen Glyn Dŵr', pp. 150-151.

Glyndŵr. In the latter chronicle Owain Glyndŵr is portrayed as seeking safety in the 'Berwyn mountains' when the king sent an army to Wales to 'destroy' the Welsh rebels.⁷⁷

The vocabulary used to describe the manner in which Owain and his followers occupied the landscape features of Wales is also telling.⁷⁸ Gildas' description of the Britons suggests that they were occupied by the Romans due to their disorganisation and cowardice in war. Repeated by Gerald of Wales, and then Ranulf Higden, the stereotype was still apparent at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Adam Usk claims that the king put Owain 'to flight' (*deportato*), and that they spent a year 'hiding away' (*detiliscere*).⁷⁹ Thomas Walsingham uses the verb *occupare* to describe the way that they inhabited the mountain of Snowdonia, which is translated as 'took to' in the edition, but could just as well mean occupied, or claimed.⁸⁰ The *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* describes how Owain Glyndŵr hid his face from the king in the caves and mountains (*abscondere*).⁸¹ The *Cronica de Kirkstall* portrays Owain and his followers as 'fleeing from place to place' (*fugare*) and eventually 'hiding in the mountains and dark forests' (*latitare*).⁸² John Streeche's chronicle, like Adam's, depicts the rebel leader as 'hiding' in the mountains, also using the verb *detiliscere*.⁸³ Finally, in the later chronicle, *Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, Owain was said to have 'escaped' into the woods, using the verb *ddiangawdd* in Welsh.⁸⁴ In these extracts, the vocabulary used insinuates that Owain Glyndŵr and his followers were cowardly.

The majority of the chronicle accounts of the outbreak of rebellion use similar language to describe rebel interactions with the landscape. Owain and his men are also portrayed as fleeing, hiding, and escaping. Both the utilisation of the landscape for defence and the rebels' cowardice in battle are reminiscent of the imagery used by Gildas, Gerald of Wales, and Ranulf Higden. The Welsh do not face the king in battle, preferring to flee or hide. They do not occupy castles, or fortified buildings,

⁷⁷ *Cronicl Elis Gruffydd Rhan I* NLW MS 3054iD, f. 285r. Translation by John K. Bollard, 'Elis Gruffydd, Chronicle' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 228-231.

⁷⁸ Aspects of the following discussion relating to Gildas and Bede are also discussed in my MA dissertation 'A New Perspective on Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle', pp. 18-20, 32-33.

⁷⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101. *Deportato* is could be translated as 'forced into exile'.

⁸⁰ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II pp. 304-305.

⁸¹ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 167-168. *Ipse autem Owynus Glyndor in speluncis et montibus Wallie a facie regis se abscondebat*. My own translation.

⁸² *Cronica de Kirkstall*, BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII, fol. 134v, '*De loco ad locu fugieus... montibus ut in silvis tenebrosis latitabat*'. My own transcription and translation.

⁸³ 'John Streeche's chronicle', BL Add MS 35295, fol. 264v, *sic in montibus detiil...* the hand is difficult to read here, but likely to mean 'hide'. My own transcription and translation.

⁸⁴ *Annales of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 150-151. Translation by J. E. Lloyd.

but rather cower in the natural structures within their terrain. If they camp there, if they have supplies or horses or armour, it is not mentioned. There are two possible explanations for the fact that the descriptions of the rebellion are so similar in fifteenth-century chronicles. Firstly, the narrative regarding the occupation of the Welsh could have been part of a wider discourse externally imposed on the Welsh identity. As Gildas said, the proverb regarding the Britons' cowardice in battle was known 'far and wide'.⁸⁵ Just like the image of the barefooted Welshman becoming a common way of representing Welsh identity from an external perspective, the description of their cowardice in warfare could equally have been well known. Therefore, when describing Owain Glyndŵr and his followers, the chroniclers may have unconsciously selected the imagery that was associated with Welsh interactions with their occupiers.

The second explanation highlights the fact that the fifteenth-century chronicles were part of the similar chronicle traditions in that they were Latin chronicles and some were *Polychronicon* continuations. Certain aspects of military behaviour and the outcome of the battle were considered to be enduring. In the opening stages of the rebellion there was no outright battle, and the rebels were not immediately successful, and thus they were portrayed as uncivilised and cowardly; this is the way that an unsuccessful army *ought* to behave. This description follows the imagery presented in the *Polychronicon* tradition. Chapter two of this work explored how Adam Usk created a local identity in the chronicle, presenting the rebellion as something unconnected to either his Welsh identity or his identity as a man from Usk, linking his status as a man from the March to his negative opinions to people in non-Marcher regions of Wales. In this way he was able to portray Owain Glyndŵr and his followers negatively. This highlights that the imagery was externally imposed on the rebels, and was derived either from a wider discourse, or from the *Polychronicon* tradition itself.

The fact that Adam Usk's local identity was tied to a Marcher lordship created conflict for him. Whilst there is no doubt that Adam was part of the Welsh community in Usk, rather than an English one, his allegiance and loyalty to the Mortimer family had a compelling influence over his attitude towards Owain Glyndŵr and the rebellion in Wales. In 1402, at the battle of Bryn Glas, Edmund Mortimer was taken prisoner by the rebels.⁸⁶ Edmund was uncle to a younger Edmund Mortimer, who had inherited his father's title of Earl of March. At a time when the Mortimer family were laying the foundations for a claim to the throne, Edmund Mortimer senior had considerable influence in

⁸⁵ Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, p. 18.

⁸⁶ Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 179.

areas of West England as well as in the Welsh Marches as his nephew was still a minor.⁸⁷ When Edmund Mortimer was taken prisoner, therefore, Henry IV refused to pay the ransom, despite having paid a considerable sum for the release of Reynold Grey of Ruthin earlier that year.⁸⁸ With no hope of a ransom (although there were rumours that Edmund Mortimer had been taken prisoner deliberately) Edmund Mortimer then defected to Owain Glyndŵr's cause and married the rebel leader's daughter Catherine to formally solidify their allegiance. Edmund remained an ally of the rebels until his death at Harlech castle in 1408.⁸⁹

By the time Edmund was captured in June 1402, Adam Usk had already left the British Isles for Rome, leaving his *Polychronicon* behind. He did not regain access to his book, and therefore his chronicle until 1414, so all reference to Edmund and his alliance with Owain Glyndŵr was written with hindsight.⁹⁰ This means, that while Adam's tone is sympathetic, he does not outrightly show support for Edmund's defection or for Owain Glyndŵr.⁹¹ Adam's own defection to the pope at Avignon, an ally of Owain Glyndŵr, in 1406/7, however, should be understood in this context. Whilst a range of factors were at play in this situation, as is discussed in the next chapter, the defection of Edmund followed by the Welsh bishop of Asaph, Siôn Trefor, in 1404, are likely to have unsettled Adam, and even challenged him to consider his own allegiances.⁹² As a Welshman from a Marcher lordship, the conflict between his desire to alleviate the subjugation he experienced as a Welshman clashed with his deeply held allegiance to the Mortimer family. When Edmund Mortimer joined Owain Glyndŵr's cause, Adam's loyalties would still have been conflicted, but it would certainly have made the decision easier for him.

Guerrilla tactics and the Glyndŵr rebellion

Whilst it is clear that Adam Usk's descriptions of the rebellion were based on a predefined set of stereotypes, aspects of the account were arguably factually accurate. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the rebels *did* utilise landscape features as part of their military tactics. From the perspective of the rebels, however, they were presented in a more positive light devoid of the

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 179-180.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 182.

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 179-184.

⁹⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xlvii-xlviii.

⁹¹ Adam Usk, pp. 158-161.

⁹² James Tait (revised by R. R. Davies), 'John Trevor [Siôn Trefor] (d. 1410/1412)', *ODNB*. Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 116.

negative cultural characteristics discussed so far. Indeed, in a poem written by Llywelyn ab y Moel, *I Goed y Graig Lwyd*, (*The Wood of the Grey Crag*, also known in English as *Praise of the Rebels' Lair*) written between 1410-1416, the poet praises both the rebel leader Owain Glyndŵr and the wood in which he sought refuge.⁹³ Llywelyn describes both the beauty and the security of the wood:

*Rhod o ddail, rhawd Wyddelig,
rhad Duw fry ar hyd dy frig!
Rhestrog fagadog ydwyd,
rhysfa, gwarwyfa gwŷr wyd.
Rhedynglos, diddos dyddyn*

*Circle of leaves, a wild plenty,
The grace of God be upon your branches!
You are arrayed in close ranks;
A fortification, a playground for men are you.
A bracken bower, a cozy cottage*⁹⁴

The wood described by Llywelyn is Craig Llanymynech, which in the modern day is situated only slightly east of the English/Welsh border and is part of Shropshire.⁹⁵ During the later years of the revolt, Llywelyn and other rebels hid in the wood, seeking to make money from the English locals through ransom.⁹⁶ This is seen in the second verse of the poem, Llywelyn describes ransoming 'an Englishman by stealth'.⁹⁷ In this verse the poet again describes the wood as a fortress.⁹⁸

Another poem by Llywelyn ab Y Moel, *I frwydr Waun Gaseg* (*The Battle of Waun Gaseg*), refers to another negative stereotype used against the Welsh, again in relation to their military interactions with the landscape.⁹⁹ The poet describes the morning of the battle. Owain's soldiers stand on the

⁹³ Llywelyn ab y Moel, 'I Goed y Graig Lwyd' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 132-133, translated by John K. Bollard. Joseph Clancy uses the title 'the wood of the Grey Crag' in his translation: Llywelyn ap y Moel, 'The Wood of the Grey Crag' in J. P. Clancy, *Medieval Welsh Lyrics* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 182-183.

⁹⁴ Llywelyn ab y Moel, 'I Goed y Graig Lwyd' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 132-133.

⁹⁵ John K. Bollard, 'Notes on *Praise of the Rebels' Lair*' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 358-361.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Llywelyn ab y Moel, 'I Goed y Graig Lwyd' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 132-133, translated by John K. Bollard.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Llywelyn ab y Moel, 'I frwydr Waun Gaseg' in *Gwaith Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd 'Sypyn Cyfeiliog' a Llywelyn ab y Moel*, (ed.) R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth: canolfan uwchfrydiau cymreig a cheltaidd prifysgol

hilltop, anticipating the arrival of their opponents. They are described as an organised, prepared force:

*Da'dd oeddem y dydd heddiw,
Deulu rhwydd, ar dâl y rhiw,
Arddyfrwys, pobl aur ddifreg,
Yn cychwyn o fryd tyn teg
Ar odde cael, arwydd cain
Mwya' chwedl am Owain.¹⁰⁰*

*We began quite well today,
Full warband, on a hilltop,
Mighty, men of flawless gold,
With splendid proud intentions,
Set on gaining, bright emblem,
For Owain the greatest fame.¹⁰¹*

The soldiers swear an oath not to flee during the battle but would instead fight for their famous leader. The poem recounts, however, that the army were overwhelmed and fled 'across nine brooks' and into the mountains where they hid and escaped their enemy.¹⁰²

It may seem strange that a Welshman would describe his experience as so intrinsically connected to nature, when the chronicles following the English tradition use the trope in such a negative way. For the Welsh rebels, however, it reflected the way that they approached the revolt militarily. This is seen in Adam's chronicle account of the rebellion in 1401:

Owen Glendower and several of the Welsh chieftains, whom the king regarded as traitors and outlaws from his kingdom, severely devastated West and North Wales, taking refuge in the mountains and

cymru/ center for advanced Welsh and Celtic studies at the University of Wales, 1998), pp. 94-95. In translation: Llywelyn ap y Moel, 'The Battle of Waun Gaseg' in *Medieval Welsh Lyrics*, (ed. and trans.) Joseph P. Clancy (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 183-185.

¹⁰⁰ Llywelyn ap y Moel, 'I frwydr Waun Gaseg' in *Gwaith Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd 'Sypyn Cyfeiliog' a Llywelyn ap y Moel*, p. 94.

¹⁰¹ Llywelyn ap y Moel, 'The Battle of Waun Gaseg' in *Medieval Welsh Lyrics*, p. 183.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 184-185.

*woodlands before emerging either to pillage or to slaughter those who tried to attack or ambush them.*¹⁰³

Adam depicts a similar mode of warfare to that described in *I Goed y Graig Lwyd*. Instead of describing the places that rebels were hiding as 'cosy' as seen in the poem, they were places of 'pillage' or 'slaughter'.¹⁰⁴ The style of warfare that was employed by the Welsh rebels was guerrilla in nature and generally relied upon surprise raids and targeted attacks rather than the battlefield, although the success of the Welsh rebels at Bryn Glas in 1402 is just one example of an exception to this standard practice. Quick and sporadic raids made the most of their main advantage over the English, whose military style consisted of heavily armed garrisons. In addition, the English had little to no specialist knowledge of the 'wild' areas of Wales. This is evident in *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, which claims that when Owain Glyndŵr emerged from his hiding place, and attacked Welshpool in 1401 he was able to cause a lot of damage to the town.¹⁰⁵ The diversity of terrains, and plurality of disconnected lordships also meant that cohesion of troops and communication of orders was limited, signifying that erratic, unpredictable raids were far more effective for the Welsh than field battles that required a higher degree of organisation and management.¹⁰⁶ The nature of small raids also enabled the rebels to cause maximum disruption with a limited number of followers, after which they could seemingly vanish into their mountain retreats with their plunder.¹⁰⁷ This is demonstrated in the extract above. Adam claims that the Welsh caused destruction to '*partes WestWalie et NorthWalie non modice*', before they retreated '*in montanis et siluestribus delitentes*'.¹⁰⁸

In addition to causing chaos and destruction during the sudden raids, the rebels also focused on taking prisoners for ransom. The rebel tactic of capturing and ransoming both high profile figures and ordinary citizens as a source of income to fund the revolt, proved to be lucrative and became more frequent towards the end of their campaign when the need to raise revenue to support the rebels was more pressing.¹⁰⁹ In a later insertion to the above extract from 1401, it is recorded that it was during this campaign that Lord Reynold Grey, who had been involved in the initial dispute that

¹⁰³ Adam Usk, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 134-135 '*in montanis et siluestribus delitentes, aliquando depredando, aliquando insidias et insultus eis inferentes interfeiciendo*'.

¹⁰⁵ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, p. 170; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 232.

¹⁰⁶ Davies, *Revolt*, p. 229.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-262.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁹ Davies, *Revolt*, p. 229.

lead to the rebellion, was captured and ransomed.¹¹⁰ On this occasion, Adam made a mistake with his chronology, which is unsurprising since he left England for Rome in the year that Reynold Grey was captured. Citing the correct year of 1402, Thomas Walsingham records that Reynold Grey expected Owain to arrive in Ruthin with a small force, and as a result left the safety of his castle and went to confront the rebels in order to subdue them. This, however, did not go to plan, and Reynold Grey was captured and then later ransomed.¹¹¹ According to Thomas Walsingham the 'defeat of the English stirred the pride of the Welsh and heightened their madness'.¹¹² Regardless of the psychological victory that the Welsh enjoyed, the financial gains were also something to be celebrated, with Reynold Grey's ransom bringing in up to ten thousand marks for the rebels.¹¹³

The rebels' urgency for materials to support their campaign was not only focused on the acquisition of financial provision. The robbing and pillaging undertaken by Owain and his followers was seemingly directed towards practical items that sustained their mountain accommodation. Arms, horses and tents were taken from the English army at Welshpool, which according to Adam were for the rebel's own use.¹¹⁴ Later in 1401, when the rebels again attacked Ruthin, Adam records that they looted 'many riches of the land, including the animals' which they then took away with them to Snowdonia.¹¹⁵ In 1403, with the king's attention drawn to suppressing the rebellion by the Percys. Owain Glyndŵr took the opportunity to cause devastation in Wales and 'taking enormous quantities of booty with him, he returned to the safety of the mountains of Snowdonia in the north of Wales'.¹¹⁶ The *Continuatio Eulogii* supports Adam Usk in this narrative, stating that they plundered the goods of the English, and it was this act that drew the king into Wales.¹¹⁷

It was not unusual in medieval warfare for those involved to seek financial gain from their military exploits, and it was not only rebels who sought economic rewards for their military endeavours.¹¹⁸ Adam describes events in Wales in 1402:

¹¹⁰ Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 134-135, fn. 2.

¹¹¹ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 316-317.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ 'Henry IV: September 1402.' *PROME*, article 13; Davies, *Revolt*, p. 233.

¹¹⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 144-145.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 146-149.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 172-173.

¹¹⁷ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 388; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 226.

¹¹⁸ R. Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 98.

*This year the king led a force of a hundred thousand men and more, in three divisions, to attack Owen in Wales, but Owen and his wretches remained in hiding in the caves and forests, so the king devastated the land and returned home in great pomp, taking with him an enormous booty in animals.*¹¹⁹

The reason for the king's pillaging in this extract undoubtedly came from a desire to demonstrate a form of victory over the rebels. Since he was denied the opportunity to face them in battle, he emulated a win over the Welsh in the destruction and confiscation of their possessions. Whilst the way that both groups pillaged is similar, their motivation in the examples in Adam's chronicle were different; the rebels were practical and sought to obtain items that would directly support their cause. The English, however, took with them a haul of animals with a large financial value to demonstrate victory over their absent enemy. Despite this, in both cases the looting was to support the outcomes of their different forms of warfare, with the English preferring a demonstration of their strength in order to boost finances and morale, compared to the more practical tactics displayed by the Welsh rebels.

Clearly then, Adam Usk's representation of the rebels as hiding in the mountains, waiting to lay siege to their enemies is based on the practical elements of medieval guerrilla warfare which the rebels employed. It can therefore be challenging to understand when Adam is being descriptive, formulaic, or using the wilderness as a metaphor. For the latter, the most explicit example occurs in 1408. He again uses mountains and caves to represent destitution, and an 'uncivilised' existence, but this time in reference to his own experiences. He claims that whilst he was trying to gain safe passage to his lord, Edward Charlton, Lord of Powys, in order to gain a pardon from the king, he had to spend some time 'pretending' to be a supporter of Owain Glyndŵr. Whilst waiting for Edward Charlton to return to Wales, Adam writes that:

*I hid away amongst the mountains and caves and woods and forests, hungry and thirsty, constantly afraid that I would be killed or captured or betrayed, and passing many sleepless nights in fear of attack from my enemies.*¹²⁰

It is unclear about how literal Adam is, when he claims that he passed his time hiding in nature, rather than manmade constructions. It seems unlikely, however, that this is more than a carefully selected turn of phrase, chosen to exaggerate the harshness and bleakness of his experience. In this extract the '*montibus, cauernis, fruticibus et siluestribus*' in which he hid are general, generic

¹¹⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 160-163.

¹²⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

concepts to support his narrative of desperation and destitution; he does not give specific details as to which mountains or caves he hid in, or any specific details about his accommodation in the woods and forests.

The narrative of interactions with the rural environment in Wales is paradoxical. On the one hand, the external descriptions of the rebels' behaviours were largely negative. The chronicles described the insurgents as 'hiding' and 'fleeing' into the landscape. The language suggests cowardice, and that Owain and his men were too afraid to face the king in battle. Instead, they disappeared into the remote corners of the Welsh landscape, merging with its remoteness and becoming wild themselves. On the other hand, the rebels used their intimate knowledge of their environment to their advantage. They were able to carry out raids and attacks quickly and efficiently, causing maximum chaos with minimal organisation or coordination. The sanctuary provided by the mountains and woods enabled this and some rebels saw their connection to their surroundings as a positive thing. Further to this, there is evidence that the rural landscape of mountains, caves, cliffs, caverns, and woods, were used as a metaphor for remoteness and hardship, which was promoted through the *Polychronicon* tradition of chronicle writing. Adam Usk was so convinced of this analogy, that he was able to apply it to his own experiences. It is thus clear, that the connection with wilderness and its benefits for guerrilla warfare was considered both a positive and a negative trait for Welsh people. For Adam Usk, who was writing a continuation of the *Polychronicon* and perpetuating an English historical narrative, the attribute was negative, and it is this that he projected on to the rebels in Wales.

Depictions of the English in accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion

Returning to the chronicle descriptions of the outbreak of rebellion, landscapes are a pertinent theme also in connection with the English identity. Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* presents the English as the civilised standard that the Welsh are able to achieve by altering their habits and customs. The English in the *Polychronicon* built castles in Wales to maintain the peace, and their stability meant that they were able to sustain control over the region.¹²¹ In all of the Latin chronicle accounts of the early fifteenth century, descriptions of Henry IV's army in Wales were subtly different from those of Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. Where the Welsh were described as

¹²¹ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 404.

inhabiting the landscape, the English were depicted as interacting exclusively with urban environments.

This is reflected in chronicle accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion. When Henry IV first heard about the rebellion, for example, he entered Wales to try to suppress the insurrection before it was able to take hold. As such, it is possible to compare how the chroniclers described the urban environments connected to the English king and the English. In Adam Usk's account of the outbreak, he notes that the king heard the news of the rebellion when he was at Leicester. After describing how the king entered North Wales, he says that he then went to Shrewsbury with his captives.¹²² The *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* also states this; the king was at Leicester when he heard the news of the outbreak. After entering Wales, but failing to meet the rebels in battle, the king set out for Worcester, stopping at Shrewsbury on the way.¹²³ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* confirms the places the king passed through in England, but claims that the king returned to England not having faced the rebels, and therefore disagrees with Adam Usk that there were captives.¹²⁴ Despite the discrepancies, both accounts agree that the English king, when in England, interacted predominantly with urban environments. The towns, which were places of commerce, trade, civilization and power, were the backdrop to his movements within England.

Chronicle accounts of the outbreak of rebellion in 1400 used similar language to describe the rebels fleeing and hiding. The chroniclers once again show a lexical unity in the way that they describe the king's movements to and from Wales, but in this case, they use more neutral terms. For Adam Usk, the king gathered his army and led (*dirigere*) his young warriors into Wales, and upon his return he again led (*ducere*) his captives to Shrewsbury.¹²⁵ Thomas Walsingham also agrees that the king gathered an army before 'invading' Wales (*Walliam est ingressus*). After failing to fight Owain Glyndŵr, the king destroyed the land, before returning to England (*Angliam est regressus*).¹²⁶ The translation of 'invade', as found in the edition, is a little more loaded than Thomas Walsingham's description. When the two actions of crossing between England and Wales are placed side by side, it is clear that 'entered' would be more accurate, taking a similar connotation to the opposite

¹²² Adam Usk, pp. 100-101.

¹²³ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, pp. 167-168.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101. Given-Wilson translates '*ipsorum tamen principales secum Salopiam ducens captivos*' as 'and taking their chieftains away with him as captives to Shrewsbury'.

¹²⁶ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 304-305.

'returned'. The notion of entering and returning is repeated in *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*. The chronicler describes how the king sets out from Leicester (*egredior*) and enters Wales (*intrare*). When the king was unable to find Owain Glyndŵr, he returned (*revertor*) to Shrewsbury.¹²⁷ There is a clear difference between the verbs used for Owain and his followers and for Henry IV. The rebels were described as fleeing, hiding, and escaping. Henry and his army were characterised in more matter-of-fact terms such as entering, returning, and leading. The terminology used by the chroniclers creates a power balance between the two warring factions; Henry's movements are portrayed impartially as he seeks to subdue Owain, but Owain is cowardly, fleeing to the mountains and avoiding punishment. It is clear who is being portrayed as militarily dominant, and who is not.

The English, however, were not only seen as inhabiting towns in England, but also urban areas in Wales. Adam writes in 1400, '[Owain Glyndŵr] had seized numerous castles, and was everywhere plundering and burning the towns inhabited by the English who lived amongst them, and forcing the English to flee'.¹²⁸ It is not clear from Adam's description which castles and towns he is talking about. Adam instead uses the motif to demonstrate that symbols representing Englishness were the focus of Owain Glyndŵr's attacks. The phrase 'who lived amongst them' leads to some ambiguity as to whether Adam is insinuating that towns and castles were primarily 'English spaces'.¹²⁹ It is possible that Adam meant that towns were places of mixed occupancy, but that only the English had to flee from the rebels. If Owain Glyndŵr were sacking and burning the towns, however, it is likely that all the occupants would have had to flee. As a result, Adam presents the towns as primarily English places, disrupting the 'Welshness' of the landscape with civilised structures designated for the English in Wales.

Other chronicles also explain that towns were the focus of the rebels' attacks. The *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, for example, claims that 'English towns' were attacked in the outbreak of rebellion, namely Conway, Ruthin and Oswestry and other towns, some of which had protective walls, and some without.¹³⁰ The focus of the Welsh attacks on towns is mentioned again in 1402, when Adam describes the capture of Edmund Mortimer, and the successes of the Welsh in that year, as he claims that the rebels 'burned the towns' throughout the march of Wales.¹³¹ The violence

¹²⁷ *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, p. 168. Translation my own.

¹²⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 100-101.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 175.

¹³¹ Adam Usk, pp. 158-161.

towards towns is corroborated by Thomas Walsingham's narrative of the revolt. In 1405 he recorded that the French, who had come to the aid of the rebel leader, urged Owain Glyndŵr to attack the town of Carmarthen. When the rebels did this, the town surrendered. The townspeople then received 'letters patent from Owain, which allowed them freely, and without having to pay compensation, to depart to other of the king's lands in Wales, or in England if they preferred'.¹³² The *Cronica de Kirkstall* also notes that the English were the target of Owain's attacks. It states that the English were killed, the towns were burnt, and the castles were seized.¹³³ The chronicler notes that the level of destruction against the English 'is not easy to recount'.¹³⁴ In a plea to the King's Bench at Shrewsbury in 1401, the towns of Denbigh, Rhuddlan, Flint, Hawarden and Holt are described as 'English towns' (*villas... anglicanas*). The plea states, that along with the town of Ruthin, these towns bore the brunt of Owain Glyndŵr's violence during the early days of the rebellion.¹³⁵

This is perhaps not surprising. Anglo-Norman towns in Wales, sometimes referred to as English 'plantation boroughs', were originally built or developed as a way of occupying and pacifying Wales during the Anglo-Norman invasion, and 'civilizing' the native Welsh population in the years after.¹³⁶ As the towns became less militarily significant after the conquest, many retained their function as places of trade and commerce.¹³⁷ They ultimately provided both financial and seigneurial power to the foreign lord and his administration, denying such privileges to the Welsh people and their own structures of power and urbanisation.¹³⁸ In the early phase of town building, they were predominantly English spaces, with the Welsh population sometimes officially excluded from the rights and privileges granted to the English people who lived there.¹³⁹ Indeed, particularly in North Wales in the lands governed by the Crown, it was not uncommon for arrests or removal of rights of Welsh people, who were even described as 'foreigners' in the English borough towns of Wales.¹⁴⁰ Some Marcher Lords divided their lordships into 'Englishries' and 'Welshries', with the English administrative region designated to the prospering lowlands, and the Welsh settlements in the rural

¹³² Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 462-465.

¹³³ '*Cronica de Kirkstall*', BL Cotton MS Domitian A XII, fol. 134v, '*quot anglos per vicis occidit quot villas cremant et quot castella cepit*' transcription and translation my own.

¹³⁴ Ibid. '*destruxit non facile est enarrare*' my own transcription and translation.

¹³⁵ *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench*, pp. 114-116.

¹³⁶ Matthew Stevens, *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales*, pp. 7-12; Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 372, p. 375.

¹³⁷ Stevens, *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales*, p. 15; K. Lilley, C. Lloyd and S. Trick, 'Designs and designers of medieval 'new towns' in Wales', *Antiquity* 81 (2007), 279, 284

¹³⁸ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 373.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, pp. 433-434; Matthew Frank Stevens, 'Towards a Characterization of 'Race Law' in Medieval Wales', *The Journal of Legal History*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2020), 303.

uplands, disenfranchising the Welsh population.¹⁴¹ Despite this, by the fourteenth century, one in six people living in urban areas in Wales were Welsh, and towns were increasingly seen as places of intersection, not just between English and Welsh communities, but between the local lord and his subjects regardless of nationality.¹⁴² Due to the fragmentation of Wales, it is challenging to generalise about the experience of Welsh people in medieval towns in Wales as each individual town in each individual lordship developed along a unique course based on the economic priorities of the respective governing elite.¹⁴³ By the Glyndŵr rebellion, however, towns could still be described as spheres of English power, even if they were places where Welsh people lived and traded.

Despite the presentation of towns as 'English' spaces created in the chronicles of the revolt, research has demonstrated that in reality the towns in Wales were places of contact between the English and Welsh. This opposes the narrative presented in the chronicles, which portrays ethnic and social tensions between the English and Welsh in towns. In addition, there is little evidence to suggest that either the English or Welsh were confined to either urban areas or the rural landscape surrounding them.¹⁴⁴ The notion that the sometimes walled boundary of the town was a divider between the English living inside, and the Welsh outsiders simplifies the reality of the complex relationship between the English, and the Welsh and their towns.¹⁴⁵ Despite the initial purpose of the towns as English strongholds in a hostile, conquered landscape, even from the birth of Edward I's new towns, there is evidence of Welsh inhabitants contributing to the success of the towns and even went on to hold office, become burgesses, and obtain property in both rural and urban settings.¹⁴⁶ For example, when Harlech received its charter in 1325, the position of mayor was held by Hywel Goch, a Welshman, and by the last quarter of the fourteenth century, it was becoming common for Welshmen in Carmarthen to hold the positions of mayor, reeve or bailiff.¹⁴⁷ There was intermarriage between the English and the Welsh, and an exchange of traditions and cultures, such as adopting patronymic naming system for the children of immigrants, or anglicising Welsh names.¹⁴⁸ This would

¹⁴¹ Stevens, *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales*, p. 20.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 15.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Clarke, 'Place, Identity and Performance', 263. Also see: R. A. Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994) p. 163.

¹⁴⁵ Clarke, 'Place, Identity and Performance', 265.

¹⁴⁶ Griffiths, 'The study of the Medieval Welsh Borough', p. 163.

¹⁴⁷ R. A. Griffiths, 'Who were the townsfolk of Medieval Wales?' in *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales*, (ed.) H. Fulton (University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 13. Also see: Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁸ Griffiths, 'Who were the townsfolk of Medieval Wales?', p. 13.

have allowed both the English and the Welsh to move more fluidly and effectively within a space defined by its pluralism and ethnic diversity.

One must be careful, however, not to create an idealised image of Welsh towns as places of harmony and integration. Whilst the Welsh were certainly not exclusively rural, the town as a point of connection and interchange created tension between the English and the Welsh, and has partly been blamed for the creation of pressure within the Welsh community that eventually led to the Glyndŵr rebellion. Indeed, there were certainly areas of the towns that were inhabited by the Welsh and English inhabitants almost exclusively.¹⁴⁹ The *Continuatio Eulogii* portrays an element of this divide in events of 1404. The writer claims that in this year Owain Glyndŵr took the town of Cardiff, and destroyed the majority of the town with fire. He did, however, save one area of the town in which the Minorite Friars lived, because the order had shown support for Owain's cause previously.¹⁵⁰ Ironically, the Friars had placed many of their valuable items in the castle for safe keeping, which Owain destroyed.¹⁵¹ This demonstrates the complexity of groups and loyalties in towns that generally are not represented in chronicle narratives of the revolt. It is instead more common to see a simplified image of ethnic relations in Wales in order to support a narrative of the English against the Welsh with the English the occupiers of towns, which the 'uncivilised Welsh' fought against. This simplicity reflects descriptions of the Welsh in earlier works which portrayed them as being less technologically advanced than the English.

In the same way that images of wilderness were both part of a derogatory discourse, and a reflection of reality, so too were castles in the descriptions of Wales. It is hardly surprising that castles in Wales appear frequently in Adam Usk's narrative of military events. The conquest of Wales by Edward I in the thirteenth century included two phases of castle building, which left the landscape littered with the military constructions in the most strategic points in Wales.¹⁵² Within the field of castle studies, there has been some debate as to the exact purpose of castles. For earlier castles, such as Conway, there is no doubt that their original and primary function was for security and military domination. Castles were, however, multifunctional spaces, with design and

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.; Clarke, 'Place, Identity and Performance', 256-272.

¹⁵⁰ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 401. The writer of the *Continuatio Eulogii* claims that when the king tried to enter Wales in 1401, he was resisted by the Minorite Friars from the convent of Llanfaes; *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 389; Translation in: Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 226-229.

¹⁵¹ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 401; translation in: Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 228.

¹⁵² Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 358.

architecture also allowing for the performance of residential and administrative functions, which had become the more dominant roles of peace-time castles by the late fourteenth century.¹⁵³ In addition to this, castles were also symbols of power stamped onto the landscape by the local lord, who was not only marking his territory in a martial manner, but also demonstrating his seigniorial status.¹⁵⁴ In Wales the multitude of castles was undoubtedly an initial response to military need, but by the early fifteenth century the parliament rolls reveal the neglect of fortifications, as parliament was urged to compel Marcher Lords to properly repair and equip their castles with appropriate defences and manpower to provide protection against the rebels.¹⁵⁵ Adam Usk comments on the results in 1401, noting that 'throughout Wales, defences were strengthened with walls and ditches'.¹⁵⁶ Evidently, there was an issue with some castles in fourteenth-century Wales not being maintained to a standard required to perform a military function.

During the Glyndŵr rebellion, the need to repair castles was urgent. In Adam Usk's narrative of the rebellion, the castle was frequently the focal point of military action and demonstrates the technological superiority of the English. In 1401, he records how William ap Tudor and Rhys ap Tudor, disgruntled by the king's refusal to grant them a pardon for the part they had played in the uprising, went to Conway Castle with their men and took it by stealth.¹⁵⁷ These two rebels were acting on their own accord, rather than with Owain Glyndŵr, who was at this point in hiding as an outlaw.¹⁵⁸ According to Adam, one of the men gained access to the castle by pretending to be a carpenter, because at this time the castle was well defended. The rebels took the castle as a 'stronghold', a place of protection.¹⁵⁹ For Adam, the most shameful thing that occurred during this episode was that once the castle was besieged, instead of giving their own lives, the two Tudor brothers bound nine of their men whilst they were sleeping and handed them over to the besiegers, to be 'firstly drawn, and then disembowelled, hanged, beheaded, and quartered' whilst the Tudors simply stood and watched.¹⁶⁰ *The Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey* also records this episode. The

¹⁵³ A. Parkyn and T. McNeill 'Regional Power and Profits of War: The East Range of Warwick Castle, *Archaeological Journal* 169:1 (2012), 482.

¹⁵⁴ C. Coulson, 'Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture' in *Late Medieval Castles*, (ed.) R. Liddiard (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), pp. 199-220. Also: Parkyn and McNeill 'Regional Power and Profits of War', 481-483.

¹⁵⁵ 'Henry IV: January 1401', *PROME*, article 104; 'Henry IV: October 1404', *PROME*, article 32; 'Henry IV: October 1407', *PROME*, article 25.

¹⁵⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 144-145.

¹⁵⁷ Adam Usk, p. 128-129.

¹⁵⁸ J. E. Lloyd, *Owain Glyndŵr*, 2nd edn., (Bangor: Cockatrice Books, 2019) pp. 38-39; Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 37.

¹⁵⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 128-129.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

chronicle dates it as 1400. Even though the dates of the event do not match, the two narratives are similar in content. They only differ in the way that the Welsh entered the castle, with the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey* claiming that there were only two English guards on duty at the time, as the others were all in church.¹⁶¹ Whilst the Welsh were able to take the castle, in each case it was hardly a moment of military might or prowess. The objective of the rebels was to gain control of a military building, thus reducing the level of English control, and they did this by whatever means necessary. On the one hand, accounts of this event represent the factual experience. It is likely that the Tudor brothers did take the castle by stealth because they did not have the military strength to take it by force. On the other hand, the fact that the rebels were ultimately unsuccessful led to their actions being portrayed as amoral and chaotic.

When the rebellion eventually came to the town of Usk in 1405, Adam describes how the rebels attacked the castle there, which having been strengthened, the defenders were successful against the rebels. According to Adam Usk, Owain Glyndŵr's men were then driven away from the town and across the river Usk.¹⁶² Thomas Walsingham also records this event, but simply states that a battle was fought at Usk, with fifteen hundred rebels captured or killed, but with no mention of the castle.¹⁶³ This is also the case for the *Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, the fifteenth-century Welsh chronicle, which claims that there was a 'slaughter of the Welsh' during this battle.¹⁶⁴ The number of casualties suffered by the rebels at Usk has been disputed, but it was certainly a victory for the English, who were at that time undertaking a strategic military advance through Wales with the hope of suppressing the rebellion. A number of key rebel leaders were removed at Usk, such as Owain's kinsmen, Tudor ap Gruffydd, who was killed, and Gruffydd ab Owain, who was captured.¹⁶⁵ Again, the sophistication of the military technology used by the enemies of the rebels gave them the upper hand. The fact that the defences had been improved demonstrated the organisation of the occupants of the castle. For Adam Usk, this led to their success in both a practical and ideological sense.

Adam Usk's narrative is centred around castles, perhaps because castles played such an important role in the rebellion. After all, they were the focal point of English military control in Wales, so it was

¹⁶¹ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p.175 and fn. 1.

¹⁶² Adam Usk, pp. 212-213.

¹⁶³ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 434-435.

¹⁶⁴ 'The Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr', p.147.

¹⁶⁵ Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 116 and p. 152.

natural for an account of the revolt to take place around them. Despite this, the Welsh achievements related to taking castles were limited; they failed to take even lightly fortified castles, and those that they did manage to seize were rarely held for any notable period of time.¹⁶⁶ Whilst castles play a role in constructing the story of the revolt in both *Annals Glyn Dŵr* and *the chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, Thomas Walsingham only mentions them occasionally. This indicates that there was an element of selection in the way that the chroniclers chose to portray events in order to construct a narrative that reflected the character of the Welsh or Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. In each case Adam Usk demonstrates that castles were spaces that belonged fundamentally to the English, and were thus attacked or seized by the rebels. This can also be read in the light that castles were not merely military buildings, they were also symbolic; they were a motif of power, advancement, sophistication, and civilisation. This imagery returns to expected behaviour during battles, which had implications for their outcomes. In the case of the Conway Castle, the attackers tricked their way into the castle, whilst the guards were attending church. They ultimately lost possession of the castle, which was perhaps a consequence of their immoral behaviour. In the case of Usk castle in 1405, the walls had been strengthened. This level of organisation had a direct influence over the outcome of the battle both in a practical sense, and also in a moral sense. It is likely that Adam Usk was particularly sensitive to this imagery because he perceived himself as being a member of the Welsh community.

Owain Glyndŵr's own residence, however, indicates that grand fortified houses and castles were not only occupied by the 'English'. Indeed, the fact that Adam Usk was himself born in the gatehouse of Usk castle, shows the level at which Welshmen interacted with the spaces. In fact, castles built by Edward I and his successors were not the only castles in Wales. Before the military campaigns in Wales under Edward I, Welsh lords and princes had equal need for defensive and administrative structures, building not only their own courts, but also their own stone castles, with the highest concentration built by the princes of Gwynedd.¹⁶⁷ Despite this, these castles did not feature heavily in the Welsh narrative of their landscape. The thirteenth century poets barely mention them, preferring instead to refer to more ancient or religious structures, rather than the new imposing buildings that were modernising the landscape.¹⁶⁸ To the poets they were symbols of modernity and did not complement their desire to present a classic image of Wales. Indeed, Welsh terminology, as

¹⁶⁶ Davies, *Revolt*, p. 236.

¹⁶⁷ D. F. Evans, 'Castle and Town in Medieval Wales' in *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales*, (ed.) H. Fulton (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 185.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

seen in the works of the thirteenth century poets, such as *castell* and *caer* were used to refer to both native and English castles, which suggest that the two were not viewed as distinct entities by the people living there.¹⁶⁹

With this in mind, it is evident that the sophistication of buildings as an English phenomenon was an externally imposed stereotype onto Wales and the Welsh people. In Welsh descriptions of their own landscape, buildings were often portrayed as markers of sophistication. One of the most notable descriptions of a grand Welsh house during the period covered by Adam's chronicle, is found in Iolo Goch's poem *Llys Glyndŵr* (Owain Glyndŵr's Court), in which the poet describes the rebel leaders' house at Sycharth.¹⁷⁰ The poem, written during the 1380s or 1390s, describes many of the luxurious aspects of the house, including an orchard, a vineyard, a fair mill and dovecote, not to mention fishponds, peacocks, a rabbit park, and a deer park.¹⁷¹ Archaeological findings on the site determine that many of the features of the great house, as described by Iolo Goch, did really exist rather than simply being poetic embellishments, including the deer park.¹⁷² The aspects described by Iolo Goch were indicators of Owain Glyndŵr's social status, with deer and rabbit parks serving more than an agricultural function; they were symbols of status, with deer in the royal parks reserved for the king, and many of the more established deer parks being owned by more prosperous noblemen.¹⁷³ Since Owain Glyndŵr was Iolo Goch's patron, it is not surprising that Iolo Goch presents the house at Sycharth as refined and opulent, demonstrating Owain Glyndŵr's affluence. It is, however, notable that symbols of distinction that Iolo Goch highlights, would be similar to those used by nobility in England to highlight wealth and status. Clearly, the other narratives of the revolt support the idea seen in Adam Usk's chronicle, that the towns and castles in Wales were primarily English places. In the narratives, the English are the clear targets of Owain Glyndŵr's aggression, and the towns and castles were the natural places to focus military attacks.

Conclusion

To conclude, Adam Usk's account of the Glyndŵr rebellion is similar in many ways to those written by his English contemporaries. He appears to embrace the imagery and stereotypes that were

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 186-187.

¹⁷⁰ 'The Book of Huw Llyn', BL Add MS 14967, fols. 17r-17v.

¹⁷¹ Iolo Goch, '*Llys Glyndŵr*', *Iolo Goch: Poems*, pp. 38-44. Also Wiles, 'Owain Glyndŵr's Peacocks', 25-26.

¹⁷² Wiles, 'Owain Glyndŵr's Peacocks', 28.

¹⁷³ J. Birrell, 'Deer and Deer Farming in Medieval England', *The Agricultural History Review* 40:2 (1992), 114.

traditionally applied to the Welsh in English historical accounts, even if he takes care to only use them against Owain Glyndŵr and his followers. Just as the previous chapter explored how Adam Usk could express Welshness within the English framework, this chapter has demonstrated how English portrayals of the Welsh in history influenced Adam's own accounts.

The notion of English versus the Welsh is too simplistic, and understanding the imagery in chronicles as purely allegorical is inadvisable. Simultaneously, the analysis in this chapter has stressed that aspects of certain stereotypes and imagery were based on 'factual' information, in that they reflected the real behaviour or motivations of the players. Owain Glyndŵr and his men, for example, undertook their military campaign in the style of guerrilla warfare. As such, they took advantage of their knowledge of the challenging terrain to gain an advantage over their opponents. This style of warfare meant that they used the landscape as a form of defence in a way that their opponents did not. In addition, whilst there is an overemphasis on the extent to which castles and towns were 'English' spaces in the chronicles, it is certainly true that Owain Glyndŵr and his followers attacked these places as part of their military campaign. The fact that there was accurate information reported in the accounts, however, does not mean that they should be taken as 'fact'. In the writing of chronicle accounts, there is always an aspect of selection about what information would be presented, and how it would be presented. In some cases, it is possible that a piece of imagery in a chronicle account could be both factual as well as symbolic.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this chapter has analysed Adam Usk's descriptions of the Glyndŵr rebellion in the context of the *Polychronicon* tradition. The Welsh identity was clearly established by Ranulf Higden, who looked to Gerald of Wales as his main source of information. In this way, many aspects of the Welsh identity were circulated and repeated. The Welsh people were connected to the wildness of their landscape, portrayed as less sophisticated than the English, and their subjugation was described as a result of their cowardice in warfare. The extent to which this imagery is seen in the early fifteenth-century chronicles suggests that its reproduction was not a coincidence. As such, care should be taken when describing this discourse and imagery as 'English'. The fact that it originated in Gerald of Wales' work, but was repeated by Ranulf Higden, demonstrates that this was not an entirely 'English' production. Certainly, it is an external construction of the Welsh identity, which is derogatory, and demeaning, and was undoubtedly part of the English discourse of the Welsh identity. By following the English framework of British history, Adam Usk repeated the 'universal truths' surrounding both the Welsh military practices and their

character. Based on this, it is challenging to fully understand how Adam felt about the rebellion. On the one hand, he was extremely derogatory about it, but on the other hand he joined Owain's allies in France after losing favour with the English king. In the next chapter, I explore in more detail how Adam Usk's views on the rebellion, and his relationship with the ruling elite in Britain were influenced not by his cultural status, but his political and legal identity.

Chapter Four

Legal and Political Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle: subjects, denizens and foreigners

In 1413, Henry IV passed away. His eldest son, 'Henry..., prince of Wales, duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester, who was born in Monmouth in Wales... was crowned'.¹ He was young, wise, and virtuous; 'a changed man, dedicated to honour, propriety, and dignity of demeanour'.² Whilst his character and virtue were befitting of a king, his coronation day did not run entirely to plan. The day itself was marked by exceptional weather conditions. Beginning on the day of the coronation and for the next two days, snow, hailstorms, and excessive rain prevailed.³ The mountains were covered in snow. Men, animals, and houses were buried even in the valleys and fenland. Many people died.⁴ Some interpreted the snow as a bad omen; the severe conditions surely meant that Henry would be a 'callous', 'harsh' king, whose reign would be marked by 'turbulence' and instability. According to the chronicler, Thomas Walsingham, other people 'rather more wisely', saw it as a positive sign, 'saying that the king would make the snows and frosts of vices in the kingdom disappear'.⁵

All eyes were on the new king, questioning what kind of ruler he would be. His father had died, leaving the kingdom in a state of instability and financial hardship. Wars persisted in France, Wales, and Scotland. The Crown was losing revenue; lands devastated by the rebellion in Wales and the border counties required tax exemptions.⁶ The cost of maintaining soldiers, forts, and equipment was a constant issue.⁷ The new king needed to make a statement, a demonstration of how he

¹ Continuatio Eulogii, p. 421. My own translation, *Et Henricus primogenitus, princeps Walliae, dux Cornubiae, comes Cestriae, natus apud Monnemouth in Wallia... apud Westmonasterium coronatur.*

² Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 620-621; Adam Usk, pp. 242-243, 'a most admirable youth, full of wisdom and virtue'; *Gesta Henrici*, pp. 2-3, 'When, young in years but old in experience, he began his reign, like the true elect of God savouring the things that are above, he applied his mind with all devotion to encompass what could promote the honour of God, the extension of the Church...'

³ 'The Chronicle of John Strecche for the Reign of Henry V (1414-1422)', (ed.) Frank Taylor, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 16:1 (1932), 146-147. My own translation *Verumtamen in die coronacionis Henrici regis V et per duos dies continue sequentes nix cum gradine ita cecidit et copia tanta pluviarum quanta vel quails a diebus Leyer,...;*

⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 242-243.

⁵ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 618-621.

⁶ Helen Watt, 'On account of the frequent attacks and invasions of the Welsh': The Effect of the Glyn Dwr Rebellion on Tax Collection in England' in *The Reign of Henry IV: rebellion and survival, 1403-1413*, (eds.) Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2008), pp. 48-77.

⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 144-145; *CPR: Henry IV 1405-1408*, p. 114, 145.

intended to reign. According to Adam Usk, Henry made his mark as king by raising money to solve the problems in his kingdom. At the banquet following the coronation, it was proclaimed that all criminals would be pardoned, even those accused of treason. The criminals simply had to sue 'for letters of grace before the feast of St John the Baptist'. This was not an act of mercy but a money-raising venture; those seeking pardons would have to pay for the privilege.⁸ In the parliament immediately following the coronation, the new king taxed both the laity and the clergy, and 'doubled all the payments customarily made at the beginning of a reign.'⁹ In Adam's account of the early days of Henry V's rule, he records that Henry 'issued a decree against the Welsh and Irish ordering them all to go back to their own countries, demanding large sums of money from them for licences to remain'.¹⁰

Out of the chronicles that cover this period, Adam's is the only one to mention the expulsion of the Welsh and Irish. It is logical that he took such an interest in the matter because the decree had direct implications for Adam himself. The patent rolls of 1413 record a list of Welshmen seeking permission to reside in England as a result of the decree. A range of people from different backgrounds sought this consent. There are numerous clerks, like William Newport, Hugh Walter, and David Pryce. Vicars and parsons are also represented in the list. Philip Smyth, a barber, John Gruffyth, a tailor, John Tyler, a 'whittawyer', David Conewey, a draper, and Llewelin Couper, a brewer, all paid a fee to continue living in England. Only two names on the list did not have an amount paid next to their names; William Chyld and Master Adam Usk, clerk.¹¹ In the chronicle, Adam Usk does not appear offended or even irritated by the legislation. He instead portrays it as a simple money-making exercise, undertaken by a new king attempting to raise revenue to support the realm.

This chapter addresses the changing political environment that led to Adam Usk's name appearing on this list. Indeed, being so explicitly defined as Welsh could be conceived as contradictory, particularly since Adam has been described as 'a Welshman by blood and tongue and an Englishman by career advancement as a clerk and ecclesiast'.¹² It is Adam's Welsh identity that is most

⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 242-243. According to Usk, the king 'received a great deal of money' for the letters. Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, p. 243, fn 5.

⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 244-245.

¹⁰ Ibid. This was not a new statute, but a decree to uphold a statute made in 1404, by his father Henry IV. 'Henry IV: January 1404,' *PROME*, articles 26-29; 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 15; For the pardoning of criminals see: 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 18. For the expulsion of Irishmen, Ibid., article 39.

¹¹ *CPR: Henry V 1413-1416*, p. 122.

¹² Michael Livingston, 'Adam of Usk, *Chronicle, Part 1*' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 306-307.

commonly cited as a stumbling block for his career, particularly against the backdrop of the rebellion in Wales.¹³ Adam Usk was certainly keen to work in England, and to gain promotion there, but these plans were never realised. In previous chapters aspects of Adam Usk's Welsh cultural identity have been discussed. The aim of this chapter, however, is to contextualise his experience in terms of his Welsh legal and political identity, terms which are discussed in more detail below.

Indeed, despite Adam Usk's lack of reaction in 1413, the decree must have been unsettling. His earlier life was characterised by his ability to move freely between England and Wales. It should be noted that Adam would have been legally defined as Welsh his entire life as a result of the prevailing nature of the laws first passed by Edward I in 1282. Despite this, before the Glyndŵr rebellion in 1400, there is no evidence that he was affected by any of these regulations. During this period, Adam Usk experienced a range of opportunities. He studied in Oxford under the patronage of his lord, Roger Mortimer, for example, and worked for many years in the court of Arches under the Archbishop of Canterbury. He earned an income from benefices in England and provided legal counsel to a number of leading figures in England including Henry IV.¹⁴ There is a wide gulf between his opportunities under Richard II and having to seek permission to live in England under Henry V. The intervening period of Henry IV's reign was fractured by the Glyndŵr rebellion, an event that would ultimately redefine the Welsh political identity. The years of Henry IV's reign saw a recategorization of the Welsh in terms of their relationship with the Crown; the rights and privileges that they once enjoyed were restricted and their status redefined. The Welsh were no longer marginalised based only on their cultural identity, but a distinct 'political identity' was shaped through parliamentary decrees, and other legal avenues. The difference between the English and Welsh was defined in tangible legislation. The power relationship between the dominant English and subordinate Welsh, was prescribed in unambiguous terms during this period.

Political identity as a concept incorporates a number of complex and frequently conflicting aspects. The provisions and sustenance of political structures, such as the king, his parliament, and his courts has been expressed most succinctly in the term 'political culture', which Ruddick defines as 'the conventions, values and assumptions that inform and condition political activity (both consciously and unconsciously) in a given time and place, and the repertoire of language and media used to

¹³ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxv.

¹⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 41-49

express them'.¹⁵ The 'conventions, values and assumptions', have been rationalised as constitutional frameworks, both written and unwritten, formal and informal, through which aspects of daily life and activity were regulated.¹⁶ This is combined with an aspect of ethnicity and heritage. An individual's legal status in England was defined by their lineage, with the parliament rolls often referring to an individual's bloodline to determine their involvement or exclusion from political structures.¹⁷

In this chapter, the concepts of 'political' and 'legal' identity are closely related. In the Middle Ages, there was a belief that the world was made up of different 'peoples', defined not only by their place of origin, but by their traditions, customs, habits, and laws. Indeed, Rees Davies wrote 'People and law were life's weft and warp; to attack the one was to call the other into question'.¹⁸ This was not least the case for Wales. The fragmentation of Wales and the March both pre- and post-conquest created an environment where Welsh law could not be considered a single, consistent entity. Despite the regional variation, however, the fact that Welsh people were not governed by the laws of England was a unifying factor that allowed Wales and the Welsh to be understood as a single identity. This was in addition to the *Cyfraith Hywel* (laws of Hywel Dda) which applied to the whole of Wales, although it is not clear exactly what that meant.¹⁹ For the English, the Welsh character and customs were interwoven with their native laws, and even after the conquest, the Welsh people were granted the right to continue living by their own laws so long as they did not impede the authority of the Crown.²⁰ This created a system of legal pluralism in Wales, where the English lived by one set of laws and the Welsh by another. To further complicate matters, the Welsh Marches, which were outside the control of the Crown, were permitted to create their own laws. This resulted in a blend of English and Welsh legal practices in these regions, and there is evidence to suggest that Welsh law was maintained where customary levies or payments benefitted the lord. The application

¹⁵ Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 21. Also see: John Watts, *The Making of Polities: Europe, 1300-1500*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 129-131; Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 100-1400* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 169-197.

¹⁶ Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 22; Michael Hicks, *English and Political Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 22-27.

¹⁷ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Identities', p. 6.

¹⁸ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Law', p. 11.

¹⁹ Sara Elin Roberts, *The Growth of Law in Medieval Wales, c.1100-c.1500* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2022), pp. 4-5. See chapter 3 for the discussion of two manuscripts.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 9; Davies, 'Presidential Address: Law', p. 21; for a fifteenth century Welsh version of the statute see: 'Statud Rhuddlan, fifteenth century', NLW Peniarth MS 41.

of native or customary law was rarely to the benefit of the Welsh person and added an additional layer to the discrimination and subjugation of the Welsh.²¹

In this chapter, legal status and identity is considered as an important aspect of political identity. As a result of the fragmentation and regional application of legal practices in Wales, the status of 'Welsh' would have had different implications for each individual.²² Political identity, however, acknowledges the relationship between a people and the ruling elite beyond what was set out in legal documents. It incorporates not only the xenophobic subjugation enacted through law, but the complex mesh of loyalty, obligation, and power relations between the governing elite and the peoples they governed. Political frameworks had the power to enfranchise or disenfranchise based upon concepts of belonging or 'foreignness' and directly related to geographical spheres of power. The Welsh people from the time of the conquest in the thirteenth century, for example, were subjects of the English Crown; as a result of their non-Englishness were conversely defined as both part of the English realm and separate to England and the English people. The revolt of Owain Glyndŵr is an interesting case study for political power and the legal status of the people within that system. In a world where opportunity was becoming increasingly restricted as a result of legal discrimination within the English system, Owain Glyndŵr presented an alternative political framework which presented more freedom for the Welsh people, something that proved enticing for Adam Usk.

Scholarship that addresses spheres of political power in the Middle Ages has made the connection between political life in a given country and national identity. This is drawn from Benedict Anderson's work on *Imagined Communities*, which is in some senses contradictory because Anderson determined that nations did not exist until the sixteenth-century, and yet his hypothesis that community was formed through its interaction with a political structure is frequently applied to the Middle Ages.²³ Susan Reynolds suggests, however, that whilst the communal political action, culture, and institutions and frameworks that governed it, created a common sense of belonging to an identity, the term 'regal identity' would be more appropriate than 'national identity', if only to distance the field from unproductive contention.²⁴ Indeed, Reynolds successfully demonstrates that

²¹ Matthew Frank Stevens, 'Towards a Characterization of 'Race Law' in Medieval Wales', *The Journal of Legal History*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2020), 290-331.

²² Stevens, 'Towards a Characterization of 'Race Law' in Medieval Wales', 308.

²³ Ruddick, *English Identity*, p. 7.

²⁴ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 56.

political activities created boundaries between various kingdoms in Europe, including England and France. In each case, a community of the realm can be seen, although this was expressed to varying degrees in the contemporary literature.²⁵ Whilst her motives were to avoid detaching the term 'nation' from its modern connotations, Reynolds makes an important point about the reality of political structures in medieval Europe. The realm of the king of England, for example, incorporated numerous cultural identities, which certainly were not a single nation, as is discussed in more detail below. Even so, the development of the field links political activities through a shared infrastructure and framework to the advancement of communal sentiment and thus a shared identity amongst the participants. This research aims to develop this field by providing the specific case-study of the English/Welsh relationship, and the implications that political culture had on Adam Usk as an individual.

Whilst a range of terminology is used in scholarship to express similar concepts, such as 'alligant identity', and 'regnal identity', this chapter employs the terms 'political identity' and 'legal identity' as it explores divergent identities that existed within the same political system.²⁶ 'Political identity' differs from 'national identity', or 'communal identity', in a number of ways. Rather than describing cultural stereotypes, either self or externally imposed, 'political identity' is used to describe the relationship between a 'community' and the governing powers.²⁷ Political identity had numerous manifestations in medieval societies. Subgroups with unequal rights existed alongside each other within a single geographical area. The above example demonstrates this; Welshmen who lived in England in 1413, now had a legally different status to their English friends and neighbours. In England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the various political subcategories in English society were well defined. People living in England could be one of the following: politically English, a subject of the English king, a denizen, or a foreigner. These statuses were not mutually exclusive and the definition was open to constant debate and re-evaluation. One's political status had implications for numerous areas of governance, such as the right to reside in England, obligation to pay taxes, and access to legal systems, to name just a few. Just because an individual had this status, however, did not mean that others who shared the status formed a community or identity. This chapter

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 283-289.

²⁶ Ruddick, *English Identity*, in particular chapter 5, pp. 217-256; Bart Lambert and Mark W. Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare, Resident Aliens and the Early History of Denization in England, c. 1250- c. 1400' *English Historical Review* 130:542 (2015), 14.

²⁷ Ruddick, *English Identity*, pp. 226, 229. Ruddick discusses the division in relation to theories of 'nationalism'. She also writes 'concepts of 'national' and 'allegiant' identity ...do not describe two different forms of national identity, but two forms of political identity'.

establishes the way in which communal belonging can be seen in various sources (including documents generated by parliament and the court systems, chronicles, and letters), and addresses how, and when, a status became an identity.

As with the application of all theory relating to identity, the terms 'political identity' and 'legal identity' creates a sense of homogeneity where it did not really exist. Individuals had different political and legal relationships with the ruling elite depending on where they lived, where they were born, and their social position.²⁸ As a result, it is often more appropriate to talk about 'political status'. This status was based on the legal frameworks and parameters that were imposed on individuals. It defined the boundaries of their lives and had implications for their ability to trade, access courts and hold office. For a 'political identity' to exist, the group of people it applied to needed to believe that it created unity and bonds between them; in other words, an 'imagined community'.²⁹ This identity was also imposed by others. In the early years of the Glyndŵr rebellion, there is evidence that political status grew into an identity, particularly in the rhetoric of parliamentary sources, and the repercussions of this language and discourse.

The Glyndŵr revolt has long been recognised as a turning point in the Welsh status, both legal in the sense of old laws being reimposed or extended, and political in that their rights became closer to that of foreigners rather than English subjects of the Crown. Scholars have addressed this issue in a number of ways, utilising a variety of different frameworks. Parliamentary restrictions placed on the Welsh in 1401 and 1402 have been addressed in the context of altering the Welsh 'subject' status. Indeed, it has been argued that the implementation of ordinances against the Welsh had devastating consequences for individuals, which 'conferred on Welshmen less than the status of subjects'.³⁰ Whilst this argument is certainly valid, the wording is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, Welsh identity had been based on legal and political difference since the time Wales was 'annexed' to the English crown in 1284. A written constitution, known as the 'Statute of Rhuddlan', defined

²⁸ Rees Davies notes that political homogeneity did not exist in Wales, until it was imposed by external, military force: Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 14.

²⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

³⁰ Ralph Griffiths, *King and Country: England and Wales in the fifteenth century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), p. 44. Also see: Ralph Griffiths, 'The island of England in the fifteenth century: perceptions of the peoples of the British Isles', *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003), pp. 177-200; R. A. Griffiths, 'This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle': *The English realm and nation in the later Middle Ages*; R. A. Griffiths, 'The English Realm and Dominions and the King's Subjects in the Later Middle Ages', pp. 83-98; Ruddick, *English Identity*, pp. 217-256.

how the Welsh were to be governed.³¹ The statute allowed the Welsh to continue practising their own laws in all matters except for criminal law. The 'legal' situation in Wales was complicated further by the administrative structure. Marcher lords governed their lands in Wales with limited influence from the English Crown, imposing their own interpretation of law onto the people living within their lordship. As such, the idea of a universal change in subject identity is muddled by the already uneven application of legal status in Wales.³² Further to this, the view that the Welsh became less than subjects, does not acknowledge the fact that 'subject status' was a concept that was in constant flux, and could be reinterpreted and redefined by the English kings and their parliaments. Being a Welsh subject of the English king was a very different status in 1413 than it had been during the 1390s.

The Welsh were not alone in having their political and legal identities redefined during the period 1377-1421. Indeed, there was an increase in denization during this period and foreigners were banned from England on numerous occasions. This will be explored in the first section of this chapter. The Welsh status transformed in line with the other statuses that were redefined in this period, and the motivation was the same; protecting the realm from external military threats and raising money. As well as the 1413 expulsion, the Welsh suffered further restrictions, both in England and in Wales. The second section of this chapter addresses how these changes constituted a redefinition of political status, and how this translated into a new political identity for the Welsh. Adam Usk's life was ultimately shaped by this new definition of Welsh political identity. During the opening years of the chronicle, it is clear that he lived in England without any additional restrictions as a result of his place of birth. This all changed in 1401. He was unable to further his career and felt the legal parameters of his life tightening. The third section of this chapter uses Adam Usk's life as a case study for the implications of the newly defined political identity of the Welsh. For Adam Usk, the consequences were far-reaching and disastrous.

³¹ For a fifteenth century Welsh version of the statute see: 'Statud Rhuddlan, fifteenth century', NLW Peniarth MS 41.

³² Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 171-173; R. R. Davies, 'Law and National Identity in Thirteenth Century Wales' in *Welsh Society and Nationhood: historical essays presented to Glanmore Williams*, (eds.) Davies, Griffiths, Jones, Morgan (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), pp. 51-69.

The redefinition of rights and obligations under Henry IV and Henry V

The first section of this chapter addresses the fluctuation in the status of foreign people residing in England between 1377 and 1422. It analyses the way in which documents generated by parliament and the surrounding administrative structures can be read, particularly in relation to the difference between political and legal status, and political and legal identity. This provides both a context and a methodology for analysing the changing status of Welsh subjects in the next section. From merchants and monks, to foreign lieges of the king, anyone who entered the realm and did not have parents who were subjects of the English king, were at the mercy of the Parliament to decide their rights or obligations while they lived within the realm. There were many reasons for relocating to, or residing in, England. For some, it was the financial pull that led them to cross the channel. Merchants are the obvious community in the category, but not the only occupation for which one might move to a new country.³³ One of the more notable jobs that appears in the patent rolls, is the position of 'king's physician' held by one Louis Recouchez, who was granted the status of denizen in 1405.³⁴ Monasteries, religious orders, and benefices also proved an attractive reason to reside in a new country. For others, the motivation was marriage and family. In each case, legislation created a 'communal' political identity, by creating a set of rules by which each person in the category was equally limited.

Many studies that address the granting of denization and the crossing of borders to reside in England focus on large timeframes.³⁵ In order to understand the context of the 1413 list of Welsh names, however, the time period of 1377-1421 needs to be analysed in more depth. Indeed, during this period there is a shift not only in the Welsh legal and political identity, but also in the way that all foreign people were treated by the governing powers. The legal change to a certain status was frequently a reactionary, reciprocal measure, and appears to have been common knowledge to clerks and lawyers like Adam Usk. He notes that in 1400, for example, certain restrictions were placed on 'Lombards and other overseas merchants in London'.³⁶ He states that the merchants

³³ W. Mark Ormrod, Bart Lambert, Jonathan Mackman, and S. H. Rigby, *Immigrant England, 1300-1550* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 94-126.

³⁴ *CPR: Henry IV 1405-1408*, p. 22.

³⁵ For example: Lambert and Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare', 1-24; Keechang Kim, *Aliens in Medieval Law: the origins of Modern Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); W. Mark Ormrod, 'England's Immigrants, 1330-1550: Aliens in Later Medieval and Early Tudor England', *Journal of British Studies* 59 (2020), 245-263; Ormrod, Lambert, Mackman, and Rigby, *Immigrant England*; R. A. Griffiths, 'Crossing the Frontiers of the English Realm in the Fifteenth Century', in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by H. Pryce and J. Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 211-225.

³⁶ Adam Usk pp. 114-115.

‘were used to staying in their own lodgings and being freely allowed to offer their goods for sale’.³⁷ That year, however, their status was redefined, and they instead had to lodge with a ‘citizen’, who would act as a ‘surety’ or guardian. This ‘citizen’ not only provided lodgings for the foreign merchant, but also oversaw the sale of their goods.³⁸ According to Adam Usk, placing foreign merchants under strict supervision was common practice in other countries. In an article expelling foreign people from England, the king also notes that ‘both merchants and others who dwell in England, shall be treated under their hosts as the English are treated overseas’.³⁹

In the Patent and Parliament Rolls, the majority of entries regarding the redefinition of foreigners during the relevant timeframe occurred during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V. What constituted a foreigner or an ‘alien’, however, was again open to interpretation and redefinition. During the period in question, there are no examples of Welsh people applying for the denizen status. Indeed, under Richard II, denizen merchants in general are alluded to in the patent rolls, but are not recorded specifically. From 1400 onwards, under Henry IV, there are sporadic entries that specify that denization is for a merchant, all of which are from central or northern Italy. For example, in April of 1400, letters of denization were granted to Reynald Greyle, a merchant from Genoa, and also to his son and ‘the heirs of their bodies’, as well as for Peter Remond, a merchant from Milan, Lombardy.⁴⁰ In 1409, letters of denization were granted to Louis de Port, a merchant from Luca, and in 1412 to Mark Marcadella from Venice.⁴¹ It is not always clear how much, if any money, was paid for the privilege. Only Mark Marcadella’s payment is recorded in the calendar. He paid 20l.⁴²

In most cases, holding letters of denization was an indication of an individual status, not a communal identity. Despite this, the fact that denizens were not ‘fully English’, suggests that they would have been treated differently, or felt different. Denizens were legally and politically separate from both English subjects, and ‘aliens’ in the realm. One consequence of this, was that they were subjected to different tariffs on imports. In 1402, for example, denizens had to pay 50s for each sack of wool brought into London, whereas aliens had to pay 60s. For hides, denizens were charged 100s, but

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 114-117.

³⁹ ‘Henry V: May 1413,’ *PROME*, article 37.

⁴⁰ *CPR: Henry IV 1399-1401*, p. 255 and p. 258.

⁴¹ *CPR: Henry IV 1408-1413*, p. 26 and p. 362.

⁴² This equals roughly £12,500 in modern currency: ‘Currency Converter: 1270-2017’, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>, accessed 13/10/2021.

aliens 8 marks.⁴³ The distinction between 'alien' and 'denizen' sometimes created an environment in which they formed collectives. An entry into the patent rolls in 1380 demonstrates this. The entry is regarding an exemplification from enrolling a memorandum. The memorandum contained information about an agreement between the denizen weavers of London, and the alien weavers of the same city. The two groups had agreed that they would meet every six weeks so that the denizens could survey the equipment and output of the aliens. The denizens orchestrated the meeting to obtain a contribution from the alien weavers towards 'the farm of 20 marks and 2s', which was the denizens' legal responsibility to pay.⁴⁴

The patent roll entry includes names and titles of those in the group:

*John Wille and Robert Hobbok, masters of the denizens, and William Coryng, John atte Hecche, William Belton and John Bokkyng [denizens], for themselves and their fellows, and Giles Fanbell and Reginald Radeles, masters of the aliens, and Ralph Clofhangre, John Fauettenowe, Arnald Fanherp and John Everyngham, aliens, for themselves and their fellows, appeared in Chancery and delivered a schedule of the above memorandum, and prayed and acknowledged its enrolment in Chancery, where on the files it now remains.*⁴⁵

The above denizens and aliens formed groups based on their political status. The requirements of their status, in either raising or paying money to the Crown, created horizontal ties between the weavers. They recognised each other as being of the same status and viewed the opposition group as being different. From the perspective of outsiders, such as those involved in the administrative systems of the chancery, they were clearly defined identities that were required to behave in a certain way and conduct their business within a set of defined boundaries.

The reigns of Henry IV (1399-1413) and Henry V (1413-1422) see an increase of letters of denization in the patent rolls in general, not just amongst merchants. There are two main reasons for this, both of which were connected to foreign policy, and both of which can be applied to Welsh legislation of 1413. Both Henrys were involved in multiple domestic and foreign conflicts. During times of political instability created by war, foreigners living in English society were perceived as a security risk.⁴⁶ People on the other side of a conflict represented the enemy and were seen as posing a risk to

⁴³ CPR: Henry IV 1401-1405, p. 89.

⁴⁴ CPR: Richard II 1377- 1381, p. 452.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bart Lambert and W. Mark Ormrod, 'A Matter of Trust: the royal regulation of England's French residents during wartime, 1294-1377', *Historical Research* 89:244 (2016), 208-226.

society. In addition, the kings needed to raise money to fund their military exploits.⁴⁷ Thus, letters of denization solved two problems; the status required the individual to pledge allegiance to the Crown, as well as create money through the letters patent themselves.⁴⁸ Further to this, denizens were required to pay taxes and fees specific to their status, as well as scot and lot, as seen in the example of the London weavers.

A new diligence for creating denizens can be seen during Henry IV's reign. Many people who had already spent a long period of time living in England were made denizens retrospectively. Warimbald Harlam, for example, was a goldsmith who had been born in Holland. He had already been living in York for twenty-four years by the time he received his letter of denization in 1403, paying 100s in the hanaper.⁴⁹ Massy Chesere, a Frenchman, had lived 'within the realm' since he was twelve years old. The calendar entry states that he was a king's liegeman, and should be regarded as a denizen, although it is not noted how long he had lived in England, or whether or not he paid for the status.⁵⁰ In 1406, Albert de Andernaco, a goldsmith, was granted denization, having lived in London for twenty-two years.⁵¹ The following year a knight, John Dabriggecourt, who had served both Edward III, the king's father John of Gaunt, as well as the king (Henry IV), was granted denizen status for himself and his son. He paid 20 marks in the hanaper.⁵² Finally, in 1408, John Beaumont (also known as John Frenshe) who had been 'born in the power of the king's adversary of France', had lived in Worcester for over forty years. His grant of denization cost 20 marks.⁵³ These denizens had all been living in England without seeking the correct political status for many years. In the cases of Massey Chesere and John Beaumont, it is likely that the renewed military campaigns in France put them under suspicion or compelled them to seek the correct status in order to continue living peacefully in the cities they had made home.

In 1406 there are two additional cases of foreign-born men who had been living in England for many years applying for letters of denization. In both cases, the receiver of the letters patent was not able to simply apply for denizen status, like those above, but instead requested pardons for behaving unlawfully and outside the bounds of their prescribed status. Peter Busseby had been born in

⁴⁷ Lambert and Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare', 16-24.

⁴⁸ Ormrod, 'England's Immigrants, 1330-1550', 254.

⁴⁹ *CPR: Henry IV 1401-1405*, p. 204.

⁵⁰ *CPR: Henry IV 1405-1408*, p. 58.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 472.

Brittany, but had lived in 'the realm' for over forty years. During that time, he had acquired two plots of land in Derby 'held of the king in burgage'.⁵⁴ Since he was not denizen when he acquired the messuages, he did not have the right to hold the land. As a result, he gained a pardon from the king, and paid homage in Leicester that same year. In total he paid 40s.⁵⁵ Also in 1406, Matthew son of John Spicer, who had lived in London for over forty years, was required to seek a pardon. He had been born in Cologne but had been living in London working as a goldsmith. He too had obtained two messuages in London, as well as four shops. Not being a denizen when he obtained the property, he was required to seek a pardon. In total he paid 50 marks to the Exchequer.⁵⁶

From the above evidence, it is clear that an individual's political status, and their freedoms and rights, were subject to redefinition and change. This was particularly evident for the greater regulation of the political status of foreigners during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V. The restrictions and obligations were often related to fiscal matters, or issues of security. Being a denizen gave the individual some rights and privileges not afforded to all foreign-born individuals, such as the right to hold land and to pay lower tariffs. At the same time, however, denizens were exposed to the changing administrations and the individual demands of the monarch. Shifts in financial demands, and the insecurity created by conflict, resulted in reclassification of political status, as well as a greater propensity for imposing it. It is also evident that political identities and collectives were sometimes formed within this environment; the political situation that redefined the level of risk posed by a group from a specific country was applicable to each person from that region. This is seen in cases discussed above relating of northern and central Italy, and also France, where multiple individuals from that region felt compelled to seek the denizen status. The next section of this chapter will address how the changing political environment in Wales created a political identity for the Welsh, the limitations, timing, and nature of which correspond with the greater controls for foreign people in England during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V.

The Status of Welsh people living in England under Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V

The Welsh, unlike the above examples, were not 'aliens', but were born as subjects of the English king. The status of the Welsh, however, went through a discernible change during this period, one

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 204.

very much in parallel to the change in status of foreign-born English residents. Indeed, a search of the 'England's Immigrants' database demonstrates the shift. In a search from 1300-1450, only one licence to remain is granted to a Welshman before 1413, notably John Hiriell in 1394. There are no details as to why he required the licence. Between 1414-1450, no licences to remain are recorded, but there are four letters of denization and six tax assessments of Welsh people living in England. In 1413, thirty-nine Welsh people were granted licence to remain.⁵⁷ The reason for the shift in Welsh status with the repercussions being played out in 1413, is the same as for their denizen counterparts. Adam Usk's interpretation of the 1413 policy was that it was a money-making exercise rather than a challenge to his position as a Welshman in England. Indeed, in an entry for 1404, Adam had commented on the amount of money being lost by the war in Wales; sixty thousand pounds of revenue.⁵⁸ The amounts paid by the Welsh in order to secure their right to reside in England 1413 vary, but as mentioned above, Adam Usk, clerk, does not have a sum of money next to his name. Along with William Chyld, he was given a free pass to reside in England. The ordinance concerning the Irish makes certain exceptions to this expulsion, including people who had graduated from the schools, or 'serjeants or apprentices of law'.⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, Adam Usk's name appearing on this list symbolises a re-evaluation of his political status. Whilst paying to live in England was not the same as seeking letters denizen, by the 1430s there are examples of Welsh people applying for this status.⁶⁰ The Welsh political status under Richard II was similar in some ways to the English subject political status. They could live freely in the country, buy property, and trade. By Henry V's reign, the Welsh were closer to the status of foreign-born denizens. They were now politically and culturally defined as 'other'.

The political status of the Welsh subjects, however, was not only related to their right to live in England. The Glyndŵr rebellion also instigated a significant revision to the general relationship between the Crown and the people of Wales. At the beginning of Adam Usk's chronicle, it is again apparent that he lived a life of comparative freedom. Under Richard II, most references to Wales or the Welsh in the parliament rolls are related to land disputes. One dispute in particular, between the earl of Salisbury and the earl of March over the lordship of Denbigh in north Wales was noted by Usk

⁵⁷ England's Immigrants:

<https://www.englishimmigrants.com/search/results?keyword=Welsh&startDate=1300&endDate=1450&col1=name&col2=nationality&col3=date&col4=origin&col5=residence&page=1>, accessed 08/05/2023.

⁵⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 176-77. This is almost certainly an exaggeration. See: Davies, *Revolt*, p. 70.

⁵⁹ 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 39.

⁶⁰ J. Beverley Smith, 'Distinction and Diversity': the common lawyers and the law of Wales' in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: essays in memory of Rees Davis*, (eds.) H. Pryce and J. Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 139-152; Lambert and Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners', pp. 76-78.

in 1397.⁶¹ Legislation relating specifically to the Welsh is rare under Richard II. In January 1380, however, there is a petition to parliament that aimed to restrict the rights of Welsh people in both England and Wales. It begins by stating that towns in Wales were created by Edward I to be inhabited by Englishmen, and that Welshmen and women were not permitted to live in the towns, or purchase property there. With that in mind, the petition complains that Welsh people were living in, and purchasing property in, 'the counties of Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester, Shropshire and Staffordshire'.⁶² In the same sentence as complaining about the Welsh living in towns and buying property, the petition then states that the Welsh 'sometimes by the hundred, sometimes in two hundreds and sometimes in three hundreds', crossed the border into England 'in a warlike manner'.⁶³ The Welsh are accused of killing, robbing, kidnapping, taking beasts, goods and chattels, before returning to Wales. As a result of the petition, the king replies that individuals 'who are purely Welsh' should not buy land in the 'said counties beyond the Severn'.⁶⁴ He does make an exception, however, stating that the ordinance only stood if the individual could not 'find adequate guarantee for their good behaviour'.⁶⁵ In relation to the Welsh entering England to cause chaos in the border regions, the king stated that if Welsh people living in this region helped the groups from Wales, they too would be convicted as if they had committed the crime.⁶⁶

A complaint about Welsh bands entering England to commit crimes before fleeing back into Wales is also made to parliament in January 1390. This time the response was more acutely focused on bringing the perpetrators to justice. The legal process is described in some detail, beginning with the plaintiff presenting their grievance to the justices of the peace, the sheriff, and coroners at the county court.⁶⁷ The steward of the county where the perpetrator had retreated to would be contacted. The steward would then be expected to arrest and hold the offender until they had fully compensated the plaintiff. If the steward did not fulfil his duty, he would 'be obliged to answer to the king and the parties thus injured according to the form of the law of England' as though he had committed the original crime.⁶⁸ The petition finishes with this phrase: 'Bearing in mind that no such malefactors leave their county to carry out such grievances and riots unless they have the

⁶¹ Adam Usk, pp. 34-37.

⁶² 'Richard II: January 1380,' *PROME*, article 29.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ 'Richard II: January 1390,' *PROME*, article 56.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

permission of their steward or his lieutenant, because of the penalty they would suffer according to their own law in Wales.’⁶⁹

In both these petitions, it is the ‘people of Wales’ who committed violent and illegal acts. The first petition alludes to a shift in political status of the Welsh since Edward I initially conquered the region. The petition states that Edward I’s laws regarding the purchase of land or tenements in towns, and that the ‘decree [was] still in force’.⁷⁰ Despite the decree officially limiting the actions of the Welsh, it did not appear to have been widely observed and or indeed to have been considered to be particularly relevant during the fourteenth century.⁷¹ The decree made by Edward I no longer dictated the political status of the Welsh. There is a clear link between the desire to limit Welsh rights, and the criminal activity being committed by Welsh people in the border counties. Richard’s response to the first petition, is tepid. Whilst he is determined that the decree should stand, he also makes allowances and exceptions. For the second petition, rather than focusing on the limitations imposed on all Welsh people, the legal process for bringing the Welsh to justice is emphasised. Neither petition fully alters the political status of the Welsh, but rather confirms an existing position. Richard II was on the throne for twenty-two years, and yet only two petitions regarding the Welsh political status survive from his parliaments. The lack of alteration of political status during Richard’s reign, mirrors the political situation of foreigners in England at that time.

The small skirmishes in the border counties received a measured response from the king. For Henry IV’s reign, however, the threat coming from Wales was much greater. The result of this was a rigorous redefinition of the Welsh political status, which broadened the gap between the English and Welsh political identities. The Welsh in England became the subject of suspicion. Those suspected of aiding or supporting the rebel leader suffered severe consequences. For example, in 1402 a case was brought to the King’s Bench. A Welshman, John Sparrowhawk of Cardiff, was accused of treason. John Sparrowhawk, like Adam Usk, was not living in Wales at this time. He claimed that whilst near Baldock in Hertfordshire, he met the wife of a tailor. The tailor’s wife told him that the persistent rain and terrible weather they had been suffering was the fault of the then king, Henry IV. According to John, the tailor’s wife claimed that King Henry was not the son of John of Gaunt, but of a butcher in Ghent, Belgium. Instead, the earl of March was the rightful king, and Owain Glyndŵr was the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ ‘Richard II: January 1380,’ *PROME*, article 59.

⁷¹ Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, pp.188-189.

rightful 'legal' (*loial*) prince of Wales and Cornwall. The Roman pope was also supportive of this, according to John Sparrowhawk, and the tailor's wife claimed that the rain was the result of the king ignoring the Pope's wishes. John Sparrowhawk repeated these claims to numerous people in Morden, Cambridgeshire over breakfast. He was accused of treason for repeating the claims and was sentenced to being drawn through the streets of London, hanged, and then beheaded.⁷² If John Sparrowhawk is to be believed, he was only repeating information he had heard elsewhere. He was not a well-connected or influential man. Even so, his words to the people of Morden, a place over 150 miles from Wales, were considered dangerous.

As a result of the suspicion the Welsh were now under, their status was frequently contemplated in parliament. The process of limiting Welsh privilege occurred mainly in the parliaments of 1401 and 1402. For Adam Usk, the curtailing of political rights and privileges was noticeably distressing. In a passage concerning the parliament of 1401, he states that it was decreed that 'men of the March' were allowed to 'launch reprisals against Welshmen', who had either committed a crime against them, or were in their debt.⁷³ In addition to the decrees that had actually been instated, he gives details of 'rigorous measures' that the Commons were urging be brought against the Welsh. He gives two examples. The first was that the English and Welsh should not be allowed to intermarry, the second that the Welsh should not buy land, or live, in England. He notes that there were 'other such harsh suggestions', and that he felt fearful and 'committed [himself] to the special protection of the Holy Spirit'.⁷⁴

The parliament in question records twelve separate ordinances and petitions regarding the revolt, each one seeking to legally moderate the behaviour of Welsh individuals in both Wales and England.⁷⁵ It should be noted, that many of the ordinances passed at this parliament were reaffirming and strengthening laws which had limited the rights of the Welsh since the conquest in the 1280s.⁷⁶ Adam Usk's concerns about purchasing land in England were justified. The Commons

⁷² *Select Cases in the Court of the King's Bench under Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V, volume VII*, (ed. and trans.) G. O. Sayles (London: Seldon Society, 1971), pp. 123-124. Also p. 133, for another case of a supporter of Glyndŵr being tried for treason, this time that William Taylor claimed that Owain Glyndŵr would be lord of Oxford. He paid for a Welshman, Owain Conway (acquitted), to join Owain and help him. William Taylor was sentenced to being drawn to Tyburn and hanged there.

⁷³ Adam Usk, pp. 126-127.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ 'Henry IV: January 1401,' *PROME*, article 16 - relates to the instability caused by Welsh people living in Bristol and Frome.

⁷⁶ Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, p. 189.

requested that 'no full-blooded Welshman' (*nulle homme Galois entire*) should purchase property in Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Leominster, Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester 'or any other marcher towns adjoining to the Welsh marches'.⁷⁷ In addition, it was requested of the king that Welshmen should not hold 'the offices of mayor, bailiff, chamberlain, constable or warden of the ports or prisons'. They were not to carry weapons in marcher cities, boroughs or towns. In each case the punishment was to forfeit land or weapons. The king responded that these measures would be put into force, adding Chester as one of the named towns. The king's response also defined 'full-blooded Welshmen' as someone 'born in Wales, and having a father and mother born in Wales'.⁷⁸ In the same parliament, the restrictions on Welshmen purchasing land, or being accepted as burgesses, was extended to all of England and English borough towns in Wales.⁷⁹

There are further grievances against the Welsh. The theme of justice, retribution, and legal process is frequent amongst the petitions to parliament. The 'people of the counties adjoining the Welsh marches' complained about raids, with Welshmen stealing animals and other property, a statement reminiscent of Richard II's reign. They also stated that Welshmen were arresting merchants in Wales for complaints 'in which they [were] not acting as parties or pledges'. English people (*gentz Engleis*) were thus given the right to arrest anyone 'coming from the lordships of Wales' where the guilty parties were located, if they had not responded to the complaint within seven days.⁸⁰ The Commons also requested that the legal process for convicting Welsh people committing crimes in England be refined. If the Welsh person returned and hid from justice in Wales, it was the responsibility of the lord in the area where they were found hiding to bring them to justice.⁸¹ Finally, a petition on 'behalf of the English', requested that 'no full-blooded Englishman shall be convicted at the suit of any Welshman within Wales'. The only circumstances in which this could occur was if they were tried by English justices, or 'by judgement of wholly English burgesses, or by inquests of borough towns and Englishmen of the lordships in which they were arrested'. The king responded that this would be the case for the next three years.⁸²

⁷⁷ 'Henry IV: January 1401,' *PROME*, article 77.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, article 107.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, article 94.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, article 103.

⁸² *Ibid.*, article 106.

As described by Given-Wilson in his monograph of Henry IV's reign, the laws of Edward I, which had been considered 'outdated' during the fourteenth century, were now 'not merely confirmed but extended'.⁸³ In fact, the proceedings of parliament indicate a concern that many of the original legal restrictions passed in 1282 were no longer being observed, with examples of Welshmen holding office. This led to a meeting taking place a week later at Coldharbour House where the subjugation of the Welsh was pushed even further; cooperation between Marcher lords was established to assist with catching offenders, the Welsh were expected to help finance English garrisons stationed in castles in Wales, and Welsh poets could not collect payment for their work.⁸⁴

The following year, in 1402, many of the same points and themes are reiterated in parliament. The treatment of criminals who committed crimes in England and were hiding in Wales, the fact that Englishmen could not be convicted by Welshmen, and the rights of Welsh people to purchase property, hold positions or carry arms were all discussed again.⁸⁵ In terms of limitations placed on Welsh people, there were only a few new additions. Petitions were made against gatherings and assemblies in Wales, unless they had a good reason and permission to do so.⁸⁶ Adam Usk's claim that intermarriage between the English and Welsh was to be banned, was realised in 1402, not 1401 as Adam had stated. Englishmen who married Welshwomen, should have no 'franchise with English burgesses', and anyone who had married a Welshwoman since the beginning of the Glyndŵr rebellion, should not be appointed to office in Wales or the march of Wales. The petition also states that the ban would apply to any Englishman who married a Welshwoman in the future.⁸⁷ Throughout the rest of Henry IV's reign, the Welsh rebellion is prominent in each of the parliament rolls. Other than a statement in 1404, which banned Welshmen from travelling to the Roman court whilst the rebellion was in progress, the topics addressed were similar to those in 1401 and 1402.⁸⁸

It has been asserted, that the measures presented in these parliaments were largely ignored.⁸⁹ Repetition of certain topics and themes suggests that issues such as Welshmen holding office and the implementation of legal procedure continued to be a problem and that the limitations were not universally applied. For some individuals, however, the change in their political and legal status as

⁸³ Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, p. 189.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-119.

⁸⁵ 'Henry IV: September 1402,' *PROME*, articles 87, 88, 91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, article 92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, article 91, 102.

⁸⁸ 'Henry IV: October 1404,' *PROME*, article 48.

⁸⁹ Griffiths, 'The English Realm and Dominions and the King's Subjects in the Later Middle Ages', p. 91.

Welshmen had undesirable consequences for their quality of life. Under Henry V, a number of Welshmen petitioned parliament in order to challenge their weakened position. Petitions were presented in parliament on the behalf of Rhys ap Thomas in 1413, and Lewis John, John Montgomery, and John Stiward in 1414.⁹⁰ In the 1414 cases, the petitioners state that they had been enfeoffed with land and had remained loyal to the king. Since the supplicant was 'fully-Welsh, with a Welsh mother and father', holding the land would contravene the laws made during the 1401 parliament. They all requested pardons for holding the land contrary to the statute. Lewis John's petition states that he had been a free man of the city of London, but he was stripped of this status in 1401. The king agreed for this status to be re-imposed. Rhys ap Thomas, however, had not owned land previously and was not requesting a pardon. Instead, his lands in Wales had been destroyed, and he wished to have the same freedom for himself and his heirs as 'other English lieges' of the king in order to improve his financial prospects.⁹¹ Rhys requested that all the aspects of the statute be withdrawn in his case, including limitations on the right to hold office. In effect, Rhys was to have the status of an English liegeman, despite his Welsh birth. The king agreed to all of these requests.⁹²

In this context, the development of a limiting legal identity for the Welsh can be observed. In the parliament rolls, it appears that at least three out of the four supplicants held land between 1401 and 1414, contrary to the statute of 1401. One interpretation of this could be that the statute was not enforced. The fact that the Welshmen petitioned parliament, however, indicates that they were concerned about their status. Within the four petitions, there is further evidence of restriction. Lewis John had lost his liberties in London, and Rhys ap Thomas felt that he needed permission before he could purchase land. No matter how limited, it is clear that some Welsh people were concerned about their weakened status as subjects of the English king. The factor that links these men together was nothing more than the fact that they were 'fully-Welsh'. As such, they were defined entirely by their legal identity, and their rights were limited accordingly.

Welshmen were not the only people stripped of their status as a result of the 1401 statutes. English people who associated themselves with Welsh subjects also left themselves vulnerable to punishment. In 1415, during the reign of Henry V, Adam Banastre, was restored to his rights and liberties in the town of Conway. He had lost his privileges by marrying Maud, a Welshwoman. Maud

⁹⁰ 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 16; 'Henry V: November 1414,' *PROME*, articles 27, 28 and 29.

⁹¹ 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 16.

⁹² 'Henry V: May 1413,' *PROME*, article 16; 'Henry V: November 1414,' *PROME*, articles 27, 28 and 29.

was made a widow after her previous husband, Richard Godynogh, had been killed by the Welsh rebels. Adam Banastre was restored to his previous status because he claimed he had not known about the ordinance made in 1402, under Henry IV.⁹³ It can certainly be assumed that Adam Banastre was an Englishman. Richard Godynogh's surname would also suggest that he was an Englishman, although this cannot be stated with any certainty. It is unclear when Adam Banastre lost his status in Conway, and how long he had lived without it. What is clear, however, is that Maud, as a Welshwoman, was defined by her Welsh status which should have prohibited her marriage to Adam. As a burgess of the town of Conway, Adam Banastre would have had access to rights of franchise. If, as supposed, her previous husband Richard had also been English, it demonstrates a shift in her legal privileges. Her earlier marriage to an Englishman was not contravening any legal or political directive. After the rebellion had broken out, however, her options to marry had been limited by parliamentary ordinance, and the rights of her new husband restricted as a result. These limitations applied solely because of Maud's legal identity.

The above examples reveal a change in the status of the Welsh, which aligns with the shift in the status of foreign-born people living in England as described in the first section of this chapter. The ordinances in parliament, and the later petitions, suggest that the creation of a legal identity was likely; in each case the complainant was attempting to loosen the narrowed legal parameters that governed their daily lives. Both the ordinances and the petitions referred to 'full-blooded Welshmen', as individuals with a Welsh mother and father. The repetition of the wording from the ordinance and in the petition, insinuates that all Welshmen who could be defined in such a way, were exposed to the same limiting framework set out by parliament. Thus, the sound of a Welsh accent, the signing of a Welsh name, or a conversation about family or heritage, created an unequal relationship between the English and Welsh subjects. The Welsh were not only belittled by negative cultural stereotypes, but there was now a legal framework within which they could be subjugated. By limiting the rights and opportunities of the Welsh, Englishmen had a legal power to perform their prejudice by denying Welshmen the freedoms that they had once enjoyed.

⁹³ *CPR: Henry V 1413-1416*, p. 341.

The implications of Welsh political identity for Adam Usk's life

The above ordinances and petitions demonstrate the creation of a legal identity for Welsh people living under English rule. Welsh people are presented in the documents as a unified group, limited equally in their legal status within the English political system. Those who experienced these limitations were also aware it was because they were Welsh. As a result, imagined bonds were created between the Welsh, as an opposite legal identity to 'English'. In addition to this, throughout Adam Usk's life and chronicle there is also evidence that the new definition of political identity had implications for him. The repercussions of his redefined legal and political identity infiltrate the story of his life. As a chronicler, he provides narrative detail and a personal perspective. This is complemented, and in some cases contradicted or expanded, by the administrative records that document his interactions with systems of governance in England. In this final section of the chapter, it is argued that Adam Usk's redefined political identity, rather than his cultural Welsh identity, negatively affected his career prospects and his freedoms.

In many ways, Adam Usk's chronicle is a typical early fifteenth-century work. The chronicle is structured around the political events of its time. The challenges faced by the king and his reaction to them form a scaffold for the narrative flow of the history. As a result, the political frameworks created by the king and parliament are integral to the events that Adam wrote about. As someone who worked for the English administration and was directly involved in many of the situations he recorded, Adam's use of eye-witness testimony permits the reader to observe the world from his perspective. It is therefore possible to view the shifting landscape of Welsh political identity from Adam's standpoint.

Before addressing the implications of Adam's Welsh political identity, it is beneficial to briefly review the key phases of his life and career. His blossoming success under Richard II's administration provided Adam with benefices, income, and promotion, although it is notable that many of his early appointments were in Wales.⁹⁴ The opening years of Henry IV's reign initially saw a continuation of this success.⁹⁵ But then, in 1400, his fortunes changed. For two more years Adam worked in England but became increasingly frustrated by his lack of career opportunities.⁹⁶ Then, in 1402, he left

⁹⁴ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xiv-xx.

⁹⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 3-95.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-151.

England and travelled to the Papal Curia in Rome.⁹⁷ Again, his chronicle records his attempts to gain promotions and benefices, but his relationship with the Crown prevented this from happening.⁹⁸

In 1406, Adam left Rome, and made his way across the Low Countries to France. During this time, he was in contact with 'enemies' of Henry IV, and his relationship with the Crown deteriorated further. He met with two rebel magnates, the earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolf, who were plotting to challenge the king's authority.⁹⁹ He also gained benefices from the anti-pope in Avignon, Benedict XIII (who was an ally of Owain Glyndŵr), although he was careful not to include this in the chronicle.¹⁰⁰ He finally returned to Wales in 1408-1409 and gained a pardon from Henry IV in 1411.¹⁰¹ Put simply, Adam Usk's relocation from England to Rome was driven by his career ambitions. He states this himself. A chronicle entry for the year 1402 outlines his career history and his hopes for the future. He asserts that he did a three-year doctoral course at Oxford, and then worked as 'an advocate in the court of Canterbury' for seven years'. Now, with God's help, he would go to Rome to continue with his professional journey.¹⁰²

Adam Usk's motivations for going to Rome have been discussed in some detail. The most commonly cited reason is an attempt to advance his career. It is also suggested that his Welsh identity pushed him to move to Rome, although the context of this identity is not mentioned.¹⁰³ It is not a coincidence, however, that the key dates of change and upheaval in Adam Usk's life, correlate with the changes in Welsh legal identity addressed above. This direct link suggests that Adam Usk's legal and political identity as a Welshman had significant implications for his ability to live freely in England. The dates align. 1401-1402 saw greater restrictions placed on Welshmen and this is the time when Adam decided to leave England. The legal parameters that governed his life in England were tightened, and the likelihood of a successful career became increasingly unlikely. He therefore sought his fortune elsewhere.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 152-153.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 176-179.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 214-215.

¹⁰⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxix-xxxiii.

¹⁰¹ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 152-153; for details on this stage of Adam Usk's life see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxix-xxxiii.

¹⁰³ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxiv; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 172-173.

Before 1401, despite being legally defined as Welsh, Adam was able to profit from the opportunities and freedoms in both England and Wales, which resulted from his position as a subject of the English king. Adam's chronicle begins in 1377, with the death of Edward III, and the beginning of Richard II's reign. In many ways, Richard II's Welsh subjects were constrained by the same limitations of social position, wealth, and favour as any English subject. The parliament rolls during these years are generally empty of Welsh-specific legislation, which was mirrored in the relative freedom that Adam experienced. Adam Usk was living in a time of opportunity. Whilst studying at Oxford, for example, Adam was rewarded with benefices to support himself, which he frequently exchanged during the 1380s and 1390s.¹⁰⁴ Benefices provided clerics with financial means that supported both their studies and their careers. The first evidence of benefices functioning in this way for Adam was in 1388 when he required a licence of absence from his benefice as sub-deacon at Upton Scudamore in Wiltshire in order to continue his studies in law at Oxford for two years. The letter gave permission for Adam to be absent from his benefice but stated that his duties there must not be neglected. As a result, he was required to appoint a proctor, and return to Upton Scudamore when the dispensation period ended. This was a common requirement for clerics who wished to further their education whilst holding a post that required them to be resident at the location.¹⁰⁵ This was an English benefice. Under canon law, Adam required permission to be absent from the benefice, but in terms of the liberties granted by the Crown, he was free to study, live, and hold benefices in England.

Adam was not only gaining financial rewards for his work, but he was also given positions of responsibility that would have contributed to his status and reputation. There is a stark contrast in Adam Usk's level of success as a lawyer before and after the outbreak of rebellion in Wales. Under Richard II, and the beginning of Henry IV's reign (before the Glyndŵr rebellion), Adam was able to pursue his ambitions. From 1395 onwards, he worked in the Court of Arches (the court connected to the Archbishop of Canterbury). His role there continued after Henry Bolingbroke came to the throne in 1399.¹⁰⁶ After supporting Henry Bolingbroke in his successful campaign to overthrow Richard II, Adam Usk initially found favour with the new administration. He was given opportunities to work as a legal advocate in high profile disputes. The Dymoke case, discussed in chapter two, serves as a

¹⁰⁴ *The Register of John Waltham, Bishop of Salisbury: 1388-1395*, (ed.) T.C.B. Timmins (Woodbridge: Canterbury and York Society, The Boydell Press, 1994), p. 100. Adam exchanged the benefice of Rector of Upton Scudamore with Richard Petyt, the vicar choral in Wells cathedral. Also discussed by: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xiv.

¹⁰⁵ *The Register of John Waltham*, p. 4; also see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xv; R. N. Swanson, 'Universities, Graduates and Benefices in Later Medieval England' *Past and Present* 106 (1985), 31-32.

¹⁰⁶ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xvii.

good example of this. In the case, Adam acted as counsel for Thomas Dymoke, who ultimately won the suit.¹⁰⁷ The following year, Adam Usk was involved in bringing judgement post mortem against the earl of Salisbury, and in the same year, his legal counsel was requested by the Crown regarding Lady Isabella, Richard II's wife and the daughter of the king of France.¹⁰⁸

In 1401, a year after the outbreak of rebellion in Wales, Adam states that he was involved in two court cases concerning disputes over arms. The first was between Lord Grey of Ruthin and Lord Edward Hastings, in which Adam Usk represented Reynold Grey.¹⁰⁹ The second case was between Sir John Colville del Dales and Sir Walter Bytterley. Adam states that he appeared against John Colville. According to Adam, he lost both cases 'despite much vigorous argument'.¹¹⁰ These losses coincided with further career disappointments for Adam. On the 14 February 1400 Adam was presented with the prebend of Llandygwydd and the canonry of Abergwili by his patron Arundel.¹¹¹ Almost immediately after he had received the prebend of Llandygwydd, however, Walter Jakes, who also went by the name of Walter Aumeney, claimed that he had been granted Llandygwydd in July 1399 by exchanging his previous benefice in Hereford with Master Richard Whychecombe.¹¹² When the case was reviewed, it went in favour of Walter, who was restored to his position on 16 July 1400.¹¹³ Adam appealed to Pope Boniface, requesting that the precentor of St David's assess the situation. As a result of the inquiry, in 1401 it was established that neither Walter nor Adam had a legal right to the prebend, so it should be granted to Adam. It eventually was, but only much later.¹¹⁴ Adam's career was suffering and the successes of the 1380s and 90s were fading into the past.

¹⁰⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 72-74; for a copy of the petition in French see: 'Miscellaneous papers (originals and transcripts) concerning England, reign of King William I (1066-1087) to that of King Charles I (1625-1649), arranged alphabetically by subject': BL, Cotton MS Vespasian C. xiv, fol. 137v.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 96-97, 100-115.

¹⁰⁹ For more on this case see: M. Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), pp. 167-185.

¹¹⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 132-135.

¹¹¹ 'Thomas Arundel 1396-1414': *Reg. Arundel*, i, fol. 265r accessed via BL MFR 2526/6 ; also see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xx.

¹¹² *The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of St. David's 1397-1518*, vol. I (*Cymmrodorion Record Series no. 6*), (translation and general index) R. F. Isaacson (London: The honourable society of Cymmrodorion, 1917), pp. 119-121; Also see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxi. Walter Jakes had accused Adam Usk of stealing a horse and saddle with the value of 100s and 14 marks in 1402. Adam Usk, was granted a pardon in 1403 after he had left for Rome. See: *CPR: Henry IV, vol. II A. D. 1401-1405*, p. 188; A. Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 209. and fn. 130.

¹¹³ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers: 1396-1404 vol. v*, (eds.), W. H. Bliss and J. A. Tremlow (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904), p. 457; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxi.

¹¹⁴ *Reg. Arundel*, i, fols. 96r-96v; *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters vol. vi A.D. 1404-1415*, (ed.) J. A. Twemlow (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904), pp. 44-45. Also see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxi.

The situation regarding Adam's benefices is more complex than simply his personal relationship with the English monarch, or even his fate as a Welshman. Indeed, the situation represented a battle for authority and jurisdiction between the kings and the Roman popes of this period. The pope had power over who could obtain benefices and incomes, a power which was used intensely during the reign of Edward III (1312-1377). During the mid to late fourteenth-century, however, there was growing discontent amongst the king and nobility, who felt uneasy about the control of the pope, particularly because a large number of the appointments were going to foreigners.¹¹⁵ Worries that papal appointments would lead to a range of problems from the financial detriment of English clerics, to issues concerning security and the dissemination of 'secrets' relating to parliament and national policy, led to the Statute of Provisors in 1351, a decree that limited the pope's power in granting benefices, and extended the royal power in this area.¹¹⁶ When Adam Usk left for Rome in 1402 there were concerns that he was trying to evade the will of the king. Indeed, in Adam's absence in 1402, William Etchingham and Thomas Lytewyn represented him at his mainprise. It was promised that whilst at the Roman court Adam Usk would not do anything that would either prejudice the king or act in contempt of the Statute of Provisors.¹¹⁷ This essentially meant that Adam Usk was not to go 'above' the king and seek promotion from the pope when the king himself would not have granted it. Even so, in negotiating the rivalry between the king and the pope, Adam Usk felt that his opportunities as a Welshman were more promising if he were abroad.

The trajectory of success and failure in Adam's life appears to reflect the shift of legal and political status of the Welsh people as tracked through the patent and parliament rolls. Under Richard II, Adam Usk found success. When the Welsh status was re-defined in 1401, his personal successes came to a halt. From the third year of Henry IV's reign, Adam was certainly going through an unlucky spell. Two court cases had not gone his way, and his big promotion was being contested. Wales, his home country and a place he identified with, was in the grip of violent rebellion. In addition, in 1401 he had heard about the decrees in parliament against the Welsh relating to owning property, holding positions, and marriage between the English and Welsh. Admittedly, none of the ordinances passed in this parliament would have immediately had dire implications for Adam. It is obvious,

¹¹⁵ Cecily Davies, 'The Statute of Provisors of 1351' *History (New Series)*, 28:133 (1953), p. 117; Lambert and Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners', p. 12. These concerns also recorded by Adam Murimuth in 1343, *Adae Murimuth*, p. 138.

¹¹⁶ William E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England* (Cambridge Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1939), p. 334; Swanson, 'Universities, Graduates and Benefices in Later Medieval England', p. 45; Davies, 'The Statute of Provisors of 1351', pp. 116-133.

¹¹⁷ Adam Usk, p. 153, fn. 2; "Close Rolls, Henry IV: February 1402," in *Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry IV*, 509.

however, that he sensed a shift in attitude towards the Welsh, and feared what this would mean for his own prospects. Indeed, his intuition was correct and he was wise to leave England for Rome when he did. Only a year later, parliament decreed that Welshmen were not to travel to the Roman court.¹¹⁸ Leaving England, however, did not bring any additional favour to Adam.

Despite being in Rome, Adam was once again denied the benefices that he desired. He claims that at the end of 1402, the pope tried to grant him with 'the archdeaconry of Buckingham with the churches of Knoyle, Tisbury and Deverill in England'.¹¹⁹ Adam states that 'the Welsh war' thwarted this. He was instead granted benefices in Wales.¹²⁰ These may not have been the benefices that Adam Usk wanted, but he was nonetheless granted an alternative archdeaconry. In 1404, however, he was not treated so kindly. In this year, Guy Mone, the bishop of St David's, was put forward to take over 'the church of London'. The 'entire college of auditors', who were seeking Guy Mone's promotion, also put to the pope that Adam Usk could take over St David's.¹²¹ The pope seemed pleased with the solution. The king of England, however, was not. Cardinals who held benefices in England were threatened, and merchants were forbidden to advance Adam money. Adam was told that if this exchange went ahead, he would be at risk of being sent to prison, or even the gallows.¹²² Thus, much to Adam's disappointment this proposal did not come to fruition. It now appears that this was more than simply bad luck. A number of different factors were at play in blocking these promotions, not least his political identity as a Welshman.

Two letters regarding Adam Usk's access to benefices and promotions were written and sent from Rome in 1404. One was written by an English clerk, William Lovell, to the bishop of Carlisle, William Strickland. The second was written by Adam and was to the king of England, Henry IV. Both letter writers have very different perspectives on why Adam was denied benefices, but both address Adam's political identity as either a cause of, or a solution to his problem. Adam, attempting to placate the king's anger, promotes his position as subject of the English Crown. William Lovell,

¹¹⁸ 'Henry IV: October 1404,' *PROME*, article 48.

¹¹⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 158-159.

¹²⁰ Ibid. According to the chronicle, Adam Usk was granted 'the archdeaconries of Llandaff and Carmarthen, with the church of Llandyfaelog together with the prebend of Llanbister'. See: *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters vol. vi A.D. 1404-1415*, (ed.) J. A. Twemlow (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904), pp. 44-45. Also see: Given-Wilson, *Adam Usk*, pp. 158-159, fn. 2.

¹²¹ Discussed in more detail in: Margaret Harvey, *The English in Rome 1362-1420*, pp. 140-141.

¹²² Adam Usk, pp. 188-191.

writing to warn William Strickland that Adam might not be trustworthy, emphasises Adam's position as a Welshman.

Adam's letter only survives because he includes a copy of it in his chronicle. The letter, which he gave to the bishop of Salisbury to deliver to the king, was primarily an attempt to secure a greater income because his position as auditor in Rome was unpaid.¹²³ In a hyperbolic message, Adam Usk appeals to the king's grace, and makes frequent allusions to aspects of their relationship as king and subject. He talks about the notion of service. He writes that in Rome, 'I might thereby be able to be of greater service to your royal highness and to your followers'. He backs up this point, stating that he had supported Henry when he returned from exile and took the throne from Richard II. In the most pleading part of the letter, Adam wrote:

*I most humbly and devoutly beg your royal majesty, therefore, in whose shadow I live and act - for nothing is more desirable to me than your own safety, good fortune, and conspicuous success - that you will, in your kingly mercy and benevolence, ...[be] moved by charity, [and] your royal highness might accordingly deign to relieve the present deprivations of my old age with some further promotion.*¹²⁴

He appeals to Henry based on their relationship that Henry is his king, with the qualities of mercy and benevolence, and Adam is his humble and undeserving servant. Adam Usk is also clear that he respected the official procedures before travelling to Rome legitimately. He states he obtained a licence from the king. He begs the king to ignore the rumours or people speaking badly about him. He ends the letter by asking God to grant Henry IV a long and happy reign.¹²⁵ In the letter, Adam Usk emphasises his identity as a subject of the king.

The second 1404 letter also focuses on Adam's political identity, but this time addressing his redefined political identity as a Welshman. A copy of the letter survives in William Swan's letter book. This letter, written by William Lovell to William Strickland, the bishop of Carlisle, is regarding benefices conferred by the pope.¹²⁶ The letter, which is chiefly concerned with issues of promotions

¹²³ Adam Usk, pp. 176-179.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ 'Letter Book of William Swan': Bodleian MS Arch Selden B23, fols. 60r-61v. This letter is discussed in detail by Given-Wilson, who also provides a transcription and translation of the lines concerning Adam Usk. See: Given Wilson 'Introduction' in *Adam Usk's Chronicle*, pp. xxv-xxvi. Also discussed in: Margaret Harvey, *The English in Rome 1362-1420*, pp. 140-141.

in the church, speaks plainly about suspicions surrounding Adam Usk's loyalties. In the letter William Lovell claims that 'lord Adam' was 'not entirely faultless' when it came to his connections with Owain Glyndŵr. As a result, William Lovell warns William Strickland that it would not be wise to divulge information to Adam regarding the promotions, 'or any other matter'.¹²⁷ William Lovell is not forthcoming about why he believes this about Adam. He only writes that he had come to the conclusion 'on account of his [Adam's] own words'.¹²⁸ The details of what Adam had said are lost to obscurity. Adam, however, was clearly aware of his political identity as a Welsh subject of the English king. He knew the precarious nature of his position. He had commented on this himself, stating that the Welsh wars had prevented him from gaining benefices in 1402. As Adam was still attempting to engage with the king in 1404, it is unlikely that he would carelessly be making statements about supporting Owain Glyndŵr. At this time in Adam's life, William Lovell's letter is the only evidence connecting him to the Welsh leader, and even this was based on conjecture and rumour.

Both letters are preoccupied with Adam's political identity. He was both a Welshman and a subject of the English king. Here lies the complex and contradictory nature of the identity. Ultimately, they were not discussing two separate identities, but the opposing elements of the same one. Adam was trying to gain favour from the king, and therefore allegiance, loyalty, and service to the king were promoted as significant factors. He hoped that the king, in return, would reciprocate the king/subject relationship, and show favour to him. This was, after all, the status of his political identity that he had enjoyed under Richard II. William Lovell, however, construes Adam's political identity in the new framework introduced in the 1401 parliament. Adam was Welsh. He was therefore a security risk to the realm. As a Welshman, his relationship with the king was tainted by his sharing of an identity with Owain Glyndŵr. Whether Adam Usk had shown sympathy to Owain Glyndŵr in front of William Lovell or not, a limiting identity was imposed on Adam Usk that meant sensitive information should no longer be shared with him, and the framework within which Adam could manoeuvre had become more limited. Adam's Welsh political identity had been redefined and was causing him problems in his career, which no pleading with the king would overcome.

¹²⁷ 'Letter Book of William Swan': Bodleian MS Arch Selden B23, fol. 61v. Extracts and translations: Given Wilson 'Introduction' pp. xxv-xxvi

¹²⁸ 'Letter Book of William Swan': Bodleian MS Arch Selden B23, fol. 61v. My own transcription and translation: *propter sua verba*

Adam faced his next problem with the English crown in 1406. Ultimately, it was Adam's personal decisions that created the next shift in his political identity. Frustrated by the lack of progress he was making in his career, and the limitations he faced as a Welshman, he left Rome. Uncharacteristically, the chronicle lacks details about his personal motivations and experiences during this period.¹²⁹ He does tell the reader, however, that his benefices were confiscated and granted to others, leaving him 'utterly impoverished'. He claims that he travelled aimlessly through 'Flanders, France, Normandy and Brittany', making money through legal counsel.¹³⁰ During this period, he went from being a Welsh subject of the English king, with all the limitations and prejudices that came with it, to a being outlawed for treasonous behaviour against the Crown.¹³¹ His new associations, as will be explored below, allowed him to enter an alternative system in which Welshmen were treated favourably, even if it did temporarily sever his relationship with the English monarch.

A letter from the archdeacon of Wiltshire to Robert Hallam, the bishop of Salisbury, which gives details of a bishop's commission from the previous year, provides more information about Adam's new political identity. According to this letter, Adam Usk had left Rome on 13 June 1406 and immediately 'joined the anti-pope [Benedict XIII] who within half a year had conferred the bishopric of Llandaff on him'. The letter states that he was thus excommunicated by the Roman pope, Gregory XII, and 'deprived of all his benefices' on 8 September 1407.¹³² The section of Adam Usk's chronicle covering the years 1406-1407, were written into the manuscript in one go in around 1414.¹³³ With the benefit of hindsight, Adam chose not to be forthcoming about his relationship with the anti-pope in Avignon, and with good reason. Henry IV was vehemently opposed to anyone who was associated with the Avignon pope. In the parliament of January 1404, it was declared that anyone associated with the anti-pope, French or otherwise, would be expelled from England. The statute expresses concerns about national security and those loyal to the anti-pope passing secrets to the king's enemies.¹³⁴ In addition, in 1404, Owain Glyndŵr and his men had signed a treaty with the king of France. The aim of the treaty was to connect the two powers against Henry IV. This notion is repeated throughout the treaty, as they agreed to support each other against the English king,

¹²⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxix.

¹³⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 212-215.

¹³¹ CPR 1408-1413, p. 159.

¹³² *The Register of Robert Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury 1407-17*, (ed.) Joyce M. Horn (England: Devonshire Press, The Canterbury and York Society vol. lxxii, 1982), p. 6. Also discussed in: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxx-xxxi, and fn. 75 and 76.

¹³³ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xlvii; Given-Wilson, 'The dating and structure', 528.

¹³⁴ 'Henry IV: January 1404,' *PROME*, article 26.

named personally as *Henricus de Lancastria* (Henry of Lancaster).¹³⁵ By joining the anti-pope in Avignon, Adam aligned himself with two of the king's most reviled enemies, Owain Glyndŵr and the anti-pope. Adam did not change sides simply to irritate King Henry. Instead, he had exhausted all avenues available to him in the political system in which he found himself. As a result, rather than fruitlessly fighting a system that defined his political position as almost 'foreign' or 'other', he simply moved to an alternative system that championed his right to a successful career.

The anti-pope, however, was not the only enemy of the king that Adam Usk was associated with. Whilst in Bruges he met the earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolf who were staying there, who were known opponents of Henry IV.¹³⁶ The relationship between Henry IV and the Percys, who were a powerful magnate family, was complex and often fraught. The Percy family's relationship with the Crown had been gradually deteriorating over a number of years, linked mainly to power and control in the north of England and in Scotland. In 1403 Henry Percy, the first earl of Northumberland's son, Henry Hotspur, raised an army and rebelled against Henry IV, allying himself with Owain Glyndŵr at a battle in Shrewsbury. The battle was a success for the king, and Henry Hotspur was killed.¹³⁷ Henry Percy, Hotspur's father, claiming that his oldest son had entered into battle on his own accord, avoided serious repercussions.¹³⁸

Henry Percy, was involved in a plot against Henry IV two years later, in which he colluded with Owain Glyndŵr and Edmund Mortimer to overthrow English rule and divide England and Wales between themselves.¹³⁹ An unsuccessful rebellion followed, which resulted in both Henry Percy and Thomas, Lord Bardolf fleeing to Scotland rather than facing the king in battle.¹⁴⁰ In 1405, the king summoned Henry Percy and Thomas, Lord Bardolf to answer charges of treason.¹⁴¹ After this, Northumberland and Thomas, Lord Bardolf attempted, and failed, to rebel against the king. It is in this context that Adam came to meet them. They travelled to the French court, in the hope of

¹³⁵ "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: July-December 1404," in *Rymer's Foedera vol. 8*. A further ratification was made in 1404. See: "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: January-March 1405," in *Rymer's Foedera vol. 8*.

¹³⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 218-219.

¹³⁷ Bevan, *Henry IV*, pp. 95-109.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹³⁹ Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, p.317. This agreement was supposedly formalised in the 'tripartite Indenture', a problematic document that gave Owen Glyndŵr Wales, Henry Percy the midlands and Scotland, and Edmund Mortimer the rest of England.

¹⁴⁰ J. M. W. Bean, 'Percy, Henry, first earl of Northumberland (1341–1408), magnate and rebel' *ODNB*, accessed 19 Nov 2019.

¹⁴¹ "Rymer's Foedera with Syllabus: July-September 1405," in *Rymer's Foedera vol. 8*.

gaining support from the French Crown to put the earl of March on the English throne.¹⁴² Adam knew that Henry Percy and Thomas, Lord Bardolf were considered enemies of the Crown. At that moment, it is likely that Adam was weighing up the likelihood of Owain Glyndŵr winning the rebellion against the king, and becoming prince of Wales.¹⁴³ He ultimately decided that this was not a likely outcome. Adam's chronicle states that Henry Percy had offered him promotion to high office if he joined him in rebelling against the king. Adam decided not to join the rebellion, saying that God visited his heart, and so he decided that he would try to obtain a pardon from Henry IV instead. This was ultimately the right thing to do, for the rebellion came to nothing. Adam's mere contact with the two men led to King Henry being 'stirred to even greater fury'.¹⁴⁴

Adam must have known the implications of leaving Rome and forming new allegiances. The bureaucratic trail created in the wake of his defection, cites both his connection to Owain Glyndŵr and his connection to Henry Percy and Thomas, Lord Bardolf as the reason for his fall from grace. A royal writ, dated 5 May 1407, connects Adam both to the French court and the rebel magnates in France.¹⁴⁵ The writ records that Adam atte Hulle and Robert Webbe owed tithes to the value of £5. 6s. 8d to Adam Usk at Castlecombe 'which belonged to the said Adam [Usk] on the day that he adhered, contrary to his allegiance, to our enemies and traitors of France'.¹⁴⁶ In 1410, the patent rolls record a grant to John Petit and Nicholas Preston of an income from the church of Castlecombe. It states that the church was at that time held by the above-mentioned Adam and Robert. The church, according to the entry, had been forfeited to the king 'because Adam Uske, parson of the church, was an adherent of the king's enemies and rebels of France and Wales'.¹⁴⁷ Adam acknowledges both of these accusations against him when he claims that Richard, Lancaster king at arms, returned to Paris, and informed Adam that there was no chance of him gaining a pardon from the king, 'partly because of my contact with the earl of Northumberland, and partly because of smears written by my enemies at Rome and sent to the king'.¹⁴⁸ Since Adam gives no other

¹⁴² Bean, 'Percy, Henry, first earl of Northumberland', *ODNB*.

¹⁴³ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxix-xxxii.

¹⁴⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 214-215.

¹⁴⁵ This writ was found by Given-Wilson, who provides a translation in the introduction to the chronicle: TNA PRO E368/180, fol. 165, cited in Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xxxi.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; translation provided by Given-Wilson. Robert Webbe and Adam Attehulle of Castle Combe were mentioned as jurors at the bishop's commission in 1407: *The Register of Robert Hallum, Bishop of Salisbury 1407-17*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ *CPR: Henry IV 1408-1413*, p. 159.

¹⁴⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

suggestion for what the 'smears' may have been, it is likely that he is referring to William Lovell's accusations that he was involved in Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion.

The final twist in the saga of Adam's life, puts him in direct contact with the rebels. In 1408, when Adam decided to return to Wales, he claims that he 'swore an oath' to Richard, the king-at-arms with whom he had been plotting his return, that he would go to Wales with his men and 'pretend to be one of Owain's supporters'.¹⁴⁹ He travelled to Barmouth on the north-west coast of Wales, and spent some time amongst the rebels. Eventually he managed to slip away, and sought a pardon from the king, through his lord, Edward Charlton, lord of Powys.¹⁵⁰ The right to grant pardons to the Welsh rebels was often bestowed upon individual lords who had lands in Wales. This was the case for Edward Charlton, who in 1401 was given 'full power to receive into the king's grace any rebels of his lands and lordships of Wales who may be willing to submit'.¹⁵¹

When Adam arrived in Wales via Barmouth, he discovered that Edward Charlton was absent from his lordship, attending his daughter's wedding in Devon, which meant that he had to wait for some time before he could request his pardon.¹⁵² It was perhaps this episode that provoked the commission on the 16 May 1409, which required Edward Charlton, along with a number of other lords, to remain in Wales and continue to fight the Welsh rebels. The directive was reiterated by the king in November of the same year.¹⁵³ The entry into the patent rolls that gives Edward Charlton the right to grant pardons, stipulates that he first had to ask permission from the king to grant the pardon, a process which in Adam's case seems to have taken about two years.¹⁵⁴ Whilst Adam was waiting for his pardon, which he received in 1411, Edward Charlton provided protection for Adam within the boundaries of his lands in Welshpool.¹⁵⁵ This story highlights an important element of lordship; it shows the expectation of the subject that the lord will provide them with protection, which Edward Charlton granted by allowing him to live safely within his lordship until the pardon was given in 1411. The wording of the pardon echoes Adam's own explanation of events. It claims that Adam was

¹⁴⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

¹⁵⁰ Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

¹⁵¹ *CPR: Henry IV 1401-1405*, p. 24.

¹⁵² Adam Usk, pp. 238-239.

¹⁵³ Rymer's *Foedera with Syllabus: April-June 1409*, in *Rymer's Foedera vol. 8*.

¹⁵⁴ *CPR: Henry IV 1401-1405*, p. 24.

¹⁵⁵ The pardon is printed in: Thompson, 'Introduction' in *Chronicon Adae De Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, p. xxviii; *Sciatis quod, cum Adam Uske, clericus, contra coluntatem suam in comitiva Owini de Glyndorduy et Wallensium rebellium extiterit, et ab eis tam cicius quam potuit recesserit, et ad graciā nostrum expectandam venerit*. My own translation. Also see: Adam Usk, pp. 238-241; *CPR: Henry IV 1406-1413*, p. 283.

colluding with Owain Glyndŵr and the Welsh rebels 'against his will'. He was accepted into the king's grace and pardoned for all his felonies and transgressions.¹⁵⁶ Despite the pardon, Adam was still not 'English'. His name appearing on the 1413 list indicates that his political identity was still very much 'Welsh' and that he was still limited by the political frameworks of the English crown, even after returning to the king's peace. After Adam Usk received his pardon in 1411, his career was somewhat muted in comparison to what he had achieved earlier. He resumed his position as an advocate at the Court of Arches and attended parliament in 1413. He was given new benefices, such as the church of Merstham in Surrey which he exchanged for Hopesay in Shropshire, finally settling at Llangibby near Usk, where he is likely to have stayed until shortly before his death.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates that whilst his Welsh status ultimately forced Adam to seek an alternative political system which would not marginalise the Welsh, even when returning to England after the rebellion he was still granted some opportunity.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the way in which individual political status, and communal political and legal identities, were redefined during the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V. An in-depth reading of the Parliament Rolls and the Patent Rolls for this short time frame demonstrates how different administrations reacted to foreign people living in the English realm. It is clear there was a general tightening of control under Henry IV, which was further entrenched during the reign of his son, Henry V. The Welsh legal identity was redefined at a time when there was not only instability in Wales, but foreigners in England in general found legal structures in England more limiting. This is evidenced in the increase of pardons issued to people from a variety of places, including Wales, for acting in a way that was legally unacceptable for their status, infringements that had previously not been considered significant. There is no doubt that the reinforcement of the Welsh legal identity was instigated by the rebellion in Wales, but it can also be seen as part of a wider policy in England at the time.

Adam Usk's Welsh identity has been seen as the reason his career ambitions were never realised. Indeed, Adam wrote in his chronicle that he did not receive certain promotions because of the war in Wales. Anti-Welsh legislation is frequently cited as an example of the prejudice that Welsh people

¹⁵⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 238-241; *CPR: Henry IV, 1408-1413*, p. 283.

¹⁵⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction' in *Adam Usk*, pp. xxxiii-xxxv.

suffered during the years of the rebellion, and into the future. This chapter, however, has demonstrated that the prejudice projected onto the Welsh people was part of a wider redefinition of their subject status. For Adam, it was his political identity, as in his relationships with the ruling elites, that created the most significant limitations for his life. As the legal framework that governed his freedoms and opportunities shifted, the promotions and opportunities that Adam desired moved further from his reach. The language of his chronicle, various administrative documents, and letters written in 1404, demonstrate this. Adam Usk, for example, highlights his association, responsibilities, and loyalty to the English political system. Others, however, are preoccupied with his supposed connection to the Welsh/French alliance under Owain Glyndŵr. Adam Usk was clearly conscious of the way his political identity was redefined by both administrations; in England it was limited, but under Owain Glyndŵr in Wales and the anti-pope in France his prospects temporarily appeared improved. Whilst there is certainly a connection between cultural prejudice and the legal marginalisation of the Welsh, the two should also be considered separately. Adam Usk's name appearing on the list of Welshmen who were given leave to live in England in 1413, was the result of an environment in which the Welsh legal and political identities were being redefined.

Chapter Five

Prophecy, Legend and Identity in Adam Usk's Chronicle: connecting the past, the present, and the future

Wales still lies wretched and oppressed under the Saxon people. Yet she hopes sometime to recover through the merits of Cadwaladr after the fated time mentioned in the prophecies of the Eagle and which Merlin prophesied to Arthur, especially in accordance with the prediction of the Angel who dissuaded Cadwaladr for the time being from moving from Armorican Brittany to his own Britain.¹

Walter Bower's history, the *Scotichronicon*, was compiled and composed in the 1440s. Like Adam Usk, Walter Bower was university educated. He studied Canon Law at St Andrew's in Scotland in the 1410s, when the university was very much in its infancy. He was then promoted to Abbot on the isle of Inchcolm, a position he held until his death in 1449.² Walter Bower based his chronicle on a pre-existing Scottish history, the *Scotichronicon* by John of Fordun, the main text of which had finished in 1153. Walter Bower's chronicle is described as an 'elaboration' of this previous work.³ He added to, and extended the history, including information about the relationship between Scotland and the neighbouring countries.⁴ This included the Scottish perspective on the Glyndŵr rebellion from which the above extract is taken.

Although Walter Bower had been alive whilst the Glyndŵr rebellion was taking place, he wrote his chronicle roughly thirty years after it ended. He therefore composed the account with a combination of contemporary knowledge and hindsight. Throughout the description of the rebellion Walter frames the Welsh as weaker and more turbulent than their English enemies. His tone is far from sympathetic. The Welsh had initially been successful in their campaign against the English, standing united against a common enemy. He claims that the Welsh, however, angered God with their vices, drinking and gambling rather than giving thanks for their victories. God thus gave the English the advantage and allowed them to overcome the Welsh easily.⁵ It is in this context that the above passage is found. The opening phrase of the extract '*Adhuc etenim Wallia jacet sub gente Saxonica*

¹ From: '*Scotichronicon*', CCCC, MS 171B; 'Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*', (ed. and trans.) Watt, in *Owain Glyndŵr: A Casebook*, pp. 198-199.

² D. E. R. Watt, 'A National Treasure? The *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower', *The Scottish Historical Review* 76:201 (1997), 44.

³ Michael Livingston, 'Notes on Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*', in *Owain Glyndŵr: A Casebook*, pp. 386-388.

⁴ Watt, 'A National Treasure? The *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower', 45.

⁵ 'Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*', pp. 194-197.

squalida et oppressa speaks of the political situation that the Welsh found themselves in. They were *still* (*adhuc*) oppressed by the English. The use of this adverb, suggesting the continuity of their oppressed state, connects the present to the past and tells a tale of perpetual subjugation. Walter also speaks of a prophecy which foretold that the Welsh would regain their autonomy from the English. The prophecy links the oppression the Welsh suffered to the legendary character of Cadwaladr, a prominent figure in the commonly believed history of the Welsh. In the extract from Walter Bower's chronicle the past, the present, and the future are tied together as one through prophecy.

Prophecy played an important role in medieval societies. Whilst originally connected to the Bible, the medieval world relied on a wide variety of sources for its prophecy. Some were based on ancient materials and mythology, like the prophecies of Merlin, and others were taken from political poems, like that of John of Bridlington, both of which will be discussed in more detail below.⁶ Political prophecy, which is explored in this chapter, has been described as both a genre and a discourse. It is a genre, because people in the medieval world would have perceived it as a separate form of literary output, with specific characteristics.⁷ Alternatively, it has also been described as a 'discourse' as a result of the social currency that it held. Prophetic language could be alluded to without explanation, and held integral meaning for the person interpreting it.⁸ When used in chronicles, it created continuity and stability. As such, it is hardly a surprise that when Henry IV came to the throne through military strength in 1399, contemporary chroniclers utilised prophecy to demonstrate that this change in regime had been preordained.⁹ Prophecy came from God and the use of prophecy gave the chronicler authority over their account. Prophecy was therefore a greatly utilised tool in the Middle Ages, and had a specific function in the construction of histories and chronicle writing.¹⁰

⁶ Lesley A. Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs in later medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 117-168; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 38-40; Victoria Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place: from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Thomas of Erceidoun* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), pp. 1-17.

⁷ Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), pp. 2-5.

⁸ Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs*, p.13; Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 2-3, 10-12.

⁹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p.45; Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, p. 7; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 87; Helen Fulton, 'Arthurian Prophecy and the Deposition of Richard II', *Arthurian Literature* 22 (2005), 64-83; Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs*, pp. 148-158.

¹⁰ Stephen Yandell, 'Prophetic Authority in Adam of Usk's Chronicle' in *Prophet Margins: the medieval vatic impulse and social stability*, (eds.) E. L. Ridsden, K. Moranski and S. Yandell (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), p. 83; Marchant, *Revolt*, pp. 81-90.

Adam Usk's chronicle has frequently been cited as an interesting example of the role that prophecy played in medieval histories.¹¹ He uses numerous prophetic techniques throughout his accounts.¹² Biblical prophecy and references to biblical accounts are used to structure events and express a moral stance.¹³ There are a significant number of portents, some of which are noticed by other chroniclers, like the comet seen in the sky in 1402.¹⁴ Miracles and the bizarre, which are not attributed to any kind of prophetic significance appear within the history; the story of the two headed calf in Llancayo, or the boy with a single eye in the middle of his forehead are stand-alone tales, nestled amongst the stories of national events with political significance.¹⁵ Adam Usk also shows a propensity for political prophecy, referencing the prophecies Merlin and Bridlington, as well as many prophecies for which he gives no provenance, but which were popular at the time. Finally, he is alone amongst his immediate contemporaries in recording dreams in his chronicle. Overall, he records five dreams, which he recognises as having prophetic significance. The dreams tend to be more personal in nature, demonstrating his personal feelings and attitudes to events, including the death of his patron Archbishop Thomas Arundel in 1414 and his reaction to anti-Welsh legislation in the parliament of 1401.¹⁶ With this abundance of prophecy, it is hardly surprising that Adam's chronicle is singled out as a prophecy-rich work, and therefore one of interest.

Whilst some have highlighted the international nature of medieval Welsh prophecy, theoretical approaches to national identity overlap significantly with the practical functions of prophecy in the medieval period.¹⁷ The above extract from Walter Bower's chronicle demonstrates two key elements of identity. First, is the communal belief in a shared past. Medieval understandings of communal difference were based on the fact that distinct communities were of diverse descent. For a 'people' (*gens*) to exist, understanding themselves, or being understood as having the same roots was important.¹⁸ Identity was passed down through the blood line. It was not necessary for the history to be real for it to create divide between the English and Welsh identities. It was simply the *belief* in history that formed the communal group. Using Anderson's definition of 'nation', the belief in a

¹¹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp 27-32; Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret*, pp. 53-65; Yandell, 'Prophetic Authority in Adam of Usk's Chronicle', pp. 79-100; Marchant, *Revolt*, pp. 81-90; Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, pp. 1-31.

¹² Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. lxxvii-lxxxi.

¹³ Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs*, p. 41; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 46.

¹⁴ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p.31; Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 54-63.

¹⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 86-87.

¹⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 4-5, 16-17, 48-49, 50-53, 58-59, 82-83, 90-91, 126-127, 170-171, 180-181, 204-207, 218-219, 248-249; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. lxxi-lxxix.

¹⁷ Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan*, p. 208; Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Identities', p. 6.

shared past aids the formation of imagined communities in two ways. Firstly, it creates a limit.¹⁹ The people who believed in a communal history were immediately separated from the people who believed that they descended from a different blood line, or a different set of historical circumstances.²⁰ In the above extract from Walter Bower's chronicle, the mention of Cadwaladr alludes to this shared history for the Welsh, as will be discussed in more detail below. This origin was specifically Welsh and separated them by descent from their English neighbours. It also creates 'community'.²¹ Undoubtedly the lived experience of individual Welsh people differed depending on numerous factors. Wealth, social position, gender, and location all had implications for the way people could live their lives. Yet prophecy created a perceived communal tie between the Welsh people. In Wales it was widely believed that the people there were descendants of the original Britons oppressed by the Saxons. They were culturally united in the belief that they might one day be free from the rule of the English in Wales. The people of Wales were colonised, limited by English rule, and united in the hope for a freer future. Prophecy created an imagined past, and an imagined community, and became an integral part of the way the Welsh were perceived, and how they perceived themselves.

From an internal perspective, the Welsh certainly saw prophecy as a fundamental part of their national character.²² A propensity for prophecy was also a trait that was applied to the Welsh from their English and Scottish neighbours. The English and the Scots also used prophecy, and to some extent used it to define their own communal character.²³ In this case, however, the fact that an identity required limits to exist meant that a power relationship formed between the different groups. For the Welsh, prophecy provided an antidote to the authority of the English and gave them a sense of power over a seemingly unchangeable situation. For the English, the tradition of the son of prophecy (*mab darogan*) only sought to intensify the idea of the Welsh as uncivilised, unstable and wild, as will be discussed below. It became a defining aspect of the Welsh character.²⁴ Walter Bower's account of the Glyndŵr rebellion, makes the natural association between Welsh oppression under English rule and their desire for liberation as a result of the ancient prophecies. The Welsh in

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 7.

²⁰ Davies, 'Presidential Address: Identities', pp. 4-5; Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 39-56.

²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 7.

²² Henken, *National Redeemer*; Davies, 'Presidential Address: Language and Historical Mythology', 22-23; Davies, *Revolt*, p. 169; Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan: prophecy, lament and absent heroes in medieval Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013); Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 105-107.

²³ Ruddick, *English Identity*, pp. 171-172.

²⁴ Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 105-107.

this extract are morally weak, religiously lacking, and unable to save themselves. To be Welsh, in Walter Bower's eyes, meant to be associated with prophecy. It also meant to be uncivilised and unstable. The connection is frequently made between prophecy and negative Welsh cultural stereotypes in later medieval texts. It can in itself be seen as a cultural characteristic that identified the Welsh as different from their neighbours.

Tentative allusions to Adam Usk's Welsh identity have been made by scholars analysing prophecy in his chronicle.²⁵ Despite this, the links between his identity as a Welshman, or as a man from Usk, and his use of prophecy, have never been explored in any detail. Analysing the relationship between prophecy in Adam Usk's chronicle and his Welsh/local identity, demonstrates how he attempted to express Welsh identity through an English framework. The first section of this chapter deals with this theme most explicitly, analysing the political narratives supported by prophecy in Adam Usk's work, and comparing them to the narratives in, firstly, the Welsh tradition, and then the 'shared' tradition that developed in the twelfth century. Next, Adam's political perspective is tested against the way that Owain Glyndŵr used prophecy and history in two letters recorded in Adam's chronicle. This discussion centres around intended political outcomes and building alliances between Owain, Scotland, Ireland, and France. The final section of this chapter examines the connection between prophetic practices and negative portrayals of the Welsh in medieval Latin chronicles. This links to the Welsh cultural identity as portrayed through chronicle narratives and demonstrates how the language used to describe Welsh prophecy was often demeaning.

The Merlin Tradition and Adam Usk's Chronicle

In the late Middle Ages a range of prophetic texts were in circulation, such as the 'Prophecy of the Eagle', the 'Prophecy of the Six Kings to follow John', the 'Bridlington Prophecies' and the 'Merlin Prophecies'.²⁶ There were many points of cross over between these texts, such as the use of animal imagery that was derived from the prophecies of Merlin found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century work, *Historia Regum Britanniae*.²⁷ By the time Adam Usk was writing, a prophetic tradition with roots in *Historia Regum Britanniae* was evident in both England and Wales.²⁸ What differed, however, was the way that the prophecies were used, particular for supporting two contradictory

²⁵ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 81.

²⁶ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 40.

²⁷ Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 110.

²⁸ Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 155-198.

political narratives. Indeed, the Welsh political narrative, as will be explored below, was based on a tradition far older than Geoffrey's work that was essentially taken and repurposed into a format more fitting to the English narrative. In this section, Adam Usk's interaction with this prophetic tradition is explored. It analyses to what extent Adam was aware of the native Welsh tradition and whether he was sympathetic to the political ambitions of the original Welsh prophecy. As seen in earlier chapters of this work, the way that he linked prophecy to Welshness is explored within the context of the English framework that shaped his perceptions and structured his chronicle writing.

When Adam was writing during the early fifteenth century, Merlin's prophecies were less fashionable amongst chronicle writers than they had been previously, but were still widely disseminated and well known.²⁹ In the section of BL Add MS 10104 containing Adam Usk's work, Merlin is referred to by name on three occasions. The first two appear on the leaves between the end of Ranulf Higden's chronicle and the beginning of Adam Usk's. Here, there is a clear link between Wales, Welsh identity, and Adam Usk's use of Merlin's prophecy. This section of the manuscript is not part of the chronicle proper, but contains a tract written in a scrawling hand containing creative prose introducing himself, his life, and his name. Playfully, Adam Usk experiments with his name 'Adam' and its connection to other high profile or biblical figures. Adam the first man and Adam Orleton, an earlier bishop of Hereford, appear in the text.³⁰ The name Adam is repeated at the beginning of sentences thirteen times in the space of 32 lines. Finally, he reveals his own name:

*Hearken! – abandoning the spade of all misery, how glorious, with his manly qualities, becomes Adam! Usk: the prophet Merlin says of this name, 'The River Usk shall be boiling hot for seven months; the fish shall die of its heat, and serpents shall proliferate' – thereby showing approval of serpents, as I take to be correct, according to what the gospel says, 'Be ye wise as serpents'. But of whom does Merlin say these things?*³¹

Adam and Usk are placed either side of a red punctuation mark in the manuscript, presenting his name to the reader. Usk, as Adam's surname, is immediately connected to a prophecy about the

²⁹ The only prophecy in the major chronicles of this time is found in: *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, pp. 177-178. This prophecy is not attributed to Merlin in the text, only in a marginal, even though the writer mentions Bridlington in the main body of the text when using his prophecies. See 170-171. For discussions about Merlin, the dissemination and use of his work see: R. W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of historical writing 3: history as prophecy', pp. 55-56.

³⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xl.

³¹ '*Polychronicon* (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fols 154v-155r. For a translation see: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. xli and transcription p. xli fn. 117.

town of Usk, Adam's birthplace. The river that flows through the town stars in this prophecy.³² Adam goes on to explain that the prophecy of Merlin regarding the wisdom of serpents is surely referring to his Lord, the earl of March 'lord of that place' (*domino loci*). He then describes the royal ancestry of Roger Mortimer and also his prowess in battle.³³ As is seen elsewhere in the chronicle, the Mortimer lineage was constructed to include a number of Welsh legendary characters, including Cadwaladr as mentioned in Walter Bower's description of the Welsh at the beginning of this chapter. Roger Mortimer is therefore portrayed as Welsh, with a connection to a Welsh belief in a shared past.³⁴ Every element of this prophetic moment is connected to Wales and Welsh identity. Adam chose this prophecy because of his own name, his place of birth, and his lord. Place, prophecy, and identity are entwined, drawing a link between Wales as a place, its legendary shared past, and the resulting character of the people there. Merlin, the Welsh prophet, functions as an adhesive, binding these aspects together in a single mention of his name.

The third mention of Merlin occurs in the narrative of the chronicle itself. During his account of the year 1399, Adam describes the return of Henry Bolingbroke from the exile imposed on him by Richard II. He includes three consecutive prophecies in this section, two of which are ascribed to Bridlington, and the other to Merlin. He wrote:

The return from exile of the aforesaid duke of Hereford - also now, through the death of his father, duke of Lancaster, and thus a duke twice over - fulfilled the prophecy of Bridlington, where the verse reads,/ The double duke will come with scarce three hundred men,/Let perjured Philip flee, regardless of the slain.

*According to the prophecy of Merlin, this duke Henry is the eaglet, for he was the son of John; following Bridlington, however, he should rather be the dog, because of his livery of linked collars of greyhounds, and because he came in the dog-days, and because he drove utterly from the kingdom countless numbers of harts - the hart being the livery of King Richard.*³⁵

Both Merlin's and Bridlington's prophecies are used to comment on kingship. Even though Adam's chronicle was first copied into the manuscript in 1401, two years after Henry Bolingbroke came to the throne, his work begins in 1377 when Richard II was crowned.³⁶ This means that as a historian,

³² This references one of Merlin's prophecies from Geoffrey of Monmouth's history. See: *Historia Regum Britannie*, pp. 150-151.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See above: chapter 2; Adam Usk, pp. 40-41.

³⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 50-53.

³⁶ Given-Wilson, 'The Dating and Structure', 520-533.

Adam had to create a connection and justification for how both men could legitimately wear the crown.³⁷ For Adam, and a number of his contemporaries, prophecy was the solution. It demonstrated that the change in regime had been preordained by God and was thus legitimate. Adam's approach to justifying Henry IV's right to the throne is resolute. By combining three prophetic verses consecutively, Adam ensures that no one is in doubt over his support for Henry IV. Unlike the prophecy found in the pages between Ranulf Higden's chronicle and Adam Usk's chronicle, this mention of Merlin was not connected to Wales or Welsh identity. It instead aligns Adam Usk to a tradition that was found in many English chronicles of this time.

In terms of Adam's sources for Merlin, there are a large number of extant fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts written in Latin, middle French and middle English that contain the prophecies of Merlin, or stories about Merlin as a legendary character.³⁸ In these manuscripts Merlin's prophecy can be found alongside chronicles or copied into manuscripts along with other prophetic texts. For example, BL Cotton MS Faustina A VIII is a Latin manuscript from the later Middle Ages, which contains a number of prophetic texts. In this manuscript, Merlin's prophecies are immediately followed by the *Prophecy of the Eagle*, another prophecy used by Adam.³⁹ It can therefore be assumed that Adam's knowledge of these kinds of prophecies came from a manuscript like this one; one that was written in Latin, and probably produced in England.

Therefore, it is evident that Adam Usk was familiar with Merlin's prophecies, and to some extent makes the association between Merlin and Wales. Indeed, the character of Merlin and his prophecies were deeply embedded in Welsh culture. According to Wallis Evans, Medieval Welsh prophecy can be separated into four distinct periods, the earliest credited to Myddin and Taliesin, which appears in pre-thirteenth century verse, and the latest *y cywyddau brud* written during the Tudor period.⁴⁰ Whilst the delivery of the message varied over this time, the overall theme remained consistent; the power struggle between the Welsh and their occupiers (notably the Saxons, Normans

³⁷ See: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. 41-42.

³⁸ For Latin prophecies: BL Cotton MS Tiberius A IX, fols 2r-5r; For Middle French prose narrative of Merlin: BL Harley MS 1629 and BL Add MS 25434.

³⁹ 'The prophecies of Merlin, and the Prophecy of the Eagle': BL Cotton MS Faustina A VIII fols 115r-166v; Adam Usk, pp. 50-53. For a description of the prophecy and its use see: Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, p. 51 fn 5; Coote *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, pp. 63- 64; Taylor, *Political Prophecy in England*, p. 92; Morgan Kay, 'Prophecy in Welsh Manuscripts', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, vol. 26/27 (2006/2007), 76.

⁴⁰ R. Wallis Evans, 'Prophetic Poetry' in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282-c.1500 vol II* (eds.) A. O. H Jarman and G. R. Hughes (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 256.

or English depending on the time period) and the foretelling that the Welsh would overthrow their oppressors and become rulers of 'Ynys Prydein' (Island of Britain).⁴¹ The imagery of a single, united island prominent in this early prophecy framed the political ambitions of the Welsh princes and gentry in opposition to the English occupation of Wales.⁴² The earliest prophecy is the *Armes Prydein* (the Prophecy of Britain) is found in the fourteenth-century Book of Taliesin (MS NLW Peniarth 2) and has been dated to before the Norman conquest.⁴³ The key theme is a grievance that the king of Wessex was interfering in Welsh affairs and that the Welsh king, Hywel Dda, was displaying a tendency for pro-English policy, specifically related to taxation.⁴⁴ The poem describes a prophecy of a battle between the English and an alliance of a force composed of Welsh people and their neighbours, not least the Cornish, Bretons, Norsemen of Dublin, and the Scots.⁴⁵ The army would be led by Cynan and Cadwaladr, the legendary Welsh leader referred to by Walter Bower in the 1430s, and the Welsh would be victorious.⁴⁶

Myrddin, the Welsh precursor to Merlin, is the cited in the poem as the source of the prophecy (*Dysgogan Myrddin*/Myrddin foretells), drawing authority from God and the Saints of Britain, notably St David.⁴⁷ Myrddin is a common character in Welsh prophetic poetry. The Black Book of Carmarthen, for example, written in the mid-thirteenth century contains three prophetic poems that include Myrddin: *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin* (The Conversation of Myrddin and Taliesin), *Afallen* (Apple Tree), and *Oian* (Little Pig).⁴⁸ These again follow the same political ideology, in which it is foretold that the Welsh would overcome the opposing army, and force their occupiers into retreat.

⁴¹ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, pp. 79-80; Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 4-6.

⁴² Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 4-6.

⁴³ G. R. Isaac, 'Armes Prydain Fawr and St David' in *St David of Wales: cult, church and nation* (eds.) J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 161; Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, p. 27; Wallis Evans, p. 260; 'The Book of Taliesin', NLW Peniarth MS 2, fols 6r-8v. This manuscript dates from the early 14th century; for more on the oral dissemination of prophecy in Wales see: Morgan Kay, 'Prophecy in Welsh Manuscripts', p. 80; Aled Llion Jones, 'Prophecy as Criticism: MS Peniarth 50, tradition and translation' *Translation Studies*, 9:2 (2016), p. 137.

⁴⁴ Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan*, p. 31; Isaac, 'Armes Prydain Fawr' p. 161.

⁴⁵ Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, p. 28; Isaac, 'Armes Prydain Fawr' p. 161.

⁴⁶ Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, p. 28; Isaac, 'Armes Prydain Fawr' pp. 174-175; R. Wallis Evans, 'Prophetic Poetry' in *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282-c.1550, vol. II*, (eds.) A. O. H. Jarman and G. R. Hughes (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 260; B. F. Roberts, 'Appendix: The *Historia Regum Britanniae* in Wales', in *Brut Y Brenhinedd*, (ed.) B. F. Roberts (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies) p. 55.

⁴⁷ Welsh text and English translation: Isaac, 'Armes Prydain Fawr' pp. 170-173; Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan*, p. 31.

⁴⁸ Stephen Knight, *Merlin: knowledge and power through the ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 4. For English translations of the poems see: *The Romance of Merlin*, (ed.) Peter Goodrich (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), pp. 16-56; 'The Black Book of Carmarthen' NLW Peniarth MS 1; also see: M. Griffiths, *Early Vaticinations in Welsh with English Parallels* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1937).

Whilst the written text dates from the thirteenth century, the poems themselves are likely to be older, possibly from the eleventh or twelfth centuries.⁴⁹

The story of Merlin's life appears in the ninth-century history by Nennius, a cleric at the court of Merfyn Frych in Gwynedd.⁵⁰ This character was the forebear of the character Merlin in Adam Usk's chronicle. Merlin was a prophet; in chapter 42 of his *Historia Brittonum* Nennius told the story of how Vortigern had tried to maintain power over Britain but was forced to flee into the Welsh mountains. When he tried to build a fort there, the materials repeatedly disappeared. Vortigern's court magicians told him that the blood of a boy with no father must be poured on the foundations for it to work. The boy, however, could see a world beneath the tower and predicted the presence of two dragon-serpents below a subterranean lake, whose existence was causing the tower to repeatedly fall. The boy then foretold that there would be wars between the Britons and the Saxons. The dragon representing the Britons won the battle.⁵¹ It connects the character of Myrddin to Snowdon, and the prophecy of the two dragons demonstrates the Britons' victory over the Saxons. It is a Welsh prophecy, by a Welsh prophet. The Welsh would one day overcome the oppression of the English.

The character of Myrddin or Merlin arguably exists in two phases, before the works of Geoffrey Monmouth and after.⁵² In the time before Geoffrey's work, Merlin existed in a realm of Welsh political ideology, tied to the notion that Wales would one day be free of her oppressors and would come rule the island of Britain. Geoffrey of Monmouth's works written in the twelfth century, however, took the traditional Welsh character, prophecy, and message of Merlin, and repurposed it into a format that could be used and perpetuated by the English themselves. From their place of significance within the Welsh political framework, Merlin's prophecies went on a journey, which made them acceptable to an English audience, and allowed them to be used by Adam in relation to Henry IV of England. Indeed, as stated above, Adam's knowledge of Merlin's prophecies was from texts derived from the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, a twelfth century work compiled by Geoffrey of

⁴⁹ Knight, *Merlin*, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Nennius: *British history and the Welsh annals*, (ed. and trans.) J. Morris (London: Phillimore and Co., 1980); A. Lawrence-Mathers, *The True History of Merlin the Magician*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 36; M. J. Curley 'Conjuring History: Mother, Nun, and Incubus in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 114:2 (2015), p. 219.

⁵¹ Lawrence-Mathers, *The True History of Merlin*, pp. 36-37; M. J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), p. 51.

⁵² Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 18-21.

Monmouth, the Bishop of St Asaph.⁵³ The text included an account of Merlin and his prophecies, and claimed that it was based upon a 'British' source that was translated into Latin. Geoffrey of Monmouth took the fundamental framework of the story found in Nennius's chronicle, and a prophecy not dissimilar to that found in *Armes Prydain Vawr*, but made it his own.⁵⁴

The way that Geoffrey of Monmouth used sources was part of the reason that his work is considered to be controversial, not only by modern scholars, but some medieval commentators as well.⁵⁵ In the traditional way he based his own narrative on pre-existing chronicles and histories, such as Gildas's *De excidio Britanniae* and Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, who he names within the work. In addition, he used a later recension of Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*.⁵⁶ Unlike traditional compilers, however, Geoffrey of Monmouth introduced an extra creative element when using these texts, altering them and expanding them, which he also did to the story of Vortigern and Merlin's prophecies. This combined with the introduction of King Arthur, a character widely believed to be a historical figure until the 1530s led some of his contemporaries and some modern scholars to label his work as a 'literary hoax' and him as a 'disreputable scoundrel'.⁵⁷ Despite this, the majority of those writing history in the Middle Ages approached his work without question and the story of Merlin and his 'British' prophecies took on a new life. In changing the account of Merlin that he gave in his chronicle, Geoffrey was able to counteract some of the more troubling aspects of the story of Merlin; Ambrosius's unmarried mother who claimed that she had never had relations with a man in Nennius's story, became a nun of good lineage who was visited by a spirit who had intercourse with her. This provided an easy explanation for how Merlin came to possess his powers.⁵⁸ Indeed, in many of the texts containing Geoffrey's version of Merlin present Merlin dressed in a monk like

⁵³ J. C. Crick, 'Monmouth, Geoffrey of (d. 1154/5)', *ODNB* accessed 2 May 2017. For Adam Usk's sources see Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxvi.

⁵⁴ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain; an edition and translation of De gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, (ed.) M. D. Reeve and (trans.) N. Wright (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 142-143. Nennius's work was written in Latin and therefore it is not this text that Geoffrey claims to have translated.

⁵⁵ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶ M. D. Reeve 'Introduction' in Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain; an edition and translation of De gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, (ed.) M. D. Reeve and (trans.) N. Wright (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), p. lviii; David E. Thornton, 'Nennius (fl. c.770–c.810)', *ODNB* accessed 27 June 2017.

⁵⁷ R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: power and identity in the British Isles 1093-1343*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 39. Throughout the Middle Ages writers of history questioned the legitimacy of his work including Henry of Huntingdon and Ranulf Higden.

⁵⁸ Curley 'Conjuring History', 222-223.

garb, and his mother wearing a nun's habit.⁵⁹ They were religious people who were worthy of receiving God's gift of prophecy. The character becomes acceptable to an audience that was unfamiliar with the Welsh tradition of prophecy.

Merlin's parentage was not the only difference between Geoffrey's and Nennius's stories of Merlin. In Nennius's account Ambrosius explains the meaning of the fighting dragons. He states that the cloth was the kingdom and the two worms were the English and the Britons. He foretold that initially the white dragon would seize many peoples and countries in Britain so that their power would stretch from sea to sea, but eventually the red worm would rise up and throw them over the sea.⁶⁰ The prophecies in Geoffrey of Monmouth's work begin in a similar way to those in Nennius's chronicle, with Merlin describing the metaphorical significance of the two dragons. Quickly the imagery progresses into motifs that are not visible to his onlookers in the story, and that are also not directly explained by the prophet, beginning with the boar of Cornwall.⁶¹ The message of the prophecies, however, remain consistent with the traditional Welsh prophecy; whilst the English were dominant in Wales, it would not be the case forever, and eventually the Welsh would fight for their freedom and be victorious over the English and all of England. Despite this, the prophecies resounded with an English audience, who made the history of the Britons synonymous with their own past. Thus, the *Historia Regum Britanniae* and subsequent works based on the characters of Merlin and Arthur left the confines of Wales and found their way into many libraries across Europe.

There is no evidence in Adam Usk's chronicle that he was familiar with any of the Welsh sources for Merlin's prophecies. It does appear, however, that Adam was aware of the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, be it directly from the chronicle or through indirect means. In 1399 he quotes almost directly from *Historia Regum Britanniae* as he compares the deposition of Richard II to the overthrowing of Arthgallus, a former king of the Britons.⁶² The reason for suggesting that Adam Usk's reference to Merlin may not be directly from *Historia Regum Britanniae* is that the 'eaglet' prophecy he associates with Henry Bolingbroke is not one of Merlin's prophecies, but rather *Prophecia Aquile*. The *Prophecy of the Eagle* was a series of three political prophecies that were in circulation by the end of the twelfth century. Merlin's prophecies, and the *Prophecy of the Eagle* were part of a corpus

⁵⁹'Miniature of Merlin taking leave of his mother; miniature of Merlin standing before Vortigern', BL Cotton MS Julius A V, fols 53r-53v.

⁶⁰ Nennius: *British history and the Welsh annals*, p. 31.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 13; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 144-159.

⁶² Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 62-63 and fn. 1.

of prophecies that are frequently found alongside each other in manuscripts, so it was perhaps for this reason that Adam Usk was confused.⁶³ This is further evidence that Adam's familiarity with manuscripts that circulated as readily in England were the source of his Merlin references, rather than an explicitly Welsh connection.

In addition to Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, and Merlin's prophecies that were in circulation separately to the *Historia Regum Britannie*, Adam would also have understood the link between Merlin and Wales from Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. Ranulf linked Welsh cultural identity and prophecy in his rhyming chapter describing the Welsh. He writes:

*Hos consuevit fallere
Et ad bella impingere
Merlini vaticinium,
Et frequens sortilegium.*⁶⁴

The Welsh were easily deceived and pushed to war by Merlin's words. This is clearly portrayed as a weakness in their character. Ranulf Higden explains that there were two Merlins. One was called *Ambrosius*. He was born of an incubus during Vortigern's time at Carmarthen, and pronounced (*proflavit*) his vaticinations at the rise of the river of Conway, and on the slopes of Mont Eirry (Snowdon).⁶⁵ The other Merlin, according to Ranulf Higden, was associated with Scotland, and prophesied at the time of King Arthur.⁶⁶

The *Polychronicon*, in its description of places and peoples, made the association between prophecy and the Welsh identity. Prophecy was fundamentally connected to the geographical location of Wales. Carmarthen and Snowdonia are places often associated with Merlin and prophecy. Indeed, the Welsh name for Carmarthen, Caerfyrddin, is believed to be based on Merlin's name, a point that Walsingham makes when describing events in Wales in 1405.⁶⁷ The place name Caerfyrddin can be roughly translated as 'Merlin's fort' (*caer* meaning castle in Welsh and *fyrddin* a mutation of

⁶³ Ibid.; Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 59.

⁶⁴ Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. I, p. 410. *These were accustomed to deceive, and to push them to war, by Merlin's vaticinations and frequent soothsaying.* My own translation.

⁶⁵ Ranulf Higden, vol. I, p. 418. My own translation.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 420. Merlin is seen elsewhere in Ranulf Higden's work, such as creating Stonehenge. See Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. v, pp. 312-313.

⁶⁷ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II pp. 464-465 'when the French reached Owain, they urged him to attack the town of Merlin, which is now called Carmarthen'.

Myrddin).⁶⁸ Adam Usk's chronicle as a *Polychronicon* continuation continues some of the themes of Ranulf Higden's work. Most importantly, it is possible to determine that Adam knew this history of Wales. Therefore, when Adam Usk mentions Merlin it is likely that he makes some association between the prophecy of Merlin, and the geographical location of Wales.

By the time that Adam was writing, a shared tradition of Merlin's prophecies had emerged, and had been embraced on both sides of the border.⁶⁹ Welsh translations of Geoffrey's work survive in the form of the *Brut y Brenhinedd* (Chronicle of the Kings).⁷⁰ Whilst an illusion of separation existed, the reality was different. Welsh and English prophecy, when it came to Merlin's prophecies, had become part of the same tradition by the later Middle Ages. Thus, Adam's use of Merlin's prophecy fulfilled two purposes. He clearly understood that Merlin was a prophet with a geographical connection to Wales, and to his hometown of Usk, which is referenced in Geoffrey's prophecy. He also saw Merlin as a political prophet, whose prophetic words were as valid and relevant as the popular John of Bridlington. For Adam, an educated Welshman who had access to English histories, there was no dividing line between the two traditions. Merlin's prophecies belonged both to England and Wales. They were both an expression of Welsh identity, and a declaration of his position as a subject of the English king, two roles that were not mutually exclusive.

The third mention of Merlin in Adam Usk's chronicle is used in a similar way to how he and his contemporaries used political prophecies in their chronicles to pass comment on events. This use of the prophecy demonstrates that Adam was using the English or shared tradition of prophecy, rather than the Welsh tradition. These prophecies were used to express both their interpretation of the moral values of actions, and their opinions on the virtue of the actors. The use of these prophecies was demonstrated their ability as historians and was a marker of erudition and education in English and Welsh culture. Adam Usk quotes or makes reference to a number of different prophetic works in his chronicle. The most commonly used prophecy amongst both him and his contemporaries are based on a poem associated with John of Bridlington (John Thwenge, the pious Prior of Bridlington who died in 1379). As a result of his popularity and the value placed on the prophecies, he was

⁶⁸ John Everett-Heath 'Carmarthen (Caerfyrddin), Wales/UK (Maridunum, Cair Mirdin)' in *The Concise Dictionary of World Place Names* (4th ed.) (Published Online: Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780191866326.001.0001/acref-9780191866326-e-1239>, accessed 22/01/2020.

⁶⁹ For more evidence of the cross-border traditions see: Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 157-198.

⁷⁰ For example, see: 'History of the Kings', NLW Peniarth MS 23C.

canonised in 1404.⁷¹ The prophecies are in the form of an anonymous Latin poem accompanied by a commentary dating from the early 1360s, added shortly after the poem was written.⁷² Such was the interaction between prophecies in circulation at this time, that some of the themes echo those of the Merlin prophecies, such as the kingdom being divided into three.⁷³ John of Bridlington's prophecies are used by a number of Adam Usk's contemporaries, including the writer of *the Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, and Thomas Walsingham.⁷⁴ The Bridlington prophecies, as a form of political prophecy, were used by chroniclers to talk about three main topics: kings, peoples and nations.⁷⁵ Inevitably, in Adam Usk's chronicle the prophecies of Bridlington are always used to comment on English kings and noble people, but not Welsh people of influence or power. This is not surprising; as a Welshman Adam Usk was a subject of the English king. Wales did not have an independent political system and thus political life in England was also political life for Wales.

There are a number of examples where Adam Usk uses the Bridlington prophecies in this way. In 1372, for example, Adam Usk tells the story of Sir John Arundel, who was sent to make war in France but was shipwrecked and died. Adam interprets John Arundel's death as resulting from mismanagement by the Crown. He states that the reason for his death was the money extracted from the people and the clergy, and uses the prophecy 'while tax does reign, good fortune shall be gone/ Thus work begun will soon be quite undone' to show the inevitability of John Arundel's death.⁷⁶ Adam Usk makes a connection between the poem and the political situation, drawing authority from the prophecy to support his own attitude to over-taxation. This *ex eventu* prophecy, which takes a clear moral stance on how a king and his parliament should treat their people, was retrospective rather than predictive. It was used to construct a narrative that connected tragic events to a moral and political theme, tying the past to the present and showing that poor leadership had real repercussions.

⁷² M. J. Curley, 'the Cloak of Anonymity and 'the prophecy of John of Bridlington' *Modern Philology* 77 (1980), 361. Also see A.G. Rigg, 'John of Bridlington: a new look' *Speculum*, 63:3 (1988), 596-613; Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs*, pp. 139-140.

⁷³ Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 113.

⁷⁴ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 169, 170-171; Thomas Walsingham, vol. I, pp. 410-411; Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 124-125, 448-449, 526-527.

⁷⁵ Coote, *Prophecy and public affairs*., pp. 15-27.

⁷⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 16-17. Bridlington prophecy in *Political Poems and Songs Illustrative of English History*, vol. I, (ed.) T. Wright (London: Rolls Series, 1859), p. 183.

'*Dum multat taxa, non fiat gratia laxa
Sic opus inceptum laxum patietur ineptum*'

From the discussion above, it is evident that Adam Usk was aware of the connection between Merlin and Wales. There is no evidence, however, that any of information about the connection came from anything other than the shared tradition of Merlin that was instigated by Geoffrey of Monmouth and perpetuated by chronicles such as Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. Adam Usk's use of the prophecy that he attributes to Merlin, but is actually the *Prophecy of the Eagle*, is representative of his attitude to political prophecy in general; the prophecies were used to provide authority to his accounts and allowed him to comment on political issues such as taxation or the fact that the coming of the new English king had been foretold.⁷⁷ This attitude is no different to that of his contemporaries who were writing in an English context.

Despite this, the way that Adam Usk uses Merlin's prophecies in his chronicle does allow an insight into his identity. The fact that he was fully embedded in the shared prophetic tradition, with no evidence of any interaction with the Welsh tradition, represents the seamless contradictions that came with being from a Marcher lordship and educated at an English university, whilst defining himself as Welsh. On the one hand, the prophecies were entirely removed from their Welsh political framework; instead of being used in support of Welsh rule in Britain, Adam Usk attributes a prophecy to Merlin which he uses to support the accession of a new English king. Yet Adam was aware of the association between Merlin and Wales as defined in the shared tradition, and in the prelude of his work used it to link his name with the town and river also called Usk. The fact that he chose Merlin's prophecy for this purpose is unlikely to be a coincidence. Instead, he follows the same line taken by Ranulf Higden and Geoffrey of Monmouth, acknowledging Merlin's geographical ties to Wales. This is an example of Adam Usk articulating his Welshness through a shared tradition and framework, something that could be seen as representative of many areas of life as an English-trained cleric from the Welsh Marches.

Prophecy and political alliances

Whilst Adam Usk's use of Merlin's prophecies did not retain their original political message in his chronicle, he records two letters from Owain Glyndŵr that do.⁷⁸ The letters are political in nature

⁷⁷ S. Yandell, 'Prophetic Authority in Adam of Usk's Chronicle' in *Prophet Margins: the medieval vatic impulse and social stability*, E. L. Ridsden, K. Moranski and S. Yandell (eds.) (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), p. 79-100.

⁷⁸ For discussions about these prophecies and their connection to various prophecies in circulation at the time see: Victoria Flood, *Prophecy, Politics and Place*, pp. 171-172; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 46; T. M.

and concern the international allegiances sought by Owain Glyndŵr as he attempted to establish a system of governance entirely independent from the English. In the letters Owain Glyndŵr sought support from the Scottish and Irish by requesting military assistance, which he did not receive. Adam Usk explains why these letters did not generate support. The messengers sent by Owain were intercepted in Ireland and beheaded, and therefore these letters did not reach their intended reader.⁷⁹ The letters demonstrate how even in the shared prophetic tradition, the Welsh leader could draw upon traditional Welsh prophecy and narratives alongside the prophecies in circulation across Britain.⁸⁰ In addition, they demonstrate the currency that prophetic discourse held between countries.

The letters are a deliberate attempt to connect the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish nations as allies, as a result of their shared persecution by the English. Owain Glyndŵr uses a number of techniques to do this, all of which aimed to create a common identity between the Welsh and their neighbours. The first is referencing a shared past and a commonly held belief in the legendary history of the communal groups. The first letter, written in French to the Scots, speaks about 'Albanactus and Locrinus and Kamber' and stated that the Scots were descents of Albanactus, and the Welsh those of Kamber.⁸¹ In this letter Owain Glyndŵr refers to the legend of the founding of Briton. In Helen Fulton's analysis of the prophecies in the tripartite indenture, she states 'It is possible... that the 'prophecy' to which Owain's document refers could be any of the Merlinian prophecies which were circulating in various forms... taken more or less directly from Geoffrey of Monmouth' including Welsh versions of the prophecy.⁸² Indeed, Geoffrey tells the story of Brutus. Brutus was descended from a family of Trojans, who had fled to Italy. His own life was the subject of prophecy; wise men foresaw that he 'would kill his father and mother, wander many lands in exile and in the end receive the highest honour.'⁸³ The parents' deaths were accidental. His mother had died in childbirth, and he killed his father in a hunting accident, an incident which led to him being exiled from Italy. Whilst in exile, Brutus received a vision from a goddess in an abandoned city, telling him about a deserted island 'beyond the kingdoms of Gaul'. 'Sail to it', the goddess told him, 'it will be your home forever'.

Smallwood, 'The Prophecy of the Six Kings', *Speculum* 60:3 (1985), 571-592; Ceridwen Lloyd Morgan, 'Prophecy and Welsh Nationhood in the Fifteenth Century', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1985), 9-26; L. A. Coote, 'A Language of Power: prophecy and public affairs in later medieval England' in *Prophecy: the power of inspired language in history, 1300-2000*, (ed.) B. Taithe and T. Thornton (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), pp. 17-30.

⁷⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 148-149.

⁸⁰ Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 117.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

⁸² Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 113.

⁸³ *Historia Regum Britannie*, pp. 6-8.

It would become 'a new Troy', and Brutus' descendants would become 'masters of the whole world'.⁸⁴ Brutus sailed to the island, and seeing that he wished to settle there, named it 'Britain after himself and called his followers Britons'.⁸⁵ The story of Britain's nativity was scaffolded with prophecy. The birth of Brutus, as the heroic founder of the land, fulfilled a prophecy. The very land upon which the country was built was revealed to him in a vision. Legend and prophecy combined to create a foundation legend that resonated with the people of the later Middle Ages.

The foundation myth found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's work also explained the separation between England, Scotland, and Wales. Brutus had three sons, named Locrinus, Albanactus, and Kamber. After their father's death, the three sons divided Britain between them with each living in, and ruling, their own region. Locrinus, as the eldest brother, took 'the central part of the island', which became England. His brother Kamber took 'the region across the River Severn, now known as Wales'. Geoffrey of Monmouth explains that this is the reason the Welsh still called their land *Cymry*. Finally, the youngest brother, Albanactus, lived in Scotland, 'which he named Albania [*sic*] after himself'.⁸⁶ The story demonstrated the paradoxical unity and divide that existed on the island of Britain, which was still apparent in the later Middle Ages. The lands and their peoples were descended from Brutus and his followers, a fact that unified England, Wales, and Scotland. Simultaneously, the various regions of Britain were given their own names, and subsequently each developed a unique identity.

In Owain Glyndŵr's letter to the Scots he invokes this legend. The aim of the letter is to gain favour with the king of Scotland, Robert III, and try to secure military aid against the English in Wales. He emphasises that Scotland and Wales had a shared history. He wrote:

'Most esteemed lord and royal cousin, may it please you and your royal excellence to know that Brutus, your most noble ancestor and mine, was originally the first crowned king to live in this kingdom of England, which used to be known as Great Britain. Brutus fathered three sons, namely Albanactus and Locrinus and Kamber; you are descended from the direct line of this Albanactus, while the descendants of this Kamber ruled as kings until the time of Cadwaladr, who was the last crowned king of my people, and from whose direct line I, your humble cousin, am descended'.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁸⁷ Adam Usk, pp. 148-149.

Whilst Wales and Scotland were different places, with different pasts and identities, they shared a belief in a common descent. Referring to Robert as 'cousin' (*cosin*) created an undeniable connection; they were family in the same way that Locrinus, Kamber, and Albanctus had been brothers. Owain Glyndŵr also altered the order of the brothers from that found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. Albanactus, rather than being presented as the youngest brother, is mentioned first in the list of names by Owain Glyndŵr.⁸⁸ With Scotland in a prominent position, the Welsh leader hoped to persuade Robert to assist him in his struggle against English rule. It was not a question of England against Wales, but a similarity and difference that had existed since Britain was founded.

The mention of Cadwaladr is a further example of Owain Glyndŵr using prophecy and legend to persuade his Scottish neighbours to come to his aid. Cadwaladr, who appears as a lead in *Armes Prydein* also appears in *Historia*. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Cadwaladr was the last king with the right to hold the title 'King of Britain'. In Geoffrey's account, Cadwaladr had given up his throne in order to make a pilgrimage to Rome.⁸⁹ Merlin's prophecies from Geoffrey's chronicle connect Cadwaladr, Wales, and Scotland. Merlin prophesied that 'Cadualadrus will summon Conanus and make Scotland his ally. Then the foreigners will be slaughtered, the rivers flow with blood... Wales will be filled with rejoicing'.⁹⁰ Owain Glyndŵr highlights his descent from Cadwaladr in his letter to Robert III. By taking on the role of Cadwaladr in his narrative, Owain Glyndŵr presents himself as an actor fulfilling a prophecy that united the two identities. The prophecy forces temporal continuity. Wales and Scotland were connected in the past through their descent from Brutus. They were bound together in the present through their turbulent relationships with England and its monarchy. In the future, they could also be united through the fulfilling of an ancient prophecy. Legend and prophecy were Owain Glyndŵr's currency. They drew upon a sense of identity, ancient obligation, and the political aspirations of the early Welsh prophecy. Owain Glyndŵr was doing everything in his power to form a political allegiance with the Scottish king.

Prophecy and legend functioned as a unifying factor. It was used with the aim of creating a common identity between the Welsh and the Scots. Owain Glyndŵr adopted one more method to achieve

⁸⁸ Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, pp. 148-149, fn. 4.

⁸⁹ *Historia Regum Britannie*, pp. 276-281.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

this in his letter to the Scottish king. He utilised a narrative of power imbalance, placing the Welsh and Scottish in the dominant position, and the English identity in the subordinate. He wrote:

'Since [Cadwaladr's] death... my forbears and all my people have been, as we still are, subjected and held in bondage by my and your mortal enemies the Saxons – a fact which you, most esteemed lord and royal cousin, know full well. The prophecy states that, with the help and support of your royal majesty, I shall be delivered from this subjection and bondage.... [and] to punish them for the evils and injuries which I and my aforesaid forbears of Wales have suffered, and for the many other things inflicted upon us by these mortal enemies of mine and yours'.⁹¹

Terminology in this extract is important, particularly for descriptions of places and peoples. Owain Glyndŵr does not actually mention Scotland at all in the letter. His reference to Wales uses the standard Anglo-Norman *Gales*. When talking about the subjugation imposed on the Welsh by the English, however, Owain Glyndŵr does not use the Anglo-Norman *engleis*, but rather the term *Sacsouns*. There are two possible ways to interpret this. The Welsh language words for places and peoples still carry the traces of legend and foundation myth. The words for Wales (*Cymru* - modern Welsh), Scotland (*Yr Alban* - modern Welsh) and England (*Lloegr* - modern Welsh), retain their connection to the story of Brutus and his sons. The term for 'English', *Saesneg* (modern Welsh), is derived from the Latin term for Saxon, *Saxo*. The story of the Britons suppression at the hands of the Saxons is reflected in the language spoken today. Perhaps Owain Glyndŵr's use of the term was a close mirroring of the Welsh language when translated into French.

A second way to interpret Owain Glyndŵr's use of the term *Sacsouns*, is to assume that he was deliberately constructing a shared identity between the Welsh and the Scots. The term *Sacsouns* is emotive. It creates a parallel between the fifteenth-century power struggle between Owain Glyndŵr and the English kings, and the suppression of the Britons under the Saxon invaders. The story of Cadwaladr, the last king of the Britons, is structured around problems with the Saxons invading Britain. In-fighting and famine blighted Cadwaladr's reign, forcing many Britons to leave the island supposedly discovered by Brutus many years before. The entire population of Britain was almost destroyed, 'except [for] a few whom death had spared in the regions of Wales'.⁹² These remaining Britons, who were living in the forests of Wales, were unable to stop the Saxons from invading and settling. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth this was 'the end of British power in the island and the beginning of English rule'.⁹³ Cadwaladr was preparing to return to Britain to restore his kingdom,

⁹¹ Adam Usk, pp. 148-151.

⁹² *Historia Regum Britannie*, p. 278.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

when he heard an angelic voice telling him that God did not wish for the British people to rule the island. Instead, they should wait until a time foretold by Merlin, when, with God's blessing, they would once more take control of the island. The prophetic message was checked against other prophecies, and was confirmed to be true. Cadwaladr did not return to the island. The Britons still living there became the Welsh, and the Saxons the English.⁹⁴ Defined by their opposition to each other, the two communal groups were natural enemies.

Owain Glyndŵr's use of the term *Sacsoun* in his letter to the Scots refers explicitly to the history of Britain, and in doing so creates a common enemy. Both the Welsh and the Scots were descendants of the original Britons whose right to the island had been foretold in prophecy. The English, on the other hand, descended from a group of invaders. They were two communities, rather than three, with the Welsh and the Scots on one side, and the English on the other. A power balance is implied. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, the Saxons are referred to as *barbari* (barbarians), they massacred their enemies at peace talks, they were pagans and they destroyed churches, and their deeds and habits are frequently described as *malus* (wicked).⁹⁵ Owain Glyndŵr refers to the 'Saxons' twice as *mes et votres morteles enimys* in his letter to Robert III.⁹⁶ The Welsh and the Scots were the constant, rightful heirs to the land gifted to them by Brutus. The English were not. Their character of brutality, wickedness, and underhanded tactics followed them from Brutus' time into the fifteenth century. The English showed themselves again to be the enemy, in the same way the Saxons had done before them. The Scots, however, did not come to the aid of the Welsh in the way Owain Glyndŵr wished. If Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* can be seen as representative, however, not all Scots were unreceptive to this Welsh plea for aid using prophecy. He shows sympathy to the prophecies stating that the Welsh would not regain power in Britain without the Scots.⁹⁷ The Scots, however, did not respond, and Owain was eventually defeated.

The second letter recorded in Adam Usk's chronicle is to 'the lords of Ireland'. The letter, written in Latin, contains some of the same characteristics as that sent to Robert III. The letter describes 'a great struggle' that was taking place between the Welsh and 'your mortal enemies, the Saxons'.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 280-281.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 132-133; pp. 134-135; pp. 179-171; pp. 190-191.

⁹⁶ Adam Usk, pp. 148-151. *My and your mortal enemies*.

⁹⁷ Walter Bowers, 'Scotichronicon' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 198-201.

⁹⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 150-151. *Sciatis quod maxima dissencio siue Guerra orta est inter nos et nostros uestrosque mortals inimicos Saxones*.

Owain Glyndŵr again attempts to utilise the political narrative of early Welsh prophecy to form an alliance. He wrote:

*It is commonly said in the prophecy, however, that before we can gain the upper hand in this contest, you and your noble kinsmen in Ireland shall come to our aid in this matter.*⁹⁹

The reference to a prophecy in this letter is much more ambiguous than in the letter to the Scots. In the legend of Britain and Merlin's prophecies, Ireland is mentioned several times. It appears in the prophecies themselves. During the long, often seemingly non-sensical prophecy, Merlin predicted that 'St David's will wear the pallium of Caerleon, and the preacher of Ireland will fall silent because of a baby growing in the womb.'¹⁰⁰ As part of the same prophecy, he also foresaw that 'the city walls of Ireland' would be overthrown and 'the forests' turned 'into a plain'.¹⁰¹ Ireland was part of Merlin's prophecy, but so were many other places. Africa, Canterbury, York, Normandy, Spain, the lioness of Stafford, the springs of Bath, the forest of Dean, 'The snake of Malvern', amongst others, all make an appearance in the prophecy.¹⁰² There is nothing meaningful about the mention of Ireland. Owain Glyndŵr's reference to 'the prophecy' in his letter may not have been referring to Merlin's prophecies, but if it was, the reference is ambiguous and with little implication.

In his letter to the Irish lords, Owain Glyndŵr does not allude to Brutus, Locrinus, Kamber or Albanactus. Ireland was not part of this foundation myth, and thus Owain could not draw upon a shared past to form a union with them. He uses the term *consanguine confidentissime* (most trusted kinsmen) but cannot elaborate on the foundation of this blood relationship. Instead, he seeks to place the Welsh and Irish on the same side, in opposition to a common enemy, *nostros uestrosque mortals inimicos Saxones*.¹⁰³ Indeed, Ireland had also suffered at the hands of the Saxons. According to Bede, in 684 AD Egfrid the king of the Northumbrians sent an army to Ireland in an unprovoked attack. They devastated the land and destroyed the churches.¹⁰⁴ Like Wales, Ireland was invaded and occupied by the Anglo-Normans during the twelfth century. For Owain, this was the shared experience that united the two and might help secure him support from the lords of Ireland. Like the Scots, the Irish did not respond to Owain Glyndŵr's plea for military support.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 150-151.

¹⁰⁰ *Historia Regum Britannie*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 148-149.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 144-159.

¹⁰³ Adam Usk, pp. 150-151.

¹⁰⁴ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, (eds.) Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 426-431.

Whilst these two letters, recorded in Adam Usk's chronicle, did not prove fruitful for Owain Glyndŵr, there are three letters that had more positive outcomes. Two of the letters are the *Pennal Letters*, signed by Owain Glyndŵr in the village of Pennal in 1406.¹⁰⁵ These letters, like those to the Scots and Irish, were written to a foreign ally, this time the French. The purpose of the two letters was for Owain to demonstrate his allegiance to the French, particularly his willingness to align his regime with the pope in Avignon. The first letter was a personal letter to the king of France. Here Owain draws on the now familiar concept of a mutual enemy. He wrote:

*Most serene prince, you have deemed it worthy on the humble recommendation sent, to learn how my nation, for many years now elapsed, has been oppressed by the fury of the barbarous Saxons.*¹⁰⁶

Owain contrasts the French king's positive characteristics against the negative ones exhibited by the English. The French king is described as having an 'innate goodness', and the Avignon Pope as being 'the true Vicar of Christ'.¹⁰⁷ The English are twice described as *barbarus* (barbarous/barbarian), and again are called *Saxones*. Whilst this connection does not draw on any historic or prophetic connection between the two nations, by pairing the term 'Saxon' with 'barbarous' certainly places the English in the subordinate position in the relationship. The allusion to a past in which the Saxons were unscrupulous invaders, created a bond between the Welsh and French. It seems that Owain Glyndŵr used the term *Saxones* when he needed to highlight the common enemy between two different groups. When writing to a fellow Welshman asking for military support in 1403, for example, Owain did not feel the need to use these techniques, referring instead to *inimicorum nostrorum Anglicorum* (our English enemies).¹⁰⁸ Perhaps he felt sure that he would receive support from one of his own kinsmen. The English identity, as a continuation of the unprincipled and uncivilised characteristics of the Saxons, proved to be a useful piece of political currency for Owain.

As has been explored above, Adam was familiar with Merlin's prophecies and used them more frequently and overtly than his contemporaries. When he records the two letters from Owain Glyndŵr, he includes limited information, only providing details for how he gained access to the letters.¹⁰⁹ He does not comment on the prophecies. He does not elaborate on the references to history, legend or foundation myth. In fact, he does not make any observations about their content

¹⁰⁵ John K. Bollard, 'Notes on Owain Glyndŵr, *Pennal Letter I*' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, p. 374.

¹⁰⁶ Owain Glyndŵr, 'Pennal Letter I' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, (ed.) Michael Livingston, (trans.) Matthews, pp. 120-121. Also published in: Rees and Jones, *Thomas Matthew's Welsh Records in Paris*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Owain Glyndŵr, 'Letter to Henry Dwn' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a case book*, (ed. and notes) John K. Bollard pp. 82-83, pp. 324-25. Edition and translation: Matthews, in Rees and Jones, *Thomas Matthews's Welsh Records in Paris*, pp. 105-106, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁹ Adam Usk, pp. 148-149.

at all. This leads to questions about why Adam felt it necessary to include the letters, and whether their inclusion equates to an understanding of their implied content or a belief in the insinuated outcome of the prophecy. The reticence at such poignant moments of the chronicle has led to much speculation.¹¹⁰ What is interesting, however, is that the letters demonstrate the political ambitions of the Welsh long-articulated through their history and prophecies. Whilst both Adam and Owain would have been influenced by the shared tradition of prophecy, Owain was able to draw on the Welsh tradition in a way that Adam was not; Owain used the prophecies to promote the independence of the Welsh, whereas Adam used 'Merlin's' prophecy to support the legitimacy of an English king.¹¹¹ Whilst both men would undoubtedly describe themselves as Welsh, the combination of Adam's background and education, and the fact that he was writing a chronicle following an English tradition, impacted the way he used prophecy in his work.

Negative Welsh Cultural Stereotypes

The tradition of prophecy explored above played a part in forming Welsh communal identity in the later Middle Ages. It tied together Welsh people through the foundation legend and explained their subjugated position in the fourteenth century. The belief in a *mab darogan* (son of prophecy) provided hope for a future in which Wales was no longer ruled by the English. Prophecy, however, was not a specifically Welsh phenomenon. Described as a 'cross-border literary dialogue', it was conversely a single tradition which used the same sources and literature but was viewed as distinctly Welsh or English.¹¹² Reflecting Anderson's definition of 'national identity', it was necessary for a community to have a 'limit' to exist. Since prophecy was so fundamentally connected to identity in Wales, it was inevitable that a distinction between the two traditions was drawn in the contemporary literature. In 'English' descriptions of the Welsh identity, prophecy was added to the long list of negative attributes of the Welsh. It was frequently portrayed as being a lower form of prophetic experience at best and connected to the 'instability' of the Welsh at worst.

¹¹⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. lxxix-lxxxvi; Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret*, pp. 3-6.

¹¹¹ Thomas Matthews, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, connected the prophecies to Merlin because of the dissemination of *Historia Regum Britannie* and *Vita Merlini* in vernacular form during the fourteenth century and fifteenth century, making them accessible. Thomas Matthews, 'Welsh Records in Paris, 1910', in Dylan Rees and J. Gwynfor Jones *Thomas Matthews's Welsh Records in Paris: A study in selected Welsh medieval records*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010) pp. 126-127; Fulton, 'Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 109.

¹¹² V. Flood, 'Henry Tudor and Lancastrian Prophecy in Wales', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 34 (2014), 67.

Gerald of Wales, who was descended from both the Anglo-Norman elite and the Welsh princes, wrote about Welsh prophecy in some detail.¹¹³ His dual identity comes through in his writing. 'Seeing that we have discussed the English perspective carefully and thoroughly' he wrote in the final chapter of *The Description of Wales*, 'we must now consider both peoples from whom I am descended'.¹¹⁴ He goes on to give the Welsh advice about how they could resist and rebel against the Anglo-Norman invasion of Wales.

The theme of being both English and Welsh is apparent in many areas of Gerald's works on Wales. Chapter sixteen of book one of *The Description of Wales* is dedicated to Welsh prophetic habits. Entitled *De divinitoribus in hac gente, et quasi arreptitiis*, the chapter links the habits of local 'soothsayers' known as *Awennithion* (*awenau/awenyddion* (modern Welsh meaning poet or inspired person) and the prophetic traditions found in the bible.¹¹⁵ The chapter initially portrays a negative view of Welsh prophetic habits.¹¹⁶ Gerald writes 'There are in this population of Wales, some men called *awenyddion*, the likes of whom will not be found elsewhere'.¹¹⁷ When consulted, their divinations flowed from their mouths as if they were possessed by spirits. The words, whilst ambiguous, helped listeners with their problems. The *awenyddion* had to be shaken violently before they regained consciousness from their trances and they had no memory of the divinations once they were awake. The words came to the *awenyddion* whilst they were in the trance; sometimes visualising the words set upon their lips, sometimes seeing sweet milk and honey poured upon their mouths.¹¹⁸ Gerald's initial description of these practices is apprehensive. They were alien to the Anglo-Norman eye, and unique to the people of Wales. Gerald repeats the term *arreptitius* (seized or possessed), and the idea of *spiritus* (a spirit). Through his descriptions and choice of vocabulary he

¹¹³ Robert Bartlett, 'Gerald of Wales [Giraldus Cambrensis, Gerald de Barry] (c. 1146–1220x23), author and ecclesiastic', *ODNB*, accessed 12 Feb 2020; McMullen and Henley, 'Gerald of Wales: Interpretation and Innovation in Medieval Britain', pp. 20-32; Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223*, pp. 9-25.

¹¹⁴ Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: vol. vi Itinerarium Kambriae et description Kambriae*, p. 226. My own translation. *Sed quoniam pro Anglis hactenus diligenter admodum et exquisite disseruimus, sicut autem ex eaque gente originem duximus, sic aequo pro utraque disputandum ratio dictat, ad Kambros denuso, in calce libelli, stilum vertamus, eosque de arte rebellandi breviter sed tamen efficaciter instramus.*

¹¹⁵ For an overview of Gerald's attitude to prophets and diviners see: Carl Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 149-153.

¹¹⁶ Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: vol. vi Itinerarium Kambriae et description Kambriae*, p. 194. 'Concerning diviners in this people, and just as if they are possessed' my own translation. The term 'soothsayers' is used in Lewis Thorpe's translation: Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, p. 246.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. *Sunt et in hoc Kambriae populo, quod alibi non reperies, viri nonnulli, quos Awennithion vocant.* My own translation.

¹¹⁸ Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera: vol. vi Itinerarium Kambriae et description Kambriae*, pp. 194-195.

insinuates that this is a problematic form of prophecy; these were divinations from the devil, not from God. Gerald presents these practices from an outsider's perspective. The negative portrayal of the Welsh creates a boundary between them and the Anglo-Normans. The Welsh tradition of prophecy as described here was different from their neighbours and set them apart as a separate people. In the power balance created here, the Welsh are clearly in the subordinate position.

Gerald, however, does not end his description there. As a result of his dual identity, he attempts to dispel the negative stereotype and justify the validity of Welsh prophetic traditions.¹¹⁹ Primarily he links the traditions to the foundation legend of Wales. 'In nations other the Britons and the Trojans from whom they are descended', he wrote, 'it is rare to find these kinds of prophets'.¹²⁰ He makes the connection between the vaticinations of Calchas and Cassandra, who foretold the downfall of Troy, and the prophecies of the two Merlins who predicted the ruin of Briton at the hands of the Saxons. This form of prophecy was timeless, characterising both the people of Troy and those who descended from the same line. He acknowledges that some people were sceptical about the source of the prophecy, but did not personally believe that the source of the prophecy was demonic. Instead, he links it to the bible, giving examples of when non-Christian people performed miracles, and prophets like Daniel and Ezekiel had visions in dreams. It is thus hardly a surprise, according to Gerald, that when one receives the spirit of God, that they appear to have lost their minds.¹²¹ The chapter on Welsh prophecy provides two contrasting perspectives. It acknowledges that the Welsh prophetic traditions were perceived negatively by people outside Wales. By arguing so vehemently that this prophecy came from God, Gerald reveals that was not the widely held belief. Gerald also shows the importance of this tradition to the Welsh identity. It connected them to the foundation legend of Troy, and to the story of Merlin. Prophecy in Wales was a characteristic that was taken seriously, and one that Gerald was determined to defend.

Whilst Gerald of Wales was writing two centuries before Adam Usk, descriptions of prophecy as a negative characteristic of the Welsh prevailed amongst Adam's contemporaries. Indeed, the prophetic traditions of the Welsh including the foundation story of Brutus, and the prophecies of Merlin, appeared to support other negative stereotypes of the Welsh. Instability, underhand tactics

¹¹⁹ Given-Wilson argues that these practices would not have been tolerated by the Catholic Church in England: Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, p. 39

¹²⁰ Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, p. 196. *In aliis autem nationibus quam hac Britannica, sicut et olim Trojana de qua descendunt, prophetas hujusmodi raro reperies*. My own translation.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-200; translation of this chapter available in Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, pp. 246-251.

and a foolish pride were all linked to Welsh prophecy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In his *Polychronicon* Ranulf Higden wrote that the Welsh were accustomed to cheating, and were thrust towards war through the divinations of Merlin and other frequently occurring predictions.¹²² There was a direct link between Welsh prophetic traditions and their tendency for instability, and one that Adam Usk would have read in his own copy of the *Polychronicon*.¹²³ This was a topic addressed by parliament during Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion. Henry IV's parliament in 1402 was concerned about the role that prophecy played in instigating the revolt. The parliament rolls state that:

*no wasters, rhymers, minstrels or vagabonds should be tolerated in Wales to make kymorthas or exactions on the common people, for by their divinations, lies, and incitements, they are a cause of the present insurrection and rebellion in Wales.*¹²⁴

This statement connects several aspects of Welsh tradition. Prophecy is linked to the bardic tradition in Wales, which in turn is connected to instability. It is notable that the parliament blames the *divinaciones* (divinations) entirely, stating that the rebellion was *concause* (caused) by the prophecies. The ruling English clearly felt an anxiety about Welsh prophetic practices. Through the promotion of a common past, and a unity in a shared belief in the future combined with a history stating that prophecy pushed the Welsh to war, it was a dangerous combination for the English.

Indeed, Gerald of Wales' point that Welsh prophetic practices were perceived as demonic, or the result of 'witchcraft' is a negative Welsh stereotype that is also used by many of Adam Usk's contemporaries. The writer of the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, for example, uses this theme to demonstrate the tactics of the Welsh rebels. The writer states that in 1401, when Henry IV tried to enter Wales, he was met with thunder and hail storms, even though the weather had previously been sunny. The writer explains that one theory for this was that it occurred as a result of sorcery (*ex sortilegio*) committed by Owain Glyndŵr's magicians, or by 'impure spirits of the air'.¹²⁵ The writer of this chronicle, however, concedes that the most likely reason for the strange weather was the fact that the English had no right to Wales, and thus failed in their plans. The writer of the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey* was a staunch supporter of Richard II, and therefore chose to place the blame on Henry IV.¹²⁶ Despite this, the chronicler hints at a narrative of demonic powers

¹²² Ranulf Higden, vol. I, p. 410.

¹²³ 'Polychronicon (to 1377); Chronicle continuation (1377-1404)', BL Add. MS 10104, fol. 25v.

¹²⁴ 'Henry IV: September 1402', *PROME*, article 90; Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, p. 15.

¹²⁵ *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey, 1381-1403*, p. 176. *immundorum spirituum aerem*.

¹²⁶ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 14 (1930), 130.

surrounding the Welsh, that their source of power extended beyond prophecy to an ability to control the weather.

Thomas Walsingham states this more explicitly in his account of 1402. When the king tried to enter Wales in an attempt to surprise Owain and his followers, he was met by terrible weather. According to Thomas Walsingham, this weather was conjured by the art of magic (*arte magica*). The English troops suffered greatly on this expedition. They were afflicted with extreme cold combined with hail and snow. When they set up camp in a 'pleasant meadow', the weather immediately turned. The king's tent was torn to pieces in a gale, and it rained so hard that the English thought they would drown. The king was almost killed by his own lance, which had become dislodged in the wind, and was only saved because he slept in his armour. Thomas Walsingham claims that the Franciscan friars, who were supporting the Welsh, had associated themselves with demons, and produced this magic against the king.¹²⁷ Magic in these examples links the Welsh to demonic practices in the same way that prophecy did in Gerald of Wales' account. It was a continuation of a characteristic that placed the Welsh in the subordinate position within the identity powerplay. Adam Usk does not make any reference to occult practices or connections in Wales. He does not discuss prophecy as a specific characteristic of the Welsh, and he does not claim that Owain Glyndŵr used magic. Perhaps, like Gerald of Wales, he was aware of this unflattering stereotype, but he chose not to engage with it in his own work.

Negative portrayals of Welsh prophetic practices were not always as extreme as saying they used magic. Instead, the narrative of these practices found in chronicles and in the parliament rolls systematically failed to connect them to 'biblical' or 'legitimate' practices in the vocabulary they used. There are a number of Latin terms that can be translated as 'prophecy' in English. The first is the root word for the English term: *prophetia*. Adam Usk uses variants of this term throughout the chronicle. He describes a verse from John of Bridlington's prophetic poem as '*Contra eam taxam ecce quedam Bridlington' prophesia*'.¹²⁸ In 1398, he uses another of John of Bridlington's prophecies to describe a situation between the duke of Hereford and the duke of Norfolk, John Mowbray. John found himself imprisoned, with his offices conferred to others. The situation 'stirred up a great storm of dissension', which Adam Usk saw as a direct result of John Mowbray's imprisonment. He

¹²⁷ Thomas Walsingham, vol. II, pp. 326-327. Alicia Marchant discusses the association between the Welsh and magic, stating that chroniclers made this connection in order to place the Welsh on the periphery of an English centric, Christian narrative. See: Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 104-105.

¹²⁸ Adam Usk, pp. 16-17. 'Listen to the prophecy of Bridlington against tax'.

again uses this term to refer to a Bridlington prophecy, writing '*iuxta illud prophecie*'.¹²⁹ The series of three prophecies seen in 1399 are described as '*prophecie Brydlintoun*' and '*prophecie Merlyny*'.¹³⁰ Indeed, Adam Usk's contemporaries who refer to the prophecies of Bridlington or popular prophetic verses, do so using this term.¹³¹ This is equally the case for those referring to biblical prophecies.¹³²

Welsh prophecy, however, is not described using the word *prophetia*. In Gerald of Wales' chapter on prophecy, he uses a number of different terms to describe Welsh practices. In the title to chapter sixteen he uses the term *divini* (diviners). This form of prophecy is portrayed as different to more established forms of prophecy such as famous prophetic verses, or prophecy in the bible, which were described with *prophetia*. He uses the verb *vaticinor* to describe Merlin's act of prophesying at the beginning of the chapter, when describing how Merlin foretold the ruin of Britain. This term can translate as prophesy, but it also has the meaning of 'to speak wildly'. When describing the prophecies from the bible, however, Gerald begins to use the noun *prophetia* and the verb *prophetare*.¹³³ Having argued that Welsh prophecy followed the same patterns as biblical prophecy, Gerald's choice of vocabulary changes. He begins to use *prophetia* and *prophetare* when speaking about Merlin's prophecies. There is clearly a difference in the way that Gerald uses these terms; *divini* and *vaticinor* are 'lower', less legitimate forms of prophetic people and practices. *Prophetia* and *prophetare* are connected to the bible and describe an established form of prophetic tradition. Only when Gerald had established that the Welsh prophetic practices were consistent with biblical forms of prophecy did he feel able to use *prophetia* to describe it. The two terms have been translated as 'soothsayers' (*divini*) and 'to foretell' (*vaticinor*) in a modern English language edition of Gerald's works on Wales.¹³⁴ These terms maintain the subtle difference presented in the Latin used by Gerald.

Other works also avoid applying *prophetia* to Welsh prophetic practices. Ranulf Higden, for example, describes Merlin's prophecy about the eventual overthrowing of the Saxons as *vaticinium*. The other 'frequent' prophecies of the Welsh are described as *sortilegus*.¹³⁵ Both John Trevisa, and the creator of the English language work found in MS Harley 2261 translate *vaticinium* as 'prophecy'. As

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 48-49. 'thus fulfilling the prophecies'.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 50-53.

¹³¹ *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 391; Thomas Walsingham, vol. II pp. 72-73, 124 -125, 132-133, 448-449, 532-533,

¹³² *The Westminster Chronicle*, pp. 46-47; Knighton, pp. 226-227.

¹³³ The terms connected to *prophetia* are mainly included in Biblical quotations.

¹³⁴ Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, pp. 246-251.

¹³⁵ Ranulf Higden, vol. I, p. 410.

described above, this term, whilst accurate, does not maintain the difference insinuated in the Latin. The second term, however, is presented differently by each translator. John Trevisa uses the word 'sortelegie', mimicking the Latin. The translator of Harley 2261, however, uses the phrase 'wycche crafte'.¹³⁶ The term *sortilegus* is also used by the writer of the *Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey*, translated by Alicia Marchant as 'sorcery'.¹³⁷ It was not simply a tendency for 'prophecy' that defined the Welsh cultural identity in the eyes of the English. Instead, the Welsh were characterised externally by a lower form of 'prediction' 'foretelling' or even 'sorcery'. In reality, the prophetic practices of the English and Welsh were not dissimilar. The conflict between the two identities, however, dictated that a difference needed to be established in order for it to become a trait of their opposing communal identities. The English did this by belittling the Welsh, their belief in the prophecies of Merlin, and their cultural prophetic practices.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is important to look forward into the sixteenth century. The role that prophecy played in later accounts of Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion was significant.¹³⁸ Indeed, the motif of the Welsh as being obsessed with prophecy is used by Shakespeare in *Henry IV, part 1*.¹³⁹ In a scene in which Owain Glyndŵr is conspiring with Hotspur, Owain is portrayed as believing that he was the 'son of prophecy'. He claims that at his birth the sky was filled with fire and the earth shook. Hotspur responds to this, saying that these signs would have occurred if the only birth were his mother's cat having kittens. When Owain retorts, speaking poetically about the portentous signs at his birth, Hotspur states 'I think there's no man speaks better Welsh'.¹⁴⁰ Sixteenth-century negative attitudes towards the Welsh and their prophecy demonstrate how Welsh prophetic traditions had become entrenched in English narratives of the Welsh, and that the Welsh were ridiculed for it. This theme is also seen in later chronicles, which are much more likely to make links between Owain Glyndŵr and the prophecy of the returning hero than those contemporary to the rebellion.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Ranulf Higden, vol. I, p. 411.

¹³⁷ Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 239.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

¹³⁹ William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part 1 (Arden Shakespeare Third Series)*, (ed.) David Scott Kastan (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002). Act 3, Scene 1, lines 12-50.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Helen Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 114.

Of course, the reality was very different. Prophecy was a legitimate political tool, used by both the English and the Welsh in the writing of histories. Analysing prophecy in Adam Usk's chronicle, provides a number of conclusions about his identity. Firstly, it is evident that he did not use Merlin's prophecies to promote the political message that is so integral to the original Welsh prophecies, despite his clear understanding that Merlin was connected to Wales and important to Welsh culture. The difference between Adam's use of the prophecies and the way that Owain Glyndŵr used them, demonstrates the extent to which Adam was influenced by his place in Marcher society and the English frameworks he interpreted and expressed his identity through. Despite this, there is clear evidence that Adam was expressing Welshness in the way that he linked his name to the town of Usk, using Merlin's prophecy to cement its location both geographically and culturally in Wales. Finally, Adam does not link Welsh identity to the occult in the way that a number of his contemporaries do. Adam Usk, was therefore expressing his form of Welshness within the context he was living, working, and writing in.

Conclusion

Built on the spot that had once been the location of an iron age fort, Usk castle has undergone many changes during its long history. From the Great Keep constructed by Richard de Clare in 1170, to the Dovecote Tower which was added by the Mortimer family in the 1380s, it was undoubtedly an imposing and impressive building in its day.¹ Despite demonstrating its strength by withstanding attacks during the Glyndŵr rebellion (most famously the Battle of Pwll Melyn in 1405), the castle fell into ruin in 1536. Its purpose and utility changed; the gatehouse was repurposed into a house in 1680, and the castle ruins later became a carefully manicured private garden, a historic monument, tourist attraction, and an event venue.² The modern visitor is met by ivy-laden crumbling stonework, meticulously maintained lawns, various topiary and wooden sculptures, and chickens roaming freely around the grounds. It is now a place that combines the values, needs, and requirements of modern life with the historical significance of its location. As the modern tourist looks out from the Garrison Tower and admires the view of the rolling hills and the gentle hum of traffic from the town below, they are reminded of how the castle existed in different forms in both the past and the present. The heavy stone building blocks remain the same, but their purpose and utility have changed significantly.

This repurposing and re-presentation of the ancient monument where Adam Usk was born serves as a metaphor for a number of the issues addressed in this thesis. It is clear, for example, that modern perspectives, approaches, and methodologies have influenced the way that Adam's identity has been interpreted in scholarship. In terms of Adam's identity as a historian and chronicler, modern interpretations of reliability and 'fact' have led to negative conclusions about his competence as a historian.³ Indeed, modern conventions for categorising chronicles have also led to the chronicle being described as 'English', despite the fact that Adam Usk did not identify with either categorisation, and did not express this identity in his chronicle.⁴ Finally, modern requirements artificially created 'Adam Usk's Chronicle' as a standalone history, separated from the *Polychronicon*

¹Usk Castle History': PDF available at: <https://uskcastle.com/usk-castle/about/>, accessed 22/11/2020.

² Ibid.; 'Usk Castle': <https://uskcastle.com/>, accessed 13/04/2021.

³ Thompson, pp. xix-xx; Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 57; Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 107.

⁴ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii*, pp. 171-178; Marchant, *The Revolt*, p. 2; Henken, *National Redeemer*, pp. 10-12.

tradition in its print form.⁵ In the same way that Usk Castle, Adam Usk's birthplace, has been repurposed based on the needs of the time, so too has Adam Usk's chronicle.

The research and analysis in this thesis have contributed to the fields of history and chronicle studies in a number of ways. Through an in-depth analysis of Adam Usk's *Polychronicon* continuation and life I have demonstrated two key points: Adam Usk consciously followed chronicle-writing traditions in his own history which reflect the English framework he was familiar with, and he self-identified as a Welshman from the community of Usk. Both of these aspects had implications for how Adam expressed identity in his chronicle. Once these two points were established, it was possible to understand more about the various images, narratives, and accounts in the chronicle, and how they represented and reflected the complexity of individual and communal identity. Adam Usk, for example, was writing within a specific framework which promoted 'universal truths' and formulaic descriptions of battles, both of which appear in his descriptions of the Glyndŵr rebellion. These aspects complicate readings of Adam Usk's identity because in some cases it may appear that his narrative is too moulded by an 'English' framework to ever express a Welsh identity. Despite this, as well as identifying as Welsh, Adam Usk was also defined as Welsh by others, and suffered negative cultural stereotyping and legal limitations as a result. Equally, his use of prophecy shows his interaction with a tradition that was used to culturally stereotype the Welsh, but was equally an integral part of English cultural identity and chronicle writing traditions. Adam's Welsh identity was complex and contradictory and often expressed through a predominantly English framework and narrative, but it was Welsh none-the-less.

Analysing Welsh identity during the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries is less than straight forward. The sources from the period present both the English and the Welsh identities as simultaneously distinct and intricately interwoven. Culturally, they were seen as very different, although Adam Usk and many of his contemporaries demonstrate that a Welsh person could navigate life in England fairly easily during the reign of Richard II. Politically, the Welsh situation fluctuated during Adam's lifetime; sometimes Welsh people were treated in a similar way to the English, but later their rights were restricted. Before the Glyndŵr rebellion the Welsh were rarely mentioned in the chronicles contemporary to Adam Usk's, and they were infrequently referenced in

⁵ *Chronicon Adae de Usk: A.D. 1377-1404*; Thompson, *Chronicon Adae de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*; *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*.

the Parliament Rolls. By using Adam as a case study, however, it has been demonstrated that the Welsh identity was a complex blend of imagined traits, practised cultural customs, interaction with various languages, allegiance to the English Crown and a local lord, and involvement in a local community within a Marcher lordship. As such, defining 'Welsh identity' is impossible. The implications of the identity, however, were very real. Below I will look at these points in more detail and explain the consequences of these findings, as well as outline an area for future research.

Adam Usk's Chronicle in Context

Before turning to local, national, and political identity, this thesis demonstrated that Adam Usk's chronicle was a consciously crafted work which observed many of the conventions expected of a chronicle written during the early fifteenth-century. This was undertaken to address inconsistencies in how Adam Usk's work has been viewed by scholars from various disciplines, as well as to establish a foundation for analysing his chronicle in more detail. From eye-witness accounts, to apologising for a lack of chronology, Adam proved his awareness of how a chronicle should be constructed.

Describing Adam's chronicle as 'unreliable', as so many scholars have, fails to acknowledge what a chronicle writer was trying to achieve.⁶ There was less a requirement to present 'facts', and a greater focus on 'truth'. To the modern observer the two concepts may appear to overlap. For the medieval writer, however, there were many types of 'truth'. I have demonstrated that Adam Usk and a number of his contemporaries valued truth above other conventions such as chronology, length of account, and that including details about personal experiences also demonstrated a commitment to reliability.⁷ The deliberate acts to prioritise truth are performative, as they demonstrate an awareness of the cultural expectations surrounding chronicle writing and seek to present the identity of historian.⁸ Such a conclusion has significant implications for how Adam Usk's work should be read and approached. Acknowledging that Adam deliberately emulated the traditional behaviours of a medieval historian allows for greater emphasis to be placed on the use of certain conventions and the repetition of tropes and stereotypes.

The above point is accentuated by the fact that Adam Usk's chronicle is a *Polychronicon* continuation, demonstrated by the fact that it is copied into the back of his own *Polychronicon* book.

⁶ Thompson, pp. xix-xx; Brough, *The Rise and Fall of Owain Glyndŵr*, p. 57; Davies, *The Revolt*, p. 107.

⁷ See: above chapter One.

⁸ Clarke, 'Place, identity and performance: spatial practices and social proxies in medieval Swansea', 257.

It indicates that Adam saw himself as a continuator of the chronicle into his own time and as such the chronicle was very much conceived of as part of the *Polychronicon* tradition. The majority of scholarship that focuses specifically on Adam Usk's chronicle has not taken this into consideration. Only Given-Wilson has given this aspect much thought in his edition, but no conclusions have been drawn about what this meant for the imagery and stereotypes used by Adam Usk.⁹ In this work, however, I have explored this point in some detail. Not only did I establish the fact that Adam saw his work as a *Polychronicon* continuation, but I demonstrated some of the ways the English historical narrative influenced imagery and conventions in his chronicle.¹⁰

In terms of analysing identity tropes in Adam Usk's chronicle, the *Polychronicon* tradition has proven to be important. Certain descriptions of the Welsh such as a propensity for dressing inappropriately for the climate can be traced through a number of connected histories into the chronicles of Adam Usk's time. In addition, the occupation of Wales was presented as a formulaic inevitability in early chronicle accounts, expressed through imagery showing the Welsh as uncivilised and cowardly. These images seen in the works of Gildas, Gerald of Wales, and Ranulf Higden, were repeated by Adam Usk's contemporaries and were frequently directed towards the entire Welsh population in the context of the Glyndŵr rebellion. Equally, Adam Usk replicated this imagery in his own history, although he actively removed this identity from his own in a number of ways including presenting himself as a man from South Wales, and the rebellion as taking place in the north. The stereotypes manifest in his descriptions of Owain Glyndŵr and his troops as occupying a wild landscape and utilising the natural terrain for their military advantage. He also repeated the notion of Owain Glyndŵr and his followers hiding from Henry IV and his army, a trait that Gildas presented as the reason for Britain's occupation by the Saxons in the first place.

Adam Usk's use of prophecy is also tied to his desire to present himself as a competent historian. Adam, as a result of his English education and English patrons, only expressed his Welsh identity through prophecy by linking his name and place of birth to Merlin. All political narratives supported by prophecy in Adam's chronicle were linked to the ruling elite of England and not the traditional message of early Welsh prophecies. Acknowledging the genre and context of Adam Usk's history

⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁰ See: above chapters Three and Five.

performed a vital role in understanding how and why he wrote about his identity in the way that he did.

National identity and Adam Usk's Chronicle

The research questions asked in the introduction to this work relate to how Adam Usk presented his own national identity, as well as how a Welsh identity was projected on to him. This was also related to whether Adam Usk's chronicle should be categorised as English or Welsh. The theoretical discussion in the introduction to this work provided a framework for this analysis. By examining medieval conceptions of 'nations' and 'peoples' through the terminology used in the chronicles, it was apparent that terms like *patria*, *gens*, and *regnum* aligned with aspects of Benedict Anderson's flexible definition of nation as 'an imagined political community'.¹¹ The concepts of *patria*, *gens*, and *regnum* are evident in Adam Usk's chronicle, and in the chronicles of his contemporaries.

Adam Usk and his contemporaries, for example, were influenced by their locality and this was reflected in the events, accounts, and descriptions in their histories. For Adam, however, his relationship with his hometown of Usk demonstrates his network, affection, and sense of obligation that he felt for it. This aligns with other research into *patria* during the Middle Ages and provides a case study that demonstrates the application of this theoretical framework in a historical context. Simultaneously, Adam demonstrated his Welsh identity, and his interaction with the wider Welsh community, particularly when living outside of Wales. This is conclusive evidence that a plurality of identities within a wider identity did not inhibit a sense of 'national' belonging in the Middle Ages. Cultural and political identity is complex and frequently appears to be contradictory. Adam Usk was able to show an affiliation with the Welsh community, as well as prejudice against people living in other areas of Wales (such as the North). Despite this, it does not mean that either a local or national identity were not expressed.

The imagined aspect of the Welsh identity connected to the term *gens* was explored in the context of chronicle representations of the Glyndŵr rebellion. The inherited aspect of characteristics was highlighted in the perpetuation of stereotypes in the chronicle tradition, as described above. It was

¹¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

established how a 'national character' for the Welsh as an 'uncivilised' people was expressed in chronicle accounts centuries before Adam Usk was writing. Whilst the notion of the Welsh as uncivilized was maintained in the chronicle tradition, it was also shown to exist in wider discourse. Simultaneously, it was demonstrated how aspects of this character were used by the Welsh in a positive sense; whilst the chronicles spoke disparagingly of the Welsh 'hiding' in their wild landscape, a Welsh rebel wrote a poem about the cosiness of the wood they occupied whilst waiting for an Englishman to take hostage.¹²

The political identity of the Welsh was considered in connection to the term *regnum* and its association with the status of being a subject of the English Crown. It was clear that the rights of these subjects were not absolute or stable but were unequally applied depending on the geographical origins of the subject. During the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, for example, the political and legal identity of the Welsh became closer to that of foreigners, reflecting the motivations of the ruling establishment to provide greater security for the kingdom, and to raise money. For Adam Usk, this shift in status had a significant impact on his life; he struggled in terms of his career and sought to find a political system that championed the rights of Welsh people, rather than actively suppressing them. There was thus a separation between cultural and political identity, and the only indication of Adam Usk's support for the Glyndŵr rebellion is in the context of improving his freedoms and rights.

An examination of medieval prophecy in Adam Usk's chronicle has two results. On the one hand, it supports Rees Davies' hesitancy about using sources written by English trained Welsh clerks to assess national identity.¹³ It is clear that the prophecy used in Adam's chronicle was heavily influenced by the chronicle writing traditions also seen in England. Whilst the English and Welsh traditions were certainly interlinked, the perception of the two as separate forms of prophecy meant that they contributed to identity differentiation. It was established, for example, that prophecy retaining the political objective of overthrowing English rule was used by Owain Glyndŵr to try and form alliances outside of Wales. It also shows the role that cultural difference played in interpretations of other traditions. In the English narrative, for example, the Welsh tradition of

¹² See: above chapter Three.

¹³ Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities', pp. 174-175.

prophecy, for example, was often portrayed as a 'lower' form of prophecy with connections to the occult.

In the introduction to this work two overarching questions were posed. Firstly, it was asked: how was Adam able to express his Welsh identity within his chronicle that followed an English tradition and how can these expressions of identity be interpreted and understood? There are numerous examples of how Adam Usk understood and expressed his own identity. Firstly, he saw himself as part of the community in Usk. The notion of locality created a lens through which Adam Usk viewed many events of national importance, which was noticeably influenced by his upbringing in a Marcher lordship. Adam returned to the town of Usk repeatedly in his writing and his affection for the place and the people that he knew there infiltrated the structure and accounts. There is no doubt that he was part of a community there, both real and imagined, and that this community formed part of his identity.

Simultaneously, he expressed his Welsh identity through various accounts about his interactions with the community when abroad, both at Merton College and when he placed his trust in Welsh people (who ultimately robbed him) when travelling on the continent.¹⁴ There are also a few markers of cultural Welsh identity expressed in the chronicle and other artifacts that memorialised his life. Whilst it is difficult to say to what extent he spoke or understood the Welsh language, his epitaph at St. Mary's in Usk is written in Welsh and was therefore designed to engage with the Welsh community there. He expressed dismay at the fact that the people of Cardigan were prohibited from speaking Welsh.¹⁵ He shows some knowledge of Welsh history, albeit through chronicles that were also widely used in England such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*.¹⁶ Despite the sources of his knowledge, he clearly perceived Roger Mortimer's Welsh lineage as something that elevated his patron's profile and prestige.

Perhaps the most significant contribution that this work makes to the field of history and chronicle studies is also the simplest. Throughout this work it has been demonstrated that Adam Usk was able

¹⁴ Adam Usk, pp. 14-17, 212-215.

¹⁵ Adam Usk, pp. 146-147.

¹⁶ Discussed above, pp. 79-80.

to express a Welsh identity, despite his adoption of an English framework, and as such it could be argued that his chronicle should be categorised as Welsh or at least 'Marcher'. Describing the chronicle as English erodes the voice of proudly Welshman whose perspective and view of the world was shaped by centuries of English occupation. He was not 'anglicized' as was claimed about his hometown of Usk, because to be Welsh in this period was to be occupied by the English and influenced by the power of their culture and politics.¹⁷ This is specifically true for people living in the Welsh march.

Adam Usk's chronicle has been recognised for the level of detail and the colour of the personal accounts intertwined within the narrative. It has been used by scholars looking at a wide range of different topics. When discussing the reliability of his work, tentative moves are made to discuss Adam's reliability based on his identity. He has been described as being familiar with Welsh geography, for example, because he was Welsh. He had a vested interest in the outcomes of the Glyndŵr rebellion because of his Welsh identity.¹⁸ In each case, however, there is a lack of detail about what is meant by 'Welsh identity', and Adam Usk's identity is rarely taken any further or discussed at any length. This research, however, will give those using Adam's chronicle for research the confidence to assert Adam's Welsh identity, as well as having greater confidence in how it was expressed.

Limitations and further research

Using Adam Usk's identity as a case study deliberately kept the focus of this research narrow in terms of subject matter, time period, and source type. It looked specifically at Adam Usk's identity, and used his life and chronicle to explore the interaction between English and Welsh identities during a limited and specific time period. As a result, a number of other topics and sources were not included here as they did not fall within the limited parameters of this work.

An interesting area of research that was touched upon in chapter 5 of this work, but not pursued fully, is how other identities perceived English and Welsh identities specifically during the Glyndŵr rebellion. It was discussed, for example, how Owain Glyndŵr used language connected to prophecy

¹⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxxii.

¹⁸ Fulton, 'Owain Glyn Dŵr and the Uses of Prophecy', 120; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', p. lxxxii.

and mythical pasts to form alliances with Scottish, Irish, and French leaders. There are a number of chronicles that could be explored to understand more about this topic. Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*, for example, provides a wealth of evidence in this area. The language that he uses to describe the Glyndŵr rebellion differs significantly from the Latin chronicles written in England and Wales. For example, instead of using impartial language to describe Henry IV's suppression of the revolt, Walter Bower describes Henry as 'cruel' and behaving 'cunningly'.¹⁹ Pierre Cochon, writing during the 1430s, and Jean Juvenal, writing in the 1440s, provide a French perspective in their chronicles, both documenting the experiences of the count de la Marche who went to Wales to aid the Welsh against the English.²⁰ It would be interesting to examine the traditions that these chronicles were part of and analyse the language and imagery used to describe the various players in the revolt. By doing this, conclusions could be drawn about the English and Welsh identities from an external perspective, as well as a deeper exploration of how both identities interacted with others.

On a similar note, it would be equally interesting to apply the same process to Welsh chronicles that discuss the rebellion. As Adam Usk's chronicle was founded in the *Polychronicon* tradition and there is no evidence that he had any knowledge of Welsh language chronicles, they were not examined in any detail here. There are, however, a number of Welsh language chronicles that could be analysed for their expression of identity, albeit mainly written decades after Adam's. Elis Gruffudd, for example, wrote a chronicle during the sixteenth century, which includes accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion. Another Welsh chronicle, the *Annals of Owen Glyn Dŵr*, also provides accounts of the rebellion and is written in Welsh.²¹ It is thought to have been compiled in 1422 but only exists as a sixteenth century copy.²² These chronicles would also be interesting if analysed in the context of their chronicle tradition and their construction of English and Welsh identities. Equally, by looking at the chronicle traditions of those written in France, Scotland, and Wales, it would be interesting to see the interlinking of traditions, sharing of sources, and the impact this had on how individual history writers presented various national identities.

¹⁹ Walter Bower, 'Scotichronicon' in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 190-191.

²⁰ Pierre Cochon, 'Normandy Chronicle', (trans.) Michael Livingston in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 172-173; Jean Juvenal des Ursins 'History of Charles VI', (trans.) Michael Livingston in *Owain Glyndŵr: a casebook*, pp. 184-185.

²¹ 'Annales of Owen Glyn Dŵr; extracted from Peniarth MS. 135', pp. 150-154.

²² Henken, *National Redeemer*, p. 10.

To extend the discussion of external perspectives of the interaction between English and Welsh identities, it would also be beneficial to take my analysis of chronicles as material objects further. In Chapter One, for example, I addressed Adam Usk's chronicle in its material context and used this to demonstrate the influence of the *Polychronicon* over his work. This point was then developed further to show how the *Polychronicon* and its sources influenced Adam Usk's perspectives on peoples, landscapes, and places. Understanding the relationship between chronicles and their material settings can provide greater insight into the perspective of the chronicle writer and a background to the history that they wrote, particularly in situations like Adam's where the chronicle is copied alongside a preceding history. For chronicles that are only known as copies and compilations, the material setting can provide evidence for the way it was used and perceived by the society and culture that created the physical object. In addition, any evidence of book ownership or reading of additional sources by the person writing the chronicle can also offer context for the identity tropes and imagery expressed in the history. As such it would be interesting to apply this methodological approach to other chronicles that discuss the relationship between England and Wales in this period.

While researching this work, I was conscious that there was only a single case study involving a woman, and as a result gendered experiences of Welsh identity were not examined.²³ Again this was in order to retain focus on Adam Usk's identity and experience, and such a discussion did not arise naturally from the sources. It would be interesting and important, however, to explore this in more detail. Indeed, the representation of Welsh women in chronicle accounts of the Glyndŵr rebellion has been addressed to some extent by Alicia Marchant. Marchant determined the connection between gender and national identity through portrayals of Welsh women committing vicious and sexually violent acts.²⁴ Marchant's analysis, however, does not use any sources other than chronicles, and as a result does not contextualise the imagery within a wider discourse. It would be interesting, therefore, to examine gendered experiences of Welsh national identity during the time period covered by this work, separating national identity into cultural and political identity. Doing so would give a deeper perspective on the themes discussed in this work and provide a further framework through which sources can be analysed.

²³ See: above pp. 165-166.

²⁴ Marchant, *The Revolt*, pp. 158-161.

Adam Usk's Welsh identity was multifaceted and deeply unique and personal. He self-identified as both a Welshman and a man from Usk. Yet he was from an area with a history of complex interactions between the English and Welsh inhabitants, and his outlook, perspectives, and relationships were shaped by this environment. Indeed, Adam Usk's life serves as a useful reminder about the pitfalls of discussing identities; even though the differences between the English and the Welsh are presented in the sources as absolute and inflexible, the reality was always more complex. Even so, Adam's life and chronicle have served as a spring board into some of the wider discourses surrounding Welsh identity during the later Middle Ages, and their provenance in earlier histories.

By contextualising Adam Usk's chronicle and experiences, and cautiously applying theoretical frameworks related to identity, Adam Usk's chronicle can now be used with greater clarity by scholars researching the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V. The chronicle can be approached with more confidence, particularly concerning its background and how the chronicle aligns with others from the period. Combined with a further case study for the nature of Welsh identity during the later medieval period, this research has contributed greater depth to the variety and versatility of Welsh identity.

Appendix A

Adam Usk's Epitaph

The following transcription and translation are from J. Morris-Jones, 'Adam Usk's Epitaph' *Y Cymmrodor* 31 (1921), 124, 127-33.¹

Nole clode yi ehtrode yar lleyn

Aduocade llawnhade llundeyn

A barnour bede breynt apibe

Ty nev aro ty hauabe

Seliff sunnoeir sinna se

Adam vske eva l kuske

Deke kummode doctor dymmen

Llena loe l llawn o leue

After fame, to the tomb, from on the bench, The most skilled advocate of London,

And judge of the world by gracious privilege,

May the heavenly abode be thine, good sir.

Lo! A Solomon of wisdom, Adam Usk, is sleeping here,

Wise doctor of ten commotes

Behold a place full of learning

¹ Both the transcription and translation are printed in full in: Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', *Adam Usk*, xxxvii-xxxviii.

Appendix B

Adam Usk's Will

The following transcription and translation are printed in: Given-Wilson, 'The Will of Adam Usk', *Adam Usk*, pp. 272-275.

In Dei nomine amen. Vicesimo die mensis Ianuarii, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo uicesimo nono, ego Adam Vsk, legum doctor, compos et sanus memorie, timens mortis periculum michi euenire, condo testamentum meum in hunc modum.

In primis lego animam meam Deo et beate Marie uirgini ac omnibus sanctis eius, corpusque meum ad speliendum in ecclesia parochiali Vsk, coram ymagine beate Marie uirginis. Item, lego ecclesie parochiali predictae unum librum appellatum 'Reacionale Diuinorum'. Item, lego domino Iohanni, vicario de Vsk, tres solidos quattuor denarius. Item, lego cuilibet moniali prioratus de Vsk uiginti denarius. Item, lego fratribus minoribus de Kerdeffe unum trentale, et tantum fratribus predicatoribus eiusdem uille. Item, lego fratribus Augustinensibus de Newport unum trentale. Item, lego ecclesie cathedrali Landauensi tres solidos quattuor denarius. Item, lego Edwardo ap Adam, consanguineo meo, unum librum uocatum 'Policronica'. Item, lego Philippo Went centum solidos. Item, lego fratri meo quadraginta solidos. Item, lego Griffino ap Guylym quadraginta solidos. Item, lego Meric ap Ieuan ap M' et uxori sue quattuor libras. Item, lego Iohanne sorori mee quadraginta solidos. Item, lego Iohanni uab Ior' uiginti solidos. Item, lego quattuor filiis dicti Griffini, culibet illorum unum nobile. Item, lego domino Griffino Vachan, capellano, tres solidos quattuor denarius. Item, lego domino Iohanni ap Guylym quadraginta denarius. Item, lego Thome Went de Castell Cwm uiginti solidos. Item, lego Iohanni ap Daid ap Griffin quinque nobilia. Item, lego Alicie uerch Daid ap Griffin quinque nobilia. Item, lego Ior' ap Hopkyn quinque nobilia. Item, lego M' ap Ior' quinque nobilia.

Residuum uero omnium bonorum meorum non legatorum lego dicto Edwardo et sue dispositioni; quem ordino, facio et constituo, ad exequendum presens testamentum, meum executorem. In cuius rei testimonium huic presenti testament meo sigillum meum apposui, his testibus: dicto Iohanne filio Willelmi, Iohanne Bays, et Thoma ap Ior' ac multis aliis. Datum apud Vsk, die, mense, anno supradictis.

In the name of God amen. On the twentieth day of the month of January, in the year of Our Lord 1429, I, Adam Usk, doctor of laws, being sound and sane of mind, fearing that the hazards of death are soon to befall me, compose my will in the following fashion.

Firstly, I bequeath my soul to God and the blessed virgin Mary and all his saints, and my body to burial in the parish church of Usk, before the image of the blessed virgin Mary. Also, I bequeath a book called the *Racionale Diuinorum* to the aforesaid parish church. Also, I bequeath three shillings and fourpence to John, vicar of Usk. Also, I bequeath twenty pence to each nun of the priory of Usk. Also, I bequeath one trental to the friars minors of Cardiff, and the same to the friars preachers of the same town. Also, I bequeath one trental of the Augustinian friars of Newport. Also, I bequeath three shillings and fourpence to the cathedral church of Llandaff. Also, I bequeath a book called the

Polychronicon to Edward ap Adam, my kinsman. Also, I bequeath a hundred shillings to Philip Went. Also, I bequeath forty shillings to Griffith ap William. Also, I bequeath four pounds to Meurig ap Ieuan ap M[eredith?] and his wife. Also, I bequeath forty shillings to my sister Joan. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to John ap Iorwerth. I also, I bequeath one noble to each of the four sons of the aforesaid Griffith. I also I bequeath three shillings and fourpence to Griffith Vaghan, chaplain. Also, I bequeath forty pence to John ap William. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to Thomas Went of Castle Combe. Also, I bequeath twenty shillings to John ap David ap Griffith, which sum I leaned to him. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Thomas ap M[eredith?]. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Gwenllian daughter of David ap Griffith. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Alice daughter of David ap Griffith. Also, I bequeath five nobles to Iorwerth ap Hopkin. Also, I bequeath five nobles to M[eredith?] ap Iorwerth.

I bequeath the entire residue of all my unbequeathed goods to the aforesaid Edward, to be disposed of by him, and I ordain, appoint and constitute him as my executor for the execution of this will. In testimony of which I have attached my seal to this same will, as witness the following: the aforesaid John son of William, John Bays and Thomas Ap Iorwerth, and many others. Given at Usk on the above-written day, month and year.

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