STAGING CAMBRIA: SHAKESPEARE, THE WELSH, AND THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH THEATER, 1590-1615

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on theatrical representation of Wales and the Welsh at a particularly pressured moment in the development of the English nation. In these twenty-five years, England strengthened its armed forces to fight wars both foreign and domestic, expanded its empire and moved toward a “British” state, and continued adapting to the changes of the Reformation. This dissertation argues that the frequent and varied representation of Wales and the Welsh on the late Tudor and early Stuart stage reveals the extent to which the English understood their national history and identity in relation to their western neighbors. Although Wales has been overshadowed by Ireland and Scotland in studies of early modern English nationalism, its impact on the formation of English national identity should not be underestimated. As the descendants of the heroic ancient Britons (including King Arthur), the Welsh had an enviable narrative of military prowess that the English often co-opted for themselves; moreover, the English annexation of Wales—culminating in the 1536 Act of Union—provided a hopeful precedent for how England might incorporate its most resistant Celtic neighbor, Ireland, and later, for how England might expand into a British empire. Finally, the Welsh, who claimed connection to the earliest Christian Britons, were also commonly associated with paganism and Catholicism—making them a locus for English anxiety about the success
of the Reformation. In plays such as Peele’s *Edward I*, Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV, Henry V*, and *Cymbeline*, and R.A.’s *The Valiant Welshman*, we see the Welsh as valiant soldiers, boastful gasbags, proto-Protestant heroes, and pagan prophets; we also see Wales as a flourishing British kingdom, a barren, primitive, backwoods, and an idyllic rural countryside. Such variety of representation demonstrates the way in which England appropriated and adapted Wales in order to represent and reflect upon England’s struggles with war, nation formation, and religious change. This investigation not only allows for a deeper sense of how Wales and the Welsh took part in the development of English nationalism, but it also provides a richer understanding of the textual and theatrical dynamics of both canonical and non-canonical literary works.
For Matt

and

for mom and dad
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INTRODUCTION

“THE RESIDUE OF BRITONS”

In the preface to his sprawling historical and topographical account of Britain—the cleverly titled Britain—William Camden claims that his goal is to “restore antiquity to Britaine.”¹ It was a lengthy and popular restoration. Camden published the first edition of his chorography (a county-by-county description of the landscape) in Latin in 1586 and presented seven more editions before an English version—translated by Philemon Holland and likely overseen by Camden himself—was published in 1610.² It was, obviously, a complex project. Camden goes on to describe the rigorous—and, indeed, when compared to the methods of historiographers and antiquarians that had come before him, revolutionary—process by which he completed his survey of Britain. He traveled widely, learned the languages of early British peoples, corresponded

¹ Britain (London, 1610), N4 (sig. A2r). Unless otherwise noted, the quotations cited from Britain here can also be found in the Latin versions of the text.
² Camden’s involvement in the subsequent printings of Britannia, including his involvement in the English translation of 1610, is usefully explored in Wyman H. Herendeen’s entry, “Camden, William (1551–1623)” (in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/4431>, accessed 18 March 2008). Although the text remains largely unaltered in subsequent editions (one notable exception will be addressed in chapter one of this study), Camden continued to alter is structure, changing some of its headings for subsequent printings.
extensively with fellow scholars, and carefully examined ancient artifacts. The fruit of his labor was one of the most powerful achievements in historical research of the sixteenth century, a chorography that, as many scholars have noted, forever changed the way England thought about and wrote about history.³

In taking on Britain, Camden was taking on not only a landscape, but an *idea*—and a complicated one at that. In the simplest of terms, “Britain” in Camden’s text refers to the land mass that includes England, Scotland, and Wales, “the most famous Iland, without comparison, of the whole world, severed from the continent of Europe.” But “Britain” also refers to that ancient nation of Britons: proud, warlike, and beleaguered by Romans and Saxons alike, the Britons were the earliest inhabitants of the island. It is a subtle but crucial distinction, and one that Camden never overtly signals in his text. Sometimes, he uses the term “Britain” to refer to contemporary England, thus appropriating an ancient name for a kingdom that had only recently formally annexed Wales—a territory that had to be incorporated in order for England to properly claim status as an island. At other times, however, he uses the term “Britain” to refer to the lost nation of antiquity, a nation not without its particular virtues, but nevertheless one that was destined to succumb to the civilizing influences of the invading Romans.⁴ Those of


⁴ In his essay, “The Fashioning of Britain” (in *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485-1725*, eds. Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber [London: Longman, 1995], 8-39), John Morrill also notes the “nasty English habit” of using the term “British” too freely, citing Camden and John Milton (who wrote the *History of Britain* in 1670) as frequent offenders. See esp. 13.
that nation who survived—"the residue of Britons"—would confine themselves to Wales, become known as "Welchmen,"\textsuperscript{5} and wait for their version of ancient Britain to be restored.

Camden took a risk in formulating this new vision of Britain. Not only did it fuse the landscapes of England and Wales—as if they had always been a natural union—it also challenged a long-standing and powerful mythology that had dominated accounts of the ancient Britons. In order to construct a historical narrative of which the English could be proud, historiographers had long relied heavily on Geoffrey of Monmouth’s famed twelfth-century text, *History of the Kings of Britain*, which portrayed the Britons as a brave, civilized, and Christian race—descendants of the Trojans and progenitors of Arthur. In recasting that history as one of barbarism and defeat, Camden had not only severed the Welsh—"the residue"—from their glorious ancient past, he had also given the English good reason to stop envying the glorious history of their Welsh neighbors. Perhaps in acknowledgment of the risk he was taking, Camden is modest, even conciliatory, in his preface. About Geoffrey, Camden says only that his history "is held suspected among the judicious."\textsuperscript{6} Camden also acknowledges that his own methods stand apart from the accepted practice of fellow antiquarians: he might well be "censured unadvised" for all his traveling, criticized for being "scant modest" in taking on such established sources.\textsuperscript{7} When he finally comes to the point of why he made the venture,

\textsuperscript{5} *Britain*, 113 (sig. K1\textsuperscript{r}). Both phrases appear in Camden’s section on “The Britons of Wales and Cornwales”; a subsection of his discussion of “The Romans in Britain.”
\textsuperscript{6} *Britain*, 7 (sig. A6\textsuperscript{r}).
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 5 (sig. A4\textsuperscript{r}).
Camden acknowledges that although he might have “lurked in obscurity” as a traditional antiquarian, he has instead “ventured as a scribler on the stage.”

It is a curious invocation of the theatrical: history as the stage. It compares an established discipline—one that Camden is working to legitimize with rigorous research—and a rapidly growing industry that was making much of its fortune by dramatizing history, rewriting its facts, recasting its heroes and villains; it links writing about the past for posterity and staging the past for opportunity. It makes Camden and his past and present colleagues—historiographers, chorographers, antiquarians—playwrights, men who read sources and then remake them, even if some do a better job than others. It means that William Camden, the English antiquarian, was staging his own version of ancient Britain, of the ancient Britons, just as Geoffrey of Monmouth, the twelfth-century Welsh monk, had staged his. Britons may once have played the role of heroic royal ancestors, but Camden would cast them as bereft, residual, and…Welsh.

This project grew out of a simple observation, one that I apparently shared with William Camden: that the casting of the ancient Britons and their Welsh descendants in the early modern English historical record was mirrored in the casting of actual Welsh characters on the early modern stage. What Camden and his colleagues did on the page, early modern playwrights did on the stage—with particular frequency and dynamism. In the twenty-five year period this dissertation covers, twenty-four Welsh characters

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8 Ibid., 5 (sig. A4v).
9 The distinctions between these terms is subtle, but was important in the period. While the term “historiographer” applied generally to those interested in chronicling the events of history, a chorographer delineates particular district(s), creating a history ordered by place rather than event. Antiquarians were those that focused specifically on ancient history, on the study of ancient artifacts and peoples.
appeared on the English stage—more than any other British ethnic minority, and more than double the number of Irish or Scottish characters appearing within the same period.\textsuperscript{10} The roles for these characters read like a compendium of the English historical record’s confusion over the Britons and the Welsh: some Welshman are heroic compatriots, others are dangerous rebels. Some come from a Wales that is courtly and refined, while others hail from a Wales that is rural and uncivilized. Some are hailed as the offspring of the most revered figures of British history; still others are mocked for boasting about inflated pedigrees that meant little in the world of Tudor and Stuart England.

In spite of this diversity, however, Welsh characters have very often been confined to “stock” status—a categorization that not only ignores the subtle differences in the portrayal of common traits, such as the common “hot-tempered” Welshman, but also relegates some very developed Welsh characters to minor status simply because they posses one or more of these common traits. This dissertation argues instead that many stage representations of Wales and the Welsh are in fact particularly insightful expressions of how the English constructed their national history and their national identity through appropriation of ancient British—and by extension, Welsh—history. Moreover, by linking these stage representations with important movements in English political and religious history, this dissertation demonstrates that these characters and

\textsuperscript{10} For a tabular summary of Welsh characters appearing on stage in this period and beyond, see J.O. Bartley, \textit{Teague, Shenkin, and Sawney: Being an Historical Study of the Earliest Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Characters in English Plays} (Cork: Cork University Press, 1954), esp. 255-271. Bartley’s text will be noted again later in this introduction; for now, however, it is important to note Bartley’s contribution in providing a careful summary of these Welsh (and Irish and Scottish) appearances on the early modern stage and beyond.
landscapes are actually important reflections of the changing national landscape in England. “The residue of Britons” had a powerful historical and political hold in early modern England, and that hold would be rehearsed with great frequency in both canonical and non-canonical plays from the period.

My approach to this topic is historical. In situating these characters and landscapes within their historical moment, I am interested in showing not only how stage representations of Wales and the Welsh responded to contemporary political and religious controversy, but also how stage representations influenced the perceptions of Wales, the Welsh, and their role in the English nation at a particularly charged moment in English history. During the quarter-century that I cover in this dissertation, England saw wars both foreign and domestic, the sustained effort to colonize Ireland, the union of the English and the Scottish crowns, and the continued adaptation to the sweeping changes of the Protestant Reformation. The years 1590 to 1615 are, of course, not the only years in which Welsh characters appeared onstage; however, they are years in which many of these major historical and cultural shifts in England bore particular relation to Wales and its long-standing presence in the early modern English cultural imagination.

The correspondences between Wales and these early modern historical movements are sometimes direct, but sometimes diffuse. As England worked to assert itself as a military superpower, it often enriched its own history by borrowing from the enviable martial tradition of the Welsh, descendants of the valiant ancient Britons (including King Arthur) and inheritors of a warlike spirit that had survived for centuries in the warrior culture of the Welsh borderlands. England also invoked Wales as a site of
peaceful annexation: it had been fully incorporated into England under the 1536 Act of Union without any bloodshed, providing a hopeful model for what the English might eventually achieve with their colonization efforts in Ireland. In the reign of James I, the annexation of Wales was cited as a precedent for an entirely different reason: hoping to gain traction for his idea of a British union, one that would formally incorporate Scotland, James invoked the union of Wales and England as an optimistic example for how England might develop into a Great British empire. The Welsh also, finally, had complex ties to the Protestant Reformation: although their ancestors were thought to be the earliest Christians in Britain—admired for their independence from “popish” influences—the early modern Welsh were often suspected of Celtic paganism and crypto-Catholicism. In other words, all of these major movements in early modern England—many of them lingering, evolving crises—were haunted by the Anglo-Welsh relationship.

In focusing on this relationship, and all the attendant history that constructed and surrounded it, I am following the lead of recent scholars who have called for studies that consider “British nationalism” as an outgrowth of the complicated interactions between England and the rest of the Atlantic archipelago rather than as a construct that developed solely from England. The first and most influential voice in this scholarly trend was J.G.A. Pocock, who stressed the importance of pluralistic work on the British Isles—work that would not only acknowledge England’s satellite territories, but also recognize their role in helping to construct a version of Britain that was, as Pocock puts it, “an
Pocock’s call for a new kind of investigation was likely answered with such vigor because of other important work on nationalism; the scholarship of Benedict Anderson, though not explicitly focused on Britain or any other specific national construct, nevertheless has had a profound influence on how scholars began to re-conceive of “Britain” in the early modern period. His theory of “imagined communities”—which posited that nations have elastic boundaries capable of absorbing the past and present of neighboring territories—has remained a particularly useful matrix for understanding England’s role as the “center” of the British Isles.12

Those working on British nationalism in the early modern period have integrated the work of Pocock and Anderson with great success, spurring numerous monographs and essay collections dedicated to re-configuring our understanding of how England related to the British Isles at large. Writing in the introduction to Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485-1725, Steven G. Ellis comments on the imperative of such work: “the concept of the nation and of national territory developed by the nation-centered approaches were of little help in assessing either the origins of the modern state


or the present relationship between nation and state in each territory."¹³ In other words, the longtime focus on England alone had not only skewed our understanding of how the nation was constructed, it also obscured the complex texture inherent in the nation—a texture that was introduced by the satellite territories that acted on England’s boundaries.

Not surprisingly, the call to investigate those satellite territories has introduced the theoretical discourse of postcolonial studies to British nationalism. While postcolonial criticism—the study of texts and contexts from countries under the control of a (usually European) colonial power—has most commonly focused on areas in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, its understanding of how the “center” (the colonizing nation) and the “periphery” (the colonized nation) act on one another has proven useful in discussions of the British Isles. In introducing their collection of essays on “British identities,” David J. Baker and Willy Maley adopt the language of postcolonial studies, arguing that the new British history “tries to show how the putative centre—England—and these so-called peripheries [Wales, Ireland, Scotland] mutually implied and responded to one another.”¹⁴

The language of postcolonial studies has taken root particularly in studies of Ireland, which had the most traditionally “postcolonial” experience—Ireland was England’s first attempt at organized colonization (indeed, this is where we get the term “plantation” to

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refer to the establishment of a colony\textsuperscript{15}, and its violent efforts to resist settlement and assimilation more readily recall later European efforts at conquest in foreign territories.\textsuperscript{16}

It is not my intention to deploy postcolonial theory in this study of early modern Wales, in part because England’s involvement in Wales was never formally a settlement effort; it was instead a slow process of integration spurred on by those on both sides of the border. Moreover, resistance to English involvement in Wales during the early modern period was neither as violent nor as organized as it was in Ireland; indeed, by the time of the 1536 Act of Union, there had not been a sustained effort to reclaim Welsh independence in over one hundred years.\textsuperscript{17} Still, there are similarities between Ireland and Wales, most notably their shared Celtic roots and their success at resisting Saxon invasion—success that allowed them to retain much of their unique linguistic and cultural practices. While more recent scholarship on British nationalism has stressed these ties, Christopher Highley’s \textit{Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland} was among the


\textsuperscript{16} For useful summaries of how postcolonial theory has been deployed in studies of Ireland, see \textit{Ireland and Postcolonial Theory}, eds. Clare Carroll and Patricia King (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2003), as well as Stephen Howe’s \textit{Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

\textsuperscript{17} This is not to say that postcolonial theory has never been usefully applied to Wales. Indeed, a recent collection titled \textit{Postcolonial Wales} (eds. Jane Aaron and Chris Williams [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005]) addresses the complicated past and present of Wales through a postcolonial lens. The book’s entire first part, “Is Wales Postcolonial? Nation, ‘Race,’ and History,” however, considers in detail some of the problems with labeling Wales as strictly postcolonial (most notably, the issue of the Welsh as “frequently willing participants in imperial adventures” [7]). I would point readers especially to Chris Williams’s essay, “Problematising Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality,” 3-22.
first book-length studies that would engage the comparisons between Ireland and Wales, demonstrating the ways in which early modern writers used Wales as “a screen for obliquely registering and imaginatively negotiating the current crisis in Ireland.”

This study follows Highley’s lead in its willingness to read representations of Wales and the Welsh as commentaries on larger cultural movements, including those in Ireland.

There is a danger, however, in too freely drawing comparisons between Ireland and Wales; doing so often obscures the importance of Wales, especially as it functioned in the construction of the nation at large, while also ignoring the significant historical cache that Wales—completely independently of either Ireland or Scotland—held in England. A corrective to this has been the work of Philip Schwyzer, whose book *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* has had a profound effect on this study. Schwyzer’s book is the first major study of how Wales contributed to English national identity in the early modern period; by focusing on the ways in which ancient British history influenced Tudor national consciousness, Schwyzer has successfully argued that the British nationalism of the English was created by co-opting the historical tradition of the Welsh.

In looking briefly at Camden, we have already seen how the English historical tradition wrestled with the history of the ancient Britons—a history that more rightly belonged to the Welsh than the English. But Schwyzer’s argument about how England successfully incorporated this tradition deserves particular attention here, as it both informs this study and provides a useful context for understanding the complexities of the

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Anglo-Welsh relationship. Singling out Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* early on his study, Schwyzer is able to demonstrate the variety of ways in which Welsh tradition proved particularly attractive to the English.\(^1\) Galfridian history (the term used to refer to Geoffrey’s work) relied heavily on exalting three major traditions of the ancient Britons: their genealogy, their heroism, and their Christianity. According to Geoffrey, ancient Britain was founded when Brutus, great-grandson to the heroic Trojan soldier Aeneas, fled his homeland with the last remaining Trojans to start a new kingdom. From this Trojan line sprang an impressive roster of ancient Briton kings, including the valorous King Arthur—Geoffrey claimed that Arthur had conquered most of Europe and made an assault on Rome. One of these British ancestors—the last Briton king Cadwaladr—would, in the waning days of his kingdom, hear an angel deliver a prophecy promising the eventual return of the Britons as the natural rulers of the island. Finally, the ancient Britons were, according to Geoffrey, the earliest Christian converts. Visited by Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, the Britons were converted to Christianity in its earliest and purest form, thus sparing them from the corruptions that would later overtake the church.

Geoffrey’s version had Britons that were tied to the most ancient of societies; their own heroism and faith would become, he argues, a model for all future kingdoms. And although much past scholarship has argued that this mythology would lose its

\(^{1}\) Schwyzer’s argument about Geoffrey and his influence is carried throughout his book; a useful starting point for the discussion, however, occurs in the book’s introduction, which notes that both Welsh and English nationalism were “heavily dependent” on Geoffrey’s account. See *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory*, 6. Schwyzer also covers this issue in his essay “British History and ‘The British History’: The Same Old Story?” (in Baker and Maley, *British Identities*, 11-23).
currency with the arrival of “humanist historiography,” which questioned the factual import of Geoffrey’s work, Schwyzer demonstrates that moving on from the Galfridian model—from “Welsh” history—might have been a good idea in theory, but in practice, it proved challenging. If English kings wanted to claim that they had “antiquity” on their side in order to bolster their legitimacy, they would have to borrow that antiquity from ancient British kings. If they wanted to claim an inherited strength for military conquest, they would have to borrow their valor from British heroes like Arthur. Finally, if they wanted to claim a special and unimpeachable Christian faith—one that would distinguish them from the Catholic church, especially—then they would have to draw on the important early British connection to Joseph of Arimathea. The English, though lacking any “self-evident connection to the people of pre-Anglo-Saxon Britain,” nevertheless worked hard to appropriate that pre-Anglo-Saxon glory of antiquity and heroism. Even Camden, who was, as we have seen, careful to avoid a full-scale attack on Geoffrey’s version, seems to understand the temptation:

Let Antiquitie herein be pardoned, if by entermingling falsities and truthes, humane matters and divine together, it make the first beginnings of nations and cities more noble, sacred, and of greater majestie: seeing that, as Plinie writeth, Even falsely to claime and challenge descents from famous personages, implieth in some sort a love of virtue.\footnote{Britain, 8-9 (sigs. A4v-A5r).}

In other words, who could blame them? By Camden’s logic, the English were merely exercising a love of virtue, a love of the noble majesty of ancient Britain, when they borrowed this history for themselves. As long as the English were unwilling to
completely separate their history from that of the ancient Britons, they were, in many ways, tied to the Welsh.

Schwyzer applies this understanding of British history to the Tudor period, finding particular use in studying how Welsh national memory influenced a dynasty that had its own Welsh ties. The first of the Tudors, Henry VII, came to the throne with one-quarter Welsh blood, and his accession was hailed by both the Welsh and the English as a fulfillment of the Cadwaladr prophecy (though, as we shall see in chapter one of this study, the enthusiasm for that fulfillment was uneven at best). Moreover, because the Tudor period saw the implementation of the 1536 Act of Union, the Tudors had particular political influence in Wales. The payoff of Schwyzer’s study is profound. In studying texts (such as Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*) that take up the mantle of British history, Schwyzer is able to show that the trajectory of the English historical tradition was not utterly derailed with the introduction of humanist historiography; thus we are asked to reconsider our notions of historiography as progressive. Rather than “maturing” out of the mythology of the British tradition, the English used it as they saw fit, keeping alive central tenets of Welsh history in the English cultural imagination. Schwyzer also centralizes the role of Wales in the construction of the English nation, providing us with a new understanding of the evolution of British nationalism in the early modern period and beyond.

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21 The first chapter of Schwyzer’s study, “Spenser’s Spark: British Blood and British Nationalism in the Tudor Era” (13-48), forms the most central argument for the Tudor relationship to Wales.
This dissertation extends the work of Schwyzer in two ways: by broadening the time period covered and by shifting focus entirely to the stage. In looking outside of the Tudor period into the early Stuart period, I want to show how the early modern English understanding of Wales and the Welsh changed under the scepter of James I, a Scottish king who worked hard at creating a new vision for what he saw as a British empire. But I also want to show that the early modern understanding of Wales and the Welsh changed within the Tudor period itself: in other words, “Welshness” is never a static category, and we must apply our understanding of it not just in terms of the British history, but also in terms of particular moments in early modern history. Wales stood for something different in times of war than it did in times of peace; it stood for something different in times of religious upheaval than it did in times of religious settlement. In tracing these changes—and the logic by which Wales was invoked during them—we extend our understanding of how England drew distinctions between ancient Britons and contemporary Welsh during periods of social, political, and religious change.

Because it was accessible to a diverse segment of the London population, the early modern stage was the medium most suited to accommodating the wide range of perspectives available to the English about the Welsh, and past scholars such as J.O. Bartley have certainly noted the abundant presence of the Welsh on the stage. However, these scholars have primarily confined their work to “surveying”—gathering a list of all

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22 Scholars like Phyllis Rackin and D.R. Woolf have argued that plays were central in recasting history for diverse audiences that did not have access to or could not read the chronicle histories that inspired their composition. See Rackin, *Stages of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), esp. 21-32, and Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26-34.
Welsh characters and drawing comparisons among them.\textsuperscript{23} This project does not aim to survey; if it did, it would most certainly have to take into account plays like Thomas Middleton’s \textit{A Chaste Maid in Cheapside}, the 1613 city comedy that features both a Welsh servant, Davy Dahumma, and a “Welsh Gentlewoman” who is mocked for her inability to speak English and her rural upbringing. Such joking—which often includes chiding the Welsh for their culinary tastes (cheese, most often) or their livelihood (raising sheep, most often) or their bad habits (thieving, most often)—is a telling expression of some of the day-to-day interactions between the English and the Welsh, who were, in this period, moving to London at astonishing rates.\textsuperscript{24} Though these interactions are important—and clearly resonant in many plays that feature jokes at the expense of the Welsh—they will not be the focus of this study, which works to understand the most developed Welsh characters in light of British history, British nationalism, and contemporary politics in the period.

The wide appeal of plays is certainly one reason for my focus on them as the medium that best captures the early modern understanding of Wales and the Welsh in this period. However, I am also focusing on the stage because it was a medium capable of

\textsuperscript{23} J.O. Bartley, writing his \textit{Teague, Shenkin, and Sawney} in the wake of the Second World War (a point he highlights on the first page of his study), is primarily concerned with understanding “that national type” (4) as an outgrowth of stage conventionality. Though he seeks to understand the “appeals to the various automatic or semi-automatic associations which arose in the English mind at the thought of these three nations” (6), he is not concerned about \textit{why} or \textit{when} such associations arose.

\textsuperscript{24} For a discussion of Welsh immigration to London in the period, see \textit{The Welsh in London, 1500-2000}, ed. Emrys Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001). Jones argues that the first significant wave of Welsh immigrants came to London post-1485 (after Henry Tudor’s accession) and continued to make the move as London became a cultural and economic center.
accommodating the diverse and sometimes contradictory representations of Welshness that corresponded with events of the day. Part of the appeal of the early modern stage was its timeliness, its ability to reflect contemporary social or political or religious controversy in the moment. This is a fact we will see repeated throughout this dissertation with the examination of stage plays that present different versions of the Welsh and the Welsh relationship to both Britain and England—sometimes within the same play, sometimes from the same playwright, sometimes for the same company.

In addressing the intricacies of the Anglo-Welsh relationship and the attendant complexity of how this relationship was staged and re-staged throughout the period, “Staging Cambria” accomplishes three major goals. First, I build on the work of previous scholars by expanding the parameters of what constituted England as a nation in the period. Centralizing the role of Wales certainly does this, but it also demonstrates that future studies of British nationalism in the period must always consider Wales, as it was (and continues to be) an important force in shaping the past and present of England. Second, I broaden the work of scholars like Schwyzer (and, by extension, Benedict Anderson) by showing that national pasts are not only crucial for understanding a national identity, but also that these pasts do not always have one owner.25 In the case of the Welsh, they often shared their past with an England eager for a prouder and more distinguished past than their own.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I illuminate the role of characters that have been confined to “minor” or “stock” status, demonstrating that these characters can in fact be relevant and resonant expressions of the culture’s most pressing issues—what look like simple patterns are in fact subtle invocations of contemporary political and religious controversy. In the immediate, this broadens our understanding of stage Welshness; however, it also provides a worthwhile context for examining similar common expressions of ethnic identity on the early modern stage. To achieve these goals, “Staging Cambria” works first to establish a general context for understanding the history of Wales (including how that history intersected with England), then moves on to examine in detail three major movements that affected the Anglo-Welsh relationship and the representations of Wales and the Welsh. Although dramatic texts are undoubtedly the focus, several historical texts and political tracts (some official, some not) provide a necessary and enriching context for such timely plays.

By considering England’s complicated history with the title “Prince of Wales,” chapter one not only provides useful historical context for understanding the Anglo-Welsh relationship, but also underscores the English propensity for re-figuring that relationship in order to suit the demands of a given historical moment. The princedom, originally a native Welsh inheritance, became an inheritance for the heir to the English throne after the 1282 conquest of Wales; its seat, located in the Welsh borderlands, was intended as a training ground for those who would become king. From the installation of the first Tudor—Arthur, son of Henry VII and thus distant relative of the Welsh Owen Tudor—as Prince of Wales in 1489, to the controversial naming of young Mary Tudor as
“princess of Wales” during Henry VIII’s reign, to the formal and elaborate investiture of Henry Frederick, son of James I, the principedom of Wales underwent a series of major changes, including an extended period of disuse (during the reign of the childless Elizabeth) and a possible eradication (following the 1536 Act of Union, which abolished Wales as a distinct principality). By examining texts such as David Powel’s *Historie of Cambria*, George Peele’s *Edward I*, Richard Connack’s *An Account of the Princes of Wales*, and Ben Jonson’s *Oberon*, we find expression of the culture’s adaptation to new princes of Wales and new policies for Wales. Each text shows us that representations of Wales and the Welsh were conditioned by particular historical circumstances—in this case, the changing nature of a long-standing instrument of the English monarchy.

Chapter two analyzes how, during the intense and escalating martial conflicts of the 1590s, including major efforts in Ireland, England sought to create for itself a heroic past that would endorse the English nation as an exemplar of martial strength. Two plays of this period, Peele’s *Edward I* and Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, demonstrate the ways in which England appropriated the valiant martial tradition of ancient Britain while simultaneously undermining the Welsh—themselves once a rebellious Celtic neighbor—as the true ancestors of the British tradition. In these plays, English kings are not only exalted as paragons of military skill, but they are also figured as rightful heirs to an ancient line of kings. By contrast, the principal Welsh character in each play is figured as either militarily inept or comically out of touch with the realities of war. These Welsh characters are exceptionally valuable for our understanding of how the English revised the Welsh past. Both Lluellen (of *Edward I*) and Fluellen (of *Henry V*) exemplify how
English playwrights could exalt the English nation by suppressing and re-imagining the history of a neighboring country that had a more compelling tradition of military might.

While the plays I consider from the 1590s—though each with its own subtleties—present a uniform version of Welshness that highlights English strength and superiority at the expense of the Welsh, the plays I consider in chapter three, each from the early Stuart period, offer more complex representations of Wales and the Welsh. Against the backdrop of James I’s new ideas of British unification and empire, Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* and R.A.’s *The Valiant Welshman* showcase the culture’s divided views of the national past and its implications for the contemporary present. Shakespeare’s play, staged by the King’s Men, ultimately endorses James’s version of a pacifist and unified British empire by representing Wales as a primitive and barbaric space, in desperate need of being incorporated fully into the civilized “Britain” of the play. R.A.’s play, by contrast, staged by the Prince of Wales’s Men, presents an ancient version of Wales that is civilized and martially superior—an attractive alternative for the young Prince of Wales, who disdained James’s pacifist policies and saw his Welsh inheritance as a link to an ancient and heroic past that suited his own chivalric and martial interests. These plays highlight the malleability of the Welsh past—it was capable of accommodating the most disparate of political positions.

Chapter four turns to the English perceptions of Welsh religion, arguing that dramatic representations of Welsh religious practices mirror English confusion and anxiety about lingering Celtic and Catholic beliefs in neighboring territories. Amidst contentious debates in the late Elizabethan period about how best to implement the
Protestant faith in Wales, two Welsh characters—Owen Glendower of *1 Henry IV* and Parson Hugh Evans of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—highlight the persistent suspicion of Welsh prophecy and Welsh Catholicism. As the early Stuart dynasty focused on the possibility of a re-united British empire, however, the early Christian history of Wales became a useful mythology for exploring how England might return to its ancient—and supposedly “pure”—Christian roots through a reconnection to the British past. William Rowley’s *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* highlights the persecution of Britain’s earliest and most devout Christians at the hands of the Romans, while demonstrating that these early perils were the foundation for Britain’s continued religious superiority.

For the conclusion of this study, I look beyond the years 1590-1615 in order to highlight the need for continued study of stage Welshness and its cultural resonance. By examining the 1618 production of Ben Jonson’s *For the Honour of Wales*, I demonstrate that Wales as a space and the Welsh as a people continued to be a useful resource for playwrights who were looking to infuse their productions with contemporary political resonance. In setting his antimasque (a short interlude designed to precede the more elaborate masque production) in Wales and populating it with Welsh characters, Jonson provided himself with a meaningful context for commenting on the king’s recent difficulties in Scotland. Moreover, he used the most common tropes of stage Welshness to comically deflect criticism that he had received in his initial dramatic attempt—a masque titled *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*—at pleasing the king with commentary on the situation in Scotland. Jonson’s antimasque shows us not only that stage Welshness continued to evolve, but also that it had become a common and recognizable point of
satire for early modern audiences. His is a text that inspires a look toward the later canon of the early modern theater and its unique approaches to Wales and the Welsh.

In the end, “Staging Cambria” asks readers to look beyond England’s borders in the way that English playwrights—and English audiences—certainly did. By illuminating the history of Wales, and by showing how that history worked its way into the popular culture of England, this dissertation will argue that our understanding of early modern England is simply incomplete without a deep understanding of early modern Wales. Camden’s Britain is a reminder of why England and Wales must remain linked in our understanding of the nation. But his daring to be a “scribler on the stage” is a reminder that we can look for both the link and the understanding in the early modern English theater, a medium that was capable—and clearly willing—to cast new versions of “the residue of Britons” with surprising and telling results.
CHAPTER 1

“PRINCE OF WALES BY CAMBRIA’S FULL CONSENT”:
THE PRINCEDOM OF WALES AS POLITICAL STAGE

George Peele’s Edward I begins like many other chronicle history plays: there is a new king on the throne of England, and trouble looms on the horizon. This formula, coupled with a late-century surge in historiography and antiquarianism that had produced texts like Camden’s Britannia, Stow’s Annals, and Holinshed’s Chronicles, made the chronicle history play wildly successful throughout the 1590s. Peele’s Edward I was no exception; the Lord Admiral’s Men performed the play at least fourteen times in less than a one-year span.¹ For Peele’s Edward, the primary “trouble” looming is the Welsh prince Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, whose refusal to pay tribute at Edward’s coronation ignites a diplomatic crisis that takes Edward out of England and into Wales, a climate “fraught

¹ Philip Henslowe, the famed Elizabethan business man and theater owner, recorded these performance in his Diary between August 29, 1595 and July 9, 1596. In the Diary, the play is listed (with spelling variants) as longshanckes, though we can be as certain as is possible that this was in fact Peele’s play. The first printed edition of Edward I (1593) includes “Longshankes” as the alternate name for Edward I; furthermore, no other extant play is known to be written about Edward I. See W.W. Greg, ed., Henslowe’s Diary (London: A.H. Bullen, 1904), 24-26, 42.
with infectious fogges and mistie dampes.” It is here, in Wales, that the rest of Peele’s English history unfolds—and although the play treats Edward’s early struggles as king against both Scotland and Wales, it is in Wales that Edward reigns victorious at the play’s climax. To secure that victory, Edward stages an event that will, he hopes, convince the Welsh to abandon loyalty to their native prince Llewelyn.

Edward has already begun his war in Wales against Llewelyn when his pregnant wife Queen Elinor arrives, heralded by trumpets and well-outfitted with servants. She is, from the moment she descends her litter, a frustrated traveler: sweaty, faint, and apparently well into her third trimester, Elinor immediately launches into an indictment of her new surroundings: “I tel thee the ground is al too base, / For Elinor to honor with her steps” (ll. 1031-32). Why, she complains, would her husband send for her to come to the “ruder part of wales” when she is so far along in her pregnancy (ll. 1085-87)? The answer, as it turns out, is that Edward has decided that she too will play a role in his plan to win over the native population: “The Welshmen have of long time suters been, / That when the warre of rebels sorts an end, / None might be prince and ruler over them, / But such a one as was their countryman” (ll. 1090-1094). Edward is banking on his defeat of the rebel Llewelyn, the native prince of Wales, and as soon as this end is achieved, a new prince of Wales will be waiting on deck—of English blood, but Welsh born, and thus sufficient to hold the title. The birth of the boy is only half of the battle won, because Edward wants a formal christening held in Wales. Such an event, he knows, will seal the

newborn’s “Welsh” status, and from then on, his son will be known as “Edward of Carnarvon,” and the official Prince of Wales.

Welsh barons who have already pledged their support to Edward arrive on the scene to promise that “the whole countrey” will come to the christening; they have even brought him a Welsh mantle of frieze and assure him that the community of Snowdon will stock the christening with cattle and corn. It will be the perfect home-grown tribute, and Edward warns Elinor not to scoff at her son wearing a Welsh garment: “In good time Madam, he is your own, lappe him as you list, but I promise thee Nell I would not for tenne thousand pounds the countrey should take unkindness at these words” (ll. 1603-6).

The christening that Edward orchestrates is concurrent with the play’s consistent focus on strategy over brute force as a means to defeat the rebels in Wales. The presentation of Edward of Carnarvon, complete with trumpets and procession (and, perhaps, the young prince swaddled in a Welsh mantle, an inspired bit of costuming), is a theatrical event, with a dramatic flourish in which the audience for the christening shouts, “God save Edward of Carnarvan, prince of Wales” (l. 1943). It has been, as the play’s stage directions rightly note, “a showe,” and so before Edward has even eliminated the native prince of Wales, he has effectively replaced him—and all it took was a bit of the theatrical.

Yet in the early 1590s, when Peele’s play debuted,3 there had been no formal installation for an English prince of Wales since 1489, when Henry VII’s eldest son,
Arthur, received the title. Furthermore, though historical evidence supports the assertion that Edward II was, in fact, born in Wales, there is little evidence to suggest that the birth was a calculated move on the part of Edward I. For Peele, the story of Edward I naming Edward II as prince of Wales was an opportunity to showcase a creative exercise in empire-building, a consolidation of power in a principality where a native prince had become too willful for the tastes of the English monarchy. But outside the boundaries of the theater, at a time when the princedom of Wales had faded into obscurity, was this the perceived function of the title “Prince of Wales”?

The answer, put simply, is that the English perception of the princedom of Wales had long been more about form than function. Though the princedom had been established as the inheritance of the monarch’s eldest legitimate son (and thus presumptive heir to the throne) following Edward I’s conquest of Wales in 1284, the title carried little actual governmental responsibility. The marches of Wales, the term used to describe the Welsh shires bordering England, were run largely by powerful “marcher” lords who disdained any interference from the monarch, let alone the monarch-in-training. The shires to the west of the marches, also known as the principality, were meant to be subject to the prince of Wales, yet they maintained a high degree of provincial autonomy. The prince was, in many ways, a figurehead for the English

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monarchy, a fact highlighted by the tradition that the prince of Wales was not born with his title; it was, instead, a title conferred at the time of formal installation. Such an installation afforded the monarchy an opportunity to assert publicly his dominion over his territory to the west.

Yet the degree to which the monarchy utilized the formal installation as a tool to assert power in Wales, as well as the uneven employment of the title throughout the early modern period, indicates that even the form of the princedom was subject to negotiation in the English cultural landscape. The process of installing an heir with the title was re-imagined throughout the Tudor and Stuart reigns as the monarchy adjusted both its dynastic circumstances and its relationship to territories it had long considered as auxiliary to England. In this chapter, I argue that the princedom of Wales provides a useful framework for understanding how early modern England negotiated its perspective of Wales and its inhabitants. By tracing the use of the princedom by both English monarchs and English authors, we can see how the perception of Wales (and the Welsh) was constantly in flux—and how the title itself was, at various periods, used as a stage on which the English could assert their positions on foreign policy, dynastic succession, and the role of Wales in the English empire.

The Rebirth of a Briton Hero? The Tudor Welsh Inheritance

In November 1489, at a ripe three years of age, Arthur Tudor, the eldest son of Henry VII, celebrated his creation as prince of Wales. It was, to say the least, an elaborate display: Arthur progressed into London on a barge outfitted with opulent
decorations; he was accompanied by an impressive number of nobles, as well as heralds, pursuivants, and minstrels. 6 Upon passing Lambeth, the prince’s barge was met by the Spanish ambassadors, along with many Spanish merchants, who, from their small boats, happily cast apples toward Arthur, “all in Rejoyshyng the Princes Comyng.” 7 What follows in John Leland’s brief account of the investiture is little more than a list of the nobles who are, along with Arthur himself, inducted into the order of knighthood by Henry VII. Indeed, the most vivid detail of the account is the mention of the Spanish welcome, which may leave us wondering, what does this display have to do with the princedom of Wales?

In fact, Arthur’s installation had nothing to do with Wales, and everything to do with Spain. As early as 1488, Henry VII had begun negotiating for the eventual marriage of Arthur to the three-year-old daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Catherine of Aragon. 8 By March of the year of Arthur’s investiture, a formal agreement had been reached, and Catherine and Arthur were to marry as soon as they reached canonical age (fourteen years). But with that over a decade away, there was certainly no reason to assume that the marriage was a surety, and the spectacle for the investiture of Arthur was, in many ways, a display aimed at proving that the young Arthur was a suitable candidate

7 Ibid., 250.
for a marriage of such international importance. His installation is proof that the title “prince of Wales” did not necessitate recognition of the Welsh inheritance.

Yet would we not assume that the Welsh inheritance would be of crucial importance for Arthur’s investiture? He was, after all, heir to England’s first Welsh king, and his name certainly conjures up images of the valiant Briton hero, King Arthur. One might expect, for example, a mention of the red dragon of Wales, or a reference to Arthur’s Briton namesake.9 Were these images not, after all, part of Henry VII’s propaganda machine? Ralph A. Griffiths and Roger S. Thomas certainly think so, and claim Henry VII long held “a personal attachment to the land of his ancestors and a shrewd awareness of the political, propagandist, and dynastic value of the British element.”10 Such an attachment, they argue, is evidenced by Henry’s use of the red dragon as his standard, as well as civic pageantry that recognizes Henry VII as the descendant of the last British king before the Saxon takeover, Cadwaladr.

Sydney Anglo, however, views the evidence rather differently, arguing that the Welsh red dragon and the descent from Cadwaladr were of little interest to the first Tudor king. The Tudor connection to Wales, he argues, was of more interest to Welsh authors rather than English; furthermore, genealogy connecting the English monarch to the long

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9 Such a reference to King Arthur appears in a reception for Prince Arthur held in Coventry in 1498: see Mary Dormer Harris, *The Coventry Leet Book* (London: EETS, 1907-1913), 589-92. An actor in the role of King Arthur greets the prince, but, as Sydney Anglo rightly notes in his book, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), “this King Arthur does not claim that the Prince is descended from his own line—or even from a British line” (36).

line of British kings had been a trend even in the reign of Edward IV.\textsuperscript{11} Indeed Henry VII \textit{could} make substantial claims to an ancient Welsh ancestry. This certainly would have been of interest to “Welsh patriots” of the day, but as Anglo crassly puts it, among the English, “who cared?”\textsuperscript{12}

Although Griffiths/Thomas and Anglo are treating the same materials, they come to vastly different conclusions about what these materials mean to the larger propagandistic project of the Tudors. Griffiths and Thomas’s book, an analysis of how the Tudor dynasty fashioned itself in the early years, is throughout concerned with the role of Wales in the Tudor rise to power.\textsuperscript{13} As such, it suits them well to portray Henry as a patriot who maintained a sense of Welsh identity within the English monarchy. Anglo, however, wants to emphasize that images of Tudor kingship (especially in pageantry) were more concerned with propaganda than patriotism, thus he sees the Welsh material as of minimal importance. The seemingly intractable divide between Griffiths/Thomas and Anglo demonstrates a larger trend in scholarship about the Tudor Welsh connection: the impulse to identify it as either \textit{extremely} important or \textit{extremely} unimportant. But the Welsh tradition is, I argue, far more complex than that, in the eyes of even the earliest Tudor monarch. Cadwaladr may not have made an appearance in Arthur’s installation, but he would make appearances elsewhere. The visibility of the Welsh connection waxed and waned according to the venue.

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\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Images of Tudor Kingship} (London: Seaby, 1992), 43-45.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{13} See, for example, chapter one of their study, “Servants of Welsh Princes,” which traces the earliest Tudors back to the 1200s.
We would do well to rehearse the specifics of that connection: though the Tudors are widely recognized as being Welsh, they are often identified as such with only a vague understanding of the ancestry. The Welsh Tudors were introduced to the English royal bloodline in nothing short of a scandal: around 1427, five years after the death Henry V, parliament decreed that any marriage with the dowager queen, Katherine of Valois, would require special approval. Such an act would, parliament hoped, ensure that if Katherine were to remarry, it would be an advantageous political match. Yet somewhere around 1431-32, Katherine had indeed married, without special permission, and completely in secret. Her new husband was Owen Tudor, a Welsh gentleman whose family name was all but unknown in England.\(^{14}\) Though there was likely much outrage from the very few that even knew of the marriage, Owen and Katherine’s quick production of at least four children ensured that no legal action would be taken against Owen for disobeying the parliamentary decree—after all, declaring the marriage invalid would mean that the dowager queen would have illegitimate children.\(^ {15}\)

The eldest son of their union, Edmund Tudor, eventually secured a marriage that would, in the end, make Henry VII’s reign possible. Henry VI, the eldest son of Henry V

\(^{14}\) For further analysis of Owen Tudor’s station at the time of his meeting Katherine of Valois, see Griffiths and Thomas, *The Making of the Tudor Dynasty*, 29-32. Griffiths and Thomas are careful to point out that much of the accepted knowledge of Owen and Katherine’s marriage is derived from romantic myths, ones that, for example, have Owen as a strapping young servant in her chamber whom she could not resist. The myths may well have made a stage appearance in the late 16\(^{th}\) century as well: Henslowe makes record of a play called “owen teder” in his *Diary* (see Greg, *Diary*, 117).

\(^{15}\) English outrage at Owen’s transgression eventually came to fruition: when Katherine died in 1437, he was called to the King’s Council, a summons he avoided for some time. He was later arrested and confined to Newgate prison, but was in time released and pardoned.
and Katherine, held an apparent affection for his half-siblings, and ennobled Edmund, along with Jasper, the second-eldest son of the Owen-Katherine marriage. Edmund’s title, the earl of Richmond, was prominent enough to warrant a marriage with one of the most powerful young women in England: Margaret Beaufort. She could boast a connection to the royal line through her great-grandfather, John of Gaunt, the father of Henry IV, and perhaps more importantly, she had a stunning inheritance. The marriage between Edmund and Margaret was short-lived; Edmund had already died by the time their only son Henry was born in 1457. All told, then, Henry Tudor was born with only one-quarter Welsh blood—that of his grandfather, Owen.

The Tudor connection with the Welsh, however, went far beyond family ties. Too often, analysis of the Tudor-Welsh connection focuses solely on the bloodline, ignoring formative developments within Wales that defined Henry Tudor’s young life and his kingship. The bulk of evidence regarding Henry’s youth comes from his exile in Brittany, to which he fled in 1471 during an outbreak of the Wars of the Roses; his experience at the Burgundian court had a demonstrable effect on his own court. Yet we would be remiss if we ignored that the first fourteen years of Henry’s life were spent in Wales, as a ward to William Herbert. At Herbert’s Raglan Castle, he was raised by Herbert’s wife, Anne Devereux, and alongside their children. And perhaps even more

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16 The most recent and well-developed study of the early modern understanding of the Welsh influence on English culture is Schwyzer’s Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales, which was considered in the introduction to this dissertation. Schwyzer’s discussion of the Tudors, however, is decidedly focused on the bloodline and its relationship to the Welsh prophetic tradition, an issue that will be treated later in this chapter, as well as in chapter 4.

crucial for understanding the formative years of Henry’s life, it was in his lengthy exile that Henry was under the constant care of his uncle Jasper, earl of Pembroke: the stalwart Lancastrian supporter and a national hero among the Welsh.\textsuperscript{18} Even when in Brittany, the Welsh influence in Henry’s life remained constant.

Perhaps most important, however, is the Welsh dimension to the Wars of the Roses. In his landmark study of the conflict, H.T. Evans argues that Henry’s victory at Bosworth Field was possible largely because “the Tudors made Wales their special sphere of action.”\textsuperscript{19} Prior to his landing at Milford Haven, Henry—now grown and already prone to calling himself King of England—addressed a letter to John ap Meredith, a Welsh gentleman who could rouse significant support for Henry:

\begin{quote}
Right trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. And whereas it is so that, through the help of Almighty God, the assistance of our loving and true subjects, and the great confidence that we have to the nobles and commons of this our principality of Wales, we be entered into the same, purposing, by the help above rehearsed, in all haste possible to descend into our realm of England, not only for the adoption of the crown, unto us of right appertaining, but also for the oppression of the tyrant, Richard late duke of Gloucester, usurper of our said right; and moreover to reduce as well our said realm of England into its ancient estate, honour, and property and prosperity, as this our said principality of Wales and the people of the same to their erst liberties, delivering them of such miserable servitude as they have piteously long stood in. . .\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{18} Jasper Tudor’s influence on the Wars of the Roses and in Wales is tracked with considerable detail throughout H.T. Evans’s \textit{Wales and the Wars of the Roses} (2nd ed. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1995).
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Wales and the Wars of the Roses}, 6. Evans’s study treats the Welsh involvement with the War of the Roses from its inception; for the purposes of this study, however, I have focused my analysis on the Tudor appeal to Wales that occurred just prior to the battle at Bosworth.
\textsuperscript{20} Quoted in Evans, \textit{Wales and the Wars of the Roses}, 131. This letter is also re-printed in Griffiths and Thomas, \textit{The Making of the Tudor Dynasty}, 139. Griffiths and Thomas speculate that Henry sent similar letters to a wide range of Welsh gentry in hopes of making the passage through Wales as uncomplicated as possible.
The letter is striking not just for Henry’s bold use of the royal possessive. He deftly appeals to Welsh patriotism with a promise that the principality will enjoy benefits long denied to them by past English rulers. Indeed, it is this letter that most clearly demonstrates Henry’s awareness of the importance of Welsh support for his victory over Richard. Scholars who argue that Henry Tudor held a special attachment for the Welsh throughout his reign find the seeds of that attachment in this letter.

Moreover, once Henry did become king, there is evidence to suggest that he paid tribute to his Welsh ancestry with subtle recognitions. At his coronation, he created a new pursuivant, *Rougedragon*, a nod to the red dragon standard carried by Cadwaladr.21 Less flattering, perhaps, but still in recognition of the ancient Briton past, are the slightly barbaric foliage-clad, club-wielding characters—meant to represent ancient Britons—who appear in William Cornish’s elaborate pageant for the celebration of Richmond Palace.22 At the first Tudor tilts, William of Devonshire enters the tournament enclosed in a pageant car designed to resemble a red dragon.23 Ralph Griffiths and Roger Thomas note several other indications of Henry’s affections for his Welsh countrymen: he was known to celebrate Saint David’s Day and often had Welsh minstrels perform at court.

21 The red dragon standard was also carried by the Welsh rebel Owain Glyndwr, and later by Jasper Tudor (who could claim descent from Owain Glyndwr through the line of his father, Owen Tudor). For a detailed analysis of the institution of the *Rougedragon* pursuivant (and of the account of Henry’s coronation) see Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, 13-14.
23 Perhaps to drive home the point, the pageant car is led by a “wildman,” one likely quite similar to those that appeared in Cornish’s pageant for Richmond Palace. See Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour*, 127.
These gestures were, Griffiths and Thomas state confidently, “no affectation or public pose” but “genuine sentiment.”

At first glance, the confidence of Griffiths and Thomas seems warranted; as I have shown, Henry’s connection to Wales was one that transcended a simple blood relation to a Welshman, and it is tempting to assume that such a connection was a fundamental part of Henry’s identity as a man and as a monarch. But what was the sum total of Henry’s exploitation of his Welsh roots? Even Griffiths and Thomas must concede that “Henry acknowledged his Welsh relatives, but on the whole modestly and privately.”

Does a red dragon pursuivant and some private tributes to Welsh ancestry add up to a foregone conclusion that Henry was interested in using his Welsh roots for propagandistic purposes? For Sydney Anglo, such symbols mean very little: in fact, he argues that the paper trail of pageantry and commissioned genealogies demonstrates a declining interest in a Tudor-Welsh connection. Though he is right to note that the Welsh symbolism in early Tudor pageantry was less than enthusiastic, his quick dismissal of the Tudor interest in the Welsh connection is flawed. Just as Griffiths and Thomas too readily assume Henry’s devotion to his Welsh ancestry, Anglo too readily assumes that the lack of enthusiasm for the Welsh ancestry was the equivalent of disinterest. With careful consideration of the complexity of Henry VII’s relationship with Wales, however, it becomes apparent that Henry’s exploitation of that relationship was far from

24 The Making of the Tudor Dynasty, 195.
25 Ibid., 192.
26 Images of Tudor Kingship, 49.
straightforward. What Anglo reads as disinterest may well have been a calculated decision to keep Welsh references to a minimum in Henry’s royal propaganda.

The first and most obvious reason for a suppression of Henry’s Welsh ancestry was that it was plainly irrelevant to his succession as an English monarch: although the marriage of Katherine and Owen has, in subsequent years, become the stuff of romance legend, their offspring had no real claim to the throne. Though Katherine was the widow of the much-revered Henry V, she was a French princess with no English royal blood. The claim that Henry Tudor could make was through his English ancestry; his mother, Margaret Beaufort, was a descendant of John of Gaunt, son of Edward III and father of Henry IV. This bloodline connected him firmly with the Lancastrian dynasty, grounding him within the central conflict in England at the time. Thus his eventual marriage to Elizabeth of York would seal his reputation as the English monarch who put an end to the Wars of the Roses. A Welsh pedigree might have been a novelty, but it certainly was no asset in the political sphere.

Yet the Wars of the Roses ended only after what many now think of as the triumphant march through Wales, following Henry’s landing at Milford Haven. Certainly the Welsh role in such a decisive battle would provide reason for Henry to recognize a Welsh connection even if his familial ties did not. But hindsight’s

It should be noted that at best, Henry’s claim to the throne through Margaret’s line was vulnerable; at worst, it was completely unfounded. The Beaufort line derived from John of Gaunt’s third marriage, to Catherine Swynford; however, she bore his children prior to their marriage. The Beaufort children were not legitimised until 1397, when an act of Parliament recognized them as John of Gaunt’s heirs. Such recognition would, theoretically, put the Beaufort children in a line of succession, but in 1407 Henry IV formally declared that the Beaufort line could never succeed to the throne. See Griffiths and Thomas, The Making of the Tudor Dynasty, 35-36.
perspective on the march through Wales has, perhaps, overestimated just how triumphant 
Henry’s progress was.²⁸ Prior to his landing at Milford Haven, Henry had already 
learned that several of the most powerful Welsh gentry were remaining loyal to Richard; 
moreover, Rhys ap Thomas, a Welsh soldier with considerable holdings in Wales, had 
long been negotiating with both Richard and Henry. In order for Henry to continue 
successfully through Wales, he needed Thomas’s support, and Thomas held out until 
Henry promised him viceregal powers in Wales once he defeated Richard.²⁹ He was 
further held up at Shrewsbury, where the gates on the Welsh side were shut in 
anticipation of his arrival. It was two more days until Henry could pass through. So 
although the march through Wales was largely successful, Henry did not receive the 
rousing welcome of his Welsh countrymen; indeed, his trip through the country might 
have been a reminder of just how important Wales was to his rise to power.

Yet recognition of such a debt of gratitude toward Wales would, presumably, 
undermine Henry’s project to present himself as an English monarch who had 
successfully put an end to an English conflict. The implications of the march through 
Wales and the win at Bosworth would soon be subverted in favor of royal propaganda 
that emphasized Henry’s promise to marry Elizabeth of York, a union that would literally

²⁸ See Evans, Wales and the Wars of the Roses, chapter 10 (“Henry, Earl of Richmond 
and the March to Bosworth”), for a detailed analysis of the militaristic dimensions of 
Henry’s progress through Wales.
²⁹ Welsh tradition has remembered Thomas as an even more important figure in the battle 
at Bosworth: according to Griffiths, at least one Welsh poet names Thomas as the man 
Dictionary of National Biography Online. 
join the warring houses. Moreover, Henry’s pledge to return Wales to its original liberties was an outlandish one. We might expect such a pledge from a Welsh patriot, but to an English monarch, an independent Wales would mean less money in land grants and less security from invading forces that might find a way into England through Wales. The pledge for freedom would have to be forgotten—yet another reason to show his appreciation through royal appointments for powerful Welsh gentry rather than public displays of a Tudor-Welsh connection.  

And there may be other prejudices that kept Henry from being too open about his Welsh background. In a well-rehearsed anecdote of sixteenth-century chroniclers, Richard III delivers a rousing address to the troops assembled at Bosworth. It is a chance for Richard to rally his army against the enemy, and he does so by reminding his troops just who Henry is not:

I doubt not but you know, how the devyl continuall enemy to human nature, disturber of concorde and sower of sedicion, hathe entred into the harte of an unknowen Weleshman . . . Ye se also, what a no[m]ber of beggarly Britons (& faynt harted Frenchmen) be with hym arrived to distroy us our wyfes and childre[n] . . . And to begyn with the erle of Richmond Captain of thys rebellyon, he is a Welsh mylksoppe, a man of small courage and of lesse experience in marcyall actes and feates of war . . .

There is, throughout Richard’s oration, a language of difference. He more than once emphasizes not just that Henry Tudor is unknown, but that he, like the “faynt harted

30 Rhys ap Thomas stands as a useful example here: Henry remained close with Thomas throughout his reign, inducting him into the Order of the Garter in 1509, and Thomas continued to be a powerful force well into the reign of Henry VIII.

31 This account appears in Edward Hall’s The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Families of Lancastre and York (London: 1550), sigs. xxx’-xxxi’r. A corresponding account can be found in Raphael Holinshed, The Third Volume of the Chronicles (London: 1586), 756 (sig. Dddd 4’).
Frenchmen,” is a foreigner, a Welshman unfit to challenge Richard’s English throne. If Richard saw fit to rally his forces with a slight at Henry’s ethnic background (or, perhaps, if sixteenth-century chroniclers saw fit to couch the battle in such terms), what might this suggest about Henry’s relationship to his Welsh identity? There were good reasons for Henry to want to be identified as an *English* king, not the least of which being that in England, he was, in many ways, “an unknown Weleshman.”

Such was the complexity of the relationship between Henry Tudor and his Welsh ties: it was a connection with many dimensions, and one that was of great, albeit intermittent, importance to Henry in his rise to power. It was also, however, a liability of sorts, and so we should be careful to conclude either that Henry was entirely enthusiastic or entirely dismissive of the debt he owed to Wales. In many ways, his choice of the red dragon pursuivant was an ideal demonstration of this ambiguity: as the standard of Cadwaladr and of Henry’s distant kinsman Owain Glyndwr, it was indeed a recognizable sign of many Welsh traditions. But it was also easily recognizable as a Roman and Saxon standard, and had also been widely used by other *English* monarchs, including Richard I, John, Henry III, and Edward III. The red dragon standard would allow Henry to recognize a double ancestry—a symbol flexible enough to appeal to those on both sides of the Severn.

Assessing Welsh symbols during the reign of Henry VII is most effective when such flexibility is considered. If we fail to consider the venue in which these symbols are disseminated, we run the risk of either under or overestimating their importance to

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Henry’s propaganda campaign. The oft-cited Worcestershire pageant of 1486, part of Henry VII’s first provincial progress, provides a useful example. Henry is greeted in Worcestershire, a county in the Welsh marches, with extensive flattery; the final speaker in the pageant, Janitor, compares Henry to various Biblical figures that delivered their people from tyranny. But it is Janitor’s final two comparisons that have drawn the attention of scholars:

Welcome Arture the very Britan kyng
Welcome defence to England as A walle
Cadwaladers blodde lynyally descending
Longe hath bee towlde of suche A prince coming
Werfor frendez If that I shalnot lye.
This same is the fullfiller of the profecye.  

Here, Henry is aligned with the ancient Welsh prophecy that promised a restoration of the British throne to a descendant of Cadwaladr, the last Briton king. Griffiths and Thomas, as we might expect, cite the pageant as proof that “Descent from Cadwaladr was a central element of English royal propaganda during the reign . . . It warmed the hearts of Welshmen and it helped to persuade others that Henry had venerable dynastic right on his side.” And in spite of his rigorous denial that the Welsh prophetic tradition had any substantive effect on Tudor propaganda, even Anglo admits that the pageant reveals “the historical and emotional implications” of the ancient British history.

Both scholars are quick to recognize that Worcester had something to prove with their pageant. Because Worcester had been, just a few weeks prior to the pageant, the

34 The Making of the Tudor Dynasty, 189.
site of an ill-conceived attempt at rebellion against the king, the show of loyalty to Henry needed to be convincing. The reference to Cadwaladr may, at first glance, suggest that a mention of the British inheritance would have been a pleasing compliment to Henry. But civic authorities—not royal authorities—organized the pageant, and so we should resist the temptation to identify the pageant as pure royal propaganda. In Worcestershire, a border territory close to the banks of the Severn, the British inheritance was a legend that held far deeper meaning than it did in England’s centers of power. As one scholar notes, “One can imagine English auditors listening to Janitor’s speech of welcome with mounting unease, from the moment Henry is identified as King Arthur, the ‘Britan [Briton, or Britons’] kyng.’”

The official line on the Welsh prophetic tradition was decidedly less committed. In his *Anglica Historia*, Polydore Vergil gives the Cadwaladr prophecy only two sentences, and one of those sentences is laden with suspicion: “This prophecy, *they say*, came true in Henry, who traced his ancestry back to Cadwallader.”

With an understanding of the real circumstances of Henry Tudor’s Welsh connection, and with a consideration of how that connection could be simultaneously an asset and a liability, it should come as no surprise that Arthur Tudor’s investiture as prince of Wales avoided pandering to the British descent. The order of the day was to

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35 Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory*, 23. Schwyzer’s assessment of the Worcestershire pageant and the Cadwaladr prophecy more generally is highly nuanced, and he too notes that the English understanding and employment of Welsh history was conflicted at best. For a full discussion of the Welsh prophetic tradition, see *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory*, 13-31, as well as chapter four of this study, esp. 177-81.

36 Polydore Vergil, *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil, A.D. 1485-1537*, ed. and trans. Denys Hay (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1950), 5 (emphasis added). Polydore Vergil is often identified solely with the royal propaganda of Henry VIII; however, his writing of the English history was begun in the reign of Henry VII.
highlight the Spanish marriage and prove Henry’s skill in foreign policy; in fact, when Polydore Vergil recounts the installation, he does so only in the context of the marriage negotiations. By all accounts, the installation was a successful exercise of royal power: Arthur and Catherine were married in 1499. They made their first home together in the Welsh marches, at Ludlow castle, where Arthur was to head up the council of the Marches, but he died there less than a year later. Henry VIII was invested with the princedom of Wales shortly thereafter, but without the lavish celebration that had accompanied Arthur’s investiture—and in the eight years Prince Henry held the title before becoming king, he was never allowed to travel to his principality, perhaps owing to Henry VII’s fear of losing another son.

The above analysis demonstrates that despite Henry Tudor’s substantial connections to Wales, the actual title “prince of Wales” during his reign was little more than a vehicle for what would become a protracted marriage negotiation. The principality itself was governed without the input of the prince, and the installation was void of references to the Welsh connection. The title during Henry VII’s reign reflects the ambivalence toward the Tudor Welsh heritage. Though it was this heritage that allowed

38 The 1499 marriage ceremony was by proxy: Catherine did not actually arrive in England until 1501. The pageantry in celebration of the marriage and of her arrival has been extensively treated in Kipling, *The Triumph of Honor*, 72-95.
39 Arthur’s responsibilities in the Council of the Marches were somewhat diffuse: because he was just a child when installed, Jasper Tudor performed the administrative duties of the council until his death in 1495. Following Jasper’s death, Bishop Smith of Lincoln took over, and it is likely that Arthur’s time in the principality was spent observing the workings of the council, acquiring political experience for his future. See Alexander, *The First of the Tudors*, 126.
40 For a discussion of Henry VII’s paranoia about the safety of Prince Henry, see Alexander, *The First of the Tudors*, 196.
Henry to claim connection to an ancient British prophecy, as well as descent from a bloodline of antiquity, it nevertheless failed to identify him as an English monarch capable of asserting power on the world stage—and this was the claim he needed to gain support. This analysis also shows that the title itself was by no means a fixed entity. At a time when a princedom with a seat in Wales could mean so much to a royal family with Welsh ties, it turned out to mean very little. As we shall see, changes in the meaning of the title were not always limited to a change in monarch: in the reign of Henry VIII, such changes occur with astounding frequency. The more pronounced ambiguity in regards to the princedom during Henry VIII’s reign was to have a lasting effect on how the English culture understood the title and its purpose.

Re-writing History: The Act of Union and the Erasure of the Princedom of Wales

Henry VIII had three children that survived past infancy, and not one was formally installed as prince (or princess) of Wales. Yet Henry did, in fact, make use of the princedom of Wales with regard to his three children. However, his use of the title was by no means an exercise in foreign policy, as it was in the case of Henry VII’s installation of young Arthur Tudor. For Henry VIII, the use of the title was an exercise of power in both England and Wales. Naming a child prince(ss) of Wales, even without a formal installation, was an easy way to make apparent his ever-changing plans for dynastic succession, and it also sent clear messages to Wales at a time when Henry was making moves to change the status of the principality. The use of the title during Henry’s
reign was to have long-ranging effects on how English culture was to view the principedom throughout the remaining years of the Tudor dynasty.

Sixteen years into Henry VIII’s reign, the prospects for succession were less than ideal: Henry’s wife Catherine of Aragon (who had originally been married to Henry’s elder brother, Arthur) had given birth to Mary Tudor in 1516, but by 1525, Catherine was clearly infertile, and so a legitimate male heir would be an impossibility. Henry might, of course, name his illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, heir to the throne, but that prospect was only a pale imitation of what Henry really wanted: a *legitimate* male heir. The year 1525, then, was one in which Henry would make a calculated move regarding dynastic succession: he would bestow titles on his two children, each one a subtle statement about his intentions for their future. For his illegitimate son, Henry offered the titles duke of Richmond and Somerset. The young Henry was sent to the north of England with a significant household and with the endowments from his land rights, allowing for an extremely comfortable lifestyle. Granting the young Henry such a high-profile title raised suspicions that Henry VIII would eventually make his bastard son heir to the throne—and this, apparently, infuriated Catherine, whose legitimate daughter Mary was to be offered a far less attractive deal.41

In 1525, Henry made a move that no English monarch before him had ever made: he sent young Mary to Ludlow with the title “princess of Wales.” This was, for all intents and purposes, a title that completely lacked meaning. The principedom of Wales

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41 See David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 37. My discussion of Mary’s trip to Wales, and Henry’s reasons for sending her, has been greatly influenced by Loades’s work.
was reserved for the male heir to the throne of England, and the title “princess of Wales” was applied only to the wife of the heir, and never to the daughter of the monarch. Moreover, Henry had made no formal directives indicating that the princedom would now be available for issue to a female heir; instead, he simply begins referring to her with this title in documents relating to her dispatch. The application of this title may at first strike us complimentary to Mary. After all, the princedom of Wales was the established patrimony for the heir, and the princedom’s seat at Ludlow had not been occupied since Arthur Tudor, the great hope of Henry VII, was sent there in 1499. It would be reasonable to suspect that Henry was proclaiming Mary his rightful heir—why else would he go through the trouble of re-inventing the princedom for a female?

Completely disregarding the tradition of the title turned out to accomplish quite a few things for Henry VIII, none of which would secure Mary’s succession as heir to the throne. By foregoing any type of formal installation, Henry could hint at the possibility that Mary might become heir (especially if no other options were to become evident), but he had not committed to recognizing her in any official sense. Sending Mary to Wales also had several practical uses as well; not only did this arrangement distance Mary from her mother, from whom Henry was seeking divorce, it also took Mary off the marriage market until Henry could decide on her place in the line of succession.\footnote{Loades, Mary Tudor, 36-37. Loades notes that the marriage market had been particularly tumultuous already for Mary; negotiations with the French heir had fallen apart not long before Mary was dispatched to Ludlow.}

Perhaps most interesting of the practical uses for this incarnation of the princedom is the official reason Henry cited for sending Mary to Wales. Claiming that the
principality had slowly devolved into lawlessness, “the due administration of Justice by means of sundry contrarieties hitherto hindered and neglected,” Henry promised that a re-established royal presence in Wales would help restore equilibrium to the principality. This official line, however, was more of a pre-emptive strike in the face of a major policy change Henry was about to impose in Wales. At the same time Henry dispatched Mary to Wales, he sent with her a new class of bureaucrats whose job it was to begin undermining the authority of powerful Welsh families. The project got underway by striking a blow to a powerful Welsh family who had been instrumental in Henry VII’s victory at Bosworth. Rhys ap Gruffydd, grandson to Henry VII’s trusted advisor Rhys ap Thomas, stood to inherit a significant annuity from lands in Wales as well as the title of justiciar of South Wales when his grandfather died in the spring of 1525. Yet Henry VIII eliminated Rhys ap Gruffydd from the Welsh political arena, granting the titles he stood to inherit to the Englishman Walter Devereux, who would also be steward in Mary’s household at Ludlow. The shift in governance of Wales and of the marches from powerful Welsh gentry to English bureaucrats was a sign of things to come; soon enough the marches would be eliminated entirely as Henry continued his efforts to consolidate English power in the region.

43 Quoted in Loades, *Mary Tudor*, 36.
44 Davies, *A History of Wales*, 223. Rhys ap Gruffydd’s fortunes were to decline even more rapidly in the coming years: he was vocal in his discontent about being passed over. He was finally executed in 1531, at a time when Henry was desperate to assert his royal supremacy (his divorce from Catherine loomed large on the horizon). One of the charges made against Rhys was that he had begun using his family name to try and assert a native claim to the principedom of Wales.
Mary stayed in Ludlow, in the marches of Wales, for two years; in that time, she had nothing to do with the actual governance of Wales, which was, of course, the expressed purpose of the prince’s seat there. Instead, she continued her education at the hands of tutors, traveled to various households throughout the marches, and went on progress. By the time of her return to England, she would no longer be welcome to her father: Henry had already begun planning to have his marriage to Catherine annulled and had developed a relationship with his future wife, Anne Boleyn. The race was on for a legitimate, male monarch—so it was a good thing Mary was no official princess of Wales, because that title, Henry hoped, would eventually go elsewhere. That no one ever questioned the complete incongruity of calling Mary “princess of Wales” is demonstrative of the title’s malleability in the period. Mary Tudor’s brief tenure at Ludlow castle is a fitting example of how the princedom could be used as a showpiece for the monarch. Far from being a tradition revered by the second of the Tudor monarchs, it was instead a holding pattern for a child whose dynastic future was uncertain.

Unfortunately for Henry, succession was to be an uncertain issue throughout the reign. Moreover, Henry’s decision to break with Rome, as well as his slight to the Spanish Catherine and their daughter Mary, meant that foreign relations were deteriorating rapidly. Furthermore, Anne Boleyn had only given him a daughter, and Henry was anxious to try again with a new wife. Amidst all this domestic turmoil, Henry

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45 This is very little substantive evidence about the details of her progresses, but at least one record shows that substantial preparation was made for her coming: see R.W. Ingram, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Coventry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 125.
issued the 1536 Act of Union, which formally incorporated Wales into England. Historians have long been conflicted about the importance of the act; however, all concede that the act itself had far more to do with Henry’s larger project in asserting royal supremacy than it did with any danger in Wales. At a time when Henry needed to consolidate power within the realm and minimize the influence of powerful aristocrats who may object to his policies, Wales provided a convenient locus for the assertion of monarchical power.

Historians have produced an abundance of scholarship on the wide-ranging effects of the act in the sixteenth century and beyond; for our purposes here it is necessary only to note the central policies asserted by the Act of Union. First, it instituted a system of uniform governance in Wales—there would no longer be a distinction between the principality and the marches, where a powerful gentry class had long held considerable dominance and independence. It also appointed justices of the peace for counties in Wales, made Welshmen subject to English laws, and abolished the use of Welsh language in any official capacity. But an easy-to-overlook side effect of

46 For a discussion of the variant views of historians regarding the Act of Union, see Peter Roberts, “The ‘Act of Union’ in Welsh History,” Transactions of the Society of Cymmrodorion (1974): 49-51. The “dangers” of Wales had been addressed violently since at least 1534, when Bishop Rowland Lee was appointed president of the council of Wales; his “reign of terror” included public hangings for minor crimes, and in 1538 Lee claimed to have cured “even ‘the wildest parts of Wales’” (Davies, A History of Wales, 230).

47 The abolition of Welsh language in official correspondence has been an issue of great debate among postcolonial scholars. Some, like Richard Wyn Jones, have argued that the “linguistic homogenization” in Wales was not the aggressively colonial hegemony that it may at first seem, especially since “much of the most sustained pressure…emanated from amongst the Welsh themselves rather than reflecting state fiat” (See “The Colonial Legacy in Welsh Politics,” in Aaron and Williams, Postcolonial Wales, 29). Others, like
the act was that it had the potential to abolish the princedom of Wales: because Wales was now internally unified, with no division between the marches (where the prince’s seat was located) and the principality (over which the prince exercised dominion), and because Wales was now considered part of England, there was simply no cause for a separate princedom over which an heir could try his hand at governance.

However, scholars who have carefully analyzed the act and its subsequent addendums have demonstrated that the act itself was masterful in its subtle revision of history and its allowances for future modifications. Indeed, in a memorable stroke of reader manipulation, the act goes so far as to suggest that the changes included are nothing more than an expression of what has always been a reality:

> Albeit the Dominion Principality and Country of **Wales** justly and righteously is, and ever hath been incorporated and annexed united and subject to and under the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as a very Member and Joint of the same, whereof the King’s most Royal Majesty of Meer Droit, and very Right, is very Head King Lord and ruler; yet notwithstanding . . . some rude and ignorant People have made Distinction and Diversity between the King’s Subjects of this Realm, and the Subjects of the said Dominion and Principality of **Wales** . . .

As Peter Roberts has noted, the act is framed as a confirmation of unity, not a creation of it; furthermore, it glosses over the complex history of annexation and of the marcher

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Dylan Phillips, have connected the efforts to preserve the Welsh language with larger movements to preserve Welsh independence. The Act of Union, he argues, “completely ostracized” Welsh, and “added to the enforced inferior status of Welsh”; from this point forward, the Welsh would have to work to retain their language as a marker of their unique national culture. See “The Welsh Language in Postcolonial Wales,” in Aaron and Williams, *Postcolonial Wales*, 106.

lordships. It also, if one looks carefully enough, makes it possible for a future heir to the English throne to “enjoy more comprehensive and coherent jurisdiction than any past prince”.

Provided alway, That Lands and Tenements and Hereditaments lying in the said Country and Dominion of Wales, which have been used Time out of Mind, by the laudable customs of the said Country, to be departed and departable among Issues and Heirs Males, shall still so continue and be used in like Form, Fashion, and Condition, as if this Act had never been had nor made; any Thing in this Act to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

It was a policy suited to the overarching theme of Henry VIII’s relationship with Wales. Wales was a land of opportunity, and like the diversified use of the princedom, “the ‘Union with England’ was therefore a very provisional one which could be altered to suit changing dynastic circumstances.”

So the Act of Union was, finally, not final, and plans circa 1540-1541 suggest that Henry had some interest in reviving the principality so that he could install his first legitimate son, Edward, to the princedom. That installation, however, never occurred—Edward was crowned king at only ten years of age. And although a viable princedom stood waiting, there would be no one to take the title for 73 years: Edward died young,

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51 Bowen, Statutes of Wales, 92.
Mary Tudor produced no children in her union with Philip of Spain, and the last of the Tudor monarchs, Elizabeth I, famously remained unmarried and childless. The princedom was, undoubtedly, poised for obscurity for the remainder of the Tudor dynasty.

But perhaps taking their cues from English monarchs who had long manipulated the princedom for their own agendas, Elizabethan writers who sought an outlet for exploring the English historical tradition resurrected the title in order to provide subtle commentary on contemporary politics. David Powel (1549-1598) was a historian with one such agenda to push. Born to Welsh parents, each with a far-reaching pedigree, Powel attended Oxford University, and, like many of his Welsh countrymen, finished his education at Jesus College, Oxford (founded 1571). His training as a Church of England clergyman meant that he was deeply committed to the Protestant cause, but his patriotic fervor meant that he spent much of his life working on projects that would highlight the importance of Welsh culture in English history. His most famous publication, *The Historie of Cambria, now called Wales*, is Powel’s effort at chronicling the history of those British kings who ruled after Cadwaladr. Powel’s role in the text lies somewhere between author and editor: as he explains in his prefatory material, the bulk of his material derives from Humphrey Llwyd’s *Cronica Walliae*, but he claims to have done

54 Powel claims that Llwyd’s source is the *Brut y Tywysogion*, a chronicle of Welsh princes attributed to the 12th-century monk, Caradoc of Llancarfan. However, Llwyd never names his source directly in the *Cronica Walliae*; he only acknowledges “the Welsh Chronicler” or “my Welshe author.” For a detailed analysis of Llwyd’s source materials, as well as a comparison between the texts of Llwyd and Powel, see the invaluable edition of *Cronica Walliae*, edited by Ieuan M. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), esp. pp. 16-38.
a considerable amount of research on his own, citing the work of, among others, Gildas, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Polydore Vergil, and John Bale.\textsuperscript{55} Despite the derivative nature of *The Historie of Cambria*, Powel is careful to make his voice heard, inserting a preface to the reader that explains his intention to establish a Welsh history that will rival English histories, which were being produced in abundance:

. . . I see the politike and martiall actes of all other inhabitants of this Iland, in the time of their government to be set out to the uttermost, and that by divers and sundrie writers: and the whole doings and government of the Brytaines the first inhabitants of the land, who continued their rule longer than anie other nation, to be nothing spoken or nor regarded of anie, especialie sithence the reigne of Cadwalader, having so manie monuments of antiquitie to declare and testifie the same, if anie would take the paines to open and discover them to the vew of the world. (¶v\textsuperscript{v}–¶vi\textsuperscript{r})

Throughout his preface to the reader, Powel is preoccupied with the negative reputation the Welsh have developed as a result of misrepresentation in English chronicles. The “common Chronicles” that have treated Welsh history have done so only by detailing the efforts of English monarchs who have had to subdue what the chroniclers describe as “the rebellious attempts, the proud stomachs, the presumptuous pride, stirre, trouble, and rebellion of the fierce, unquiet, craking, fickle, and unconstant Welshmen” (¶vi\textsuperscript{r}).

Powel argues that these chronicles have indicted the Welsh without examining “the cause and circumstances” of their open rebellions. While the English chronicles have constructed the Welsh as reckless warmongers, Powel constructs them as patriots who were merely defending their sovereignty as a nation:

\textsuperscript{55} Powel, *The Historie of Cambria, Now Called Wales* (London: 1584), ¶vii\textsuperscript{v} (hereafter citations to Powel will be provided parenthetically). Powel is not kind to all his sources: he incorporates Humphrey Llwyd’s sustained attack on Polydore Vergil, “a stranger borne” whom Powel thought completely ill-equipped to produce an accurate history of the British isles (3).
By what reason was it more lawfull for those men to dispossesse them of these countries with violence and wrong, than for them to defend and keepe their owne? Shall a man be charged with disobedience, because he seeketh to keepe his purse from him that would robbe him?” (¶vii)

Powel’s scathing critique of the English chronicle tradition with regard to the Welsh demonstrates that contemporary readers—like scholars today—were able to discern the prejudices of the English chronicle tradition. Midway through Powel’s preface to his reader, it appears as though his text will be more than just a Welsh history: it will be a text committed to rehabilitating the reputation of that history, which had thus far been distorted by English historiography.

Although Powel’s central agenda is to support the idea that Wales is a valuable cultural entity with an important national history of its own, he must also include a “virtually compulsory genuflection” to the union that has officially unified England and Wales. At the end of his preface, Powel masks the indignation that had marked the early pages of his text by noting the “alteration of the estate,” otherwise known as the 1536 Act of Union. He calls it a “thing so beneficiall” to the Welsh, who are now “willing to learne, readie to obeie, and loath to offend or displease” (¶viii). It is a striking contrast to Powel’s earlier assertion that the Welsh have long been defenders of their sovereignty as a nation. This contrast, however, is endemic to a text that must balance an agenda of Welsh patriotism with a deference to English rule: Powel’s text is, after all, dedicated to Philip Sidney, the son of Henry Sidney, who had served as President of the Council of Marches in Wales. According to Powel, Henry Sidney is a model of English governmental responsibility in Wales, who encouraged Powel to take

56 Highley, Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 72.
on the Historie for the “weale publicke of those countries which he governeth” (¶v).
The elder Sidney was, of course, a satellite of the English government in Wales, but Powel concedes that his “countenance and favor to the countrie of Wales” distinguished him from those who have used their positions in Wales to gain wealth and power through land acquisition—a problem Powel again refers to in his preface to the reader, calling past English officers in Wales “over-severe” (¶vi).

The conflict that is so prevalent in the prefatory material for Powel’s history is in part resolved by his use of the title “Prince of Wales.” Each chapter is devoted to the reign of a Welsh prince, beginning with Cadwaladr. The exploits of each native prince are recounted in detail, often with emphasis on their military prowess or their impressive genealogical ties. English kings are referenced primarily when they meddle in Welsh affairs, and English historical events are mentioned only as a reference point for the corresponding events in Welsh history—this is perhaps most evident in the book’s layout, which includes running heads that name the English monarch in power at the time of any given Welsh prince’s reign. By organizing his collection in this way, Powel acknowledges English history but foregrounds Welsh history; moreover, he aligns the princedom with a native Welsh tradition that is separate from the English monarchy. The princedom, for Powel, is an organizing principle on which to stake the entire history of independent Wales.

Powel notes that the last true Briton king was Cadwaladr; after his reign, Welsh rulers increasingly styled themselves as princes, perhaps in an effort to appear subservient to the growing power of the English monarchy under Henry I and II. The slow shift from kings to princes is recounted in Davies, A History of Wales, 128.
Eventually, however, Powel must confront the loss of independence for Wales, and nowhere does the theme of the meddling English king become more dominant than in Powel’s recounting of the reign of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the last native prince of Wales. In the Historie, Llewelyn’s dealings with Edward I are strained long before Edward even becomes king: Welsh barons complain to Llewelyn that Prince Edward has begun seizing their land and punishing them “with extremitie” (319-20). By the time of Edward’s coronation as king of England, Llewelyn has sworn to “utterlie refuse the rule of the Englishmen” (320). Though repeated attempts at peace are made, Llewelyn insists that the Englishmen continue to violate peace agreements, claiming the English are guilty of, among other atrocities, “the robbing and burning of churches, the murthering of ecclesiasticall persons, aswell religious as secular; the slaughter of women great with child, and children sucking their mothers brests” (343). Powel’s inclusion of treaty negotiations and letters from Llewelyn to English officials constructs the Welsh prince as a skilled politician whose sole commitment is to the prevention of “the destruction of us and our people” (367). Though his death marks the end of the reign of native princes of Wales, Llewelyn has been resurrected by Powel’s history as a heroic figure against which all princes of Wales should be judged.

For Humphrey Llwyd, Powel’s chief source, the story ends with Llewelyn’s death and Edward’s conquest: “After this there was nothinge done in Wales worthy memory, but that is to be redde in the Englishe Cronicle.”58 For Powel, however, the story continues in a supplementary section titled “The Princes of Wales of the blood

58 Llwyd, Cronica Walliae, 224.
royall of England.” In these final pages, which are centered on the once-native princeedom, we again see Powel working to balance Welsh patriotic fervor with an acknowledgment of the union between England and Wales. To achieve this balance, Powel writes an account of the princeedom that foregrounds Welsh history, even though the title has passed into the hands of the English monarchy. The history of “Henrie of Monmouth,” for example, actually focuses very little on the prince of Wales, highlighting instead the rise and fall of Owain Glyndwr, the Welsh rebel made famous in Shakespeare’s *I Henry IV*. For the history of young Arthur Tudor, Powel takes the opportunity to defend the Tudor Welsh pedigree, arguing that Henry VII was so interested in his Welsh lineage that he commissioned a formal inquiry into his genealogy. The English princes, in Powel’s text, are no more than the vessels through which he transmits the history of Wales.

Of course, the history of Wales did include the 1536 Act of Union, and once Powel confronts the act directly, he shifts his perspective of the princeedom. The Act of Union takes place during Elizabeth’s tenure as heir presumptive (Powel points out that Elizabeth was never installed with the princeedom of Wales, but because she had been declared heir, she had the title by default until “issue male of the bodie of the said king

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59 Owain Glyndwr will be discussed at length in chapter four of this study; see especially 173-90.
60 There is no surviving evidence that such a formal inquiry took place. Powel’s assertion, it should come as no surprise, has elicited binary responses from scholars who study the Tudor dynasty: Ralph Griffiths and Roger Thomas see no reason to doubt Powel’s account (*The Making of the Tudor Dynasty*, 192), while Sydney Anglo maintains that Powel is “dressing up the evidence” to get more mileage out of the idea that Welsh history is fundamental to the history of the Tudor dynasty (*Images of Tudor Kingship*, 47).
Henrie” replaced her), and Powel describes the union in mostly legal terms, explaining how the shires of Wales were divided and how the laws of England were implemented. Courts in Wales that were now subject to English law helped, according to Powel, bring Wales “quietnesse, obedience, and civilitie” (396). The next prince born, Henry VIII’s son Edward, represents the end of an era for Powel:

. . .because the principalitie of Wales was now by statute (as I said before) incorporated to the crowne and kingdome of England, being under the same lawes and jurisdiction, was none otherwise Prince of Wales than under the generall title of England: as the king his father was king of England, and under that name k. of Wales as a member of England; neither do I read of anie other creation or investiture that he had to that principalitie, therefore I thought it not convenient to make any speciall title of him after the said statute. (396)

There is, from this point on, little else for Powel to do with his Historie: his account of the Act of Union has eliminated the need for a princedom of Wales, a title that had organized his collection of Welsh history. For the remaining few pages of his work, Powel provides a summary of the past Lords President of Wales—and even in his account of the admirable Henry Sidney, the description of English bureaucrats running the government of Wales lacks the heroic tenor of the text’s earlier focus on the British princes. In the Historie, Powel uses the princedom of Wales as a locus for the entire history of Wales, particularly the relationship between Wales and England. The effect of

61 Although Elizabeth was likely heir presumptive in 1536, it is important to note just how tenuous the issue of succession was in the period: Mary was shuffled off after Henry VIII divorced Catherine, but Elizabeth’s status was also questionable after Henry VIII had Elizabeth’s mother, Anne Boleyn, beheaded in May 1536.

62 Like many of the other figures that appear in Powel’s study, Sidney is first described by his genealogy; however, the rest of his account reads like a resume: he was a “chamberlaine,” an “Ambassadour to the French king,” and “treasurer of Ireland” (401). It is an impressive list to be sure, but Sidney is ultimately more of a bureaucrat than a hero in Powel’s version.
the Act of Union on the princedom is the true end to Powel’s history—from here, Welsh history is a satellite to the Lords President who are left in charge. Yet by constructing the princedom in this way, by erasing its value as an English cultural entity, Powel has ultimately retained the princedom as a native Welsh title; after all, his entire Historie had been built on this tradition. The evolution of the princedom of Wales is, for Powel, the organizing principle behind Welsh history, and in 1584, that princedom showed no sign of being resurrected for an English heir.

That is, of course, unless we are willing to count a resurrection of the title for the stage. This is precisely what occurs in Peele’s Edward I, a text we considered at the start of this chapter. Peele’s sources for the play are diverse, and include Grafton’s 1569 A Chronicle at Large and Mere History of the Affayres of England and Holinshed’s 1587 Chronicles. Yet it is likely that Peele also drew from Powel’s account of Edward’s conquest of Wales and his subsequent plot to have his son born there. In Powel, just as in Peele, Edward’s success in Wales is stalled by his inability to “winne the good will of the common people of the countrie to accept him for their Prince. . .unlesse he would remaine himselfe in the countrie among them” (377). Powel describes Edward’s plan to win the good will of the Welshman as calculated and more than a little devious:

Wherupon the king sent for Queene Elianor out of England in the deepe of winter being then great with child, to the castell of Caernarvon: and when she was nigh to be brought to bed, the king went to Ruthlan: and sent for all the Barons and best men in all Wales, to come to him, to consult concerning the weale publike of their countrie. And when they were come, he differred the consultation, untill he was certified that the Queene was delivered of a sonne: then (sending certeine lords to the christning of his

63 For a detailed discussion of source materials, including an analysis of the material used to construct the story of Edward’s queen, Elinor, see Hook, “Introduction,” 9-23.
child, and informing them how he would have him named) he called the Welshmen togethers, declaring unto them, that whereas they were oftentimes sueters vnto him to appoint them a Prince, he now having occasion to depart out of the countrie, would name them a Prince, if they would allow and obey him whom he should name. To the which motion they answered that they would so doo, if he would appoint one of their owne nation to be their Prince: whereunto the king replied, that he would name one that was borne in Wales, and could speake never a word of English, whose life and conversation no man was able to staine. And when they all had granted that such a one they would obey, he named his owne sonne Edward borne in Caernarvon castell a few daies before. (378)

In Peele’s play, Edward’s plot to bring Elinor to Wales is indeed calculated; however, Peele has his Edward be less deceitful and the Welshmen more willing. Powel’s Edward, by contrast, gets a Prince of Wales of English blood by carefully leaving out that the new prince’s reason for never knowing English was the simple fact that he was an infant, and thus not capable of having learned any language at all. It is a careful manipulation, one that equates being born inside of Wales the equivalent of being ethnically Welsh. The contrasting perspectives of these authors should remind us that the princedom could be utilized, even by Elizabethan writers, for different agendas.

Lamenting oppression by the English forces and praising Welsh patriotism is Powel’s territory, not Peele’s. For Peele, using the princedom of Wales as a central element to the dramatic narrative allowed him to comment on one of the most pressing English issues of the 1590s: the succession crisis.64

Well into her fifties at the dawn of

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64 As Christopher Highley has noted, Edward I can also be read with an eye exclusively toward the 1590s crisis in Ireland. Arguing that Wales represented an ideal form of peaceful colonial domination in the English cultural imagination, Highley sees the christening of Edward as “a form of domination based on conciliation and cooperation rather than on the violent imposition of a conqueror’s will” (Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 83). The issue of Edward I’s intersections with contemporary discourses on Ireland will be considered more fully in chapter two of this study.
the 1590s, there was no longer any cause to expect that Elizabeth would marry—her last marriage negotiations with Anjou had effectively ended in 1579 when the parliamentary outcry against it reached a fever pitch—and even if by some miracle she were to marry, she was certainly no longer capable of bearing children. And with Elizabeth patently unwilling to name a successor, England was left waiting while her queen grew older and more removed from her glory days as the virgin queen. Growing domestic and foreign disputes intensified anxiety over the succession: war-weary from naval combat with Spain, England also had to contend with the colonial debacle in Ireland, which by the mid-1590s would turn into all-out rebellion. Peele’s *Edward I* provides the appropriate level of anti-Spanish sentiment in its portrayal of Edward’s wife, the Spanish Elinor, but it also provides a lesson in the importance of a secure dynastic succession in the face of domestic turmoil. The war with Wales is won when Edward is able to produce a legitimate heir. Although the native prince Llewelyn boasts that “Englands broad wombe hath not that armed band, / That can expel Lluellen from his land” (ll. 2116-2117), the fealty Edward gains from christening his son in Wales is just enough to ensure that Llewelyn’s contingency will be weakened. Llewelyn’s death by the hand of an unknown soldier (who is unaware that he has just killed the prince) is what actually removes the chief rebel of the play, but in Peele’s representation, the death reads like a formality compared to the elaborate christening that wins the hearts of the native population.

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65 The portrayal of Elinor in Peele’s play is extremely uneven; though she is at times figured as Edward’s sweet queen Nell, she also plots murders and eventually confesses to having a child out of wedlock. For a discussion of the textual revision that may have resulted in such an uneven portrayal, see Hook, “Introduction,” 23-37.
Peele does not, however, completely ignore that the rebellion in Wales continued after Llewelyn’s death. Following the death of Queen Elinor and the exposure of her crimes, Edward learns that rebels linger in Wales, and the threat from Scotland intensifies. Yet Peele’s Edward has a plan, just as he did when he arrived in Wales: he dispatches armies to Wales and Scotland, promising “My constancie shall conquer death and shame” (l. 2660). For Peele, Edward’s heroism is in part the dynasty he propagates, one which allows him to assert power in his satellite territories: it is a marked contrast to a dynasty that had long since turned barren and that struggled to maintain a balance in Ireland. Peele’s use of the princedom of Wales demonstrates that the title carried with it a sense of dynastic power and security even in a time when, by all accounts, it had ceased to be viable.

The Historie of Cambria and Edward I provide us with clear examples of how the princedom of Wales was to remain in the cultural imagination throughout extended periods of disuse: it became a stage for something else, just as it had for Arthur Tudor’s marriage to a Spanish princess, and just as it had for Henry VIII’s dynastic anxieties. In their respective texts, Powel and Peele worked to press agendas that would benefit from a use of the princedom: for Powel, that agenda was a patriotic fervor for Wales, and for Peele, it was an interest in dynastic succession and domestic crisis in England. It was the lack of a prince of Wales, perhaps, that allowed these authors to explore the wider implications of the princedom in both Wales and England: without an actual heir to the throne behind the title, its employment was even more flexible for these Elizabethan writers. On the way, however, was a new monarch who brought with him a wife and
three children, as well as a plan to re-envision England as a great British empire. Less than a decade into the reign of James I, the princedom of Wales would become part of a well-oiled propaganda machine.

A New Call for the Princedom: The Investiture of 1610

Henry Frederick, the eldest son of James I, had only been invested with the title “prince of Wales” for two years before his death in 1612. Despite his short tenure, however, Henry Frederick is undoubtedly the most visible of all the princes of Wales throughout the Tudor and Stuart period, and has attracted an abundance of critical attention from scholars who have studied the various court entertainments staged in honor of the prince.66 In his landmark biography of the prince, Roy Strong calls Henry Frederick “the final figure in a series of still-born renaissances.”67 It is, of course, a fair tribute, for as Strong points out, Henry Frederick’s dynamic personality and his potential as a future king had attracted a cult-like following long before he became an invested prince of Wales. Because England had been “starved of an heir to the throne” since the 1537 birth of Henry VIII’s son, Edward, there was an outpouring of literature welcoming the young prince to England as soon as the new royal family came to England upon James’s accession; moreover, Henry Frederick’s carefully cultivated image as a militant

66 David Bevington and Peter Holbrook’s collection of essays, The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) provides a useful example: three of the essays in the collection, as well as the introduction, figure the investiture of Henry Frederick and the court entertainments in honor of him as central to arguments about the larger thematic importance of Stuart court entertainments.

Protestant hero attracted the attention of those who found themselves disheartened by James’s pacifist policies. Henry Frederick was, by all accounts, ambitious, headstrong, and eager to translate his popularity into real power. I do not wish to re-create a biography of Henry Frederick here; such studies have been masterfully completed by Strong and others. I do wish, however, to explore Henry Frederick’s investiture as prince of Wales in a way that will demonstrate the complicated set of assumptions about the princedom that the prince and his supporters had to confront in order to resurrect the long-dormant title.

Such an investigation requires a brief exploration of Henry Frederick’s reasons for wanting to be invested, and James’s corresponding reasons for wishing to postpone such an investiture. Scholars have often given a passing reference to these reasons; even Strong glosses over the issue of the investiture as a “financial move” in order to highlight the more scandalous tension between father and son that was played out in the court festivals surrounding the investiture. For our purposes, however, the financial crisis that preceded the investiture is crucial for understanding the changing perspective on the princedom and its relationship to Wales.

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68 James’s discomfort over his young son’s popularity, a fact which will become increasingly evident later in this chapter, may have been manifest even at the time of his accession: the new king did not travel to England with his family, and he made no plans to take Henry Frederick from Scotland. It was only Queen Anne’s vehement refusal to join James in England unless he allowed the prince to come that finally prompted James’s welcome of his son.


The most coherent and detailed study of the financial details relating to the investiture is Pauline Croft’s essay, “The Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales.”

Croft’s study takes as its starting point February 1609, when Robert Cecil, earl of Salisbury, had succeeded in securing a feudal income for the fifteen-year old prince. It was an income meant for a ceremony of knighthood for the young prince—but the financial woes facing the crown, weighed down with debt from Elizabeth’s wars and from James’s already extravagant expenditures, induced Salisbury to cleverly re-direct the funds back to the crown. Those funds, however, were only a small portion of what Henry Frederick stood to inherit were he to be invested with the princedom of Wales, and he was eager to collect. For the king and his privy councilors, however, Henry Frederick’s possession of land grants in Wales and Chester would mean a substantial blow to crown income: because Elizabeth had no heirs, she had long reaped the benefits. Making Henry Frederick prince of Wales would make him the head of his own royal household and in control of a substantial source of income. It was in the best interest of James and Salisbury to stall the investiture.

One shrewd way to stall was with lavish gifts for the prince: Salisbury placated Henry Frederick with a large jewel. But Salisbury also did his research, commissioning the Society of Antiquaries to investigate the inheritance of past princes. Such research may have been in part to determine the age at which the prince could receive his revenues and whether that age was necessarily tied to the investiture: Arthur Tudor, for example,

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certainly was not in control of his revenues when made prince of Wales at the age of three. Research into the title’s history might show, for example, that it would be reasonable to stall the investiture until Henry Frederick’s 21st birthday, at which point he would, according to the court of wards, reach majority age.73 As Croft points out, Henry Frederick was also committed to arguing his case (in spite of Salisbury’s gift), and he would prove to be just as motivated as Salisbury when it came to researching the title.

At this point in her study, Croft explains that by the spring of 1609, Henry Frederick had commissioned the sometime-antiquarian Richard Connack to complete a survey of the princes of Wales, one that would investigate their ages at the point of investiture, the reasons for their investitures, and the revenues they received as a result. Croft’s central interest in the tract is that it was ultimately successful in convincing Salisbury that the time was right to invest Henry Frederick with the title. However, close examination of the tract is a reminder that even in 1610, the history of the princedom, especially the history of the princedom in regard to Welsh tradition, was still being negotiated in order to serve the needs of the English monarchy.

Connack’s tract is forthright in its intentions: it will “serve as an inducement for the more speedy creating of Prince HENRY, his majesty’s first begotten son” and will outline the entire history of the title’s use.74 For Connack, the Prince of Wales is now

73 The 21st birthday as majority is applicable in the court of wards and in the case of an inheritance of peerage. Majority age for marriage, however, was just fourteen years.
74 Connack, An Account of the Princes of Wales, from the first institution till Prince Henry, eldest son to King James I, Wrote by Richard Connak Esq; Publish’d by J. T. Philipps, out of a Manuscript in Trinity-College Library Cambridge. 1751. Gale Group’s Eighteenth Century Collections Online. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>,
assuredly an English title, thus his history begins in the reign of Henry III, the English king who gave his son Edward (later Edward I) the job of subduing Wales. According to Connack, Edward’s eventual victory in Wales was a rousing success; “a perfect Peace” was achieved (6). By portraying such an uncontested annexation, Connack is able to get to the real business of his work, which is to demonstrate that the princedom of Wales had long been a title bestowed on young English heirs to the throne. Some princes, such as Edward IV, had even been given the title and its accompanying revenues while still in their infancy. There should be no reason, based on this evidence, that the responsible and mature fifteen-year-old Henry Frederick should not receive his due—after all, even the future Henry V, “an intemperate and unruly prince” was allowed to collect his revenues (14). The princes of Wales who were most fresh in the minds of the English—Arthur Tudor and the young Henry VIII—are both held up as examples of heirs who received the title in spite of their minority age. By the time he has completed the first section of his tract, Connack has proven that Henry Frederick is long overdue for his inheritance, since his predecessors were all under the age of fourteen when invested (7).

Connack provides an outline of twelve reasons for investing a prince with the title; chief among those reasons is that the princedom offers the heir experience in the government of his own estates (Connack does not address the fact that very few princes of Wales were actually involved in the governance of Wales75), and that in the creation of

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accessed 1 March 2008. This quotation comes from the text’s title page; hereafter I will cite Connack parenthetically.

75 Edward the Black Prince and Henry of Monmouth (the future Henry V) were the last adult princes of Wales who exercised significant governmental control in the principality (Thornton, “Dynasty and Territory,” 7).
a prince “thereby is performed the ancient custom of England” (28-29). Connack also claims that the title has always served as a “Declaration and Publication, or rather a Kind of Confirmation to the World of their Father’s present Right, and their own Nearnes in Succession to the Crown” (32). Such was the case, according to Connack, when Henry VIII, “having no son at That time,” made his daughter Mary princess of Wales (32). In this assertion, however, Connack ignores that Mary was never officially made princess of Wales; furthermore, her trip to Ludlow, as I have demonstrated, was by no means a straightforward declaration of her place in line for the succession. The ambiguity of the princedom’s purpose throughout history is manifest in Connack’s text, which re-writes the details of the princedom’s history in order to bolster Henry Frederick’s case.

But perhaps Connack did not concern himself with such details: after all, wasn’t he, as he claims in his dedication to the prince, writing the sole history of the princedom that would make sense “out of confused Records, where those Things lay scatter’d”? This is the posture that Connack maintains throughout his tract, until he must confront the details of the only other substantive history of the princedom: David Powel’s Historie of Cambria.76 Indeed, Connack sees Powel as a formidable enough enemy to mention him in his prefatory outline of the project: “To remove all Inconveniences, here shall be answered certain OBJECTIONS, which may be conceived against the creating of the Princes of this Kingdom; with an answer likewise to that which has been published by Dr. Powell in his Welsh Chronicles” (title page). The central claim of Powel’s with

76 Croft mentions Connack’s rebuttal of “Dr. Powell” as well; however, she does not connect this Dr. Powell with The Historie of Cambria in her search of The Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed 1475-1640. The oversight is likely due to the STC’s listing of the Historie under the authorship of one of Powel’s sources, Caradoc of Llancarfan.
which Connack is most concerned, of course, is the idea that the princedom of Wales no longer exists following the 1536 Act of Union, as proven by the lack of investiture for Henry VIII’s only male heir, Edward. It is the last hurdle over which Connack must prevail: how can Henry Frederick be invested with an obsolete title? He answers Powel by claiming that the 1536 statute was nothing more than a reminder of Edward I’s annexation of Wales; it was Edward that had incorporated the principality into the crown, and he and his successors saw fit to keep the princedom of Wales viable. Henry VIII, according to Connack, would have most certainly made Edward prince of Wales, but “being old, very unwieldy and sickly of Body,” he simply ran out of time to do the deed (48). Wales, according to Connack, had very peacefully handed over its princedom to an English monarchy, and the investiture tradition was set to continue with Henry Frederick.

Connack’s survey is indeed compelling for its role in securing Henry Frederick’s investiture: Croft notes that by October 1609, Salisbury had read the tract and decided on the investiture, and he later used the arguments of Connack in a speech to Parliament in which he requested a parliamentary creation of Henry Frederick as prince of Wales.78 Perhaps more important for conceptualizing the English understanding of the princedom,

77 At this point it is imperative that I note Connack’s debt to another seventeenth century author, George Owen. Owen, a Welsh antiquarian, had in 1607 composed a draft treatise that had urged James to invest Henry with the title. Connack borrows Owen’s arguments regarding Edward’s non-investiture and at times copies him verbatim, as is the case with the explanation of Henry VIII’s ill health (Cardiff City Library, MS 2.88, fos. 51-57). It was Connack’s text, however, that was commissioned by the prince, and his borrowed arguments were the impetus for the investiture.
however, is just how much work Connack had to do in order to explain the history of the title. The previous history, that by David Powel, had done little to elevate the title as an instrument of the monarchy; in fact, it had done quite the opposite by aligning the title most memorably with its native Welsh princes. Moreover, the confusion over the princedom’s traditional purposes and accompanying revenues demonstrates that even the most powerful of government officials remained ill-informed about the title’s implications. Connack’s text, then, not only succeeded in securing the investiture for Henry Frederick, it also endowed the princedom with an authority and visibility not seen in hundreds of years. Once again, the Welsh inheritance had been re-imagined, this time for the ambitions of its English heir.

How did this re-imagination of the princedom contribute to the cultural understanding of the title? In many ways, the research done by Connack and Salisbury’s subsequent lobbying for the investiture constitute a kind of pre-production: the new vision for the princedom was one that would establish it as the inheritance for the heir of “the king of Britain.” The 1610 investiture would highlight the princedom as a stepping stone on the way to kingship—such a focus would certainly have been inappropriate for the three-year-old Arthur Tudor, but Henry Frederick’s advanced years (he had passed his sixteenth birthday when invested) and already formidable reputation as a leader prompted an outpouring of hope for his future as king. Much ink has been spilled about the delicacy of praising Henry Frederick as heir to James’s kingdom, especially since

79 See Foster, Proceedings in Parliament, 24-25. Salisbury calls James the “king of Britain” as part of his justification to Parliament for why James deserves a yearly expense that befits he “whom we may rightly term the dear parent of the country.”
Henry’s militant Protestantism contrasted strongly with James’s pacifism.80 Roy Strong claims that James’s jealousy over Prince Henry’s popularity resulted in tensions that would “colour every event at court after January 1610,” and Martin Butler notes that James and Henry Frederick were “each marshalling sovereignty” in order to highlight agendas that were very often completely incongruent.81 This tension is most certainly at issue in the investiture; one only has to read the Venetian ambassador’s account of the investiture to see that James’s insistence on “now saying that the Prince must not mind humbling himself to his father, now playfully patting his cheek” would undermine the gravitas Henry Frederick was working hard to portray at his installation in Parliament.82 Yet in spite of this tension, there was no denying that Henry Frederick was the heir to a kingdom that was increasing its visibility as an empire. As a result, the understanding of the princedom of Wales would be shaped by the concept of a Britain united.

The most prominent example of this concept in action is Samuel Daniel’s Tethys Festival. Daniel’s masque, commissioned by Queen Anne for the investiture, has a message heavily aligned with James’s project for union and peace. The figure of Tethys, who was played by Anne herself and who represents the queen of the kingdom’s nymphs

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80 Chapter three of this study will consider this tension in light of two plays staged in the aftermath of Henry Frederick’s investiture.
82 Brown, CSP Venetian, 507. The Venetian ambassador’s account of the events leading up to the investiture, as well as the account of the investiture itself, is fascinating in its portrayal of the palpable tension between James and Henry Frederick, noting that the two disagreed on everything from the method of entry into London (the prince wished to enter on horseback; James wanted him to enter by water) to the installation of knights of the Bath (Henry Frederick, in the interest of making the event “as magnificent and pompous as possible” [503], wanted to personally approve each candidate on the list).
and rivers, has recently discovered the new prince on the “pleasant shores of Cambria,” and asks all the river nymphs to pay tribute to him:

All these within the goodly spacious Bay  
Of manifold inhaboring Milford meete,  
The happy Port of Union, which gave way  
To that great Heros HENRY, and his fleete,  
To make the blest conjection that beg at  
A greater, and more glorious far than that. (sig. E4v)

Milford Haven, the famous port at which Henry VII began his march through Wales to become king of England, is here invoked as a site of uncontested union between England and Wales, one that foreshadows the “greater” union that awaits Britain. The connection to Cambria is an ideal one for Daniel’s masque, for it not only connects the prince to the principality with which he is being invested, but also provides an example of the peaceful union that is possible for “all the spacious Emperie” (sig. E4v). The spring in Cambria that leads Tethys to the new prince prompts a union of the land’s several rivers, and the prince is hailed as “Prince of th’ Iles, the hope and the delight, / Of all the Northerne Nations” (sig. E4v). A similar act of discovery occurs in Ben Jonson’s Oberon, or the Faery Prince, in which satyrs guard a giant rock, in which is contained a glass palace and “the height of all our race,” Oberon. When the palace is revealed, Oberon (played by none other than Henry Frederick himself) sits in “ARTHUR’s chaire” while the satyrs pay “homage to the British court” (ll. 324-325). Just as in Tethys Festival, a myth of origins has been revealed in the new prince—and those origins connect him to a British

\[83\] Daniel, Tethys Festival (London, 1610), sig. E4v (hereafter citations to Daniel will be made parenthetically).
These symbols move beyond an understanding of the princedom as connected solely with the principality of Wales. Instead, Wales is figured as the latent site of British antiquity, an inheritance waiting to be claimed by the new prince.

But perhaps most telling in regards to the revised understanding of the princedom is the explanation offered by the antiquarian William Camden, whose Britannia had set out to “to restore Britain to Antiquity.” The first edition, published in Latin in 1586, coincided with a boom in antiquarianism that had produced texts like Holinshed’s Chronicles and Stow’s Annals. The 1610 edition, translated into English by Philemon Holland, offers an explanation of the princedom of Wales that had been conspicuously absent from all previous Latin editions. The explanation is worth quoting at length:

. . .the kings first begotten sonne, is reputed Duke of Cornwall at the houre of his birth. And soone after, he adorned the same sonne by solemne investiture and creation, with the title Prince of Wales. And gave him the Principality of Wales in these words, To bee held of him and his heires Kings of England. . .And this title continued unto the daies of Henrie the eight, when Wales was fully united to the kingdome of England.

But now, whereas the kingdoms of Britaine formerly dived, are by the happy good luck, and rightfull title of the most mightie Prince King James growno into one; his eldest sonne Henrie, the Lovely Joy and Dearling of Britaine, is stiled PRINCE OF GREAT BRITAIN: who, as he is borne thus to the greatest hopes, so all Britaine from one end to the other, praieth uncessantly from the verie heart, that God would vouchsafe to blesse him with the greatest virtues. . .

That this description was not included in previous editions should by now come to us as no surprise: the 1610 publication would bring the princedom to light because the princedom had resurfaced as an instrument of the monarchy. In the case of Henry

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85 See Phillippa Berry and Jayne Elisabeth Archer, “Reinventing the matter of Britain: undermining the state in Jacobean masques,” in Baker and Maley, British Identities, 119-134.
86 Britain, 164 (sig. O2v).
Frederick, the title was an assertion of dynastic power and security that had not been seen in decades. And because that dynastic power was increasingly aligned with a project to unite the British Isles, the princedom was to become a symbol not just of Wales, but also of Britain more generally. Re-establishing Wales as a site of British antiquity, then, would establish the princedom as a precursor to a larger, greater, more unified British monarchy.

At a later point in this study, we will consider how popular culture responded to the new prince of Wales and his amenability to an image that made him an heir to a long tradition of native Welsh rulers and English princes as well as to the Arthurian tradition that remained a source of pride for both Welsh and English. For now, I want to emphasize the striking transformation that the princedom underwent during the reign of James I, for it is this transformation that demonstrates the value attached to the title. The princedom became an outlet for Henry Frederick to assert a burgeoning sense of ambition and entitlement, but it also became a symbol for the monarchy’s health and dynastic surety, as well as a promise of the monarchy’s potential to rule a British empire. In 1609, when Henry Frederick began making his first serious attempts at being installed as the prince of Wales, the title had been relegated to almost total obscurity; however, by the end of 1610, it had become a benchmark for the tremendous potential of the Stuart dynasty.

Throughout this chapter, I have examined the princedom of Wales as it was employed in the reign of the Tudor monarchs, as well as in the early reign of James I. The princedom had been, for hundreds of years, an inheritance reserved for native Welsh
princes. The annexation of Wales by Edward I resulted in the princedom’s integration into the English monarchy. Yet just over two hundred years after the annexation, at the 1489 investiture of Arthur Tudor, that integration showed no signs of being a straightforward patrimony for the heir to the throne. At the age of three, Arthur Tudor was far too young to have a “practice run” at governance in Wales. Yet the formal installation provided Henry VII with the opportunity for a spectacle that he hoped would prove his serious commitment to having his firstborn son marry the Spanish princess.

This successful attempt at foreign policy was Henry VII’s priority—though he very easily could have used the Welsh princedom as a nod to his own Welsh inheritance, he chose instead to use it as an assertion of the English presence on the international stage. In the reign of Henry VIII, policy in Wales, reflected most clearly in the 1536 Act of Union, would slowly change to reflect the interests of a monarchy looking to consolidate its power at a time when its dynastic future was uncertain. The result of this policy was a princedom that lacked purpose—unless, of course, that purpose was creatively interpreted. Succeeding years showed that such interpretation was possible. Elizabethan writers who had not seen a prince of Wales in their lifetime would re-imagine its purpose in accordance with the political messages of their texts. Henry Frederick would demand his own installation, bolstered by the work of a writer who, at the request of the young heir, had reconstructed the princedom’s history.

The princedom of Wales is, of course, not the only lens through which to view the dynastic transformation in the Tudor and early Stuart period. It is, however, a lens that focuses the Tudor and Stuart relationship to Wales. Each time an heir was invested with
the title, there was an accompanying reflection of the monarchy’s attitude toward the Welsh inheritance. As I have demonstrated in this study of the princedom, that attitude was far from clear. It was at times a sheepish acknowledgement of Welsh ancestry, as was the case for Henry VII; at other times, as was the case for James I, it was a bold exploitation of a native tradition in order to claim “British” legitimacy. The larger implications of the monarchy’s relationship to the Welsh inheritance in the early modern period are profound: the monarchy’s tendency to reshape England’s history in relation to Wales was to find its way into English literary culture as well, as writers of the day constructed Wales as a nation, Wales as a space, and the Welsh as a people in accordance with their own agendas.

Such an understanding of the complexity with which Wales and the Welsh were viewed within early modern culture will allow for readings that treat the Welsh presence in literary culture of the day as multi-dimensional and ever shifting. Nowhere is this more true than in the early modern theater, which staged the complexities of this presence with frequency and variation, and with an often astounding correspondence to contemporary events. As we shall see in later chapters, the English attitude toward their neighbors to the west—and the popular entertainment that often reflected this attitude—was, much like the princedom of Wales itself, shaped by the political climate of the day.
CHAPTER 2

“The Disciplines of the Wars”: Welsh Militarism and English Patriotism on the 1590s Stage

In Robert Fabyan’s 1516 *New Chronycles of England and Fraunce*, the entire history of Edward I’s defeat of Llewelyn, prince of Wales, is covered in roughly four pages of text.¹ Fabyan’s account lacks the colorful detail that was to dominate the version presented in David Powel’s 1588 *Historie of Cambria*, discussed in chapter one of this study, and it is entirely void of some of the most compelling mythology surrounding the war: the orchestrated birth of Edward II at Carnarvon, the slaying of Llewelyn by an unnamed soldier. In fact, if one only had Fabyan’s account for understanding the war between Edward and Llewelyn, the story would go something like this: English king works hard to maintain peace with Welsh prince, Welsh prince is

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¹ The *New Chronycles* was published by Richard Pynson three years after Fabyan’s death, and it was only attributed to Fabyan in the 1534 edition by William Rastell. Prior to its printing, the *Chronycles* circulated in manuscript form: the first volume of the manuscript (Holkham Hall, MS 671) begins with the legend of Brute and ends with the death of France’s Philip Augustus, and the second volume (BL, Cotton MS Nero C.xi) continues the history up to 1485, when Henry VII ascended the throne of England. For additional information on Fabyan’s life and career, as well as on the manuscripts of the *Chronycles*, I refer readers to the 1811 edition of the text (London: C. Woodfall), edited by Henry Ellis, and to the very helpful entry provided by M-R. McLaren in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (“Fabyan, Robert (d. 1513),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/9054>, accessed 5 March 2008).
implacable, Welsh prince is killed in battle and English king gets back to the work of governing England.

The spartan nature of the account is made remarkable when one considers that when this history was to be retold in the pages and on the stages of early modern England, it would take on a new life. Yet when Fabyan ends his account of the war with Llewelyn, he does so in a way that foreshadows the new life that awaited the story of Llewelyn’s rebellion: he offers two poems that comment on the Welsh prince, one right after the other, both completely lacking in commentary or judgment from the chronicler.

The first, he claims, comes from “a Walshe metrician,” and the second from “an Englysshe metrician”:

Of Englysshmen the scourge, of Walshe the protectoure
Lewelyn the prync, rule of all vertue,
Gemme of all lyvers, and of all other the floure,
Which, unto deth, hath payde his dette due,
Of kynges a myrrour, that after hym shall sue,
Duke and prayse, and of lawe the ryght,
Here in this grave, of people lyeth the light.

Here lyeth of errour the prync, if ye wyll ken,
Thefe and robbour, and traytour to Englysshmen,
A dym bronde, a sect of doers yll,
God of Walshmen, cruell without skill
In slynge the good, and leder of the bade,
Lastly rewardyd as he deservyd hadde,
Of Troyans blode the drastes and nat sede,
A rote of falshode, and cause of many yll dede.²

In the first poem, assigned to the Welsh poet, Llewelyn is figured as more than just a great Welsh hero, more than just an example for future princes. In describing Llewelyn

² Henry Ellis, ed.  *The Chronicles of Fabyan* (London: C. Woodfall, 1811), 388. Both poems are printed first in Latin, followed by English translations, which I have used here.
as the “scourge” of the English, the poet has depicted Llewelyn as a true threat to the English kingdom—a force to be reckoned with, a man who almost defeated his English adversaries.

In the second poem, however, the depiction of Llewelyn is more than just “dispraysynge”: it is a near erasure of Llewelyn’s heroic reputation. The poem is intent on constructing Llewelyn as a mere annoyance in the English triumph over Wales. Indeed, the poem’s first line, written in the manner of an epitaph, offers a none-too-subtle slight at Llewelyn’s claim to being a prince: the poet asks his audience to take note of the spot where the prince lies, but qualifies, “if ye well ken.” The “ken” here—a term commonly used to indicate the recognition of a rightful heir or successor—undermines the Welsh prince, figuring him as a pretender, a false royal.\(^3\) By the time we reach the next line, Llewelyn is nothing more than a common criminal.

And although the Welsh poet makes a considerable effort to highlight the legacy Llewelyn will leave, the English poet works even harder to prove that Llewelyn is undeserving of such a legacy. As a “dym bronde,” Llewelyn is a weak and unsustainable fire; as an enemy, he is vicious but “without skyll.” The poem’s most forceful slight, perhaps, comes in its penultimate line, which references the legend of the Welsh ancestral tradition. Popularized by Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*, the legend described the founding of the British race by Brutus, great-grandson to the heroic Trojan soldier Aeneas. The result was the legendary line of British kings who were the last holdouts against the Saxon invasion, and whose pure bloodline continued in the

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people of Wales. For the English poet writing about Llewelyn, the legend clearly does not sit well. Eager to distance Llewelyn from that heroic Trojan tradition, the poet names Llewelyn as the “drastes” of the Trojans, rather than the seed of the British race. Put simply, the poet has just called Llewelyn, the last native prince of Wales, a pile of feces.

The inclusion of these two poems as the denouement to an otherwise unexceptional description of the war between Edward and Llewelyn is both striking and disorienting. Could the poems represent Fabyan’s effort at even-handedness? This seems unlikely, especially since we find evidence elsewhere in Fabyan that he was suspicious of the Galfridian myth of the Trojan-Briton-Welsh connection, even as he counted on it as a primary source. Could it instead be that Fabyan, in offering the English poem as the final word, wanted to shame the Welsh for honoring Llewelyn as a national hero? This too seems unsuitable; certainly the shaming would have been more effective had Fabyan eliminated the Welsh poem altogether. And though we might first be inclined to say that Fabyan, an English chronicler, likely would have favored his countryman’s poem, we should also acknowledge that the poems, though strikingly different in opinion, are remarkably similar in both structure and imagery—both, for example, take the form of an epitaph, both offer horticultural descriptions as a way to understand Llewelyn’s rule. Indeed, given their formal parallels, it is not too far beyond the pale to suggest that these two poems came, despite what Fabyan has told us, from the

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4 Philip Schwyzer provides a useful assessment of what he terms Fabyan’s “Cambrophobia,” pointing to moments in the Chronycles in which Fabyan suggests that Geoffrey’s history was biased by his own Welshness. Fabyan’s bias against the Welsh continues, Schwyzer suggests, when he posits that much of the mythology about King Arthur has been exaggerated only “to gladde the Welshmen” (New Chronicles, 81). See Literature, Nationalism, and Memory, 27-29.
very same author. Moreover, their presentation as stand-alone accounts of Llewelyn—
Fabyan offers no commentary on either—fail to provide the answers we might expect to see in an account of historical events. Instead, we might be left wondering just what we are meant to think of Llewelyn. Is he an impressive Welsh war hero, and a tribute to his valiant Briton ancestry? Or is he a deviant and destructive rebel of little consequence?

Understanding the complex early modern English perspective of the Welsh and their British ancestry means understanding that the answer may well have been “yes” on both counts. Such a conflicted perspective is due in part to the Welsh origins of the legend of the ancient Britons, a connection that has been rehearsed in the introduction and first chapter of this study. But the Welsh connection to the militaristic spirit that defined the ancient Britons had, by the time of the early modern period, been documented by Welsh and English authors alike. The Welsh author Giraldus Cambrensis, who chronicled the Welsh landscape and Welsh culture in his twelfth century works, had this to say about his countrymen:

This people is light and active, hardy rather than strong, and entirely bred up to the use of arms; for not only the nobles, but all the people are trained to war, and when the trumpet sounds the alarm, the husbandman rushes as eagerly from his plough as the courtier from his court… ⁵

⁵ The Description of Wales, ed. W. Llewelyn Williams (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1935), 166. Giraldus’s text is interesting in its own right, in part because the Welsh author himself often seems to struggle between his Welsh patriotism and his loyalty to the English crown. The conflict leads him to clarify his remarks about Welsh militarism in part two of his Description, which includes a section aimed at English commanders titled, “In What Manner this Nation is to be Overcome” (198). Though Giraldus maintains that the Welsh are “severe in first attack,” he suggests that they are easily defeated because “they cannot bear a repulse, being easily thrown into confusion” (192).
The idea that the Welsh were defined by a martial spirit was carried through the centuries. When Camden sought to describe the “Britwaless, or Welchman” as a people, he did so by commenting on their fighting spirit: “a very warlike nation” he called them, “a people fierce, valiant, given to war, and impatient of servitude.” A proud and enviable military spirit, then, was central to early modern understanding of the Welsh and their ancestors.

Yet figures like Llewelyn ap Gruffydd posed a particular kind of difficulty for historians like Fabyan. Although Llewelyn was, as a Welshman, a descendant of the ancient Britons and thus the beneficiary of a valiant and warlike ancestry, he was using that warlike tradition against an English king. Raphael Holinshed, the famed sixteenth-century chronicler, addresses this difficulty by portraying Llewelyn as petulant and destructive, who “upon a verie spite” went about “wasting and destroieing the countrie,” while still acknowledging that the Welsh rebel and his soldiers were surprisingly difficult to defeat in battle. By acknowledging Llewelyn’s military skill and also highlighting his lack of political civility, Holinshed simultaneously places Llewelyn within a tradition of British militarism while distancing him from the spheres of political civilization in which Edward so clearly excels. In the pages of Fabyan, and later Holinshed, we find accounts

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6 Britain, 113 (sig. K1'). This quotation and the one that follows also appear in Britannia’s Latin editions.
7 Ibid., 615 (sig. Eee 6'). This quotation from Camden refers to a specific tribe of Welshmen, the Silures, who populated southern Wales. The disposition of the ancient Britons, including their propensity toward war, has also been considered by Mary Floyd-Wilson in her study of British ethnology; see English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. 52.
8 The Third Volume of the Chronicles (London, 1586), 279 (sig. Dd 4'), 281 (sig. Ee 1').

81
of Llewelyn that are deeply conflicted, fractured by a delicate and illogical sense of the difference between valiant Britons and rebellious Welsh.

The English historical record of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd is evidence of this fracture, but the theatrical record is evidence of how this fracture was addressed at crucial moment in English history. The 1590s, often associated in theater history with the proliferation of chronicle plays, proved especially tumultuous for the English nation: fresh off the victory over the Spanish Armada, England nevertheless remained embroiled in a war with Spain and faced increasingly successful native-led rebellions in Ireland. No wonder then, that the most successful plays of the period were dominated by military themes, themes that very often highlighted England as a nation especially heroic in its military pursuits. Audiences who packed the playhouses during the 1590s could expect swordplay, alarums, and, of course, rousing battlefield speeches rife with bombastic language and dripping with patriotic sentiment. In victory, the English nation is celebrated, and in defeat, it is taught valuable lessons about how to avoid future strife. In the plays I consider here, each featuring an embodiment of this contested Llewelyn, English militarism is paramount, and as a result, Welsh militarism—that heroic holdover from the ancient Britons—is rendered almost entirely ineffectual. Lluellen of Edward I and Fluellen of Henry V showcase the displacement of the Welsh military tradition into the hands of their English counterparts. The result is a re-imagination of Welsh origins that engages with one of the most pressing cultural anxieties of the 1590s—England’s martial identity.
Rebel Without a Cause: Edward I and the Un-Making of a Welsh Hero

I have already examined Peleé’s Edward I in light of the play’s use of the principedom of Wales as a winning colonization strategy, a reading that necessarily focuses on Edward’s role as victorious English king. But Lluellen is, second only to Edward, the most developed character of the play, and no doubt a memorable one to early modern audiences, who would have known Edward I as one of the most popular plays of the 1590s: from August 1595 to July 1596 alone, the play was performed at least fourteen times by the Lord Admiral’s Men. The first printed version of the play, appearing in 1593, may well be testament to Lluellen’s prominence as a character; his name is featured just under Edward’s on the title page, the chief mode of advertisement for print versions of stage plays. The juxtaposition of the two names on this title page, as well as the accompanying descriptions of their roles, could indeed be a guiding principle for understanding the portrayal of Lluellen throughout Edward I. What receives immediate prominence is, of course, that this is the “Famous Chronicle of king Edward”; in a considerably smaller font is the inclusion of Edward’s “returne from the holy land,” an event which barely registers on the play’s radar. But if the smaller font is reserved for the less significant, then certainly Lluellen’s role as formidable enemy has been dealt an early blow, because although the title page tells us, in a respectably-sized font, that this will also be a play about “THE LIFE OF LLEUELLEN,” his role as “rebell in Wales” has been—well, shrunk. And although the play presents the crisis in Wales as the central

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9 Henslowe’s Diary records these performances between August 29, 1595 and July 9, 1596. See Greg, Henslowe’s Diary, 24-26, 42.
10 Edward returns from the holy land within the first fifty lines of the play; his journey to the holy land has no bearing on any of the events that occur in the rest of the play.
danger facing Edward,\textsuperscript{11} Lluellen’s part in perpetuating that danger is repeatedly undermined.

History—not the stage version—has told quite a different story about Llewelyn ap Gruffydd. His rapid rise to power in Wales and his bold assertion of that power was the primary reason for Edward’s decision to go to war in Wales.\textsuperscript{12} Though Edward’s father, Henry III, had recognized Llewelyn as rightful prince of Wales and had demanded little of him in the way of fealty, Edward was wary of Llewelyn’s feudal practices within Wales, which gave Llewelyn a lot of land and a lot of power.\textsuperscript{13} It was Edward’s decision finally to demand tribute from Llewelyn—tribute that had been settled on in a 1267 treaty with Henry III—that began the war, or perhaps more accurately, the wars. Edward and Llewelyn clashed in both 1277 and 1282; the latter being a war that saw the eventual English defeat of the Welsh. The English had distinct advantages; not only did they have more soldiers, some of which were Welshmen who disdained Llewelyn’s rule, but they were also better equipped. Llewelyn’s forces, however, made up for their lack of numbers in their unconventional tactics—in one memorable victory for the Welsh, English soldiers were forced out to sea when the Welsh cut off their access to a bridge and many English were drowned. Moreover, what seemed like difficult terrain to the

\textsuperscript{11} A rebellion in Scotland also figures into the plot of \textit{Edward I}, but with far less emphasis than the rebellion in Wales. History bears out this emphasis: it was the Welsh rebellions that dominated the early years of Edward’s reign.

\textsuperscript{12} Michael Prestwich, \textit{Edward I} (London: Methuen, 1988), 170.

\textsuperscript{13} Incidentally, Llewelyn’s feudal lordship also made him unpopular with many of his countrymen: there was widespread dissent among the Welsh regarding Llewelyn’s leadership practices, and support for him may have been, in many cases, borne out of Welsh desire for independence rather than any sense that he was the best man for the job. See Davies, \textit{A History of Wales}, 144-149.
English was home to the Welsh, and the Welsh benefited from their familiarity with the mountains and forests in which they could hide. Though they were ultimately defeated, Welsh rebels managed considerable success in their capture of at least three major English strongholds.\textsuperscript{14} The war in Wales, history has concluded, was an “immense effort on the part of the English,”\textsuperscript{15} and the defeat of Llewelyn was, according to one Welsh scholar, the moment that Wales and its sense of national independence was destroyed: “Henceforth, the fate of the Welsh in every part of their country would be to live under a political system in which they and their characteristics would have only a subordinate role, a fact which would be a central element in their experience until this very day and hour.”\textsuperscript{16} Llewelyn’s formidable uprising against Edward, and the seriousness with which Edward took that uprising, suggests that Llewelyn’s role in both English and Welsh history should not be underestimated.

However, underestimating the theatrical Lluellen certainly seems, at times, to be one of Peele’s chief goals in Edward I. Is this perhaps because Peele’s sources made Llewelyn seem like an insignificant figure in English history? We have already seen how two of the chroniclers treat Llewelyn: Fabyan remains detached until his inclusion of the two poems about Llewelyn, and Holinshed writes Llewelyn as reckless and destructive, but still a dangerous enemy to Edward and the English forces. In one of the few critical essays on Edward I, William Tydeman considers the play in light of these and other source materials, demonstrating that Peele had an arsenal from which to draw his account

\textsuperscript{14} Davies, A History of Wales, 158-59.
\textsuperscript{15} Prestwich, Edward I, 196.
\textsuperscript{16} Davies, A History of Wales, 161.
of Llewelyn—Holinshed offered useful details about the wars, while Grafton provided the raw material for the Eleanor de Montfort plot, and Stow likely provided the idea for the carefully planned birthplace of Edward I’s son. After surveying the sources, Tydeman admits, “most chronicle accounts available to Peele have the dramatist a fairly free hand in characterising the prince for stage purposes.”

Tydeman further suggests that the poems from Fabyan, considered at the beginning of this chapter, allowed Peele to make a choice about how he might portray Llewelyn. In other words, we certainly cannot only blame the source materials for what happens to the history of Llewelyn in Peele’s play.

So what does happen to the history of Llewelyn? Tydeman concludes that Peele chose to err on the side of heroism for his Lluellen, arguing that there is ultimately “honour rather than ridicule” for the Welsh rebel.

Christopher Highley, though focusing his reading more on contemporary politics than does Tydeman, also argues that Peele constructs Lluellen favorably; Edward I, he posits, offers “undeniable admiration for Lluellen and the Welsh struggle for independence.” Both arguments work to uncover nuance in Peele’s play—rather than dismiss it as an artistic failure, they each suggest that the uneven portrayal of Lluellen—who sometimes borders on barbaric in his

18 Ibid., 31.
19 Ibid., 45.
20 Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 79.
21 A common assessment of the play. In his The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, Irving Ribner calls Edward I “one of the crudest of the early English history plays” (85), only grudgingly admitting that “confused and chaotic though Edward I may be, it is not without importance” (87).
battle cries, and who at other times behaves like a typical melancholy lover—is meant to humanize his cause. But at what cost is Lluellen so humanized? Although I agree that Lluellen is hardly a straightforward villain in Edward I, I want to argue that his rendering here is less about making him likeable than it is about containing his presence as a successful Welsh rebel. Peele rewrites the historic Welsh prince with a deliberate effort: one that wipes clean any traces of British heroism in Lluellen, renders him ineffectual as a soldier, and makes his history as a Welsh nationalist seem insignificant.

It would be easy to say that ancient British heroism is a non-issue in Edward I, especially since the play’s medieval setting gives it a chronological distance from the kinds of legends that dominated Geoffrey’s account of the British kings. But in some of the play’s earliest lines, spoken by Edward’s mother, there is an unexpected revelation about the confusion over the English-British connection:

Illustrious England, auncient seat of kings,
Whose chivalrie hath roiallized thy fame:
That sounding bravely through terrestiall vaile,
Proclaiming conquests, spoiles, and victories,
Rings glorious Ecchoes through the farthest worlde.
What warlike nation traind in feates of armes,
What barbarous people, stubborn or untaimd,
What climate under the Meridian signes,
Or frozen Zone under his brumall stage,
Erst have not quaked and trembled at the name
Of Britaine, and hir mightie Conquerors? (ll. 11-21)

The Queen Mother’s speech is offered in anticipation of Edward’s return from the holy land, and it aligns him with what the Queen Mother identifies as an “auncient” line of kings who come from England. These kings, she contends, not only can boast “conquests, spoiles, and victories,” they can also profess a great tradition of chivalry. So
far, the Queen Mother has offered a version of history that has very little in common with
the actuality of England’s monarchical history—England’s kings had no real “auncient
seat,” because their line of kings was not established until the Saxon invasion. As the
queen slowly reveals the thrust of her rhetorical question, however, we see what she
really means: who is not afraid, she asks, “Of Britaine?”

How do you make England into ancient Britain in fifteen lines or less? For the
Queen Mother, all it takes is some sweeping rhetoric in which enemies become
“barbarous” and Britain becomes a paragon of military strength and civility. When she
continues, she does even more to usurp British claims to legitimacy by calling Edward
“Equivalent with Trojans auncient fame.” England is now both aligned with a British
tradition of ancient kings, and also with a British legend of Trojan descent. To hear the
Queen Mother speak it, we are about to meet the greatest soldier that has ever walked the
earth: “Longshankes your king, your glory and our sonne, / With troopes of conquering
lords and warlike knights, / Like bloudy Mars orelooks his hostes, / Higher than all his
armie by the head” (ll. 34-37). Within these early lines of the play, Edward has been
figured not just as the play’s chief military leader, but also as the chief British military
leader.

Yet shortly after the Queen Mother’s laudation for Edward, Edward himself
draws a distinction within the term “Britain,” one that again reveals the play’s ambiguous
treatment of the English/Welsh distinction. Edward’s regal procession onto the stage
with his new wife Elinor is followed by an exchange with his military leaders, who offer
promises of pensions for the men who have served in the army. The last promise comes
from David of Brecknock, Edward’s seeming Welsh ally (who remains, unbeknownst to Edward, secretly in league with his brother, Lluellen): “[To a soouldier David cannot be too liberall, yet that I may give no more then a poore knight is able” (ll. 147-48). Though David’s lesser funds limit his promise, Edward nevertheless offers him this praise: “Wel said David, thou couldst not be a Camber Britain if thou didst not love a soouldier with thy hart” (ll. 153-54). The acknowledgment suggests that both Peele and his audience are expected to know why a “Camber Britain”—a Welshman—would have a special affinity for military service. Attaching the “Camber” to describe David’s particular brand of British identity is telling, demonstrating that there are degrees of British identity in this play. In David, Edward recognizes a common Welsh trait, but he does so very briefly: the glory of true British identity, and true militarism, remains with Edward and his English cohort. As Elinor’s daughter (and Edward’s new stepdaughter) attests, “The people of this land are men of warre” (l. 247).

The first scene has presented Edward as warlike and has aligned him with an ancient British heroic tradition. It is not until scene two that we meet the rebel Lluellen, who is, historically speaking, an actual descendant of this British heroic tradition. And in his first appearance, there is both a recognition of that tradition and a sense that Lluellen will live up to it by posing a real threat to Edward. Stage directions indicate that Lluellen

Historically, the relationship between Llewelyn and his brother Dafydd was decidedly more complex. Dafydd had once hatched an assassination plot against his brother; when that failed, he turned to the English court, where Edward greeted him as an ally. Dafydd fought with Edward in the Welsh wars of 1277; however, feeling underappreciated (and under-compensated) by Edward, he fought for the Welsh side in the wars of 1282. For studies of the relationship between Llewelyn and Dafydd, see J.E. Morris, The Welsh Wars of Edward I (1901; repr. Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton, 1996), 112-148, and Prestwich, Edward I, 175, 181-187.
and his cohort are to be dressed, ready for battle, in swords and bucklers (although their “jerkins,” or military-style jackets, are made of Welsh frieze rather than the standard leather), and Lluellen’s first speech is decidedly combative:

Come Rice and rouse thee for thy countries good,  
Followe the man that meanes to make you great:  
Follow Lluellen rightfull prince of Wales,  
Sprong from the loines of great Cadwallader,  
Discended from the loines of Trojan Brute,  
And though the traitorous Saxons, Normans, Danes,  
Have pent the true remaines of glorious Troy,  
Within the western mountains of this Ile,  
Yet we have hope to clime these stonie pales,  
When Londoners as Romains erst amazde,  
Shall trembling crie Lluellens at the gate.  (ll. 268-78)

This speech no doubt parallels that of the Queen Mother in praise of Edward. Just as in that early speech, Lluellen here aligns himself with ancient British kingship by linking his bloodline with Cadwaladr, the last Briton king, and then proceeds to highlight his Trojan inheritance. At this point, it may seem that Peele is offering his audience a choice of heroes: after all, they seem nearly interchangeable thus far. But what Lluellen adds to his speech is most certainly meant to solidify audience favor toward Edward. By referencing the multiple invasions on the British peoples, Lluellen argues that his people, the descendants of the ancient Britons, were driven to Wales by these invasions and thus deserve to reclaim the whole of the original Briton territory, starting with London. No doubt Lluellen has lost the audience at this point, and what had at first seemed like a parallel heroism has quickly devolved into a haunting threat.23 In a world of international

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23 Highley also sees a shift occurring in this speech: “While Lluellen’s rousing account of Welsh victimization may stir sympathies in an English audience, the prospect of an attack upon London quickly clouds those positive feelings.” However, Highley sees these early
and domestic conflict, an assault on London in 1590s England may well have been a threat that audience members had considered.

But even if Lluellen has lost audience favor, he still retains the necessary rage to be figured as a threat to Edward. Once Lluellen has learned that Edward has detained his betrothed, Elinor de Montfort, until Lluellen agrees to pay tribute, his rage grows exponentially. He urges his fellow rebels: “Prepare, awaie in poste, and take with thee, / A hundred chosen of thy countrimen, / And scowre the marches with your Welshmens hookes, / That Englishmenn may thinke the divell is come” (ll. 614-17). Soon, Lluellen is threatening to revenge himself “With bloud of thousands” (l. 620). And in what I consider this speech’s most subtle move to re-cast Lluellen, Peele re-imagines Lluellen’s British ancestry:

But if kinde Cambria deigne me good aspect,  
To make cheefest brute of westerne Wales,  
Ile short that gainlegd Longshankes by the top,  
And make his flesh my murthering fawchions foode:  
To armes true Britaines sprong of Trojans seede,  
And with your swordes write in the booke of Time,  
Your Brittish names in Characters of bloud. (ll. 606-612)

The Trojan ancestry is not a source of pride here as it was in the play’s opening lines, and what was at first figured as a civilized military heroism is now barbaric and gruesome as Lluellen boasts about the violent plans he has for Edward. In a skillful linguistic slippage, Lluellen asks to be made “cheefest brute.” The play’s editor reads this as a but unfulfilled threats as an anomaly, arguing that the representation of Lluellen improves considerably in the course of the play. See *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland*, 78.

24 Elinor de Montfort is the third character named Elinor in Peele’s play; she joins the ranks of the Queen Mother and Edward’s wife. To avoid confusion, I will refer to Lluellen’s bride always as Elinor de Montfort.
variant of “Britt” or “Briton,” or perhaps even a nod to the Trojan Brute, but there is undoubtedly a nod to the term’s less flattering meaning: Lluellen, in this speech, has been made crude and animalistic. This behavior is made patently clear when Lluellen and Edward first meet face to face: in an attempt to force Edward’s hand in releasing Elinor de Montfort, and to further Edward’s belief in David as loyal to the English side, Lluellen pretends to take David prisoner. As part of the ruse, Lluellen cuts open David’s nose in front of Edward. Disdaining this type of violence, Edward, the more level-headed and civilized of the two, hands over Elinor de Montfort.

All of this seems to suggest that Lluellen, though made brutish and violent, is actually developed as a formidable opponent for Edward. But what occurs in the remainder of the play suggests either that the kind of threat posed by Lluellen in this early scene was simply too uncomfortable to maintain, or that audiences would take pleasure in watching a ambitious Welsh rebel fall to pieces. To a 1590s audience, Lluellen’s rebellion, brought from a marginalized English territory, would most certainly smack of Irish conflicts (as Highley has already aptly demonstrated); moreover, the continued reference to the British inheritance and its heroic history threatened to undermine the heroism being rallied for the play’s English king and hero, Edward. So for the remainder of the play, Lluellen’s rage is mediated, his capability demeaned, and his cause diluted.

Lluellen’s initial cause is to reclaim England for the Welsh, and his betrothed, Elinor de Montfort, is at first figured as part of that scheme. The daughter of Simon de Montfort, who, as Rice puts it, “Was lov’d and honoured of the Englishmen” (l. 292)
would help them to “make our roades in England mightily” (l. 295).²⁵ Yet Lluellen very quickly ceases to understand his Elinor in these political terms and instead understands her as the great love of his life. This is not, to be sure, a dishonorable development, and perhaps not an unexpected one, either, since chronicle history plays of the period frequently moved rather seamlessly between history and romance. It is, nevertheless, a development that leaves Lluellen completely uninterested in his original cause, thus distancing him from his warlike and hyper-masculine persona. Indeed, after hearing of her capture by Edward’s forces, Lluellen has a new call to arms: “Follow me countrimen, / Words make no waie, my Elinor is surprizd, / Rob’d am I of the comfort of my life, / And know I this and am not veng’d on him?” (ll. 622-625)

We should of course consider the possibility that it is Lluellen’s pride that is hurt rather than his romantic affections. After all, Peele’s source materials abstain from speculating on the Welsh prince’s love for Eleanor; Grafton says only that “he was so moved” by her capture that “he streight ways armed himselfe,”²⁶ and Holinshed focuses more on the aftermath than the event itself:

²⁵ Rice’s assessment of Simon is a fair one, and not just because Simon actually did have a treaty with Llewelyn for the marriage with young Eleanor. Simon de Montfort, eighth earl of Leicester, was born and raised primarily in France. His claim to the earldom of Leicester was through his mother, and when he first claimed the title he was a great favorite of Henry III (and eventually married Henry’s sister). In later years, however, after a conflict-ridden governorship of Gascony and increasing tensions with Henry III, Simon became the king’s chief opponent in the Barons’ Wars. He was defeated by the young Edward in 1265, but retained remarkable popularity with many of the English as a martyred political reformer. I refer readers to J. R. Maddicott, “Montfort, Simon de, eighth earl of Leicester (c.1208–1265),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19049>, accessed 18 Dec 2006.

When Leolin understood that his wife was taken from him by the waie as she was comming, he was not a little wroth, and incontinentlie began to make warre vpon king Edwards subjects that bordered neere unto Wales, killing the people, spoiling their goods, and burning up their townes and houses on each side.27

In both sources, the capture of Eleanor de Montfort is Llewelyn’s impetus for further war against Edward. In Peele, this war is ended by scene five, in which Edward dominates, telling Lluellen, “Ambitious rebel, knowest thou what I am, / How great, how famous, and how fortunate, / And darst thou carry arms against me here, / Even when thou shouldst do reverence at my feet?” (ll. 837-40). It appears Lluellen may have regained his original sense of purpose when he tells Edward that the return of Elinor is only part of the bargain: “there belongeth more / To these affaires, than my content in love” (ll. 957-58). However, instead of making any claims to sovereignty in Wales (or anywhere else, for that matter), he asks for nothing more than a pardon. An unnamed Welsh soldier does the remainder of the negotiations, asking that Edward promise to allow a Welshman to always govern Wales. Lluellen agrees, not realizing that his consent has just given Edward the opportunity to usurp the princedom of Wales for the English monarchy,28 and makes peace with Edward. “The gates are opened,” Lluellen says, “enter thee and thine” (l. 1001). It is, perhaps, the most poignant foreshadowing of the entire play; soon after, Edward brings his pregnant wife Elinor to Wales where she will give birth to the first English prince of Wales.

What happens to Lluellen after this peace treaty? In Holinshed, the treaty is only a stopgap for Llewelyn’s plans; soon he rallies his troops again and captures Rhuddland

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27 The Third Volume of the Chronicles, 278 (sig. Ee 5v).
28 See chapter one, esp. 23-25 and 58-61.
castle, an English stronghold. Edward is forced to return to Wales to fight the rebels again, who have fled to Snowdonia, where they would plan an assault on English forces who simply did not know the territory as well as their enemies. The flight to Snowdonia is, in Holinshed, a calculated and rather effective military strategy—but in Edward I, it becomes another part of the machinery that undermines Lluellen’s rebellion. By the play’s seventh scene, Edward has already made his plans for having his son born in Wales, but Lluellen appears to have given up on the war. He does indeed flee to the forest, much like the historical Llewelyn fled to Snowdonia. But rather than using the time to calculate a new military strategy, Peele’s Lluellen decides instead that his time would be well-spent in a game of pretend:

…ile be master of misrule, ile be Robin Hood thats once, cousin Rice thou shalt be little John, and heres Frier David as fit as a die for Frier Tucke, now my sweet Nel if you will make up the messe with a goode heart for Maide marian and doe well with Lluellen under the green wood trees, with as good a wil as in the good townes, why plena est curia.

Peele’s decision to make Lluellen into a Robin Hood figure is curious, and deserves significant attention, especially since the Robin Hood tradition was enjoying a popular resurgence in 1590s drama. How Peele deploys that tradition within Edward I is striking,

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29 “Rhuddlan” is the Welsh name for the castle known as “Rutland” in the English chronicles. J.E. Morris notes that the English chroniclers likely confused the facts here: the Welsh did make an assault on Rhuddlan, but did not ultimately capture it. The Welsh Wars of Edward I, 153-54.

30 See The Third Volume of the Chronicles, 281 (sig. Ee 1’).

31 ll. 1182-88. The Latin line translates to, “The court is complete”; i.e., Lluellen has filled his cast of characters for Robin Hood’s court.
not only because it places an enduring *English* myth into the hands of a Welsh rebel, but also because of the parody it makes of the historical Llewelyn’s continued assaults on Edward I’s armies from the woods of Wales.

In acting as Lord of Misrule and in making a bower for Elinor de Montfort, his Maid Marian, Lluellen is enacting a long-standing English folk practice which made the Robin Hood legend a part of May game ritual and festival tradition. And in many ways, the very act of playing Robin Hood implies a sort of rebellion in itself. Lluellen has just agreed to a peace treaty with Edward and “opened the gates” to him, thus consenting to serve in an English hierarchy that places Edward at the top. In its most basic form, the tradition of the Robin Hood game serves to undermine that hierarchy, invoking a carnival atmosphere that rejects the traditional hierarchy and replaces it with a world in which all are equal. But in more significant ways, the Robin Hood game in Peele’s play serves to sanitize Lluellen’s rebellion, making it both familiar and non-threatening to the play-going audience. In his treaty with Edward, Lluellen has been, as one critic puts it, “chased off the national stage” and made irrelevant as a threat to Edward’s kingdom. Indeed, his decision to act as Robin Hood has made him a different sort of enemy altogether: no longer a dangerous Welsh other, Lluellen has adopted the garb of one of the most recognizable English legends in history. Even if he maintains his opposition to

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33 Wiles, *The Early Plays of Robin Hood*, 55-56.
Edward, that opposition has lost its urgency. Having neglected his quest to reclaim the British Isles for the Welsh people (many of whom, in Peele’s version, have already switched to Edward’s side\textsuperscript{35}), Lluellen seems to be perfectly content in playing the game even in front of his enemy, staying in character when Edward confronts him.

When Lluellen is “in character,” he lacks the vengeance that he maintained in the play’s early scenes; moreover, he is shown to be the inferior soldier in his confrontation with Edward, who handily throws Lluellen to the ground. When the confrontation is dispelled and Lluellen’s brother David makes an effort to console his brother after such an embarrassing defeat, Lluellen seems more star-struck than humiliated, and praises Edward: “No coward David, his courage is like to the Lion, and were it not that rule and soveraingntie sets us at jarred, I could love and honour the man for his valour” (ll. 1917-19). No such precedent exists in the chronicles, but in Peele, the valiant and warlike Lluellen, great enemy to Edward, seems never to have seen valor in himself—only in his English foe. His direction to his brother to “be merrie after this colde cooling, and to prepare to strengthen our selves against this last threatnings” (ll. 26-28), bears the mark of resignation rather than re-invigoration. The play’s very next scene, in which Edward’s son is made prince of Wales with an elaborate christening, really has chased Lluellen off of the national stage.

Lluellen’s re-emergence on the scene, his final living appearance in the play, has him being pursued by driving English forces; his last speech is a pale imitation of his

\textsuperscript{35}This is a rare instance in which Peele’s play corresponds with historical actuality: Edward I had convinced many of the powerful Welsh lords to fight on the English side, knowing that these lords disdained Llewelyn’s power. See Prestwich, *Edward I*, 190-91.
earlier bombast. While lamenting the loss of “the glorie of faire Cambria” (l. 2110), Lluellen is warned by his brother to “Either flee or die for Edward hath the day” (l. 2124). David exits, and Lluellen is left onstage with the English soldiers who have pursued him. Without another word, Lluellen is killed with a pike staff by an unknown soldier, who looks down at his corpse and, without sentiment, proclaims, “This is the prince, I know him by his face, / O gracious fortune that me happie made, / To spoile the weede that chokes faire Cambria” (ll. 2130-32). Lluellen’s death by this unnamed soldier, who is eager to claim his due for the deed, is perhaps made only more poignant when one considers that this unnamed English soldier is allowed to boast of saving “faire Cambria” from Lluellen, a man who, in the play’s early scenes, had made a promise to restore “Cambria” to its earliest glory. Just as in the play’s first lines, when the Queen Mother evolves England into Britain, these lines have evolved Wales into the charitable cause of England, while the native Welsh prince lies dead on the stage.

For William Tydeman, who argues that Peele treats Lluellen with respect and honor, the Welsh rebel’s death is almost intolerable—the slaying of Lluellen by a bit character is only made more insulting by the trotting out of Lluellen’s head on a pike in the play’s final scene. Because Tydeman’s argument has relied on the idea the Peele means for us to view Lluellen positively, he can only conclude that “Peele here seems to have made the disastrous error of losing the opportunity for a resounding English panegyric in Llewellyn’s praise,” or, perhaps that the lack of eulogy for Lluellen was a
mark of “this sadly defective play.” But Tydeman is perhaps missing a larger issue that is at stake in *Edward I*. Whether or not Lluellen comes out as a likeable or appealing character is irrelevant. Although he certainly is appealing in his role as both a romantic hero and a subversive forest-dwelling thief, the heart of the matter is that these roles end up diminishing what originally was laid out for the Welsh prince. Lluellen has been made non-threatening at the expense of his status as the warlike and valiant Welsh leader who was meant to be Edward’s greatest enemy. The entire play serves as a slow unraveling of the hostile demeanor Lluellen has presented in his first appearance onstage; what was once a war cry for Welsh domination becomes a tangled love plot and a twisted May game, and a man who once flaunted his grand military ambitions is defeated while fleeing no-name English soldiers.

The treatment Lluellen receives at the end of *Edward I* may indeed leave a bad taste in the mouths of modern readers especially, who might have found themselves sympathizing with Lluellen’s initial nationalistic fervor and his plight to save his beloved from the powerful and cunning Edward. I want to suggest, however, that Peele’s rendering of Lluellen for the 1590s play-going audience is a carefully crafted effort to make the Welsh rebel ineffectual as a soldier and leader. This is assuredly due in part to the specific threat posed by Ireland—the defeat of Lluellen, a Celtic “other” who occupies England’s borderlands, functions as a wish fulfillment about how easily the conflict in Ireland might be resolved. Perhaps more importantly, the play’s early

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36 “Peele’s *Edward I* and the Elizabethan View of Wales,” 42. In calling the play “sadly defective,” Tydeman has resorted to the kinds of superficial readings that he scorned at his essay’s beginning, where he argued that *Edward I*, though not perfect in form or execution, offers a “more cogent scheme of composition” than has been previously noted.
references to “British” heroism and superior militarism suggest that for Peele and his audience, there was most certainly an awareness not just of the British tradition, but of the confusion over who owned it. For a culture that had, in recent years, seen dangerous and escalating military conflicts from enemies both foreign and domestic, claiming that tradition for the English was pursued with increasing urgency, especially on the stage. The portrayal of Lluellen, which leaves him lacking in valor and in focus, undermines his claim as the descendant of the valiant Briton tradition.

Robbing Lluellen of his claim to the British tradition allows for the placement of that tradition firmly in the hands of the English monarchy, which reigns victorious at play’s end with a conquering king and a newly-crowned heir. It is perhaps a poignant irony that the death of the real Llewelyn ap Gruffydd did, in some sense, enact that very same transition: one of the most effective methods Edward I employed in his takeover of Wales was the use of Welsh soldiers in foreign wars. Edward saw a sort of talent vacuum in the warrior culture that persisted in Wales; with Llewelyn dead, Wales offered “a reservoir of experienced warriors lacking an indigenous cause for which to fight, a reservoir ideal for a war-state such as the kingdom of England.”

Llewelyn’s death in 1284 was a watershed moment for the Welsh cause. But Lluellen’s death in the 1590s was more than that: it was a moment in which the Welsh ownership of the British military tradition also met its end. The next major stage incarnation of the Welsh military tradition—and of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd—would prove this memorably.

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37 Davies, A History of Wales, 176.
“Much Care and Valour”: The Welsh Soldier in Service of the English King

If, in Edward I, we see the death of Lluellen as the displacement of the British military tradition into English hands, then we should acknowledge that we may well see the consequences of this displacement in Shakespeare’s Henry V. The Welsh soldier Fluellen, who diligently (and comically) serves in the ranks of Henry’s army, offers us a glimpse of how Welsh military heroism continued to be adapted for the English stage as the 1590s neared their troubled end. Like Edward I, Henry V presents a Welsh character whose military identity is, in many ways, undermined in favor of showcasing the military superiority of the English king. Yet the tradition of Welsh militarism and its connection to that of the English is, in Henry V, an issue treated with an eye toward the inherent nuances of a relationship in which a conquering force had something to envy in the lengthy and admirable history of its conquered subjects. As a soldier fighting on the side of the English king, Fluellen is permitted moments of valor and even superiority. But his role as servant to both King Henry’s more childish (and sometimes barbaric) impulses and to the audience’s taste for comic relief suggests that even Shakespeare, who has so often been identified as having a special affection for the Welsh,38 was not immune to subordinating the Welsh military tradition to the English patriotic agenda.

38 Frederick J. Harries is one of the earliest scholars to argue that Shakespeare held a special place in his heart for the Welsh; in his book, Shakespeare and the Welsh (London: T. Fisher Undwin, 1919), Harries suggests that the high number of Welshmen Shakespeare may have known—including a Welsh schoolmaster in Stratford—might have led to his “deep-seated and instinctive” admiration for the Welsh (24). Decades later, Joan Rees would also claim that Shakespeare “takes pleasure in his Welsh characters,” though she acknowledges that the pleasure does not always include respect. See Rees, “Shakespeare’s Welshmen,” in Literature and Nationalism, eds. Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson (Maryland: Barnes and Noble, 1991), 37-39.
Calling Henry V a “patriotic” play is, of course, far from unproblematic. The critical consensus on Henry V has long denied that the play is a strict endorsement of either war or monarchical power, or even both. Henry himself has been the lightning rod for this kind of criticism; Stephen Greenblatt most famously argued that Shakespeare’s play “registers every nuance of royal hypocrisy, ruthlessness, and bad faith,” all the while maintaining a celebratory tone for “the charismatic leader who purges the commonwealth of its incorrigibles and forges the martial national state.” The complexity of Henry’s portrayal—and the play’s attitude toward national pride—is no doubt a sign of the times. England was certainly a more troubled nation than it had been at the dawn of the decade; any feelings of martial prowess after the Armada victory had long since faded, and Elizabeth’s unwillingness to name a successor was both frustrating and fearsome, since claims to the throne were coming from Spain and Scotland, neither of which could be called allies. Furthermore, the situation in Ireland was at a boiling point, with leaders of the rebellion gaining ground and courting foreign allies. Even if the play registers hope on the horizon, it more distinctly registers the tension of a nation whose military prowess—or lack thereof—was more of a preoccupation than ever before.

40 Spain, of course, was a downright enemy at this stage. Spain had recently ended its war with France and could focus its full aggression on England, and the Spanish claim to the English throne was in no way a long shot. Several studies—both early and recent—have tackled the issue of Henry V and the political complexity of the 1590s, including Lily B. Campbell’s Shakespeare’s Histories: Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy ([San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1974], esp. 255-305), and Peter C. Herman’s “‘O, ’tis a gallant king’: Shakespeare’s Henry V and the crisis of the 1590s” (in Tudor Political Culture, ed. Dale Hoak [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 204-225). For a study that considers the context in light of Henry V’s textual complexities, see Richard Dutton’s recent essay, “‘Methinks the truth should live from age to age’: The Dating and Contexts of Henry V” (Huntington Library Quarterly 68 [2005]: 173-204).
In the person of Henry, we are offered both a fantasy of that prowess and a
glimpse of its inherent fractures. Shakespeare may be, as Greenblatt notes, celebrating
Henry’s particular brand of kingship even as he criticizes it, and he is undoubtedly
highlighting Henry’s superior military skill while still acknowledging at what price it
comes. But he is also, on the fringes of his play, considering the nation’s martial identity
as it exists outside of the person of the king, and nowhere is that consideration more fully
developed than in Fluellen. As undoubtedly the most well-remembered and oft-examined
Welsh character of the English stage, Fluellen has often been the well-ridden workhorse
for scholars interested in portrayals of the Welsh in the early modern period. Early
studies of Fluellen pegged him as an affectionate project of Shakespeare’s, who
“intended [Fluellen] to be a favourite with his audience” by drawing him as “brave,
patriotic, honourable, loyal, [and] high-spirited.”\footnote{Harries, \textit{Shakespeare and the Welsh}, 162.} In recent years especially, Fluellen’s
stock as a worthwhile critical pursuit has risen considerably, no doubt owing to the
growing interest in the politics of national identity and empire-building during the early
modern period. In spite of the politically-oriented critical lens that has so often been
pointed at Fluellen, there has been no critical consensus on the Welshman, who has been
read as both a patriot and an understated turncoat. One scholar reads Fluellen as “the
colonial subject who has internalized English values and subordinated his own provincial
loyalties to service the English nation-state,”\footnote{Highley, \textit{Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland}, 147.} while another sees Fluellen as an
“ostensibly faithful Welsh borderer” who repeatedly introduces a voice of dissent in *Henry V*.  

Perhaps it is owing to Fluellen’s visibility as one of Shakespeare’s characters, or perhaps it is because *Henry V* so clearly engages with issues of “British” unification in its portrayal of the Welsh, Irish, and Scots in service of the king—but either way, when it comes to scholarly inquiry, Fluellen has long been, and still is, the over-determined Welshman. Although these readings of Fluellen—even the ones that seem to be in complete opposition to one another—have often very convincingly argued their position on the Welshman’s role in both supporting and subverting the English king, they have also overlooked a crucial dimension of Fluellen: his military identity. It is Fluellen, after all, who is constantly reminding his compatriots about “the law of arms.” In order to understand fully Fluellen’s import to *Henry V*, we must understand how it participates in a larger tradition of re-purposing the Welsh military tradition during the 1590s. In *Henry V*, showcasing English military prowess is of grave importance. Left in its wake is the military tradition of the Welsh: a tradition that is here, when not being played for laughs, made to serve the English patriotic agenda.


44 It must be noted here that most studies positing *Henry V* as a play about British unification are doing so with only the 1623 folio text in mind. The quarto text of *Henry V*, first printed in 1600, features neither the Irishman Macmorris nor the Scotsman Jamy—an absence that makes the argument for an happy British Isles decidedly less convincing. Fluellen, however, remains in both the quarto and the folio, though not without alteration. In the remainder of this study of Fluellen, I will focus my reading on the folio text, but will note alterations to Fluellen’s character when necessary.
There is perhaps no better place to begin a study of Fluellen than with his first appearance in the play, which is completely focused on his identity as a soldier. Immediately after Henry has delivered his memorable “Once more unto the breach, dear friends” (3.1.1)\(^45\) speech, the alarum ensues, and Henry’s company of soldiers, which includes old friends Pistol, Bardolph, and Nim, seems disjointed and ill-prepared. Though Bardolph encourages his comrades to fight, they are reluctant: “The knocks are too hot,” protests Nim, “and for mine own part I have not a case of lives” (3.2.2-3). Pistol, for his part, nostalgically sings about the alehouse with the boy of the company, and one cannot help but feel that Henry’s rousing speech has been lost on his soldiers. That is, of course, until Fluellen barges onto the stage, angrily chastising the soldiers: “Up to the breach, you dogs! Avaunt, you cullions!” (3.2.21).\(^46\) Fluellen’s rage, his expression of frustration at this display of martial inadequacy, is to be echoed elsewhere in the play with no small importance. Indeed, this introductory line can in some ways be seen as an encapsulation of who Fluellen will be throughout *Henry V*: his exhortation for Pistol and company to get “up to the breaches” makes him a sort of ineloquent version of his king, who has just issued a similar exhortation to his army. While Henry fights the good fight against the French, Fluellen is left to handle dissension in the ranks, a job he will do over and over again as the play continues. His apparent aggression in this

\(^{45}\) All quotations from *Henry V* are taken from T.W. Craik’s Arden Third Series edition (London: Routledge, 1995).

\(^{46}\) In the quarto edition, this line is preceded by the exclamation “God’s plud!”, an effective showcasing of Fluellen’s comic accent, which is discussed below. The Oxford editors restore Fluellen’s exclamation in their edition of the play: this, I think, is a fair addition, given that its absence in the folio edition is likely due to the print restrictions on oaths when the folio was printed. It is almost certain that the “God’s plud!” remained in performances of the play.
scene—Pistol’s repeated calls for Fluellen to “Abate thy rage” (3.2.23) indicates that the Welshman may well be beating the soldiers as he urges them on\(^{47}\)—will again surface in later encounters. Fluellen’s mimicry of Henry, his role as disciplinarian, and his hot temper will serve as trademarks of his character, and will determine how the Welsh military tradition is represented throughout the play.

Fluellen’s preoccupation with the martial performance of the English army dominates his second appearance onstage, a scene in which it becomes evident that his Welsh valor will not only be made comic, it will also be undermined as a source of native pride. When Gower, another captain in Henry’s army, requests that Fluellen report to the mines (tunnels which the English have dug to besiege the enemy fortress), Fluellen delivers a lengthy indictment of this kind of warfare: “for, look you,” he tells Gower, “the mines is not according to the disciplines of the war” (3.2.58-59). Fluellen, in his meandering and accented English,\(^{48}\) proceeds to warn Gower that the enemy has dug below the English, and all stands to be destroyed. This moment of shrewd military

\(^{47}\) Editors of the play often add a stage direction indicating the violence, but no stage direction of this kind exists in the folio text.

\(^{48}\) The standard stage Welsh accent substitutes “p” for “b,” “f” for “v,” and “ch” for “j.” Readers of Welsh characters in early modern drama should be cautioned, however, to notice that the accents are rarely consistent in printed texts—in the both the quarto and folio editions of *Henry V*, for example, Fluellen often proves himself perfectly capable of pronouncing a “b” sound: when he first confronts Pistol, for example, he begins with a clear “By your patience” and is expected to pronounce two more “b” words within the same speech. Is this because Shakespeare wanted Fluellen more eloquent at certain times than at others? Alternatively, is it an error or oversight in the composition of the printed text, and should we assume that the actor playing Fluellen would have kept the accented English throughout the performance? I am inclined to the latter, and would suggest that a performance would warrant a consistent accent from Fluellen, if only to ensure his identification. Of course, Fluellen’s accent allows for meaningful linguistic slippages, as we will see below.
insight is mocked by its very presentation—Fluellen, even at his very best soldiering, isn’t given his full due. Instead, his advice, hampered by its comic presentation, is ignored.

As the scene continues, we are offered what is perhaps the most famous portrait of a multi-ethnic army fighting for England: Fluellen and Gower meet with the Scotsman Jamy and the Irishman Macmorris. The meeting, in which the Irishman Macmorris famously questions “What ish my nation?” (3.2.124), has formed a textual crux for scholars interested in issues of British identity within Henry V. Whether or not the scene endorses or scorns the idea of a unified Britain has been treated with great care elsewhere, and with strikingly different results. But the critical myopia about the issue of British nationalism in this scene has perhaps resulted in an oversight of what is revealed here about Fluellen and his particular brand of militarism. Though it is easy to overlook Fluellen’s continued iterations about “the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans,” (3.2.82-83), “the disciplines of the war, the Roman wars,” (3.2.97-98), as the ramblings of a boastful gasbag, there is a more calculated slight to Fluellen’s military identity contained in these lines. This Welsh soldier, whose native tradition is one of

49 Highley posits that the meeting between Jamy, Macmorris, and Fluellen “reworks the potential collusion of Celtic groups hostile to English rule in Ireland into an internal competition among reluctant allies over how best to advance the cause of an English king”—in other words, the scene is a fantasy in which potentially dangerous enemies become allies to England, annoyances to each other. See Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 146. David J. Baker reads the scene differently, suggesting that Macmorris may represent not an Irish native, but an “Old English” settler of Ireland who feels displaced from both his native land and his adopted home. Baker argues that ultimately, the scene reveals the “fault lines” of this multi-ethnic army. See Between Nations: Shakespeare, Spenser, Marvell, and the Question of Britain (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 31-44.
martial prowess, places his own military knowledge in the context of the “Roman disciplines.” Attributing Fluellen’s martial superiority to knowledge of the Roman disciplines usurps his native tradition and places it in the hands of a conquering force. Though the Romans had success in defeating some of the most powerful Welsh tribes, they were certainly not responsible for passing a military tradition on to the Welsh, whose prowess in war was a source of native pride long before the Roman invasion. Already proven to be somewhat of a puppet for the English king he serves, Fluellen here is made subject to yet another imperial force. This is Welsh militarism of a different brand indeed.

The issue of the “Roman disciplines” may also be an important statement on how a soldier like Fluellen fits into a contemporary battle over the school of war, one in which former soldiers and military scholars printed texts extolling the virtues of either classical training on war or the real-life experience of it. Lily B. Campbell treats this issue at length in her study of *Henry V*, detailing the 1590s exchange between Sir John Smythe and Sir Roger Williams. Smythe’s tract chastised the performance of the English army—especially its leader, the earl of Leicester—for being incompetent and unlearned in the traditions of the “ancients,” while Williams contended that experience was the greatest teacher for military men. Campbell is reluctant to directly connect either Smythe or Williams with a particular character in Shakespeare’s play; however, she rightly notes

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that this contemporary battle is reflected in Fluellen’s commentary on war. The central issue, whether historical precedent and military theory could trump life experience, is one in which we find Fluellen clearly situated: he is squarely on the side of the theoretical.

Does this opinion matter for our larger understanding of Fluellen and his military identity? I would argue that it most certainly does, and it demonstrates a choice Shakespeare has made in portraying the Welsh soldier. Fluellen may know a lot about the disciplines of the wars, but his boastings suggest that he lacks engagement with the everyday challenges of an actual war. It is an important characterization, especially since the play’s hero, Henry, will win his war in France with unconventional tactics. Fluellen’s militarism then, has not only been usurped by a Roman tradition. It has also been presented as ineffectual and outmoded. In only his second appearance on the stage, Fluellen has been severed from a valiant Welsh military tradition.

Of course, there are moments in the play in which Fluellen stops jabbering about the Roman disciplines long enough to offer his own personal assessment of the king—moments that suggest Fluellen’s role is more than just comic. In one of his most famous scenes, Fluellen, upon hearing that Henry has just ordered the killing of the French prisoners, offers a historical parallel for Henry—“Alexander the Pig” (4.7.13). This scene, for many critics, has been central to arguments positing Fluellen’s role as the conscience of the play—the character that has the important job of reminding the audience of Henry’s more cruel nature. Fluellen’s first comparison seems relatively benign, if forced, suggesting that Alexander the Great’s birth at Macedon is comparable to Henry’s birth at Monmouth. But he drives home the comparison with a more apt
parallel: “As Alexander killed his friend Clytus, being in his ales and his cups, so also
Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and good judgments, turned away the fat knight
with the great belly-doublet: he was full of jests, and gipes, and knaveries, and mocks; I
have forgot his name” (4.7.44-49). No doubt the audience can remember the fat knight’s
name without Gower’s subsequent prompting—Sir John Falstaff. The moment, Patricia
Parker has argued, fractures the larger-than-life persona of Henry, reminding the
audience that, like Alexander, Henry has murdered a friend—not with his hands, of
course, but with his scorn. The comparison leaves Henry wide open for a host of other
comparisons to Alexander, who, as a symbol for wars of conquest, was often seen as little
more than a petty thief working on a grand scale.51 For David Quint, Fluellen’s speech is
a masterstroke of subtlety: “Fluellen can neither persuade the audience that Henry
resembles Alexander in bono nor that Henry does not resemble Alexander in malo.”52
When read in this vein, this scene reveals Fluellen as the great social critic of the play,
the man who culls out the very root of Henry’s heroic persona: cruel but efficient,
morally ambiguous but masterfully charismatic.

Fluellen’s insight into Henry’s complex nature would be so much more of an
insight, so much more of a coup for this comic character, were he in on the subtleties of
what he has just said. We must remember, however, that no matter what biting
comparison Fluellen has drawn, he has done so without being clever enough to see the
irony. The criticism—which is most certainly not intentional on Fluellen’s part—allows

51 See Janet M. Spencer, “Princes, Pirates, and Pigs: Criminalizing Wars of Conquest in
52 David Quint, “‘Alexander the Pig’: Shakespeare on History and Poetry,” boundary 2
the Welshman to be the voice of dissent, but all too quickly we are reminded of his extraordinary lack of awareness regarding the complexity of Henry’s character. In fact, when Henry arrives on the scene just seconds after Fluellen has made his famous comparison, we are shown just how oblivious Fluellen is: he anxiously works to get the king’s attention, boasting of his knowledge of the English chronicles, which have recounted the brave battles of Henry’s ancestors in France. Proving himself steeped in the history of the English, Fluellen notes the service of the Welsh in these battles, proudly noting their “wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps” (4.7.98-99). Is this a moment in which Fluellen’s national pride in his Welsh origins shows through, proving that he sees valor in his native tradition? I would suggest that something akin to the opposite is true: Fluellen reminds Henry of the leek-donning soldiers not just for native pride, but for desire of English recognition. Fluellen’s insistence on the leek as a reminder of an English military cause is especially telling when one considers that Fluellen has failed to mention the more native-based associations of the leek, which was also associated with the Welsh resistance to Saxon invasion.53 For Highley, Fluellen’s explanation of his badge is highly calculated by Shakespeare, who “empties the leek of all oppositional and anti-English significance,” making it safely Anglicized.54 The leek, when described by Fluellen, is not so much a badge of national pride as it is “an honourable badge of the

53 The exact origins of the legend are unclear, but the most recognized native story is that Saint David led Welsh soldiers in a victory over the invading Saxons fought in a field of leeks. See “Leek,” in A Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, ed. Elizabeth Knowles (Oxford Reference Online, <http://www.oxfordreference.com>, accessed 28 December 2006).
54 Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 148.
service” (4.4.100). Indeed, to hear Fluellen tell it, Welsh militarism has meant nothing without its English commanders.

But what about Henry’s tender reply to Fluellen, in which he tells the Welshman that he too wears a leek “for memorable honour, / For I am Welsh, you know, good countryman” (4.7.103-104)? For scholars interested in the construction of the English nation in Henry V, Henry’s purported pedigree is seen as “darkly ironic.” Though Henry was born at Monmouth, as Fluellen has rightly noted in his conversation with Gower, he does not possess any “Welsh plood” (4.7.106). The English king’s contention that he is in some way Welsh resonates with the Tudor monarchy’s claim to Welsh blood through the pedigree of Henry VII, whose grandfather was Welsh. If nothing else, the Welsh bloodline permitted the Tudors to claim that they had a claim to an ancestral line of Briton kings. David Baker argues that Henry’s admission to Fluellen demonstrates “Welsh origins of English royal power,”56 while Philip Schwyzer contends that Henry is prematurely usurping a bloodline in order that he might more effectively cement his royal legitimacy.57 But the standout moment of this scene for those interested in Fluellen’s role is the Welshman’s star-struck reply to Henry: “All the water in the Wye cannot wash your majesty’s Welsh plood out of your body, I can tell you that. God pless it and preserve it, as long as it pleases his grace, and his majesty too” (4.7.105-108). Again, Fluellen has missed the point, not only in failing to notice that Henry’s birthplace has nothing to do with his bloodline, but in offering up his Welsh heritage to an English king.

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55 Schwyzer, Literature, Nationalism, and Memory, 127.
56 Baker, Between Nations, 61.
57 Literature, Nationalism, and Memory, 127-29.
“as long as it pleases” Henry to claim it. Shakespeare’s Welsh soldier is more than a little sycophantic here, but more importantly, he is an ideal colonial subject, just the kind of man Henry would want on his side. Content—even ecstatic—to allow Henry to claim Welsh blood, eager to parrot the histories of the English chronicle tradition, happy to resign his martial skill to Roman influences, Fluellen is, for all his comic earnestness, never permitted the opportunity to be boastful about Welsh martial superiority.

Fluellen’s distance from his valiant origins is not solely self-imposed, however, for Henry himself seems intent on keeping Fluellen confined to tasks that limit his militarism to the domestic sphere. Fluellen, a captain in the army in a war against France, spends the entirety of the play engaged in a smaller-scale conflict: attempting to defuse conflicts within Henry’s army. When Henry, disguised as a soldier, slyly engages the disillusioned soldier Williams in a conversation about the fairness of the king’s call to arms, he is shown the degree to which his own army doubts him: Williams claims that Henry has lied about his promise not to be ransomed only so that the soldiers will “fight cheerfully” (4.1.191) on his behalf. The disguised Henry offers a challenge to Williams, exchanging gloves so that he may “make my quarrel” (l. 208) in the event that he meets Williams again.

Henry, however, never intends to make this quarrel himself; he has someone else in mind for this kind of dirty work. When Henry meets Williams again, it is just after he has professed his own Welshness to Fluellen, a move that, as I have argued above, leaves Fluellen conspicuously charmed. Here Henry enlists his most loyal soldier for a task that is entirely unrelated to the international crisis at hand. Offering Fluellen Williams’s
glove, Henry lies and claims the glove belongs to Alençon. Fighting the owner of that glove, Henry tells Fluellen, will not only be a victory against the enemy, but also a proof of loyalty: “apprehend him, an thou dost love me” (4.7.156). Fluellen’s response shows his characteristic enthusiasm: “Your grace does me as great honours as can be desired in the hearts of his subjects” (ll. 157-58). The lie Henry tells Fluellen is an important one: he is professing that Fluellen’s task is one related to the war with France, when in fact he has relegated Fluellen to combating dissent within the ranks of the English army. The Welshman, who has to this point been little more than the play’s dose of hot air, is finally given a task on which to act, but that task makes him an exaggerated errand boy. Even after Fluellen has called Williams a traitor (and after he has been struck by Williams for the accusation), he remains painfully unaware of the ruse. Henry’s subsequent shaming of Williams, in which the king admits his disguise and offers the soldier a glove of money with a grave threat to boot (“Keep it, fellow, / and wear it for an honour in thy cap / Till I do challenge it” [4.8.59-61]), leaves Fluellen seemingly unaffected by Henry’s lack of ingenuity. Eager to mimic Henry’s offer of money, but lacking Henry’s motivation to instill fear, Fluellen hands over a modest twelve pence to Williams.

Henry, perhaps, has known Fluellen is suited for such tasks all along: when he observes Fluellen while in disguise, he comments to himself, “Though it appear a little out of fashion, / There is much care and valour in this Welshman” (4.1.84-85). It would be easy to read Henry’s observation as a compliment, yet we should also consider the possibility that Henry has marked Fluellen much in the same way he will next mark Williams. While Williams will be made an example for his flagging patriotism,
Fluellen’s excessive patriotism will be put to work. The juxtaposition becomes even more meaningful if we acknowledge that Shakespeare gave his dissenting soldier a common Welsh surname—Williams, though lacking the accent and the eager mentions of his ethnicity, may indeed hint a different version of Welshness: one that resists service to the English king. And there were certainly examples in Shakespeare’s time of Welshmen who resisted service, in much the same way as does Williams: as Highley notes in his chapter on *Henry V*, the Welsh were among the most common objectors to a commission in Ireland—most likely because they, like Williams, questioned the cause of the English military.  

Read with this in mind, Henry’s use of Fluellen as disciplinarian may be more calculated than anyone has yet acknowledged. Fluellen, obedient and happy to be so, becomes an instrument of the empire that he serves, reining in a soldier that may, in fact, be his countryman. The fact that Fluellen’s particular brand of Welsh valor is “a little

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58 Highley concludes that Fluellen’s support for Henry “obfuscates the widespread intransigence of his compatriots, who, rejecting the status of submissive colonial subjects, refused to fight in Ireland.” He does not, however, suggest that Williams is a voice of Welsh conscientious objection. See *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland*, 156.

59 Although Katharine Eisaman Maus identifies Williams as “a rural English soldier” in her introduction to the play (see *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1449), I find no evidence in either the quarto or folio texts of *Henry V* to suggest that he is strictly identified as an English soldier. It may be that Maus, along with the original Oxford editors, who list Williams (along with Bates and Court) as “English soldiers” see more balance in the portrayal of Henry’s army if there are representatives of the English masses. Joan Rees also addresses the Welsh surname of Williams, suggesting that he recalls Giralda Cambrensis’s description of the plain-spoken and forthright Welshman, who has “boldness and confidence in speaking and answering, even in the presence of their princes and chieftans.” I am reluctant to make such an explicit connection between Cambrensis’s description and the character of Williams, though I do agree with Rees that Shakespeare’s use of the name “Williams” invites a “fresh look” into the play’s engagement with the Welsh. See “Shakespeare’s Welshmen,” 31.
out of fashion” may be all the more beneficial to Henry’s plot against Williams, because Fluellen’s quaint and seemingly excessive concerns about “the disciplines of war”—a sharp contrast to the ruthless tactics Henry has employed thus far in his campaign against the French⁶⁰—makes him the ideal candidate for holding together a fractured army. Henry could hope for no better mouthpiece for the rules of being loyal to one’s king in a time of war. And he certainly doesn’t have to worry whether Fluellen will follow through; knowing Fluellen to be “touched with choler, hot as gunpowder” (4.7.176), Henry has effectively exploited Fluellen’s most dominant traits for his own ends. That those ends have only a marginal relationship to the actual war keeps Fluellen’s militarism safely confined to Henry’s personal whims.

In his final appearance onstage, we see Fluellen at long last acting outside of the explicit instructions of the king. This scene, which finds the Welsh captain forcing the English soldier Pistol to eat a leek, does much to enrich our understanding of the perception of Welsh militarism in the period: Fluellen, finally left to his own devices, nevertheless remains in the fold of the English agenda. Fluellen tells Gower that he has endured a personal slight from Pistol, who mocked the leek on Saint David’s Day, the Welsh national holiday. He demonstrates his characteristic bombast and hot-temper (made more comic with the addition of his accent), calling Pistol a “rascally, scald, beggarly, lousy, pragging knave” (5.1.5-6). As always, he reminds Gower of his unflagging decorum, claiming that he has saved his quarrel with Pistol for the appropriate

⁶⁰ See especially 3.3.1-43, in which Henry boasts of the widespread destruction, rape, infanticide, and general havoc his troops will commit in order to attain victory. Quaint it is not.
time, since Pistol accosted him “in a place where I could not breed no contention with him, but I will be so bold as to wear it in my cap until I see him again” (5.1.10-12). Just as in his first appearance onstage, Fluellen is physically aggressive as well; he strikes Pistol and force-feeds him. And, again, as in his first appearance, Fluellen mimics his king: after assaulting Pistol, he offers a veiled threat (‘When you take occasions to see leeks hereafter, I pray you mock at ’em’ [5.1.56-57]) and money (a groat, to be exact). It is a comic re-enactment of Henry’s treatment of Williams—the glove has been replaced with the leek, the crowns have been replaced with four pennies. Whatever inclination we may have, as modern readers, to make this scene Fluellen’s bold assertion of ethnic identity must be qualified, for Fluellen is here given no more reverence than he is throughout the rest of the play. Instead, his native “honourable badge of service” is used as an instrument against a cowardly and corrupt English soldier, one who needs to be taught a lesson. As David Baker has convincingly argued, this is ethnic pride only in the service of loyalty to England; Fluellen’s Welshness, in its unflagging service to the English king in a time of war, can offer a valuable lesson to the cowardly Englishman.

61 I read the double negative here as another instance of Fluellen’s misuse of language. 62 Patricia Parker, who reads Fluellen as a subversive figure in the play, sees the force-feeding as an echo of the famous description in 1 Henry IV of Welsh women forcing dismembered genitalia into the mouths of dead English soldiers. The moment, she argues, is one in which “the phallic assault of war itself” is made plain (that it occurs with a giant green vegetable, she admits, is a “deflating mimicry”), and the peace achieved by the war is breached, re-igniting a cycle of revenge. The impulse to read this confrontation in phallic terms is compelling, especially if one reads the play as a statement on the rapacious male power in the play. Yet I would suggest that the scene between Fluellen and Pistol, though aggressive in tone, does not re-ignite the kinds of tensions that were driving Henry’s war of conquest. See “Uncertain Unions: Welsh leeks in Henry V,” 97.
Pistol. What Pistol is being forced to eat in this assault-by-leek is an idea Fluellen clearly has already fully ingested—the highest honor is the service itself.

Lest we have any lingering doubts about the re-purposed Welshness of this leek, we have Gower to make its significance clear. His most famous line, “Let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition” (5.1.78-79) highlights the way in which Henry V uses Welsh valor in service of English military ends. If Fluellen demonstrates ethnic pride in his assault on Pistol, it is an ethnic pride that Gower mediates for us, reminding Pistol and the audience that the Welshman’s loyalty has effectively made him English. Moreover, Gower is careful to point out that the leek’s attachment to a specifically Welsh military heroism must be qualified: “Will you mock at an ancient tradition, begun upon an honourable respect and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour, and dare not avouch in your deeds any of your words?” (5.1.71-74).

It is the “predeceased valour” to which we should pay the most attention—a phrase that

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63 *Between Nations*, 58.

64 Pistol, much like Williams, doesn’t appear to learn the lesson: once he is left alone, he goes back to scheming about how to win renown (and make money) by exploiting his wartime service. Those in Shakespeare’s audience who knew their herbals, however, may have had reason to think that Pistol’s ingestion of the leek would come back to haunt him. Though some contemporary herbals, such as Rembert Dodoens’s *Niewe Herball*, noted that the leek had curative powers for head injuries (a claim Fluellen himself makes while assaulting Pistol), the majority cited the less desirable effects of the leek, which was said to cause, among other things, nightmares, upset stomach, loss of vision, and excessive temper. Fluellen may well have gotten his revenge after all. For a more detailed discussion of the medicinal properties of the leek (as understood in the early modern period), I refer readers to two useful essays on the topic: Michael Cameron Andrews, “Fluellen; or Speedwell,” *Notes and Queries* 33 (1986): 354-55, and Philip E. Blank, Jr., “Pistol’s ‘Taste of Too Much Correction,’” in *A Fair Day in the Affections: Literary Essays in Honor of Robert B. White, Jr.*, eds. Jack D. Durant and M. Thomas Hester (Raleigh: Winston Press, 1980), 79-85.
has been grievously overlooked in editions of the play— for it signals us to what Shakespeare wants us to know about Welsh militarism. The valor that is “predeceased”—that has died previously—is a valor of days past. This careful choice of adjective (indeed, Shakespeare was the first to use it) reminds us of what we should already know about Fluellen: his brand of valor is outmoded, quaint, even a little funny. But it is nonetheless useful, if only to serve as an example of the kind of unflappable loyalty a king—especially a morally dubious and legitimacy-challenged one—needs from his soldiers. Gower only reminds Pistol of what Fluellen has been doing in the play all along: letting his Welshness serve for whatever the English side needs.

I have argued here that *Henry V*—a play that is decidedly and continuously preoccupied with the martial identity of England—re-purposes the valiant martial identity of Wales as a comic and out-of-fashion set of traditions, traditions that survive in the person of Fluellen. Fluellen is undoubtedly a fan favorite; Shakespeare gives him some of the play’s funniest lines and some of the most poignant lines (though their poignancy,

65 *The Norton Shakespeare* offers no gloss on the term “predeceased,” a puzzling omission for a student-centered text. Craik, however, provides the following footnote: “the bravery of bygone days.”

66 I here note a hypothesis that may add additional complexity to the fabric of this scene: Gower, too, may be identified as a Welshman. The idea is one suggested by Joan Rees, who reminds us that the work of the famed medieval poet John Gower came to Shakespeare in an edition by William Caxton, who identified John Gower as “a squyer borne in Walys in the tyme of King Richard the Second.” See “Shakespeare’s Welshmen,” 31. There is, of course, an additional association with Wales in the name: the Gower peninsula, which sits on the southern coast of Wales. Could Gower be the third in a triumvirate of Welsh characters in *Henry V*? I would certainly endorse the idea that Shakespeare may be hinting that Gower is Welsh; if we are to take him as such, we might consider the possibility that Shakespeare has fashioned here a completely Anglicized Welshman, rather in the middle of the zealous English patriot Fluellen and the suspicious and dissenting Williams.
as I have argued, is often tempered by Fluellen’s persistently comic delivery). But there
is only one military hero in *Henry V*, and that is Henry himself. In Shakespeare’s
characterization of Fluellen, we appear to be witnessing a total re-imagination of the
Welsh military tradition, which is here staged as a tradition preoccupied with the theories
of Roman conquerors, obsessed with the recognition from English commanders, and
resolved to win loyalty on behalf of the English king.

And we are certainly witnessing the re-imagination of another, more specific
tradition: it is undeniable that Shakespeare’s choice of the name “Fluellen” for his token
Welsh soldier was a calculated one. The name is, strictly speaking, a phonetic spelling of
the Welsh name “Llewelyn,” the Welsh double “l” being difficult to pronounce by
anyone other than native Welsh speakers. But the name also invokes the memory of the
last native prince of Wales, Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, a figure already considered at length
in this study. The invocation, I would argue, is a purposeful one,\(^67\) one that fits well with
the characterization of Fluellen Shakespeare has fostered throughout *Henry V*: whatever
native tradition Fluellen has brought with him onstage has been made safe, made non-
threatening, made *English*. This is no dangerous Welsh rebel, intent on reclaiming the
British Isles for the Welsh—this is a re-incarnation of the last native prince of Wales as a
willing participant in Welsh subservience to English royal power.

\(^67\) Lisa Hopkins notes that the intentionality of Shakespeare’s choice is obvious when one
considers that he might have chosen any number of easily pronounceable names that
would have been obviously identified as Welsh, such as Hugh, Owen, or Davy.
the use of the name “Fluellen” in light of its relationship to paternal authority: by
eliminating a surname from his Welsh character, Hopkins argues, Shakespeare has
eliminated Fluellen’s ties to a system of patronymic authority. The result is a Welsh
character that remains completely outside of the crucial structures of power in the play.
Shakespeare’s use of the name “Fluellen” is also, I would argue, resonant with the only other dominant Welsh character to inhabit the 1590s stage: George Peele’s Lluellen, the fictionalized rebel of Edward I. We can be reasonably sure that Shakespeare did, in fact, know this Lluellen. Peele’s play, staged by the chief rival company to Shakespeare’s, was remarkably popular in performance, as I have noted above. Moreover, Edward I was re-issued in quarto in 1599, the likely date for the earliest staging of Henry V, suggesting that Peele’s Lluellen may have been enjoying a stage revival at the same time as Fluellen was making his debut. Shakespeare, then, appears to be carrying on what George Peele began in his characterization of the Welsh and their claim to a valiant disposition from the ancient Britons. Peele’s play registers the anxiety over the Welsh ownership of this British tradition, and his solution is to make Lluellen a deteriorating specimen: while Lluellen begins the play as a formidable enemy to Edward, he becomes increasingly distracted from his nationalistic cause and happily oblivious to his nation’s imminent colonization. As Edward I draws to a close, Lluellen verges on total irrelevance. By the time Shakespeare takes up the issue, just a few years after Peele writes Edward I, whatever was “British” about the Welsh appears to have faded, replaced by a Welsh valor that exists only to serve in the ranks of an ever-expanding English empire. Fluellen, largely defined by his identity as a soldier, remains throughout the play an eager and comically naïve English subject.

The transformation of the Welsh military tradition within both Edward I and Henry V is, of course, indicative of the larger cultural response to the Welsh and their history. In drawing their plots from chronicles, the playwrights were borrowing from
accounts that had long struggled with how to exalt the English nation as both ancient and valorous, while knowing that the ancient and valorous tradition of the British Isles was more clearly identified with the ancestors of the Welsh. The uneven portrayals of the Welsh and their history, though often confusing to modern readers, provided a window of opportunity for playwrights who worked to be both entertaining and timely. In the 1590s, plays celebrating the military prowess of the English nation and its history mirrored the mood of a nation embroiled in a host of domestic and international crises. That this military prowess was in large part borrowed from the history of the ancient Britons meant, in part, that the military tradition of the Welsh would be systematically undermined in favor of a view of English kings who were dominant, successful, and exceedingly powerful.

Edward I and Henry V were, of course, products of distinct periods within the 1590s: while Peele’s play engages in the kind of deep patriotic zeal so characteristic of the early 1590s chronicle plays, Shakespeare’s reflects the subtle tensions of a nation that had grown war-weary at the close of the decade. But in both plays, we see how the issue of Welsh militarism was resolved within the chronicle play: exalting the English nation meant suppressing and re-imagining the past of a neighboring country whose history threatened to overshadow the headliner. Examining these plays in tandem is exceptionally useful, as they each offer insight into how two of the most oft-performed plays of the period—both participants in the period’s most popular stage genre—saw fit
to re-imagine the valiant military tradition of the Welsh.\(^{68}\) Doing so allowed for a more complete and unchallenged portrait of England as a warlike and victorious nation. The patriotic fervor that dominated in the 1590s theatre was only one of the many opportunities for early modern literary culture to engage with and adapt the history of the Welsh. As we will see in subsequent chapters, there would be throughout the early modern period continued political and religious controversy that would invite new interpretations of the Welsh and their historical tradition.

\(^{68}\) Henslowe’s *Diary* provides several clues that suggest even more plays of the 1590s engaged with the ancient British military tradition. In April 1598, he notes payment for a play titled “the lyfe of arthur king of england.” Presumably a play about Arthur would have jibed well with another play Henslowe mentions, in both 1598 and 1599, which he titles “pendragon” (Uther Pendragon was Arthur’s father). Also in 1598, Henslowe notes multiple times a play titled “the conquest of brute.” These plays are lost, but their titles suggest the period’s interest in British heroism; moreover, that the “Arthur” of “the lyfe of arthur” is tagged as a “king of England” is telling—the greatest ancient *British* king is apparently conveniently made English for stage purposes. See Greg, *Henslowe’s Diary*, 52-53, 85, 93.
CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALIZING 1610: CYMBELINE, THE VALIANT WELSHMAN, AND THE PRINCES OF WALES

Be dumb, you scornful English, whose black mouthes
Have dimm’d the glorious splendor of those men,
Whose resolution merits Homers pen:
And you, the types of the harmonious spheres
Call with your silver tones, that reverend Bardin,
That long hath slept within his quiet urn,
And let his tongue this Welshmans Crest adorn.¹

¹ R.A., The Valiant Welshman, Or, The True Chronicle History of the Life and Valiant Deeds of Caradoc the Great, King of Cambria, now called Wales (London: 1663), sig. A4⁴ (hereafter citations of the play will be made parenthetically). The Ohio State University’s Rare Books and Manuscripts collection owns a copy of this edition of the play, and I have chosen to quote from it. The first edition, printed in 1615, is nearly identical to the 1663 edition, only differing in spelling modernizations. The printing of the play in 1663 is significant: in late November of 1662, Charles II gave his illegitimate son James the title “Duke of Monmouth,” and 1663 was a yeal full a formal ceremony acknowledging both the dukedom (February) and James’s installation as a knight of the Order of the Garter (April). These are, of course, not the equivalent of the princedom of Wales, which was reserved for legitimate heirs; however, the dukedom of Monmouth was given precedence over all other dukedoms, and Charles “tended to treat Monmouth as if he were a prince of Wales,” grooming him to be head of the armed forces and sparking speculation that he would declare Charles legitimate. A reissue of The Valiant Welshman may well have coincided with rumors that there would be a new prince of Wales after all. See Tim Harris, “Scott [Crofts], James, duke of Monmouth and first duke of Buccleuch (1649–1685),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/24879>, accessed 13 Sept 2007.
Thus concludes the first monologue of R.A.’s *The Valiant Welshman*. The speaker of these lines is Fortune, the living embodiment of the theater in which *The Valiant Welshman* was performed, the Fortune in Cripplegate, North London.\(^2\)

Fortune’s sharp indictment of English slander of Welshmen is, perhaps, an unexpected admonishment of an English play-going audience who had, in recent years, seen Welshmen portrayed as foolish, misguided rebels (as in Peele’s *Edward I*), or as fawning anglophile soldiers (as in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*). The culture that produced and responded to characters like Lluelen and Fluellen was, as chapter two of this study has shown, highly preoccupied with marshaling a valiant and militaristic identity for the English nation, even if this identity was borrowed from the ancestors of the Welsh. *The Valiant Welshman*, however, appears to do exactly the opposite by locating the heroism and unparalleled strength of Caradoc, an ancient king of Britain and the play’s title character, squarely in Wales. Why would an English playwright set the heroic British past in Wales?\(^3\) Moreover, what would invite a full-length chronicle of a heroic

\(^2\) In the *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642* (New York: Garland, 1986), Yoshiko Kawachi lists the performance location of *The Valiant Welshman* as “Unknown.” We can be relatively certain, however, that the play was performed at The Fortune, the home base of the play’s performing company since 1600; moreover, the overt references to “Fortune” throughout the play are more than enough to support this hypothesis.

\(^3\) The authorship of *The Valiant Welshman* is a contested issue among scholars who have considered the play. The chief contender is Robert Armin, best known for his roles as Feste in *Twelfth Night* and the Fool in *King Lear*. Armin had a playwrighting career of his own; he wrote *The Two Maids of More-Clacke*, and Alexander Liddie contends that *The Valiant Welshman* shares key stylistic resonances with *The Two Maids* that make Armin’s authorship all but certain (see *An Old Spelling, Critical Edition of The History of the Two Maids of More-Clacke*, ed. Alexander S. Liddie [New York: Garland, 1979], esp. Appendix A, 341-354). David Wiles argues that Armin may have written *The Valiant Welshman* in order to come out of retirement to play Sir Morion (see
Welshman, one who, according to the author’s preface, deserves to be chronicled just as the English “Worthies, whose lives have already been acted and printed” (sig. A3)?

My goal in this chapter is to answer these questions, primarily by examining *The Valiant Welshman* and Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline*, a contemporaneous play that was being staged across the river, at the Globe theater. *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman* are, in many ways, remarkably similar plays. The backdrop for both is a Roman invasion of Britain, and both take as their title characters ancient British kings who were, according to contemporary sources, bound by a tributary relationship with Rome. These similarities have not, of course, gone unnoticed by critics, who have often grouped *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman* into a wider canon of early seventeenth-century plays that depict the Roman invasion of Britain. This thematic trend is often

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*Shakespeare’s Clown* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], esp. 143). Others, however, are hesitant to attach the play to Armin; M.C. Bradbrook offers this: “the play reads as if composed by a drunkard who had been learning Armin’s parts” (*Shakespeare the Craftsman* [London: Chatto & Windus, 1969], 71). Tristan Marshall believes that *The Valiant Welshman* was authored by Robert Alleyne, who, in 1613, wrote a tract lamenting the death of Prince Henry (*Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000], 105). Both Armin and Alleyne are sound contenders; however, authorship is unlikely to be solved with any certainty in this particular case.

4 There are four plays that are commonly grouped as dealing with “Romans in Britain”: *Cymbeline, The Valiant Welshman, Bonduca,* and *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* (*Bonduca* will be discussed later in this chapter; and *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* will be covered in chapter four of this study). John E. Curran groups these plays in his study *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism, and the Historical Imagination in England, 1530-1660* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), which argues that these plays demonstrate “revulsion” at Roman domination (16). In “The Romans in Britain, 1603-1614,” John Kerrigan similarly argues that the plays disdain the Roman presence in favor of a Galfridian-sanctioned British legitimacy, which is often located in Wales (see “The Romans in Britain,” in *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences*, eds. Glenn Burgess, Rowland Wymer, and Jason Lawrence [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005], 113-39).
read as a side effect of a period in which Rome and Britain uneasily coexisted as symbols for the Jacobean empire: from the time of his entry into London, James himself showed a preference for the high Roman style, processing through triumphal Roman arches toward pageants that were heavy on classical allusion. For James, Rome was the ideal imperial state on which England should model itself, and critics have rightly noted that “Romans in Britain” plays are responding to this phenomenon.

Yet there is another, more specific grouping that demands attention for these two plays: both were staged in the immediate aftermath of the 1610 investiture of Henry Frederick as prince of Wales, an event that raised the political profile of Wales and invited new theatrical explorations of Wales and its relationship to the ancient British past. As chapter one of this study has shown, symbols of union and long-dormant antiquity abounded in investiture celebrations such as Daniel’s Tethys Festival and Jonson’s Oberon, each of which highlighted the principality as the appropriate

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5 On the symbolism of Rome and Britain in the early Jacobean era, especially as it is expressed in royal pageantry, see Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and The Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), esp. 33-54. Coppélia Kahn also provides a detailed analysis of the Rome-Britain connection in her study, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women* (London: Routledge, 1997), esp. 1-26. Kahn’s analysis is focused primarily on how symbols of Roman and British masculinity found their way into the culture at large, especially in the works of Shakespeare.

6 Unfortunately, we have no written record of a 1610 performance of either play. The case for a 1610 provenance for both plays, is however, very compelling. The case for Cymbeline can be made based on textual resonances with other plays of the period: Thomas Heywood’s *The Golden Age*, written in mid-1610, borrows from Cymbeline, and Beaumont and Fletcher’s Philaster, written by at least October of 1610, also shows a strong link with Cymbeline. Moreover, a reference to an oath of loyalty at 1.6.100 seems to reference the May 1610 assassination of Henri IV of Navarre (incidentally, a hero of Henry Frederick’s). See Martin Butler, “Introduction to Cymbeline,” 3-6. Aside from the clear references to the prince of Wales in The Valiant Welshman, the play also bears similarities to another 1610 play, Ben Jonson’s The Alchemist.
inheritance for an heir that would become king of a newly united Britain. These symbols were no doubt pleasing to James; not only did the investiture highlight the potential of the Stuart dynasty, it also provided a useful stage for disseminating messages about the potential of a united Britain, one that would return to an ancient glory. Yet the celebrations honoring Henry Frederick were also designed to appeal to the new prince of Wales, whose own inclinations toward militarism and chivalry connected to an entirely different version of the ancient British legacy. As Roy Strong’s biography has shown, the prince was deeply invested in presenting himself as a paragon of martial strength; his most enduring preoccupations were soldierly ones, and he surrounded himself with like-minded compatriots who would contribute to the growing cult of personality that surrounded the young prince. While British union may have been an appealing legacy for James, British heroism offered a distinct and flattering parallel for Henry Frederick. Courtly celebrations in honor of Henry Frederick, then, could also usefully draw on the symbols of ancient British military prowess in order to flatter the prince, whose principality in Wales could be meaningfully invoked as the prototypical site for such heroism.

But to what extent did court celebrations disseminate Henry Frederick’s preferred image as a paragon of martial strength? How could courtly celebrations accommodate the interests of a military-minded prince while still honoring a pacifist-minded monarch? In Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones’s *Prince Henry’s Barriers* (staged in January 1610 in

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7 See chapter one, esp. 70-73.
8 For a detailed discussion of Henry Frederick’s “entourage,” which included members of both his own age group but also many men who enjoyed prominence at Elizabeth’s court, see Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, 30-57.
anticipation of the June investiture), the tension is evident. The *Barriers* provided Henry Frederick with a stage for displaying his martial skill (the performance involved stylized “battles” between the young prince and his noble compatriots); his stage persona was named Meliadus, or “soldier of God.” Speeches that preceded Henry Frederick’s martial displays emphasized Arthurian heroism: Arthur praises Meliadus as claimant of “my sceptre and my style,” a prince who will “restore ruined seats of virtue,” (l. 86) and whose heroism rivals that of past Arthurian knights. Merlin reminds Meliadus of Britain’s heroic reputation (“the only name that made Caesar fly” [l. 176]) then invokes the example of English kings who resembled the Roman god Mars in their successful military pursuits.

Yet the *Barriers* contain another message, one that dulls the heroic persona to which Henry Frederick aspired. Although Arthur praises “maiden valour,” he also cautions against offensive aggression; Merlin cautions that a prince must “give laws / To peace no less than arms” (ll. 169-70). For every mention of martial strength, there is an equally compelling endorsement of the “civil arts” (l. 206). The closing speech of the *Barriers*, delivered just after Henry Frederick’s display of sword-and-pike skill, seems oddly demeaning:

Nay, stay your valour; ’tis a wisdom high
In princes to use fortune reverently.
He that in deeds of arms obeys his blood

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10 Merlin, the legendary prophet-figure of Arthurian legend, will be considered in more detail in chapter four of this study.
Doth often tempt his destiny beyond good.
Look on this throne, and in his temper view
The light of all that must have grace in you:
His equal justice, upright fortitude
And settled prudence with that peace endued
Of face, as mind, always himself and even. (ll. 396-404)

In warning the prince about the responsibility of kingship, which includes the
responsibility to exercise temperance in the face of anger, Merlin’s speech underscores a
chief tension of the investiture. In spite of Henry Frederick’s personal interest in
cultivating an image of heroic strength, mediation trumped militarism in James’s court.
The *Barriers* indulged Henry Frederick by allowing him to perform feats-at-arms, but its
final message gestures toward James and his “settled prudence.”

While court performances needed to accommodate and alleviate such tension with
gestures to both James and Henry Frederick, the public theater of 1610 demonstrates that
the divide between the monarch and his son could be staged in ways that were
surprisingly overt. The rising profile of Henry Frederick provided the culture at large
with a realistic alternative to their pacifist king, whose *via media* policies had attracted
the disdain of those who favored more aggressive plans for past enemies like Spain.\footnote{11}
Moreover, the divided symbolism of the investiture—between a peaceful, united Britain,
and a warlike, chivalrous Britain—provided for alternative versions of the ancient past
that could be meaningfully adapted to the politics of either the king or his young heir.

\footnote{11 As Roy Strong points out, many of the critics of James’s pacifism were members of the
Elizabethan war party, who saw James as “a monument to appeasement” for making
peace with a Catholic country like Spain. Their focus on Henry Frederick was
appropriate: the young prince had his own ambitions for war with Spain, as well as for
expansion into the West Indies (Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, 72-73).}
Both Cymbeline and The Valiant Welshman exploit some of the most prominent symbolism of the investiture celebrations in their representations of Wales and its ties to ancient British heroism. Yet they do so in ways that are strikingly different, demonstrating that the ideological divide between James and his bold and aggressive heir could be usefully explored through disparate representations of Wales and its ancient history. These representations become even more pronounced when considered alongside their theatrical provenance: Cymbeline was staged by the King’s Men, while The Valiant Welshman was performed by Prince Henry’s Men. What I examine here is how Cymbeline and The Valiant Welshman—each working to accommodate a particular political position—use the local moment of the investiture to shape the early modern perspective of the Welsh and their legacy of British heroism.

The Prince’s Doubles: Caradoc, Guiderius, and Welsh heroism

Both Cymbeline and The Valiant Welshman feature a theatrical double for the prince of Wales. In Cymbeline, that double is Guiderius, the eldest son of Cymbeline and heir to the throne of Britain. Guiderius exists primarily on the fringes of the play; separated from his father as a child, he has spent his early years in a rural cave with his surrogate father, Belarius, a former soldier in Cymbeline’s court. In The Valiant Welshman, Caradoc serves as a double for Henry Frederick, a fact made plain in the play’s opening lines, which refer to Caradoc as a “prince of Wales”—a title that means nothing in the context of the play’s historical setting, but one that is, of course, highly politicized in the context of 1610. Each theatrical double for Henry Frederick
appropriately displays a streak of valiant martial heroism; Guiderius is responsible for the death of the most despicable villain in *Cymbeline*, and his courage against the Romans saves Cymbeline from capture, while Caradoc’s martial heroics form the most central scenes in *The Valiant Welshman*. Yet martial heroism is, in each play, celebrated with differing degrees of enthusiasm, and the treatment each theatrical double receives demonstrates how the culture at large deployed and reworked the tensions of the investiture on a wider scale. That *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman* each use Welshness as a means for exploring these tensions is testament to both the renewed visibility of the prince’s seat and the renewed interest in the ancient past and its relation to the present. In both plays, then, a distinctive version of Welsh heroism emerges as a means for exploring the ancient past and its usefulness as a model for the present-day heir to the throne.

I want to begin with *The Valiant Welshman*, primarily because it is the play that most explicitly engages with Henry Frederick’s carefully crafted persona. That Caradoc is identified as a “Prince of Wales” (sig. A4) early on is most certainly a gesture to the prince, but the play also lionizes the virtues that Henry Frederick found most compelling: shrewd military skill, a disdain for corrupt politics, and a stalwart refusal to placate the enemy. Caradoc—known as Caratacus or Caractacus, in the chronicles of Holinshed and Camden, respectively—was an ideal subject for an author that was searching for parallels to Henry Frederick. Though Caradoc was, strictly speaking, a “king of Britain,” his most famous exploits were performed in the lands that early seventeenth-century audiences would know as the principality of Wales; moreover, his
reputation as the most skilled military leader in ancient British history aligned him well with Henry Frederick’s own ambitions for his future leadership. The author’s source materials are unanimous in their admiration for Caratacus. Holinshed, who bases his account primarily on the work of the first-century Roman historian Tacitus, emphasizes Caratacus’s “high prowesse & valiancie.”¹² Camden offers similar praise, with an even higher degree of specificity: identifying Caractacus as the chief commander of the Silures, a tribe in the southern part of Wales, Camden praises the British commander as the most preeminent and valorous of all those to take on the Romans.¹³ That Caratacus had “Welsh” roots in the chronicles is especially useful here; a tie to Wales made for a convenient tie to Henry Frederick’s recently acquired principality. *The Valiant Welshman*, then, had a fitting precedent for a version of heroism that would endorse the ancient past and its Welsh origins as a suitable model for the future monarch.

*The Valiant Welshman* is primarily war-driven. The play tracks the successful military exploits that eventually lead Caradoc to his position as king of Wales, a kingdom he will ultimately defend against Roman invasion. Caradoc’s story begins when he arrives in North Wales to assist Octavian, who is struggling to beat back the military campaign of Monmouth, the king of South Wales and an evil usurper who seeks

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¹² *The First and Second Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587), 38 (sig. D1v). R.A. himself cites Tacitus as a source in his preface to the 1615 edition of *The Valiant Welshman*. Though it is certainly possible that R.A. used Tacitus primarily, rather than his English contemporaries, we can also be sure that R.A. consulted the English chronicles as well: these sources provided him with many of his auxiliary characters, including Codigune and Gederus. The issue of source materials in *The Valiant Welshman* has been treated in detail in John Curran’s *Roman Invasions* (esp. 200-201), which argues that R.A. claimed Tacitus as a source in order to position himself as a well-read sophisticate, one who did not rely purely on English accounts of the national past.

¹³ *Britain*, 615 (sig. Eee 6v).
to overthrow Octavian.\textsuperscript{14} In his first appearance onstage, Caradoc is tagged as “manly” (sig. B2\textsuperscript{r}); his courage is plainly revealed in the play’s first onstage battle, in which he emerges as the most capable soldier fighting on Octavian’s behalf. Their chances against Monmouth seem dismal once Caradoc’s father, Cadallan, has been mortally wounded, but Caradoc is eager to return to the fray, urging his comrades to “go to the field, / Cheer up the Souldiers, whilst I single forth” (sig. B3\textsuperscript{r}). His insistence on facing Monmouth alone may at first seem foolhardy, especially given Monmouth’s own impressive military strength: Monmouth single-handedly beats back a group of Octavian’s forces just before he meets Caradoc face-to-face. And although Monmouth seems confident of his martial prowess, urging Caradoc to “take measure” before engaging him, Caradoc defeats the usurper with relative ease.

Such displays of superior strength abound: Caradoc easily defeats the play’s Claudius Caesar in a one-on-one battle, leaving the proud Roman begging Caradoc to “hold thy warlike hands” (sig. D2\textsuperscript{r}). Later in the play, Caradoc shames his political rival by calling on him for a duel of sorts, one in which Codigune must match Caradoc’s skill (“I dare thee fight, / Even in a single Monomachy, hand to hand”), and fight completely alone (“And let no man disturb the Combatants, / Till one or both, fall to our mother

\textsuperscript{14} Monmouth is, of course, the historic locale at which Henry V was born, a fact played on in 4.2 of Shakespeare’s \textit{Henry V} to legitimize Henry’s claim to Welshness (see l. 104). The name as it is used in \textit{The Valiant Welshman}, however, seems to invoke some of the more problematic aspects of Monmouth as a truly Welsh locale; since the 1535 Laws in Wales Act, Monmouthshire had enjoyed a distinctly English privilege, being the only Welsh county given two knights of the shire for representation. The distinction between Monmouthshire and other Welsh counties often led to it being counted as an unambiguous part of England; that Monmouth is overthrown early in \textit{The Valiant Welshman} stresses the return of the kingdom to its rightfully Welsh heirs.
earth” [sig. E3r]). The ensuing battle, fought by poleaxe, seems to function much in the same way as does Henry Frederick’s performance in the Barriers—Caradoc displays his martial superiority, and Codigune is handily defeated. Even the Romans, who are reminded by the traitor Codigune of their own “matchless triumphs” in war, seem excessively preoccupied with Caradoc’s martial skill, delaying their invasion to better prepare for the “strong and puissant” Caradoc (sig. F2r). This is, perhaps, because they have heard that Caradoc’s strength is Herculean, a comparison exploited throughout the play. The Bardh, who functions as a sort of mythical narrator for The Valiant Welshman, claims that the infant Caradoc, like the infant Hercules, choked “two hideous Snakes” (sig. A4v) in his cradle, and Caradoc himself compares his own labors to those of Hercules—the battle to defeat Monmouth, he suggests, is akin to cleaning out the filthy Augean stables, a feat which Hercules accomplished, miraculously, in a single day.

R.A. is careful to stress, however, that Caradoc’s successes are not based purely on strength, but also on skill. Described late in the play by a neighboring king, Caradoc is hailed as “well instructed in true fortitude, / A Graduate in Martial discipline, / And needs no Tutour; for in pupil age / He was brought up in honours rudiments, / And learned the elements of warlike Arts” (sigs. H1v-H2r). This description of Caradoc’s martial education matches with Caradoc’s early musings on his skill and where it is best deployed: frustrated at being sent into the hills in his first confrontation with Roman forces, Caradoc scorns those who have not “read / The first material Elements of war” (sig. D2r) and offers an impressive catalogue of the warfare he knows (including,
anachronistically, seventeenth-century implements such as the canon and musket). In addition to being skilled in the arts of war, he is also temperate in them: careful not to risk the lives of many for an unjust war, he attempts diplomacy with Codigune (‘First with words / Wee’l seek to conquer’ [sig. E2’]), urging his rival to consider the larger human costs of war:

_Codigune_, mark what I’ll offer thee:  
Since that the wrongs, which basely thou hast bred  
Cannot be reconciled, but by the death  
Of millions, that must suffer for us two;  
And we the Authors of what wars and bloud  
Shall in her frantick outrage lavish out:  
(For ’tis a thing honour scorns to do,  
That multitudes should perish for us two:)  
Thou art a man, if actions like thy words,  
Be but proportionable… (sigs. E2’-E3’)

The focus on Caradoc’s training and his moderation is key for understanding the play’s overall treatment of Welsh heroism. By attributing Caradoc’s martial successes to a civilized form of training, the play offers a depiction of heroism that moves beyond plain brute force; moreover, the restraint Caradoc displays in the face of war emphasizes that this hero is not simply a warmongering mercenary. Instead, Caradoc is proven a skilled and cautious leader—in short, an ancient king of which the English could be proud.

The focus on Caradoc’s martial skill is, of course, made most plain in the play’s onstage battles (and there are many of these—“alarums” abound throughout). But _The Valiant Welshman_ also explores the implications of having such a successful martial hero as king. Caradoc may indeed be a cautious and considerate leader, but he is also extraordinarily disdainful of and impatient with politics. Characters in the play who show a preference for political theorizing and maneuvering are roundly ridiculed,
especially when faced with Caradoc’s heroism. The usurper Monmouth is the first to demonstrate such political inclinations, offering almost comic philosophical musings after Caradoc has labeled him an “Ambitious villain”:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Fondling, thou speakest in too mild consonants:} \\
\text{Thy ayry words cannot wake my spleen:} \\
\text{Thou woundst the subtil body of the ayr,} \\
\text{In whose concavity we stand immured:} \\
\text{Thou givest me cordials, and not vomits now:} \\
\text{Thy Physick will not work: these names thou speakest,} \\
\text{Fill up each spongy pore within my flesh,} \\
\text{With joy intolerable: and thy kind salutes} \\
\text{Of villainy, and ambition, best befits} \\
\text{The royal thoughts of Kings: Read Machiavel:} \\
\text{Princes that would aspire, must mock at hell.} (\text{sig. B4}^r)
\end{align*}
\]

Caradoc offers no sophisticated rebuttal to Monmouth’s lengthy nihilist commentary on the nature of kingship before getting back to the business of the fight: “Although thou fears’t not hell,” he tells Monmouth before striking him dead, “Ile dig thy grave” (sig. B4^r).

Codigune displays a similar penchant for Machiavellian plots, especially after Caradoc wins all the favor of Octavian, thus displacing the bastard Codigune from Octavian’s line of succession. Glowering at the celebration over Monmouth’s defeat, Codigune muses on the impulse that “Italianates my barren faculties,” leading him to “Machiavellian blackness” (sig. C1^v). The souls of politicians, he claims, are filled with “Black projects, deep conceits” (sig. C1^v) and his revenge against Caradoc will derive from these methods. Codigune’s plots combine poisonings, kidnappings, and double-dealing with the Romans; his soliloquies on revenge and personal ambition are the play’s longest. Caradoc, by contrast, offers his fair share of nationalistic couplets (“But at the
name of Romans, is all war / All courage, all compact of manly vigour” [sig. C3v]),
eschewing lengthy musings on his own philosophical role within the political sphere.
Moreover, Caradoc is openly derisive of bribery and court favoritism, even in the face of
Rome’s emperor. When Caesar offers Caradoc (disguised here as a common soldier)
money in exchange for his release, Caradoc reminds him that “Souldiers have mines of
honorable thoughts, (…) The wealth we crave, / Are noble actions, and an honoured
grave” (sig. D2v). In the play’s final scene, Caradoc will reiterate his disdain for what
has become of the court, complaining of the “Sycophants” and “flattery” that threaten
true honor (sig. I4r). It is an appropriate sentiment from a king who made his reputation
on honorable deeds, and an appropriate reminder of the young Henry Frederick, whose
own contempt for the self-indulgent court of James was well documented.15

Indeed, if any criticism is to be found of Caradoc in The Valiant Welshman, it is at
moments in which Caradoc allows himself to be victim to these kind of politic threats.
R.A. follows his source materials in having Caradoc’s defeat at the hands of the Romans
come by way of betrayal, not martial failure;16 however, Caradoc’s own inability to
anticipate that betrayal reads like a subtle critique. A key misjudgment from Caradoc
comes in the play’s third act, after Caradoc has returned to Wales to find that Codigune

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15 Strong, Henry, Prince of Wales, 54-57. Tristan Marshall, who also notes a parallel
between Henry Frederick and Caradoc, sees a more explicit similarity in Caradoc’s
disdain for bribes; Henry Frederick, he claims, “was reputed to have disliked bribes.”
See Theatre and Empire, 107.
16 Holinshed has Caratacus being “delivered into the hands of the Romans” by
Cartemandua, queen of the Brigants, a neighboring tribe (The First and Second Volumes
of Chronicles, 39 [sig. D2v]). In Camden, the account of betrayal is nearly identical,
except that in his version, “Cartismandua” is decidedly more active: Caractacus is “by her
taken, bound with yrons, and delivered to the Conquerours.” See Britain, 44 (sig. D4v).
has murdered Octavian, the very king who made Caradoc heir after the defeat of
Monmouth. Once Caradoc has confronted and defeated Codigune, he makes an unlikely
concession to his rival: he offers him the kingdom of North Wales, provided that
Codigune agrees to recognize and pay tribute to Caradoc’s kingdom in South Wales.

Codigune is quick—too quick—to offer his surrender:

Know, Caradoc, since by the chance of war,
I must be forc’d to render up that right,
That like a slave I might have kept by might,
I scorn thy gifts, and rather chuse to live
In the vast wilderness with fatal Owls
Free from the malice of base buzzard Chance… (sig. E3v)

Codigune half-heartedly invokes the laws of war here, suggesting that his loss in a fair
fight will force him into seclusion—and perhaps because Caradoc so wholeheartedly
believes in these laws, he also believes Codigune, setting him free without restrictions.
It is, to say the least, a naïve move: Caradoc has too readily assumed that his superior
martial strength will forever quiet Codigune’s rebellious urges. While Caradoc accepts
an apology from Codigune’s co-conspirator, Cornwall (who has only to offer a four-line
act of contrition in order for Caradoc to forgive “All former injuries”), Codigune makes
an aside: “I’ll to the Romans, and there plot” (sig. E3v). And as yet another conspirator,
Gloster, slinks offstage to plot additional threats to Caradoc and his kingdom, Caradoc is
fully immersed in his coronation—now that Codigune has turned down North Wales,
Caradoc is king of a newly united Wales. His preoccupation with monarchical
ceremony continues into the play’s fourth act, when he plans an elaborate coronation for
his queen. Caradoc’s once-nationalistic rhetoric has turned decidedly sovereign in tone;
he even muses on “our royal blood”—in spite of the fact that he became king through
deeds, not birth. In the interim of Caradoc’s transformation from martial hero to monarch, two new plots have been hatched against him, both of which will come to him as a complete surprise.

Caradoc makes another critical error when he comfortably settles into the home of Venusius, king of York, and his wife Cartamanda, who have agreed to hide Caradoc from the invading Romans. Though Caradoc has, by now, plenty of reasons to suspect everyone, and though he seems acutely aware of the risk of traitors (“what fidelity / Can be in Traytors, who art so unjust, / That their own Countrey is deceived in trust?” [sig. H3r]), he is naively unsuspicious of his hosts, and it is Cartamanda that eventually hands Caradoc over to the Romans. The staging of his capture, is, I think, extraordinarily telling: the Romans burst into his room and find him reading, completely divorced from the heroic persona that had characterized his rise to power. Caradoc’s undoing at the hands of treacherous foes, and, indeed, his own complacency in that undoing, may well provide a subtle lesson. The best kings must remain constantly vigilant about the risk of betrayal, and constantly prepared to defend themselves with force against such betrayal. The play stresses that Caradoc must cling to his martial essence, especially in the face of political maneuvering.

In spite of his errors, however, Caradoc’s martial heroism is the mainstay of The Valiant Welshman, and as we have seen, he displays this heroism in an impressive number of wars (he battles Monmouth, Codigune, and the Romans in quick
succession\textsuperscript{17}). Yet R.A. manages another heroic episode for Caradoc, one that is
decidedly less political in origins. In the play’s fourth act, amidst the turmoil of
impending Roman invasion, Caradoc must travel to the rural parts of Wales to defeat a
giant serpent—concocted by a witch, on the orders of the traitor Gloster—that has been
devouring the sheep and shepherds of Wales. The episode is curious, and no doubt its
presence in an otherwise historically-derived play has contributed to the critical
consensus that \textit{The Valiant Welshman} is little more than a pastiche of conflicting
theatrical conventions.\textsuperscript{18} I would argue, however, that this episode marks a further
development of Caradoc’s particular brand of heroism: he clearly fights with God on his
side. \textit{The Valiant Welshman} takes place in a pre-Christian Britain, and although the play
makes obligatory references to “the gods,” it also, like other plays of the period, infuses
that setting with Christian sentiment. Octavian is the first to display a providential sense
of Christian justice; before going to war, he reassures his army with the claim that
“Angels guard the just” (sig. B2\textsuperscript{v}); later he will claim that their victory was “the will of
heaven” (sig. B4\textsuperscript{v}). Caradoc seems to share in this sentiment; later in the play, he
describes heaven as “a place of rest, and Angels bliss” (sig. B3\textsuperscript{v}).

This kind of faith is contrasted with the black magic and superstition within
Wales, which is the root of the serpent’s creation: the witch responsible for its creation is
praised by Gloster for her ability to “command stern vengeance from beneath / The

\textsuperscript{17} The play’s action actually occurs over a longer period of time; we learn in act four, for
example, that Caradoc’s wars against the Romans lasted over nine years (sig. H3\textsuperscript{v}).
\textsuperscript{18} M.C. Bradbrook offers one of the most scathing critiques, calling the play “an
appalling piece of gibberish” that borrows heavily from other plays of the period. See
\textit{Shakespeare the Craftsman}, 71-72.
Center of the Earth,” with her “black” arts (sig. E4'). Caradoc hastens to the site of the serpent’s wrath with characteristic vigor and fearlessness, but before he meets his unconventional foe, he is stopped by a prophetic old man, who, “by sacred heavens decree” provides Caradoc with a “precious soveraigne herb” (sig. G1') that will help him to defeat the monster. It is a classic Spenserian “add faith unto your force” moment; the old man, who is careful to distinguish his herb from the “black enchantments” against which Caradoc will be fighting, warns that “No force of sword can conquer hellish fiends” (sig. G1'), which require a higher power than Caradoc has yet employed against his enemies. Caradoc’s gratitude for this advice (he thanks the old man as “gentle father”) is followed by an elaborate display of stagecraft, in which the serpent “flies into the Temple” (sig. G1') after being shown the herb. We might take this stage direction quite literally—if the serpent is indeed meant to “fly” back into the cave, it is a serpent that may well look rather like a dragon, a visual reference that would tie Caradoc’s fight to that of Saint George, the patron saint of England whose slaying of the dragon—especially in Spenser’s Protestant-inspired version of the story—was deeply tied to his Christian faith. Caradoc’s final act of warfare on the witch is to order that her temple be burned to the ground, and that she be tossed atop the flames. The rooting out of dangerous religious influences seems designed to stress yet another of Henry Frederick’s

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19 See The Faerie Queene’s Book I, in which Una utters this phrase to the beleaguered Redcrosse, who is fighting “Error,” a vile monster “Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide / But th’other halfe did womans shape retaine” (I.i.14). Caradoc’s defeat of this serpentine monster may also hearken to another episode in Spenser’s epic. In Book V, Arthur enters an old church to destroy an idol that is guarded by a monster that has “A Dragon’s taile” (V.ix.24) and the snake-like ability to stretch itself so that it “fild all the place” (V.ix.23). Arthur, of course, triumphantly defeats this guardian of relics and idols, securing a victory for the true faith.
most valued traits: a Protestantism that was fiercely intolerant of corrosive religious influences. Caradoc’s militant Protestantism is not explicit, but implicit enough to make him an ancient model for an ideal militant Protestant king.

The “Welshness” that Caradoc embodies is thus one that is easily absorbed into the English cultural imagination. Caradoc is a Welshman that need not be assimilated; he has an inherent impulse to valor, an extraordinary sense of honor, and an inclination to root out evil magic and superstition where he finds it. Although his impressive roster of deeds displays this civility, we are reminded of it in other ways as well, such as when Caradoc is revealed to come from Shrewsbury (sig. B1'), a town on the border between Wales and England. Not only was Shrewsbury known for its burgeoning marketplace, it was also home to the famous school that had trained two of England’s most revered chivalric heroes: Sir Philip Sidney and Robert Devereux, earl of Essex.²⁰ In short, Caradoc is no naked, tribal heathen, nor is he a foolish, accented, and boastful stage Welshman—a stereotype fully exploited in the character of Morgan, the earl of Anglesey and the loyal soldier to Octavian who later becomes Caradoc’s most valued sidekick. Morgan’s stage presence is most certainly derivative: like Fluellen, Morgan is a tremendously capable soldier (it is Morgan, after all, that will eventually kill one of

²⁰Devereux, the second earl of Essex, had of course been executed after attempting to seize control of Elizabeth’s court; however, his reputation for chivalry was revived following James’s accession (James invited Devereux’s son, the third earl of Essex, to accompany him on his entrance into London in 1604). Interestingly, the third earl of Essex served as page to Henry Frederick, until the two had a falling out sometime between 1610 and 1611. See John Morrill, “Devereux, Robert, third earl of Essex (1591–1646),” in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23467>, accessed 3 March 2008.
Caradoc’s most dangerous enemies, Cornwall), and he is fiercely loyal to Caradoc. And like Fluellen, Morgan’s speech is heavily accented, and often comic in tone. He references “Saint Tavy,” (sig. B1’) calls Caradoc “cousin ap Caradoc” (a comic send-up of the Welsh attachment to genealogy [sig. C4’]), and boasts that Wales is “the pravest nation under the Suns” (sig. E1’).

Of course, unlike Fluellen, Morgan is not serving an English king, but a Welsh one, and the differences that distinguish him from Caradoc are key: while the comic, stereotypical traits of Welshness are fully displaced within the character of Morgan, we are offered an alternative version of Welshness in Caradoc, who reaps all the benefits—but none of the liabilities—that a Welsh pedigree offers. While Morgan’s Welshness is heavily invested in contemporary references and stereotypes of the Welsh, Caradoc’s Welshness is heavily invested in the ancient mythical past of Wales. Besides the frequent comparisons to Hercules, Caradoc is also associated with the famed Trojan ancestry of the ancient Britons: “These honourable sparks of man we keep, / Descended lineally from Hectors race” (sig. D2’). More telling, perhaps, is The Valiant Welshman’s invocation of the Arthurian past for Caradoc; Octavian’s court (over which Caradoc eventually presides), is rife with feasting and sporting, and it is here that Caradoc will be betrothed to his bride, Guinevere. The allusion to the Arthurian court and the famed Arthurian bride is none-too-subtle here. By exploiting the most prominent heroic myths about the ancient Britons, R.A. is able to create a Caradoc who functions as the perfect prince of Wales.
Perhaps, then, we are not really meant to think of Caradoc as Welsh at all, but instead as generically “British,” in the ancient, mythical, and heroic sense? R.A. himself, after all, mentions in his 1615 preface to *The Valiant Welshman* that Caradoc was truly known to his enemies as the “\textit{V A L I A N T B R I T T A I N}” (sig. A3): his reign over British areas that contemporary audiences knew as Welsh locales thus prompted R.A. to identify Caradoc as a Welshman. This is a tempting theory, except that R.A.’s play repeatedly centralizes the importance of Wales, most especially in its depiction of a neighboring kingdom to Wales, known, curiously, as “Britain.” The depiction of the kingdom of Britain in *The Valiant Welshman* is crucial for understanding how the play works to highlight the pre-eminence of Wales and its king. Britain’s presence within *The Valiant Welshman* is first revealed following the wedding of Caradoc and Guinevere, when a foreign ambassador arrives in Wales to beg for help on behalf of Gederus, a British king who faces invasion from Rome. The ambassador’s speech is deferent in tone, and throughout, treats Octavian as a superior king, head of a powerful nation:

\begin{verbatim}
Now, mighty king, since Brittain throughout the world
Is counted famous for a generous Ile,
Scorning to yield to foreign servitude,
Gederus humbly doth desire your aid,
To back him ’gainst the pride of Roman Cesar,
And force his forces from the Brittish shores:
Which being done with speed, he vows to tie
Himself to Wales, in bonds of amity.  (sig. C3v)
\end{verbatim}

The ambassador’s speech does indeed invoke the mythic past of Britain by suggesting that Britain has a reputation for resisting invasion from foreign foes; this is confirmed by Octavian, who knows Britain as “a Nation free and bold” (sig. C3v), one that fought
against Julius Caesar’s invasion. This, of course, highlights the fact that *The Valiant Welshman* conceives of this Britain’s history as entirely separate from that of Wales, but the ambassador also positions Britain in a subordinate position to Wales, stressing that Welsh support will provoke a lasting debt of gratitude from Britain.

The ambassador’s concessions to Wales are, however, only the first indication of Britain’s subordinate state. When Caradoc arrives in Britain (we are reminded repeatedly that Britain is geographically separate from Wales), he is met with great praise from Gederus, who figures Britain as a small, beleaguered isle, drowning in the Roman invasion (“the swelling tempests of these times / Overflow our Brittish banks”) and in dire need of help from the “flowers of famous Wales” (sig. D1r). This representation—of a small Britain—seems to contrast pointedly with the play’s early description of Wales, which has “spacious bounds” that will, of course, eventually be entirely under the reign of Caradoc. Britain is further undermined when its king, Gederus, believes a false report about Caradoc’s loyalty and quickly relegates Caradoc to the position of an average soldier, instructing him to wait upon a hill “unless you see our Army faint” (sig. D1v). Caradoc’s refusal to bend to Gederus’s demands ultimately leads to his heroic capture of Caesar, a feat that inspires great admiration from Gederus’s son, Gald, who decides to abandon Britain to follow Caradoc back to Wales.

Caradoc’s first clash with Roman forces is thus crucial: not only does it highlight the centrality of Wales as a heroic nation, it also undermines the weakly-led British state, which, from this point on, fades entirely from the narrative. Gederus is never mentioned again, and in the subsequent Roman invasions, it is Caradoc who is solely responsible
for defending national sovereignty. Even in the play’s last scene, in which Caradoc has been captured by Roman forces, Wales is again highlighted as the central locale of national sovereignty. The submission to Caesar is here hardly a submission at all (Caradoc scorns Caesar’s demands, arguing “I was not born to kneel, but to the Gods” [sig. I3v]), and Caesar is so impressed that he agrees to return Caradoc to Wales “with all liberties” (sig. I4v). It is, perhaps, the most heroic ending R.A. could write for Caradoc given that, historically, his story ends in defeat. It is also an ending in which Wales comes to stand for the entirety of Britain and its heroic past. In centralizing Wales, R.A. centralizes his heroic “Prince of Wales,” who represents an ideal version of ancient British leadership.

It is an appropriate tribute from Henry Frederick’s own company of players, and although we cannot be certain that Henry Frederick prompted or even witnessed such a tribute, we can speculate that such theatrical spectacle in his honor was designed to raise and endorse the public profile of a prince who was surprisingly active in the control of his public image, a fact demonstrated most clearly in his involvement with his own investiture celebrations. Such a blatant endorsement of Henry Frederick’s image subtly critiques the king, whose efforts to stay firmly out of the fray of international dispute

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21 In this I disagree with Tristan Marshall, whose reading of the relationship between Caradoc and Gederus is decidedly more focused on Britain. Marshall claims that the play ultimately recreates a unified Britain by having Caradoc unite with Gederus to defeat Rome. Gederus, Marshall argues, is “accorded great respect,” and “the Welsh Caradoc can become British.” See Theatre and Empire, 108. Marshall does not address, however, the play’s presentation of Gederus as deeply flawed, nor does he address Gederus’s disappearance from the play’s narrative. For his part, Caradoc is never identified as a “Briton” except while in disguise, when he fights on behalf of Gederus: for the rest of the play, he is resolutely Welsh, even when he stands before Caesar in the final scene.

22 Strong, Henry, Prince of Wales, 141.
aligned him with a *via media* policy that was inconsistent with the aggressive militarism that was so actively pursued by Henry Frederick. The Prince of Wales’s Men are thus participatory in the image-building of their patron; this is highlighted by the genre of the play they staged in his honor. Although early critics of *The Valiant Welshman* were inclined to mock the play’s “old craft spectacle,” which drew heavily from the style of chronicle history plays, this “old craft” proved especially amenable to the thematic underpinnings of the play. The theatrical conventions of the chronicle history allowed for frequent displays of martial prowess and national pride, qualities that were particularly appropriate for a Welsh hero that was designed to highlight the best qualities of the mythic ancient past. The construction of this ancient Welshman made for a timely parallel to and a useful model for the current prince of Wales.

Unlike *The Valiant Welshman*, *Cymbeline* borrows very little from the recent theatrical past; it bears the mark of a more seventeenth-century aesthetic by including a masque-like interlude and a tragicomic plot that shuns easy resolutions to complicated plot twists. *Cymbeline* similarly shuns idyllic representations of the ancient past. Cymbeline’s British court is civilized indeed, but not intrinsically so. It is instead

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23 Bradbrook, *Shakespeare the Craftsman*, 72. Irving Ribner has similar disdain for the genre of *The Valiant Welshman*, calling the author “an avid imitator both of history plays and of other popular drama, but he had little imagination, little ability to construct a play, and no understanding of the meaning and function of history.” See *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, 264-65.

24 On the genre of *Cymbeline*, see Martin Butler’s “Introduction to *Cymbeline*,” (in *Cymbeline*, ed. Martin Butler [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005]), esp. 6-24, in which Butler describes in keen detail the play’s borrowings from folktale, Hellenistic and dramatic romance, Sidney and Spenser, and tragedy.
shaped by Roman influences from the start—Cymbeline freely admits his formative years were spent among the Romans, and his British kingdom has apparently enjoyed a cooperative relationship with Rome for years. The play ultimately endorses this cooperation. Characters in the play who argue for British resistance to Rome are wicked: the chief villains of Cymbeline, the queen and her son Cloten, are the mouthpieces for the kind of nationalistic bombast that was so characteristic of Caradoc in The Valiant Welshman. The “textual puzzle” that has kept critics discussing Cymbeline’s national politics for decades occurs in the play’s third act, when the queen delivers a powerful speech praising the valiant British ancestry, urging Cymbeline to remember “The kings your ancestors, together with / The natural bravery of your isle.”

As John Curran has compellingly argued, the queen’s rhetoric here borrows heavily from the Galfridian mythology of ancient British autonomy and resistance. If this kind of patriotism seems problematic from a woman who is nothing short of evil from the play’s first act (when her hatred for Innogen is revealed), then the play seems to resolutely

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25 3.1.18. All quotations from Cymbeline (hereafter cited parenthetically) come from Martin Butler’s Cambridge edition, cited in the previous footnote. The patriotic appeal of the queen’s speech has been a crucial point for many critics of Cymbeline, including Jodi Mikalachki, who notes that the speech combines “appeals to native topography, history, and legendary origins,” and in doing so, “it recalls the highest moments of Elizabethan nationalism.” Ultimately, Mikalachki contends that the queen’s nationalism is proven to be a sign of female savagery, which, in the context of Cymbeline, is undermined and replaced by an all-male ideology. See “The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: Cymbeline and Early Modern English Nationalism,” Shakespeare Quarterly 46.3 (1995): 301-22, esp. 303-304. For Philip Schwyzer, the queen’s speech highlights Shakespeare’s disdain for nationalistic bombast; quoting Samuel Johnson, Schwyzer argues that the queen’s patriotism is “the last refuge of scoundrels.” See Literature, Nationalism, and Memory, 170.

solve this puzzle when, following her death, the queen is proclaimed a “most delicate
diend” (5.4.47) by the husband who followed her rhetoric into war with the Romans. In
Cymbeline, the myth of the ancient past—and all its attendant bombast—is exposed as a
dangerous threat to the nation’s future.

Yet as Curran and others have shown, the heroic mythology of the ancient past is
never wholly discredited in the context of Cymbeline; indeed, it is explored on the
fringes of the play—appropriately, in a locale that is suspiciously like Wales, and so
implicitly connected to the ancient past that Cymbeline works hard to re-imagine. In
this rural and barren locale are found Cymbeline’s two long-lost sons, the princes of
Britain, who have languished in obscurity under the parentage of Belarius, who left
Cymbeline’s court after being falsely branded as a traitor. For Curran, the exploration of
Wales and its inhabitants in Cymbeline is connected to the early-seventeenth century
historiographical shift, one that moved away from the Galfridian tradition toward a more
realistic version of the national past, and one in which the ancient Britons were “naked,
painted, heathens” who were undoubtedly heroic, but lacking in basic civilization. For
this progress, the Britons would need the Roman influence. Thus Cymbeline’s Welsh
scenes can be read as a depiction of this more historically-informed version of British
history; the princes who live in the Welsh space are, like the early Britons, valiant but

27 Jodi Mikalachki, for example, argues that the “primitive fantasy of the Welsh cave”
should theoretically be “a retreat to pure Britishness,” but in Cymbeline, it turns out, in
fact, to be a failed experiment in which the true British princes are kept from their Roman
destiny. See The Legend of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England
rough around the edges, destined for a more hopeful future that will align them with their imperial benefactor, Rome.

Although I agree that *Cymbeline* is likely engaging with the politics of historiography in its treatment of the young princes and their Welsh upbringing, I want here to shift the focus to the specific politics of 1610, which invite a sustained look at Guiderius—Cymbeline’s eldest son and heir to his throne—as a theatrical double for Henry Frederick. The theatrical symbolism deployed for the discovery of Guiderius and his brother, Arviragus, is especially resonant with the first masque performed for Henry Frederick’s investiture; as in Samuel Daniel’s *Tethys Festival*, the heir is found in “Cambria,” and, in an even more specific recalling of Daniel’s masque, near Milford Haven. The play also apparently anticipates the symbolism of Ben Jonson’s *Oberon*, *The Faery Prince*, which figures Oberon—played by Henry Frederick himself—as the next great hope for the restoration of British glory; Oberon is discovered within a giant rock, or cave, from which he will emerge to claim his inheritance.\(^\text{29}\) Guiderius’s theatrical presence also subtly mimics the preoccupations of Henry Frederick. In spite of his youth, Guiderius is naturally inclined to valorous pursuits, and his eagerness to do battle with the Romans is, in the end, a saving grace for Cymbeline, whose own British soldiers seem unprepared and unwilling to fight.\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{29}\) *Oberon* was staged on 1 January 1611, with Henry Frederick himself performing as Oberon. See *Ben Jonson*, eds. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52), 7: 340-56.

\(^{30}\) See 5.2.10-18. especially, which has Cymbeline’s Briton forces fleeing the Romans just as Cymbeline is captured.
Yet all is not glory for Guiderius, whose heroism is qualified in ways that we simply do not see within *The Valiant Welshman*. One primary indication of this ambivalence is in Shakespeare’s carefully constructed depiction of Guiderius’s temporary home in Wales. Just as in *The Valiant Welshman*, “Wales” is of course an anachronism—no such separate entity existed in the context of Roman Britain—yet also as in *The Valiant Welshman*, *Cymbeline* creates an imaginary version in order to explore the implications of a space that had, in the context of 1610 especially, come to represent both the site of the ancient British past and the future British heir. In *Cymbeline*, however, the relationship between Wales and Britain (which is, in this case, the kingdom of Cymbeline) is nearly reversed, with Britain taking the central role, and Wales fading from the narrative.

The geography of *Cymbeline* is confusing at best, resembling something more like contemporary England than ancient Britain: Cymbeline rules from what appears to be a thriving metropolis in Lud’s Town (the supposed precursor of London\(^{31}\)), where his daughter Innogen occupies a bedchamber that seems far more seventeenth century than first.\(^{32}\) This stands in sharp contrast to the quarters of Cymbeline’s other offspring, who have spent their youth in a distant and rural cave, somewhere near Milford Haven.

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\(^{31}\)“Lud’s Town,” is, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the city built by King Lud, who was brother to Cassibelan (“Kymbeline” in Holinshed, and “Cymbeline” in Shakespeare). In Geoffrey’s version, the city is known as “Caerlud,” and was formerly known as by the name “Trinovaunt,” or “Troynovant”—“new Troy.” See *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Baltimore: Penguin, 1966), 73-74.

\(^{32}\)In his recent edition of *Cymbeline*, Martin Butler notes the extent to which Iachimo’s description of Innogen’s bedchamber mirrors the height of seventeenth-century fashion, especially in the rich tapestries that line her walls. See especially Butler’s notes to 3.4.66-91.
Critics have rightly noted that *Cymbeline* seems desperate to exploit the symbolism of Milford, the famed landing spot of Henry Tudor in his march toward overthrowing Richard III, but the consensus on Milford’s significance is far from settled. While some have argued that the famous port is invoked to highlight a celebratory moment in English history, others have eschewed the Tudor connection to Milford Haven, arguing instead that Shakespeare is likely playing on English anxieties about Milford as a potential landing ground for enemy trespassers, a locus for lingering anxieties about the fealty of the Welsh—and, by extension, the fealty of other inhabitants of the British Isles who might be tempted to join forces with foreign invaders. Indeed, the play itself seems to bear out these seemingly opposed readings: although Innogen offers a poetic celebration of Milford as her own personal port of union (a “blessed haven” that will bring her back to her husband [3.2.60]), she is actually quite wrong on this point, since Posthumus has chosen Milford as the site for a decisive break in their union—he plans to murder her. It is thus fortunate that Innogen never quite makes it there: instead, she

33 Emrys Jones was the first to argue for *Cymbeline*’s use of Milford as a reference to Henry VII and his march through Wales (“Stuart Cymbeline,” *Essays in Criticism* 11 [1961]: 84-99); however, more recently, readings that tap into the dangerous potential of Milford Haven have gained ground. Ronald J. Boling, for example, argues that the use of Milford Haven here should be connected to Pembrokeshire, known as “Little England beyond Wales.” Pembrokeshire—and by extension, *Cymbeline*’s Milford—is meant to “contain traces of the anglicizing process in early modern Wales.” See “Anglo-Welsh Relations in *Cymbeline*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51.1 (2000): 33-66, esp. 35. Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. offers a more topographical reading of Milford Haven: while noting that the locale has both triumphant and anxious resonances for early modern England, Sullivan is most concerned with how Milford Haven comes to stand in for all of Wales within *Cymbeline*. Just as Milford is difficult to locate in *Cymbeline*, so too was Wales’s landscape difficult to chart. See *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), esp. 139.
finds the cave of Guiderius, Belarius, and Arviragus, who live, apparently, within view of Milford Haven (“Milford, / When from the mountain-top Pisanio showed thee, / Thou wast within a ken” [3.3.4-6]), but not quite there.

The unfulfilled potential of Milford Haven within this play is telling: Shakespeare is quite purposeful in his avoidance of this most recognizable Welsh locale, opting instead to portray his Wales as a barren and uncivilized landscape—a pointed contrast to the expansive kingdom over which Caradoc reigns. Moreover, the Wales of Cymbeline is apparently lawless, without connection to the larger entity of Britain. Though Cymbeline and his fellow Britons appear to know that Wales exists (Posthumus, after all, freely reveals that his intended destination is “Cambria”), they also acknowledge that it is beyond the pale: when Lucius asks for safe passage from Cymbeline, the king agrees, but only to the point of the river Severn, the dividing line between Wales and England, and, apparently, where Cymbeline’s jurisdiction ends (3.5.17). The space that the princes and their guardian have occupied is apparently harsh and intemperate (4.2.257-260); Guiderius, for his part, is eager to escape this “cell of ignorance” (3.3.33)—a feat he eventually accomplishes when his aid to Cymbeline brings him to the British court. Thus while Caradoc’s Wales is finally made to stand in for the glory of ancient Britain as a whole, no such importance is attributed to the Wales of Cymbeline: it is instead “civilized out of existence” when Guiderius and Arviragus return to Cymbeline’s court.34

34 Sullivan, The Drama of Landscape, 157. Sullivan ultimately contends that Cymbeline works to create a “shared landscape” for Britain and Wales, erasing the physical and cultural differences between the two locales.
But perhaps Wales is meant, in the context of *Cymbeline*, to be a useful, albeit temporary home for the heir, one that is admittedly rustic but that nevertheless one which will foster the kind of fearless heroism so needed within Cymbeline’s court. This is a tempting theory regarding Guiderius in particular, who easily defeats Cloten in hand-to-hand combat (a feat which later inspires the jealousy of younger brother Arviragus, who laments, “I love thee brotherly, but envy much / Thou hast robbed me of this deed” [4.2.157-58]). Guiderius also enjoys prominence in the battle against the Romans; he is eager to fight, and decidedly less contemplative about it than Arviragus, who admits, “I never / Did see man die, scarce ever looked on blood / … / I am ashamed / To look upon the holy sun” (4.4.35-41). However, the heroism Guiderius displays is also verging on the barbaric, so that even at his most valiant moment, he appears comically out of synch with the play’s overall aesthetic. We might cheer, for example, when Guiderius’s outrage at being called a “villain mountaineer” (4.2.71) prompts his mocking of Cloten (“At fools I laugh, not fear them” [4.2.96]), but I agree with Martin Butler that we are meant to bristle when Guiderius arrives onstage bearing Cloten’s severed head.\(^{35}\) The image resonates highly with the contemporary fashion for recognizing and scorning the more unsavory aspects of the ancient British past,\(^{36}\) but it also more acutely highlights Guiderius’s ill-informed understanding of the laws of justice within the realm he will soon inhabit. This is pointedly displayed in Guiderius’s crude plans for Cloten’s severed head: while Cloten, in the midst of his confrontation

\(^{35}\) “Introduction to *Cymbeline*,” 48.

\(^{36}\) Butler notes, for example, that this image recalls the engravings of early British inhabitants, such as those appearing in Speed’s *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*. See “Introduction to *Cymbeline*,” 47-49.
with Guiderius, threatens to have Guiderius’s head displayed in Lud’s Town as that of a traitor’s, Guiderius scorns this formality:

With his own sword,
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta’en
His head from him. I’ll throw’t into the creek
Behind our rock, and let it to the sea
And tell the fishes he’s the Queen’s son, Cloten.
That’s all I reck. (4.2.148-53)

This disregard for the rule of British law extends even to Cymbeline’s court, where Guiderius remains patently unapologetic for killing a member of the royal family.

Guiderius is, of course, pardoned for his crime once Cymbeline learns of his true parentage (his status as the son of Cymbeline apparently trumps Cloten’s status as stepson), but whether he is pardoned does not appear to matter to Guiderius: “I cut off’s head, / And I am right glad he is not standing here / To tell this tale of mine” (5.4.295-97).³⁷

Guiderius’s plain-spoken approach to his inherent valor and to his inclination to fight should signal another contrast with Caradoc, whose thoughtful responses to the just causes of war (as well as to the appropriate conditions and traditions governing such wars) show him to be a reasoned and careful martial leader. Although Guiderius and Arviragus have, according to Belarius, “the sparks of nature” (3.3.79) that mark them as royal, they are also painfully uneducated, relying on Innogen’s brief tenure at the cave to

³⁷ The Valiant Welshman also features talk of decapitation; in this case, however, it is Caradoc’s brother, Constantine, who suggests that he cut of the head of Monmouth to bring to Octavian—a true traitor’s punishment. Whether or not Monmouth’s severed head ever appears onstage, however, is unclear; no such stage direction exists in the play. I think it is key, however, that Caradoc himself neither suggests nor carries out such a deed on his vanquished enemy.
teach them letters, which she carves into the roots they eat (4.2.49). And although the ancient Wales of The Valiant Welshman harbors apparent Christian sentiment—at the very least, from its hero—Cymbeline’s princes labor under ancient Celtic customs rather than the Romanized beliefs of the British court.\(^{38}\) Moreover, while they are inherently drawn to fight against the Romans, they are unsure of why it will benefit them to do so, other than to test their languishing sense of adventure. The play establishes clearly that the men exist independently of Cymbeline’s power—Guiderius makes a point to mention that “The law / Protects not us” (4.2.125-26)—and when the princes convince Belarius to allow them to fight, they call on no dormant sense of national identity. Indeed, Guiderius offers only this half-hearted identification with the British side:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nay, what hope} \\
\text{Have we in hiding us? This way the Romans} \\
\text{Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us} \\
\text{For barbarous and unnatural revolts} \\
\text{During their use, and slay us after. (4.3.3-7)}
\end{align*}
\]

This “might-as-well” attitude is, of course, the catalyst for the valiant rescue of the imperiled Cymbeline, whose own troops prove embarrassingly incompetent. When the princes are brought to court to enjoy Cymbeline’s compliments, they are knighted for defending a nation for which they hold no particular affection, except, perhaps, that it is the nation that provided them the opportunity to escape the “cell of ignorance” in Wales.

\(^{38}\) The burial ceremony of “Fidele” is the most obvious incident of these pagan inclinations: Guiderius urges his brother to “lay his head to th’east” during burial, in accordance with early Celtic custom. The dirge that follows Fidele’s burial is also, as Butler points out, “conspicuously devoid of Christian consolation”; Guiderius and Arviragus sing nothing of heaven, and hope that “no exorciser” and “no witchcraft” will harm Fidele’s corpse. See 4.2.254-280.
Guiderius has little to do once he is recognized as Cymbeline’s heir: indeed, he only has one line after this point, a quick recognition of Innogen as his sister. This is, perhaps, because Guiderius now has much to learn in order to assimilate properly into the British court. His brief martial career is likely over, as Cymbeline has now agreed to everlasting peace with the Romans: “Let / A Roman and a British ensign wave / Friendly together” (5.4.476-78). Moreover, the illiteracy and paganism that characterized his time in Wales has given way to what will certainly be a life befitting the heir to a Romanized British kingdom; as Cymbeline himself points out, the princes have now been released from “this strange starting” to be returned to their proper “orbs” (5.4.371). So while Caradoc the Great of The Valiant Welshman is given “all liberties” and returned to Wales, Guiderius’s development moves him decidedly away from his Welsh roots, making them aberrant and ill-fitting for the future heir. Shakespeare has not only effectively undermined the glorious ancient past of Wales in Cymbeline, but he has also undermined the symbolism of that ancient past as a useful model for the current prince of Wales. Instead, he has valorized the virtues of peace and imperium, confining martial heroism to the status of a convenient addition for a nation that is unlikely to ever need its services again, for war, we are reminded, was never Cymbeline’s idea in the first place (“We were dissuaded by our wicked queen” [5.4.461]). In Cymbeline, the “prince of Wales” is severed from his ancient seat and his valorous inheritance, integrated instead into a British kingdom that looks suspiciously like contemporary England, under the thumb of a king that looks suspiciously like James.
The critical consensus on the politics of *Cymbeline* needs no sustained recapitulation here: the play ultimately endorses the pacifist policies of James by writing the submission to Rome as a sensible and necessary step toward the British empire that will eventually follow. Like *The Valiant Welshman*, this play does the bidding of its patron—Shakespeare was part of the King’s Men, and it shows here more than usual. 39 I would argue that this is, in part, due to the specific politics of 1610, which raised the profile of Henry Frederick to such a degree that James had legitimate political competition in terms of his policy. In his theatrical doubling of the prince of Wales, Shakespeare is offering a gesture toward this tension, finally using the symbolism of Wales and the Welsh as a way to endorse James’s pacifism and to deflect and undermine the prince’s growing popularity among those who disdained James’s policies. Read in this way, the politics of *Cymbeline* become distinctly more focused; the play emerges as a commentary on a specific cultural event, as well as on the specific tensions between the king and his heir.

When R.A. admonishes his “scornful” English audience to “Be dumb” at the start of *The Valiant Welshman*, he is gesturing to a theatrical past that had too readily dismissed the heroic contribution of the Welsh past. But he is also, throughout his play, figuring that past in a way that would favorably apply to a young prince whose persona and principality invited associations with that past. Both *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant*...  

39 For a study of Shakespeare’s relationship to James (and its obligatory tendencies), see Alvin Kernan, *Shakespeare, The King’s Playwright: Theater in the Stuart Court 1603-1613* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Interestingly, Kernan’s study does not include a reading of *Cymbeline*, but his readings of *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and others highlight the ways in which Shakespeare’s later plays were engaged with the politics of his patron.
Welshman invite fresh investigations into the early seventeenth-century perception of Wales and the Welsh. Yet our understanding of these two plays and their portrayal of Wales and the Welsh is also enriched by an investigation into the historical circumstances in which they were first staged. The investiture of 1610 was an extraordinary event in its day, and the symbolism it evoked—of both ancient Britain and Wales—proved flexible in an England that, as we have seen, housed diverse perspectives of this ancient past and its influence on the theater. These plays reveal that the perception of Wales and the Welsh continued to be manipulated with remarkable fluency in the early seventeenth century: it was a space both civilized and uncultivated, both heroic and barbaric, both comic and deadly serious. In 1610, it was also a theatrical space that proved particularly amenable for two princes of Wales, whose stage presence reflects the culture’s adaptation of Welsh heroism for contemporary political purposes. As it turns out, the average playgoer in 1610 would find two very different versions—depending on which side of the river the prince’s story is told.

**Coda: After Henry Frederick**

Roy Strong’s biography of Henry Frederick’s life begins with a discussion of his funeral.40 This curious chronology is, in fact, completely appropriate for a biography of Henry Frederick, as the high hopes held for him during his life were only matched by the grief over his death in 1612, just two years after his investiture as the prince of Wales. The promise Henry Frederick registered was most certainly due in part to his novelty:

England had not, after all, had an heir on which to lavish its praise all through the long reign of Elizabeth. But Henry Frederick was also a captivating figure in his own right, and especially in the ways that made him distinct from his father. Following his death, an outpouring of published material on his last moments, his funeral, and even his imagined afterlife appeared, many of which highlighted the persona he cultivated during his life. George Wither appended a dialogue to his 1612 collection of elegies for Henry Frederick, one in which the figure of “Great Britain” pleads with the ghost of Prince Henry to return to life and save Britain. The “Spirit,” as prince Henry is identified in the text, offers his advice to the new prince of Wales:\(^{41}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{But bid him looke what to his place is due,} \\
\text{And every vice in generall eschue:} \\
\text{Let him consider why he was his Brother,} \\
\text{And plac’ above so many thousand other.} \\
\text{Great honors have great burthens: if y’are high,} \\
\text{The stricter’s your account, and the more nigh:} \\
\text{Let him shunne flatterers at any hand,} \\
\text{And ever firmly in Religion stand.} \\
\text{Gird on his sword, call for Jehovah’s might,} \\
\text{Keepe a good Conscience, fight the Lambs great fights,} \\
\text{For when his Father shall surrender make,} \\
\text{The Faiths protection he must under-take.}\(^{42}\)
\end{align*}
\]

He goes on to warn against court “wantonnesse and lust,”\(^{43}\) and urges that “Policie”\(^{44}\) not interfere with the appropriate defense of religious purity. In Wither, we see the most

\(^{41}\) The “new” prince of Wales was, of course, Charles—a boy whose early life had been characterized by physical disabilities, and whose tastes were, unlike his brother’s, far more scholarly than martial. Though it was likely a foregone conclusion that Charles was now prince of Wales, he actually was not formally invested with the title until November of 1616.

\(^{42}\) Prince Henries Obsequies or Mournefull Elegies upon his death with a supposed inter-locution betweene the ghost of Prince Henrie and Great Brittaine (London, 1612), sig. E2’.

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salient properties of Henry Frederick’s persona writ large: the militant Protestantism, the chivalric spirit, and the anti-political sentiment. Henry Frederick—or at least what Henry Frederick represented—had indeed made an impression on England.

The theatrical afterlife of Henry Frederick is much harder to pin down, but we may have a hint in John Fletcher’s Bonduca, performed by the King’s Men sometime between 1609 and 1614. We have very little evidence for a precise dating for this play, but one passage in particular has prompted critics to suggest a post-1612 dating. It occurs in the play’s final act, when Hengo, a young ancient British prince, is shot by a Roman soldier. Hengo’s last words express his life’s hope “to have met these bloody Romans”—a sentiment consistent with Hengo’s eager martial spirit throughout the play’s earlier scenes—but he finally painfully declares, “I was born to die” (5.3.150). When his uncle offers an elegy for the deceased prince, the imagery is curiously resonant with that deployed following the death of Henry Frederick:

Farewell the hopes of Britain,
Thou Royall graft, Farewell for ever. Time and Death
Ye have done your worst. Fortune now see, now proudly
Pluck off thy vail, and view thy triumph: Look,
Look what thou hast brought this land to. Oh, fair flower,
How lovely thy ruines show, how sweetly

43 Ibid., sig. E2v.
44 Ibid., sig. E2r.
45 For Claire Jowitt, a post-1612 dating is crucial: she argues that the play is coterminus with reports of the establishment of (and the reports of) new colonies in North America. The play, she suggests, dramatizes a fantasy of colonial success (by having Rome triumph over Britain, which can here be read as a representation of the pre-conquest Americas). See “Colonialism, Politics, and Romanization in John Fletcher’s Bonduca,” Studies in English Literature 43.2 (2003), 475-94.
46 5.3.140. All quotations from Bonduca (hereafter cited parenthetically) are from The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon, ed. Fredson Bowers. 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 4: 156-244.
Even death embraces thee! The peace of heaven,  
The fellowship of all great souls be with thee! (5.3.160-67)

The moment, with all its elegiac sentiment, seems designed to elicit a reaction from an audience who had recently experienced the death of a young prince also invested with “the hopes of Britain.” Might, then, the theatrical continuum of Henry Frederick end with Bonduca’s staging of the young Hengo’s death?

Much like Cymbeline and The Valiant Welshman, Bonduca stages the British submission to Rome, and the play has similarly attracted critical attention for its engagement with issues of British nationalism and British historiography. These studies have offered compelling—and often oppositional—arguments for the early seventeenth century’s treatment of ancient Britain and its integration with Rome. While Jodi Mikalachi has argued, for example, that the play endorses Roman hyper-masculinity while scorning the “savagery” of female rule, Ronald J. Boling has argued that the play actually makes a mockery of masculine romanitas by portraying Bonduca’s cousin, Caratach, as an unpatriotic Briton with a fetish for Roman culture. Julie Crawford has suggested that the play actually does a bit of both: the play’s hostility toward Bonduca

47 See The Legacy of Boadicea, esp. 103-105. Interestingly, in spite of the title of her book, Mikalachi does not have a full chapter devoted to Bonduca; instead, she discusses the play within a chapter on Cymbeline, arguing that Fletcher’s Bonduca makes a useful parallel to the disruptive and savage queen in Cymbeline.

48 Boling’s argument makes careful use of the contrast between the Caradoc of The Valiant Welshman and the Caratach of Bonduca. While Boling makes no definitive claims about how the plays relate to one another chronologically, he suggests that Fletcher works to “demythologize” the figure of Caratach by making him misogynistic and self-obsessed. Boling makes useful comparisons between these two figures; however, he may be too eager to dismiss Caradoc’s own misogyny in The Valiant Welshman (Caradoc offers a scathing diatribe against all women after Cartemanda turns him over to the Romans). See “Fletcher’s Satire of Caratach in Bonduca,” Comparative Drama 33.3 (1999): 390-406.
implicitly criticizes female rule, but this hostility also extends to Caratach’s obsession with homosocial bonds that may be detrimental to the British nation. For Crawford, the “anxieties” that the play deploys—about women rulers and male bonds—are powerful expressions of the culture’s unique feelings about James I, who had inherited the throne from a powerful female monarch, and whose “Romish” court was defined by the kind of homosocial bonds for which Caratach longs in *Bonduca*.49

For Crawford, the death of Hengo forms the play’s central criticism of James: Hengo, argues Crawford, is indeed meant to be Henry Frederick, and Caratach—in all his Roman-worshipping, male-bonding glory—fails Britain by failing the values that Henry Frederick embodied during his lifetime.50 I agree with Crawford that Hengo’s death is meant to recall the particular loss of Henry Frederick and the hope he offered Britain; I also agree that the particular weaknesses of Caratach are curiously resonant with some of the most common suspicions regarding James and his affection for both the high Roman style and the male bonds he formed within his court. But I want to suggest that reading Hengo in this way has implications for the larger understanding of Henry Frederick’s theatrical presence in the early-seventeenth century. If *The Valiant Welshman* represented its Henry Frederick as a heroic prototype for the perfect king, and if *Cymbeline* figured its Henry Frederick as a courageous but flawed prince, then *Bonduca* infantilizes its incarnation of the prince, leaving him without any discernable

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50 Ibid., 371.
agency, and, perhaps more importantly, without any recognizable place of his own within Britain.

The sketch of Hengo in Fletcher’s play is brief: he has few lines and even fewer moments of action. When he does speak, it is largely in insults and empty threats for the Romans, whom he calls “emptie scabbards,” (2.3.62) and “men of clouts,” (2.3.63) before boldly declaring, “Why, I dare fight with these” (2.3.64). The response from Caratach is patronizing: “That’s my good chicken. And how do ye? / How do you feel your stomachs?” (2.3.65-66) The exchange is characteristic of much of the Hengo-Caratach scenes in the play; while Hengo routinely offers his premature battle cries (“Uncle, I’ll kill him with great pain” [2.3.110]), Caratach offers gentle admonishments (“No more, boy,” [2.3.111] “Thou art too tender” [4.2.23]), often with a supplementary query about Hengo’s health and well-being, as if the boy is always at risk of illness or death. Hengo is foolishly boastful when he meets Roman soldiers, daring them, “When, ye coward, / When ye come up?” (4.2.61-62), while they gently ply him with food: “Prethee yeeld, boy: / Come, here’s an apple; yeeld” (4.2.59-60). His death is a culmination of this immature boldness and physical weakness: in dire need of food, Hengo convinces Caratach to allow him to fetch food that has been placed atop a rock, and he meets his death on this errand—shot by the Romans, he dies lamenting that his youth kept him from ever becoming a great soldier (5.3.99-142).

And while The Valiant Welshman and Cymbeline each offered their princes of Wales an incarnation of their Welsh principality, Bonduca’s “Wales” is nearly unidentifiable, if present at all: after crushing defeats by the Romans and near-starvation,
Caratach tells Hengo that they will now make the journey to “my Countrey,” but Wales is never invoked by name. The rough terrain—rocky hills and barren ground—might also hint at Welsh topography, but in *Bonduca*, there is no Shrewsbury, no Milford Haven. Moreover, if this “Countrey” to which Caratach and Hengo travel is indeed Wales, it is, for the young Hengo, the site of premature death and unfulfilled promise. This ambiguity underscores Hengo’s strange position within the British power structure itself: though he is hailed as the preeminent hope of Britain, he has also spent much of the play without any discernable claim to the British throne—Bonduca’s daughters, apparently, stand more chance of inheriting than does Hengo.

As the Romans close in on Caratach, he offers an oddly abortive epitaph for Hengo: “O Romans, see what here is: / Had this boy lived—” (5.3.180-81). What is Caratach’s intended completion to this sentence? He has little interest in finishing it, especially once he learns that he is bound for Rome, where he is eager to show himself “a spring of glory” (5.3.195) from which Rome will further grow. Given the play’s conflicted representation of Caratach (his soldierly skill is repeatedly undermined by his affection for the enemy), it is hard to imagine that Fletcher meant for this ending to be purely satisfying, most especially if “the hopes of Britain” are lying dead on stage, in the person of Hengo. If we are willing to consider that *Bonduca* was written in an England that had recently lost Henry Frederick, then I think we also might consider how the play presents a theatrical incarnation of the young prince that is both infantile and impermanent. Instead, the play’s focus is squarely on the figure of Caratach and his divided affections between Rome and Britain. If there was a hope for Hengo, it is never
fully developed here, and perhaps that is because the hopes for Henry Frederick had already become an impossibility. In light of the princely incarnations of *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman*, each of which offers a distinct representation of the heir to the British throne through explorations of Wales and the Welsh, *Bonduca*—which has no Wales, and no real prince—seems to express the collective grief of a culture that had invested much in a dynamic prince of Wales.
“There is no indication that the Welsh were supposed to have any religious bias...”

When, in 1954, J.O. Bartley surveyed Welsh characters on the early modern stage, he found numerous ways in which to categorize them. “Welsh Temperament” was “impulsive” (a characteristic fully exploited in characters like Fluellen, considered in chapter two of this study) (60), “Welsh Names” were extensive and humorous (63), “Welsh Food” was comprised mostly of cheese, leeks, and garlic (65), and “Woolens”—Welsh garments made mostly of flannel—were “celebrated” (51). In regards to Welsh religion, however, Bartley sees nothing demonstrative. The stage Welshman does, he notes, use oaths in excess (“St. Tavy” and “Cad’s blood” appear frequently), and seems to have a special affection for St. Paul’s cathedral (Morgan, the comic Welshman from R.A.’s *The Valiant Welshman*, discussed in chapter three, himself mentions a trip to the cathedral). To Bartley, however, these are little more than verbal tics of the stage Welshman, a meaningless expression of a religious background that was, apparently, completely neutral (67).

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1 Bartley, *Teague, Shenkin, and Sawney*, 67. All subsequent citations to Bartley’s book will, in the paragraph that follows, be made parenthetically.
That Bartley saw little of interest in Welsh religion in this period should, perhaps, come as no surprise. The history of Welsh religion during the early modern period has long centered on the effects of the Reformation in Wales, which has, until recently, been perceived as “a relatively quiet and uncomplicated case” in which the Welsh easily adapted to the changes of the Reformation with no organized uprising against the reformed English church. What was “relative” about the Welsh case was its distinction from the cases of Ireland and Scotland, both of which presented unique challenges to the spread of English Protestantism. In Ireland, Protestant ideology—which emanated largely from the English-dominated “Pale” around Dublin—was met with hostility from a native population that connected national pride with their Catholic roots. Moreover, the single most important and influential movement of the early Reformation—the translation of the Bible into the vernacular—never quite made it to sixteenth-century Ireland, which first saw a New Testament in Gaelic in 1603. The complexity of Scotland’s Reformation lay not in its resistance but in its independence: a protestant movement began in Scotland quite independent of the one in England (Patrick Collinson

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2 Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 105. Collinson is quick to point out that this perception has been largely an illusion. Rather than focus on the local contexts of the early modern Reformation in Wales, however, Collinson contends that Wales had its own Reformation—entirely distinct from England’s—in much later centuries.

3 One outstanding literary example of early Irish resistance to English reform is John Bale’s account of his time spent as a missionary in Ireland. In *The vocacyon of Johan Bale*, he describes what he perceives as heathenish behaviors from the Irish, but more importantly, he describes the resistance he met there, including Irish priests who poison Protestant clergymen. See *The vocacyon of Johan Bale*, eds. Peter Happé and John N. King (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1990), esp. 56.
calls Scotland’s Reformation “home-grown”), and although the monarchy in England controlled the church in England, Scotland’s church had no royal supremacy. Wales, by contrast, had very little revolutionary activity in comparison with Ireland, and it had a long-standing reputation for loyalty and deference to the English crown—most especially during the years of the Tudor dynasty.

As scholarship on the Reformation has grown in both volume and scope, however, the Welsh response to the English Reformation has proven to be deeply complicated—even as it was, perhaps, rather quiet. In his landmark study of the Reformation in Wales, Glanmor Williams—who is without a doubt the most important and prolific scholar on the issue—argues that the Reformation in Wales was an incredibly uneven process. Geography was part of the equation: although the process was aided by the relative fluidity between the English-Welsh border, it was also hamstrung by the mountainous landscape that kept most areas of Wales extremely rural. The response of the populace also played a crucial role. Even though much of the Welsh population disdained papal authority, Wales also had a substantial mass of people that was functionally illiterate. This left the transmission of Reformation texts completely irrelevant to a large segment of the population who would, as a result, adhere to their

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4 *The Reformation*, 120.
6 As is shown in chapter one of this study, the Welsh loyalty to the Tudors derived from the Welsh ancestry of Owen Tudor, the grandfather of Henry VII. See chapter one, 30-32.
familiar Catholic practices. There were those in Wales who were fully convinced by
reformist doctrine, but that minority, Williams contends, was towing a large group of
people who were “ignorant, illiterate, unconvincing, and not overconcerned about matters
of religious principle.” The Reformation in Wales was, finally, no less complex (and
perhaps even more so) than the Reformation in Ireland and Scotland.

The work of the Reformation in Wales—which included efforts to translate
Reformation texts into Welsh—inspired several contentious and public debates in the
early modern period to which the English were witness. But even for those in England
who did not follow contemporary religious controversy and Reformation policy, there
were other reasons to know of and to raise questions about Welsh religion. As this study
has shown, English (and later, British) national identity was culled in part from Welsh
history and tradition, including a pride in an ancient ancestry and in martial skill. As it
turns out, Welsh religious history and tradition also played a role in the formation of
English national identity. Welsh tradition held that the ancient Britons were converted by
Christ’s disciple Joseph of Arimathea; this early conversion to a pure form of Christianity
proved to be a useful mythology for English Protestants looking to justify the break with
the Catholic church. Moreover, Welsh prophecy—including the famed prophecy of
Cadwaladr that promised a return to power for the ancient Britons—was invoked as a
legitimizing myth for Henry Tudor, who gave birth to the early modern period’s most
powerful dynasty. These connections and mythologies were available to the English

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7 Williams, Wales and the Reformation (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 39. Williams details the complexity of the Reformation process in Wales on pages 19-39 of his study, which is indispensable for any scholar interested in Wales during the early modern period.
through compelling—and often conflicting—chronicle history accounts that attempted to account for the ancient British influence while simultaneously claiming it as distinctly English.

In spite of the nuanced work on the Reformation in Wales that has been produced in recent years, as well as increased scholarly attention to English national identity and its debt to the Welsh, however, very little work has been done to challenge Bartley’s view that stage Welshmen had no religious bias. Yet the texture of Welsh religion in the period—which contained elements of Celtic paganism, Catholicism, and Protestantism—was certainly not unknown to the English, who formed their perceptions of Welsh religion from both contemporary religious controversy and contemporary chronicle histories. Moreover, in a period that saw numerous violent clashes between Catholic and Protestant, including in Ireland, a territory whose Celtic history had distinct resonances with Wales, the status of Welsh religion—both real and perceived—would remain a vexing question for the English.8

Plays from the period are a record not only of how the English reproduced some of the most widespread assumptions about Welsh religious history and practice, but also of how the English re-imagined these assumptions in light of the sometimes anxious

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8 At times this status would be more vexing than others: in 1601, the containment of the Essex rebellion revealed several troubling connections between Welsh recusants and the rebels. Gelly Meyrick, a prominent co-conspirator in the rebellion (who was hanged, drawn, and quartered alongside Essex), was a Welshman, and his involvement prompted numerous investigations into Welsh families who were suspected of recusancy—and by extension, treason. Many of these families were centralized in North Wales, where Meyrick did much of his planning for the rebellion; for a detailed account of these events, see A.H. Dodd, “North Wales in the Essex Revolt of 1601,” *The English Historical Review* 59.235 (1944): 348-370.
negotiations of contemporary religious controversy and English/British national identity. The plays I consider in detail here, including *1 Henry IV*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman*, each showcase an aspect of Welsh religion as it was understood by the English. In doing so, they not only offer important insight into the complicated English perception of Wales and the Welsh, but they also demonstrate the ways in which English playwrights sought to contain, minimize, or mock some of the most troubling—and most persistent—religious traditions of their western neighbors.

“*The irregular and wild Glyndwr*”: Paganism, Prophecy, and the Last Welsh Rebel

Chapter two of this study considered the figure of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the last native prince of Wales who was defeated at the hands of the English king Edward I. Llewelyn’s fall to English forces was, in many ways, the single most important defeat in Welsh history: after 1282, Wales would never regain the independence it had enjoyed prior to Edward’s conquest. Yet organized martial rebellion in Wales did not breathe its last until much later, when the Welsh rebel Owain Glyndwr ceased his decade-long assault on the English crown (and Welsh countryside) circa 1412. His rise to power was swift and impressive, but rather different from that of Llewelyn. The Welsh-born 

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9 Glyndwr’s revolt was, as historian R.R. Davies puts it, “an unconscionably long time dying,” as it slowly lost steam over a period of about ten years (see Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 293). Glyndwr is not known to have been killed in battle, nor did he ever formally surrender. Though English chroniclers delighted in reporting Glyndwr’s death from starvation, Welsh bards made Glyndwr a legend in their recounting of his miraculous deeds during his life and his mysterious appearances after his supposed death. For a detailed study of Glyndwr’s legendary status in Wales, see Elissa Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndwr in Welsh Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), esp. 64-70.
Glyndwr trained in English circles: first as an apprentice-at-law and then as a soldier under the command of Richard II—to whom Glyndwr was, as many historians have speculated, likely very loyal. When, at the start of his organized rebellion, he had himself declared prince of Wales, Glyndwr had lived a very different life from Llewlyn ap Gruffydd, his native predecessor.

Yet Glyndwr’s theatrical fate was oddly similar to that of Llewlyn ap Gruffydd, who was, at the hands of George Peele (and, to a lesser extent, of Shakespeare) made into an inept fool that bore little resemblance to the Welsh nationalist. In Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV*, the historical Glyndwr is similarly rewritten; although Glyndwr’s rebellion was the most threatening Welsh uprising against English rule since Llewelyn’s, Shakespeare’s Glendower (an anglicized spelling of the Welsh name) is never portrayed on the battlefield, only in his home, where he entertains the more combative Henry Percy (known most commonly to readers as Hotspur) before dropping out of the narrative at the crucial moment of conflict between the English and rebel forces. And although Glendower’s martial capability is never plainly mocked—indeed, Glendower’s prowess as a soldier is almost entirely neglected in the play’s narrative—his boastful proclamations about his “extraordinary” talents,10 including his ability to scatter goats with his very presence, do nothing for his credibility as a man of war.

The portrayal of Glendower in *1 Henry IV* is, as Christopher Highley argues, a calculated move to disempower the Welsh rebel, providing a sort of wish fulfillment for

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10 3.1.39. All citations from *1 Henry IV* (which will hereafter be cited parenthetically) are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et. al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 1157-1224.
audiences who felt a timely anxiety over the growing power of Ireland’s most powerful rebel, the earl of Tyrone, whose insurgency was at a fever pitch in 1597—the likely date of 1 Henry IV’s debut.11 The Glendower of 1 Henry IV, then, fits tidily into the paradigm I describe in chapter two of this study, which argues that the systematic subversion of Welsh military prowess masks a growing English anxiety about its historical weakness in matters of combat and its contemporary wartime capability against a growing cache of foreign enemies. In this way, Glendower is comparable to Shakespeare’s most famous Welsh character, the comic and bombastic Fluellen, whose martial skill is displaced by the powerful figure of Henry V. Yet the particular brand of “Welshness” that Shakespeare reserves for Glendower is less about martial ineptitude than it is about a curious sort of mysticism. While characters like Lluellen and Fluellen are Welshmen imbued with martial sensibilities—however limited or undermined—Glendower is a Welshmen preoccupied with prophecy and magic, a seeming pagan who derives his power from decidedly un-Christian sources.

If stage representations of the Welsh in the 1590s were, in part, a calculated effort to undermine the Welsh martial tradition in order to bolster English martial pride, then why didn’t Shakespeare give his Glendower a funny accent, a comic battle scene, or an

11 Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland*, 89. Tyrone, like Glyndwr, was English-educated, making him “a difficult figure to classify,” and his centrality to the rebellion in Ireland, including his own declarations of sovereignty, marked him as “disturbingly similar” to the Welsh rebel (94). Add to this the mythology of Tyrone’s supposed ancestral ties to Owain Glyndwr, and the apocryphal account of Tyrone being declared both prince of Wales and King of Ireland, and the parallels between Glyndwr and Tyrone seem nearly impossible to overstate. Highley further addresses the parallels between Tyrone and Glyndwr in his essay “Wales, Ireland, and 1 Henry IV,” *Renaissance Drama* 21 (1990): 91-114.
embarrassing display of martial ineptitude—or all three? Why instead does he choose to undermine Glendower through outlandish claims about goats and prophetic visions? What I want to argue here is that Shakespeare’s representation of Glendower, though it does work to devalue the historical Glyndwr’s success as a rebel leader, also works to devalue an entirely separate Welsh tradition: that of prophecy. By drawing from and pointedly embellishing chronicle accounts that depicted Glyndwr as a foolish believer in prophecy, Shakespeare both undermines the historical Glyndwr’s legend as a supernaturally gifted rebel and challenges a long-standing Welsh tradition that privileges prophecy as a means for determining royal legitimacy. As we will see, this particular challenge to prophecy is an especially important expression of how the English re-imagined a Welsh tradition that had become, in the age of the Tudor dynasty, uncomfortably connected to the English as well.

At the dawn of the early modern period, Welsh prophecy had an unusually important role in English political culture. As Henry Tudor marched through Wales to defeat Richard III at Bosworth, Welsh bards were proclaiming him the *mab darogan*, or “son of prophecy,” the man who would return the Britons to their ancient glory. Their hope was grounded in the prophecy of Cadwaladr, the last Briton king whose beleaguered reign was depicted in the final pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*. In the account, Cadwaladr watches helplessly as the Britons devolve into a brutal civil war that leads to violence, famine, and, eventually, a plague that threatens to wipe out the entire population. To avoid death—and, presumably, to preserve his life for the good of his kingdom—Cadwaladr flees to Brittany, where he laments the dire state of
his people. When he decides, after a period of self-imposed exile, to return to Britain, he is visited by what Geoffrey describes as “an Angelic voice” who

...spoke to him in a peal of thunder and told him to stop. God did not wish the Britons to rule in Britain any more, until the moment should come which Merlin had prophesied to Arthur. The Voice ordered Cadwallader to go to Rome and visit Pope Sergius. There he should do penance and he would be numbered among the blessed. What is more, the Voice added that, as a reward for its faithfulness, the British people would occupy the island again at some time in the future, once the appointed moment should come.  

For the Welsh, Henry Tudor’s victory represented a potential fulfillment of this prophecy: his Welsh bloodline (however menial it might have been) re-ignited hopes for a reclamation of the British kingdom.  

This was, of course, not the way of Henry Tudor’s reign; as we have seen in chapter one of this study, Tudor was apparently ambivalent toward his Welsh ancestry, and his line of successors were responsible for some of the most damaging legislation to Welsh independence. Yet the Cadwaladr prophecy—with its rallying cry for ancient legitimacy—had something to offer the English, and despite its Welsh provenance, it continued to be disseminated in English texts as proof that the Tudors were re-establishing a dynasty of antiquity. Philip Schwyzer has convincingly argued that “Tudor national consciousness” was, in many ways, constructed with the help of the Cadwaladr

12 The History of the Kings of Britain, 282-83.
13 In his study of the prophetic tradition in Wales, Philip Schwyzer details the Welsh bardic response to the rise of Henry Tudor. Hopes were especially high for Dafydd Llywd, a Welsh bard who urged Henry VII to drive out all non-Welsh speaking men from his council. See Schwyzer, Literature, Nationalism, and Memory, 30.
14 I am speaking, of course, of the 1536 Act of Union of England and Wales, which abolished the Welsh principality and required English as the official language of all government business in Wales. For a more detailed description of the Act and its long-term effects, see chapter one, 47-51.
prophecy, which played a role in widely-read early modern texts like Hall’s *Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Families of Lancastre and York* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. These texts, he argues, subtly elide the distinctions between Welsh and English, providing a useful opportunity for the English to claim that antiquity had been theirs all along. The Welsh prophetic tradition could, in this case, be made English quite easily.\textsuperscript{15}

The Cadwaladr prophecy had something else that the English could digest rather easily: a safely Christian context. Cadwaladr—a Christian king—received his instructions from an “Angellic” voice: a divine revelation that rewarded the Britons for their early Christian conversion and continued faithfulness. Without a doubt, however, the most dominant prophetic tradition in Wales—the one that had been around the longest and the one that lacked an immediate Christian context—was the Merlinic tradition. Although the prophecies of Merlin, the mystical prophet said to have predicted everything from Arthur’s rise and fall to the English Wars of the Roses, were most well known through Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History*, their circulation had a much longer and more secular tradition (including a different, less Christian version of the Cadwaladr prophecy) in Wales. This tradition, argues Howard Dobin, was decidedly less comfortable for the English. First of all, the nature of Merlin’s prophecies, which were elaborately coded with animal and plant imagery, were flatly destabilizing: the “protean nature” of the language did not suit the goals of kings and queens who only wanted to

\textsuperscript{15} Schwyzer’s argument on this point is especially keen in his reading of *The Faerie Queene*, which melds the national histories of ancient Britain and England at crucial points of the narrative, such as when Britomart learns the fate of Britain in her meeting with Merlin. See *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory*, 43–44.
deal in authorized versions of the truth. Moreover, the Merlinic prophecies were seen by many as at best fraudulent and at worst demonic—John Harvey, who devoted an entire pamphlet to lambasting Merlinic prophecy, asserted that Merlin was doing the work of the devil.

Readers of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* will remember, however, that Merlin plays a key role in Book III, when Britomart hears an elaborate history and prophecy from the magician. Does this mean, perhaps, that the English had safely assimilated Merlin, realizing that his prophecies could be made to play just as well for England as they did for Wales? As Howard Dobin points out, even Spenser seems torn on the issue. Although he makes Merlin’s prophecies a myth of future triumph for his epic’s heroes, he also warns his readers of the danger that is to be found in Merlin’s cave, which he describes as “dreadfull,” “hideous,” “balefull,” and full of “cruell Feends” that are ready to prey on those eager to visit the prophet. For Dobin, this description highlights English anxieties about prophecy in general: though it proves to be useful for Britomart, its source is ultimately dangerous, mysterious, and potentially demonic. I would argue, however, that the particularly baleful description here has less to do with the prophecy itself and more to do with where it originates—namely, in a dark and remote cave in Wales.

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17 Harvey’s 1588 *Discoursive Probleme Concerning Prophesies* is read with keen attention in Dobin, *Merlin’s Disciples*, esp. 120-21.
18 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, III.iii.8.
19 Spenser seems especially intent on emphasizing the demonic once he gets to describing Merlin, who can command the sun, moon, and sea, along with making his army of “feends” quake with terror at his orders. See III.iii.12.
From Wales, then, came a dangerous discourse, if only because it often pertained to a Welsh rise to power. It was one thing for prophecy to report the inevitable rise of an English empire, but quite another for it to rally the troops of a neighboring territory with a history of organized resistance. Political prophecy—any prediction that promised the rise or fall of new leaders—had been especially important in sustaining the population of Wales “throughout centuries of subjugation,” and its stronghold would be re-affirmed every time a potential Welsh hero came onto the horizon. Such was the case for Owain Glyndwr, whose reputation in England had been, in many ways, defined by his belief in prophecy. In part, this reputation was backed by the historical record: Glyndwr himself did often invoke prophecy. To lords in Ireland, he stressed that a prophecy foretold the defeat of England as long as Ireland and Wales joined in their efforts; to the French, he argued the same. He kept in his retinue a personal prophet of sorts whose job it was to interpret signs; moreover, Glyndwr’s actions during the war—on more than one occasion—were driven by prophetic revelations.

The details of Glyndwr’s beliefs in prophecy could have easily been chalked up to idiosyncrasy or even the natural paranoia that seems to haunt people in power. Henry VII, after all, kept in his library a book of political prophecy, and, in an even more questionable display of superstitious belief, Elizabeth I had a personal “prophet” of sorts in John Dee, the Welshman on whom the queen relied for predictions about the Spanish

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22 Ibid., 62
Armada and impending illness. But Glyndwr’s beliefs, combined with his Welshness and his penchant for rebellion, made him a target for English authors who sought to ridicule the Welsh prophetic tradition. Edward Hall makes a special point to chastise not only Glyndwr, but the entire Welsh population for its belief in “falce fained Prophecie”:

O ye waveryng Welshmen, call you these prophesies? nay call theim unprofitable practises. Name you them divinaciones? nay name them diabolicall devises, say you thei be prognosticaciones? nay thei be pestiferous publishinges. For by declaryng & credite geving to their subtil & obscure meanynges, princes haue been deceived, many a noble manne hath suffred, and many an honest man hath been begyled & destroyed.24

Hall reserves a particularly accusatory rhetoric for the prophecies that originated in Wales with the Merlinic tradition; he not only lambastes their obscurity, he also aligns them with evil. It is a pointed contrast to Hall’s seeming belief in prophetic revelation at earlier points in his narrative: he does, of course, recount Cadwaladr’s encounter with an angelic voice, but he also suggests that King Henry VI had a special gift for prophecy. In recounting the king’s first meeting with the young Henry Tudor, Hall contends that “this holy man shewed before” that the young Henry Tudor “should in tyme to come (as he did in deede) have and enioye the kyngdome and the whole rule of the realme.”25 These

25 Ibid., sig. L14v.
revelations, and their seeming Christian provenance, are given respect and even reverence in Hall’s narrative, while Glyndwr’s Welsh prophecies are ridiculed.

This would be the lore that defined Glyndwr’s English reputation. In the verse collection *A Mirror for Magistrates*, a compilation of narrative accounts of the rise and fall of various princes and courtiers, and a source for Shakespeare, Glyndwr is counted as an example for those who fail after being “seduced by false prophesies.”

Told in the first person, the narrative has Glyndwr lamenting that he was “Entiste therto by many of Merlines tales” (l. 70) to lead the rebellion against Henry; his rhetoric against prophets becomes increasingly bold, naming one a “crafty dreamer” (l. 162) and cursing “a vengeaunce take them all” (l. 156). This fictionalized Glyndwr finally falls in with Hall and accuses Wales in its entirety for being susceptible to such predictions:

> Ye crafty Welshemen, wherefore do you mocke  
> The noble men thus with your fayned rhymes?  
> Ye noble men why flye you not the flocke  
> Of such as have seduced so many times?  
> False Prophesies are plages for divers crymes  
> Whych god doth let the divilish sort devise  
> To trouble such as are not godly wyse? (ll. 169-175)

According to the *Mirror* account, prophecy is the product of “crafty Welshemen” who, in addition to feigning their prophetic visions, are “divilish” to boot. This account—and Hall’s, as well—highlight the association the English made between Wales and prophecy. But they also highlight how, in the minds of the English, the particular association between Wales and prophecy was not only dangerous, but also demonic.

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26 *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938). This quotation appears in the title heading for the Glyndwr account (120). Hereafter, citations from the *Mirror* (given in line numbers), will be made parenthetically.
In spite of Glyndwr’s substantial appearances in Hall, in Holinshed, and in the *Mirror*, he is without a doubt most known through Shakespeare’s portrayal of Owen Glendower—a character that appears in one scene of *1 Henry IV*. For many critics, Glendower’s role in the play is one that nicely captures English ambivalence toward the Welsh. Although he is described early in the play by the English Westmoreland as “irregular and wild,” (1.1.40) and by Henry as “that damned magician” (1.3.82)—an enemy on par with “the devil alone” (1.3.113), critics have noted that Glendower’s appearance in 3.1—which takes place in the Welshman’s home—is decidedly less threatening. His “quirky exoticism” blends with “civilized values,”\(^{27}\) and he is presented overall as “a man of culture with warm human sympathies.”\(^{28}\) Arthur Hughes, one early critic who puzzled over Glendower, suggested that Shakespeare’s portrayal of the Welshman as “a country squire, a gentleman of position and wealth, a well-read man” was inconsistent not only with source materials that portrayed Glyndwr as dangerous, but also with the play’s early scenes, which figure Glendower as a straightforward villain. The reason for the shift in 3.1, he posits, may be that Shakespeare consulted with a Welsh friend, who might have suggested a softening of the character—in order not to offend Welshmen.\(^{29}\)

Although Hughes’s conclusion seems naïve at best, he is certainly not alone in wondering how a “damned magician” and “devil” morphs into the figure that appears in

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3.1. Rather than suggest a protective instinct in Shakespeare toward his Welsh character, however, I want to argue that Shakespeare’s representation of Glendower in 3.1 forms a calculated effort to contain and neutralize Glendower as a supernatural force, drawing associations between the Welsh prophetic tradition and a series of comic superstitions. Such associations, finally, not only work to undermine Merlinic prophecy—especially when deployed by a rebellious and potentially powerful Welshman—as a source for determining royal legitimacy, but also suggest that a long-standing and empowering national tradition of Wales is little more than a foolish pseudo-religion, one that reduces Welsh national heroes to the level of caricature.

The Merlinic prophecy on which Shakespeare’s sources placed so much emphasis is mentioned only once in *1 Henry IV*, just after Glendower has made his first appearance in the play. Here, the pragmatic and quick-tempered Hotspur expresses his frustration with Glendower’s verbosity, telling his co-conspirator Mortimer that Glendower

...angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-winged griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith. (3.1.144-151)

The sentiments expressed here—a frustration with Merlinic prophecy’s opaque and winding content, a sense that prophecy is threatening in some way to one’s better judgment in matters of faith—were, as we have seen, not uncommon in the period. That Hotspur—the chief enemy of the play’s most captivating protagonist, the young Prince Hal—is the mouthpiece of this diatribe against Merlinic prophecy might give us pause,
however. Is Shakespeare suggesting perhaps, that the consistently hasty Hotspur simply has not given credit where it is due? Hotspur’s comrades, Worcester and Mortimer, certainly seem to think so, and chide Hotspur for his lack of respect for the “wondrous affable” (3.1.164) Glendower, who is “Exceedingly well read and profited / In strange concealments” (3.1.162-63).

Yet if the audience has been meant to sympathize with—or even believe in—Glendower’s ability to identify, interpret, and be a central figure in Merlinic prophecy, then Shakespeare has done a remarkably poor job in establishing his credibility, for Hotspur’s diatribe follows a series of declarations from Glendower that align him with superstitious and demonic practices. It begins with Glendower’s early assertion that his birth was accompanied by a sky “full of fiery shapes, / Of burning cressets” (3.1.13-14), that the “foundation of the earth / Shaked like a coward” (3.1.15-16). When Hotspur challenges Glendower, the Welshman responds with a lengthy defense of his story:

Cousin, of many men
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
These signs have marked me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipped in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman’s son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
And hold me pace in deep experiments. (3.1.33-47)
In addition to confirming Hotspur’s complaints about Glendower’s penchant for being long-winded, the speech also builds to a claim that places Glendower well beyond the pale: even if Hotspur concedes the point about Glendower’s extraordinary birth (even the rather comic bits about livestock), he is not willing to authorize the Welshman’s claims to being a magician. Hotspur’s response to Glendower—“I think no man speaks better Welsh” (3.1.48)—draws a distinct parallel between Glendower’s outlandish claims and his Welsh background. Here, a devotedness to the black arts, a preoccupation with superstition, is distinctly tied to Welshness.

And while Hotspur’s exasperation with Glendower may seem excessive, he does, eventually, get the last word in against the Welshman. For each claim Glendower makes (“I can call spirits from the vastly deep” [3.1.51], “I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil,” [3.1.54]), Hotspur has answer (“Why, so can I, or so can any man, / But will they come when you do call for them?” [3.1.52-53], “And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil / By telling truth” [3.1.55-56]). Glendower offers his most powerful assertion when he tells Hotspur that

Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottomed Severn have I sent him
Bootless home and weather-beaten back. (3.1.61-64)

Here, Glendower makes every effort to prove that his military successes thus far have been defined by his supernatural power: the weather that drove Henry back from the Wye was weather that he himself sent. Hotspur, however, whose identity is defined by a chivalric code that leaves no room for magical intervention in battle, remains unimpressed, offering one last barb at his Welsh host: “Home without boots, and in foul
weather too! / How ’scapes he agues, in the devil’s name?” (3.1.65-66). No doubt Hotspur earned a laugh from the audience for his clever chiding of this Welshman’s boastfulness, and in the context of the play, his line appears to work. Glendower dispenses with his supernatural claims, and responds by changing the subject to the most patently un-magical aspect of the rebellion project: using the map to divide the land among the conspirators.

From this point on, Glendower’s claims to supernatural power are contained in quite a different form altogether—a form that is decidedly less threatening than his early claims to devilish powers. In her essay on the use of Welsh language in 1 Henry IV, Megan Lloyd notes that Glendower’s exit shortly after this touchy exchange with Hotspur leads to his re-entrance as a completely feminized, non-threatening figure. Although he has assured Hotspur that he “can speak English, lord, as well as you” (3.1.118), he leaves to find his Welsh-speaking daughter, and when he returns, he functions as a translator for her declarations of love to Mortimer before cueing music that sets the mood for the lovers’ final goodbyes before the war. Indeed, Hotspur himself seems to anticipate this

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30 “’To Speak Welsh’: Nonsense and Subversion in Shakespeare’s Henry IV, Part 1,” North American Journal of Welsh Studies 2.2 (2002): 7-14. Although Lloyd’s essay is primarily concerned with the figure of Lady Mortimer (Glendower’s daughter and Mortimer’s new bride), her essay yields useful conclusions about Glendower, including about his command of the English language—a command, Lloyd argues, that allows his Welsh voice full hearing, while the Welshwoman is silenced.

31 In “Staging the Occult in 1 Henry IV,” (in Mirror up to Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of G.R. Hibbard, ed. J.C. Gray [Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1984]), S.P. Zitner argues that the harp music may be one instance of an occult practice in the scene, if Glendower commands the music from nothing. However, there is no stage direction or line that suggests Glendower uses magic to incite the harp.
change in Glendower for the audience: while the Welshman is offstage finding his
daughter, Hotspur rails:

    O, he is as tedious
    As a tired horse, a railing wife,
    Worse than a smoky house. I had rather live
    With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far,
    Than feed on cates and have him talk to me
    In any summer house in Christendom. (3.1.155-160)

It is a calculated and cutting speech. The comparison to a “railing wife” is an obvious
feminization of Glendower, as is the more subtle reference to cheese and garlic, which
not only domesticates Glendower, but also aligns him with one of the more pervasive
Welsh stereotypes (namely, cheese-eating). In the end, Hotspur acknowledges
Glendower only as a temporary host—a quaint innkeeper of sorts—that stuffs him full of
delicacies while telling outlandish tales of magic.

    Given the chiding that Welshmen receive in Edward I and Henry V, this
domestication is a perfectly recognizable way of containing the threat posed by a Celtic
rebel who was bent on establishing an independent Welsh polity—especially in 1597,
when Tyrone’s rebellion in Ireland was growing in strength and scope. But in the case of
Shakespeare’s Glendower, the difference is in the details. Shakespeare is not only
containing the martial threat posed by such a figure, he is also containing the historical
Glyndwr’s even more subversive ethos, one that aligned him with a rich prophetic
tradition that had, for centuries, been a mainstay of Welsh nationalist sentiment. First by
making Glendower a mock-Merlin of sorts whose boastings of supernatural powers are
quickly and sharply disparaged, then by placing the Merlinic prophecy in the mouth of a
skeptic who renders its language quaint and foolish, Shakespeare effectively neutralizes
the power of Welsh prophecy while also linking it with a set of beyond the pale occult practices.

The implications of such a representation are crucial for understanding how the English had come to accommodate their own very complicated relationship to prophecy. Shakespeare himself relied on it quite readily—he, like Hall, also includes a prophetic vision for Henry VI in Richard Duke of York, with the king remarking on the young Henry Tudor that “If secret powers / Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts, / This pretty lad will prove our country’s bliss.” And, as Dobin points out, Henry IV gets his own prophetic vision when he predicts that he will die in Jerusalem. But these are royalist prophecies—they are not only delivered by storied figures of English authority, but they are also fulfilled in a manner suitable to those in power. The historical Glyndwr’s relationship to prophecy was decidedly more unsettling, as was the Welsh tradition of prophecy more generally. In 1 Henry IV, Shakespeare re-writes that tradition, making it an object of ridicule rather than reverence. Prophecy in general may not be wholly discredited by Shakespeare, but it was certainly not to be centralized or authorized in the figure of a Welshman who had led the most successful rebellion in Wales in England’s recent memory.

There is, of course, one final mention of prophecy in 1 Henry IV, and that comes just before the play’s final act, in which the crucial battle at Shrewsbury occurs. As the Archbishop of York outlines the dire case mounting against Hotspur, he notes that

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33 Dobin, Merlin’s Disciples, 161.
Glendower is absent from the battle because he is “o’erruled by prophecies” (4.4.18)—presumably, prophecies that have warned him off battle. For Howard Dobin, this is Shakespeare’s conciliatory gesture toward prophecy, a suggestion that, perhaps, Glendower was right to listen to his prophecies and stay away. But the play’s denouement does not bear out such favor to a man that would stay away from battle: indeed, it is Hotspur, who shows up in spite of the tremendous odds against him, who Prince Hal calls a “great heart,” (5.4.86), a “gentleman” (5.4.92), for whom ambition proved too much. Prophecy does not save Glendower; it only suspends his inevitable defeat, as the king and his newly-reformed son head off to Wales to quell the rebellion. Shakespeare’s final gesture toward prophecy is to make it an instrument of Glendower’s martial cowardice and ineptitude.

The Welsh Parson in Merry England: Sir Hugh Evans and The Merry Wives of Windsor

Other critics who have studied Shakespeare’s Owen Glendower have seen in him more than just the pagan prophet—they have also seen the shadow of superstitious Catholicism in him, meant to remind us, no doubt, of those other dangerous and rebellious Catholics of the 1590s, the Irish. This is, to be sure, a fair suggestion: the controversies of the English Reformation had certainly made any beyond-the-pale religious practice easy to demonize as Catholic, and the Celtic affinities between Wales

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34 Ibid., 159.
35 See especially Christopher Highley’s argument regarding the connections between Glyndwr and the Earl of Tyrone, which led to fears of “Welsh malcontents” who would support Irish rebels because “Catholics would naturally support fellow Catholics.” Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland, 86.
and Ireland certainly lent themselves to anxious connections between the two. If, however, Shakespeare is suggesting that Glendower’s pagan and prophetic practice intimates early modern Welsh Catholicism, he does so only in the most subtle of shadows—because, of course, Owain Glyndwr was Catholic, and so was everyone else in the play, since its historical timeline places it well before the English Reformation.

Moreover, one might convincingly argue that Shakespeare—in making his Welsh rebel such a patently absurd pagan—handily avoids some of the more dangerous aspects of the historical Glyndwr’s rebellion, which included a plot to make the Welsh church entirely independent. Had it succeeded, this plan no doubt would have made one more committed Catholic enemy for the English in the ensuing years.36

Yet even if its presence is not overtly felt in a play as culturally resonant as *Henry IV*, Welsh Catholicism—which flourished especially in the most outlying areas of Wales—continued to preoccupy Protestants throughout Shakespeare’s day, when the Reformation was by no means a settled issue. For Welsh clerics who were desperate to convert their countrymen to Protestantism, this was a matter of national pride: Richard Davies, the famed bishop of Saint David’s in Wales, was an early and avid voice for

36 Shakespeare may have made an even more calculated sidestep of Glyndwr’s religious import when he set the Welsh scenes in Glendower’s house. Shakespeare’s sources, including Holinshed, have the rebels’ plan being hatched in the home of the Archbishop—a locale with decidedly more resonant religious associations. On the importance of the Welsh church to Glyndwr’s rebellion, see Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr*, esp. 57-62. The church in Wales—by and large the most literate institution in Wales in Glyndwr’s time—was without a doubt the most influential force in Welsh society. Their support of the Glyndwr rebellion, combined with Glyndwr’s promises to free the Welsh church from English hegemony, made for a powerful dual threat to England. Eventually, however, the Welsh church would feel the devastating effects of the Glyndwr rebellion: his wars destroyed some of the most ancient and valuable Welsh relics and manuscripts.
getting a New Testament published in Welsh so that his people might enjoy the benefits of scripture.\textsuperscript{37} When the translation was finally published (in 1567, four years after the initial act sanctioning its production\textsuperscript{38}), Davies appended a letter to his people, written in Welsh, in which he admonishes them:

\begin{quote}
…it grieves me to see thee, Wales, which was at one time foremost, but now the last in such a glorious triumph as this: awake thou now lovely Wales, my dear and fond brother in Christ Jesus: do not denationalize thyself, do not be indifferent, do not look down, but gaze upwards to the place thou dost belong: do not add to my grief, keep in mind what one who truly loves thee says: consider what thou has within thy grasp, embrace and take to thyself this heavenly gift which the Lord hath sent thee this day.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

For Davies, Welsh resistance—or, to characterize it as Glanmor Williams has, just plain apathy—toward the Reformation is the equivalent of betraying Wales’s national history. This history includes “bravery, courage, heroism,” as well as “arts, mental powers, learning, wisdom, and supreme genius,” but there is no history more important to Wales than its “undefiled religion, pure Christianity,” brought to them in ancient days by Joseph of Arimathea.\textsuperscript{40} For Davies, this ancient and pure Christianity was the same as present-day Protestantism, and what the Welsh really needed was a reminder of the religion they

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{37} Bishop Davies was known primarily for his posts at Saint David’s and Saint Asaph; his episcopal administration and his studied engagement with the most vexing problems of spreading Protestantism in Wales are profiled in Williams’s \textit{Wales and the Reformation}, esp. 289-93, 295-97, and 244-46.
\textsuperscript{38} Williams’s study has the most detailed account of the parliamentary act for translation of the Bible into Welsh (see \textit{Wales and the Reformation}, esp. 239-41). However, for a succinct, but useful account of the vernacular in Wales and its importance for the Reformation movement, see Jenkins, “The Anglican Church and the Unity of Britain,” esp. 118-20.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 84-85.
\end{footnotes}
had before “every false divinity, idolatry, extravagance, and false doctrine” was introduced by the Roman church.\textsuperscript{41} Catholicism was a foreign plague in Wales, according to Davies, and its continued presence there threatened Welsh national identity.

Although scholars agree that the publication of the New Testament in Wales—along with the stewardship of men like Davies and William Salesbury\textsuperscript{42}—contributed immensely to the spread of Protestantism in Wales, they also agree that the Reformation there was far from settled. Suspicion of Welsh commitment to Protestantism persisted in seminal texts like Foxe’s \textit{Acts and Monuments}, in which pages were peppered with references to unseemly Welsh clerics who kept either wives (at best) or whores (at worst); Foxe even includes a lengthy history of the burning of a Welsh idol, “Darvell Gatheren,” “whome the Welshmen much worshipped.”\textsuperscript{43} Between 1587 and 1589, the Welsh-born John Penry published three treatises lamenting the state of religion in his

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 94. For Davies, much of the dangerous influences on ancient British Christianity came from the Saxons, who converted to Christianity when Pope Gregory sent the monk Augustine (not to be confused with Saint Augustine) on a mission to Britain. Although the Britons “kept their Christianity pure and undefiled” (91), the Saxons accepted the Roman church’s trappings, leading to “Crosses and images, prayers to dead saints, the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, holy water and salt, and such like vanity” (92)—all the trappings of the early modern Catholic church. The presence of the Saxons in early modern Britain—and their influence on its religious history—will be considered in the next section of this chapter, which considers Rowley’s \textit{A Shoemaker, A Gentleman}.

\textsuperscript{42} Besides Bishop Davies, William Salesbury is undoubtedly the most important steward of Protestantism in Wales during the early modern period. His work formed the bulk of the 1567 Welsh New Testament; he also wrote the first Welsh-English dictionary that was ever printed. Many Welsh scholars credit Salesbury both for the major movement of vernacular translation in Wales that followed the New Testament and for the survival of the Welsh language during a period when its use was becoming increasingly obsolete. For a short biography of his life, see R. Brinley Jones, \textit{William Salesbury} (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{43} John Foxe, \textit{Acts and Monuments} (London, 1563), 571 (sig. FF 4'). This same account of the Welsh idol appears in Foxe’s 1570 edition of \textit{Acts and Monuments}, 1254 (sig. FFF 4').
native land; the most famous, *A Treatise Containing the Aequity of an Humble Supplication*, warned Queen Elizabeth and Parliament that Wales existed in “spirituall misery”\(^4\) without the guidance of proper ministers. The Welsh, he contends, are left in such darkness that they worship saints, pray to idols, and even long for that old Catholic practice of *paying* for absolution from sin—this has led, according to Penry, to any number of disgusting transgressions, including adultery, fornication, and thievery.\(^4\) For Davies and Penry, and even the Englishman John Foxe, the latent Catholicism of Wales—and all the seemingly ignorant ritual surrounding it—still threatened well into the process of Reformation. The Welsh, then, bore yet another burdensome religious association: in addition to whatever connections the English made between paganism and the Welsh, they also made connections between Catholicism and the Welsh.

What I want to suggest here is that Welsh Catholicism does in fact appear in more overt—but still subtle—ways on the early modern stage, most particularly in Shakespeare’s only “English” comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Timelines of the Shakespearean canon differ on the exact date of composition for this play, but most critics agree that its composition likely came immediately after Shakespeare finished *1 Henry IV*.\(^4\) The chronological closeness of these two plays is important for more than

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\(^4\) Ibid., 34.

\(^4\) The most famous (and most romantic) mythology posits that Shakespeare wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* after Elizabeth I requested a play depicting Falstaff “in love.” Although the provenance of this legend is late (John Dennis, an eighteenth century playwright, first reported this version of events), it has remained a popular explanation for the play’s composition. See Jeanne Addison Roberts, *Shakespeare’s English Comedy*, (Lincoln: Univeristy of Nebraska Press, 1979), esp. 49. Another (and more
just their composition: they are also apparently meant to take place in roughly the same
time period, for the fat knight Falstaff appears in both, as do Pistol, Bardolph, and Nim
(fellow drinking mates and thieves of Prince Hal in 1 Henry IV). Yet Merry Wives seems
curiously separate from the world of 1 Henry IV; indeed, its most defining quality is that
it depicts provincial life in Shakespeare’s own time, not Henry IV’s. Moreover, where
in 1 Henry IV there is a medieval Welsh castle housing a mysterious Merlin-like rebel,
here in Windsor there is an amiable, Bible-bearing Welsh parson who serves his English
neighbors. In the fifteenth century, a Welsh parson in Windsor is a total anachronism.
But in Shakespeare’s England, a Welsh parson in England—especially one who ends up
where Sir Hugh Evans does in The Merry Wives of Windsor—had decidedly more
resonant associations, and it is these associations I want to examine in more detail here.

realistic) explanation for the play’s dating and composition involve the Garter Feast of
1597, an event to which the folio text of the play refers. For a detailed examination of
the importance of the Garter Feast, see Giorgio Melchiori, Shakespeare’s Garter Plays:
Edward III to Merry Wives of Windsor, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994),
esp. 77-112.

47 Felix Schelling famously claimed about The Merry Wives that “there is no play of
Shakespeare’s which draws so unmistakably as his experience on his own experience of
English life as this, and the dramatist’s real source here is indubitably the life of the
Elizabethan” (See Elizabethan Drama 1558-1642 [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908], 2:
243). There are other, non-English sources for the play, however; these sources also
suggest a wide gap between the history plays and The Merry Wives. Though Shakespeare
was largely faithful to his Holinshed for the histories, he may well have borrowed from
Italian comedy for The Merry Wives; a novella titled Il Pecorone has a strikingly similar
plot to The Merry Wives. For a detailed look at “The Italian connection,” see Melchiori,
Shakespeare’s Garter Plays, 79-82.

48 It is crucial that I note here my use of the 1623 folio text for this reading of Merry
Wives. The differences between the quarto text (hereafter referred to as “Q”)—first
printed in 1602—and the folio text (hereafter cited as “F”) are important ones, and figure
most prominently into the play’s treatment of the royal court (which is mentioned in the
play’s final scene). Evans, who I will be focusing on here, appears in both versions, with
only slight alterations; where necessary, I will note these textual differences.
Of all the Welsh characters that appear in Shakespeare—Fluellen, Glendower, and even the less overtly Welsh Guiderius and Arviragus—Parson Hugh Evans has been most routinely consigned to “minor” status. Joan Rees claims that Evans “is merely ignorant,” “without honor, dignity, or even language,” and “used for a sketch wholly unrelated to the play.” And although one early critic, Frederick J. Harries, took a special interest in Evans, he did so not for Evans’s inherent nuances as a character, but instead for his potential real-life inspiration. For Harries, there is no doubt that Sir Hugh Evans is Shakespeare’s re-incarnation of Thomas Jenkins, the headmaster of the Stratford grammar school, and likely the first Welshman that Shakespeare ever knew. Perhaps dismissals of Evans as a character are to be expected: Welsh characters are frequently overlooked, as we have seen, but Evans may seem at first to offer a special brand of benevolence and accord with his English neighbors, making his Welshness acutely non-threatening. He holds particular standing within Windsor, and although he is heavily accented—even more so than Fluellen, in fact—he lacks the quick temper and vigor of that soldierly countryman.

Moreover, the gentle mocking Evans endures at the hands of his English friends relies heavily on stereotypical ethnic joking about the Welsh. Evans gets called a “mountain-foreigner” by Pistol in the play’s first scene (1.1.133) and his culinary preferences—a common target for the Welsh especially—are later marked by Ford, who lumps Evans in with other foreigners: “I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle”

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50 Harries, *Shakespeare and the Welsh*, 142.
Yet these jokes never seem to prevent him from enjoying access to the entire community, a fact that critics have indeed signaled, highlighting Windsor’s remarkable ability and willingness to “absorb foreign elements.” Indeed, in the play’s first scene, the Welsh parson is painted as the town peacemaker: in his labored English, he tells the angry Justice Shallow, who has come with a grievance against Falstaff, that he “will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compromises between you.”

Yet there are moments in the play that suggest a more crucial role for Evans, a more nuanced depiction of his relationship with the town. One such moment comes when the Host of the Garter Inn decides to fan the flames of a petty dispute between the French doctor Caius and Evans; Caius is enraged that Evans has been helping Slender win the affections of Anne Page, with whom Caius is also in love. The Host—accompanied by several of the locals—is eager to see a fight between the two foreigners, clearly viewing it as a comic sideshow of sorts. While the Host needles Caius, Evans paces nervously, alternating his claims to bravery (“I will knog his urinals about his knave’s costard” [3.1.10-11]) with inner ruminations of fear (“Mercy on me! I have great dispositions to cry” [3.1.18]). Though he carries with him a rapier, he also carries a Bible (“the sword and the Word” [3.1.37], Shallow mocks), which he reads through anxiously.

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52 1.1.27-29. All quotations from *Merry Wives* come from Greenblatt et. al., *The Norton Shakespeare*. 
as he awaits Caius. When the two men finally meet, Evans is outwardly confrontational, but speaks to Caius in asides: “Pray you let us not be laughing-stocks to other mens’ humours” (3.1.73-74). When the Host’s plot is revealed, Welshman and Frenchman join forces (“let us knog our prains together to be revenge” [3.1.100-101]). The moment at which these outcasts join is wrought with potential. That they are two foreigners in a town of English men and women might at first suggest that they will seek a calculated revenge on those that have tormented them for their obvious differences from the native population. That they are Welsh and French, respectively, also suggests an unholy alliance for the English: it was the French, after all, who supported Llewelyn ap Gruffydd’s rebellion in Wales, and Owain Glyndwr also nurtured connections with the French, who he saw as allies in a war against England.53

If Shakespeare intended the Caius-Evans partnership to be more than merely suggestive, something got lost in translation: though 4.5 features the Host lamenting that he has been “undone” (4.5.74) by a plot set in motion by Caius and Evans, it is unclear exactly what the plot was, or how the two foreigners executed it.54 In the end, the Caius

53 For an especially interesting snapshot into Franco-Welsh alliances during the Glyndwr rebellion, see Davies, The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr, 167-69, which describes Glyndwr’s agreement to transfer ecclesiastical obedience from the Roman pope to Avignonese pope, Benedict III. Among Glyndwr’s list of demands in exchange for allegiance was that that Benedict would ensure that all ecclesiastical appointments in Wales would go to speakers of the Welsh language—a move that would have resulted in an almost wholesale exclusion of English clerics in Wales, most of whom could not speak Welsh.

54 The plot on the Host is a vexing problem for editors of both the Q and F text: neither version explains fully what exactly the practical joke on the Host has been. For two useful discussions of the confusion (and the subtle differences between Q and F here), see Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor’s analysis in The Complete Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford:
and Evans pairing results in little more than a harmless prank, designed to teach the Host—but not the whole town—a lesson about teasing foreigners. Yet there is another, more resonant pairing for Evans in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and that is in his adversarial relationship with Falstaff, the lecherous knight who comes to Windsor to drink, debauch, and make enemies of nearly everyone in town. Although Falstaff and Evans interact only briefly in the first four acts of the play, their confrontation in act five is a deeply suggestive moment that ends up reproducing some of the most common assumptions regarding the Welsh and their suspected religious leanings. It is this final scene in which the Welsh parson reveals a decidedly less Bible-bearing part of himself; that his target is Falstaff, a character with his own particularly evocative religious history, conjures the divisive Protestant-Catholic tensions in the period.

The Falstaff that takes the stage in *The Merry Wives* seems, at first glance, entirely severed from any sort of religious tradition. His sins, which include gluttony, thieving, and various attempts at adultery, certainly fail to recommend in him any brand of morality. But any basic inquiry into the history of the character will show that Falstaff was not always Falstaff, and the historical figure to whom he was originally meant to refer was, in fact, a deeply religious man. That historical figure is Sir John Oldcastle, Baron Cobham, who served under the future Henry V during the prince of Wales’s extended campaigns in Wales, especially those against the rebel Owain Glyndwr. His longtime interest in Lollardy—a heretical religious movement that, like the Protestant movement that would come later, reviled the authority of the pope and called for more

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invested authority in the scriptures themselves—would place him under suspicion for years in spite of his military contributions and social standing. The story of Oldcastle’s life once he fully assumed the mantle of Lollardy was certainly bizarre enough to warrant an active literary afterlife: arrested after a lengthy heresy examination by Archbishop Thomas Arundel, he escaped from the Tower of London and apparently plotted to kidnap Henry V, then fled to Wales. When he was captured, he was immediately condemned as a heretic and traitor, and was burned at the stake upon his return to England.\footnote{For a brief but detailed biography of Oldcastle, see John A. F. Thomson, “Oldcastle, John, Baron Cobham (d. 1417),” \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online}. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/20674>, accessed 30 January 2008.}

Though a traitor to his king, Oldcastle was lauded as a Protestant martyr by John Foxe, whose 1570 edition of \textit{Acts and Monuments} included a nearly thirty page defense of Cobham, a defense that not only regaled Cobham for his early and staunch commitment to eradicating the Roman church, but also denied that Cobham had any intention of kidnapping the king.\footnote{\textit{Acts and Monuments}, esp. 676-699 (sigs. Nn ii^v-Pp ii^v).} When Shakespeare decided, in \textit{1 Henry IV}, to name his morally corrupt companion to Prince Hal “Oldcastle,” he was not only treading on the name of a proto-Protestant hero, he was also sullying the ancestral line of a powerful Elizabethan family—the current Lord Cobham especially—who objected to Shakespeare’s use of the name. That “Falstaff” was once “Oldcastle” is made clear through several textual slips: in \textit{1 Henry IV}, Prince Hal calls Falstaff his “old lad of the castle” (1.2.37), in \textit{2 Henry IV}’s quarto text, a speech prefix still identifies Falstaff as
“Old . . .” and an epilogue attempts to pre-empt associations between Falstaff and Oldcastle by declaring that “Oldcastle died a martyr, and this [Falstaff] is not the man.”

Did audiences continue to associate Falstaff with Oldcastle, even after the name change? Kristen Poole argues that the echoes of religious controversy would follow Falstaff throughout the period, in part because the character speaks frequently in a “godly jargon” that associates him with puritan radicals of the period. Scriptural quotation combined with heavy drinking and criminal behavior (which reaches its apex in *Merry Wives*), Poole argues, nicely encapsulates the hypocrisy Shakespeare was lampooning in his puritan critics, who saw the stage as a corrosive influence on English culture.

Moreover, contemporary response to the Falstaff character included a play titled *Sir John Oldcastle,* which includes a prologue that distinguishes the valiant martyr Oldcastle from the gluttonous corrupter of youth that is so prominent in Shakespeare’s plays. In *Sir John Oldcastle,* the martyr’s reputation is fully rehabilitated; whatever may have seemed puritanical and hypocritical about Falstaff in Shakespeare’s plays is firmly anti-Catholic.

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57 *2 Henry IV* (in Greenblatt et. al., *The Norton Shakespeare*), Epilogue (l. 27). There may also be one subtle reference to the Oldcastle name in *The Merry Wives*; when Simple arrives at the inn to visit Falstaff, the Host directs him to “his castle” (4.5.5).


59 The play, likely first staged in 1599 by Shakespeare’s theatrical rivals, The Admiral’s Men, is also commonly known as *1 Sir John Oldcastle.* The “1” indicates that the play was most certainly intended as part one of an at least two part play; the play we do have concludes with Oldcastle and his wife on the run from officers of the king. Presumably, the conclusion to the series would have included a staging of Oldcastle’s capture and eventual death. The play’s authorship and textual history are both extremely complex; for a comprehensive history of both, see Jonathan Rittenhouse, ed., *A Critical Edition of 1 Sir John Oldcastle* (New York: Garland, 1984), esp. 1-93.

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and piously Protestant in Sir John Oldcastle. The figure of Oldcastle, then, continued to resonate with religious controversy, even when he appeared as Falstaff.

This resonance is, in part, why the final scene of The Merry Wives is so revealing: in it, Parson Evans exacts a calculating and curious revenge on Falstaff, who has angered the community by actively pursuing both Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, the “merry wives” of the town who have spent the play setting up both their husbands and Falstaff. That Falstaff is punished for his crimes is not in itself unusual. As many critics have noted, his ritual punishment, in which he is dressed as a “Herne,” or satyr-like figure with horns,60 and taunted and pinched by the locals closely resembles the folk practice of “skimmington,” in which liars and adulterers are put on display in the community as punishment for their transgressions.61 What is curious, however, is the role Evans plays in this ritual, and the lengths to which he goes to imbue the ceremony with elements that had, in Shakespeare’s England, decidedly Catholic resonances.

The decision to lure Falstaff to the forest for his shaming comes in the play’s fourth act, after Mistresses Page and Ford finally reveal to their husbands that they have been feigning interest in Falstaff and tricking him into various comic setups, including a

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60 Costuming for Falstaff here has long relied on a stage direction found only in the Q text (F has extremely sparse stage directions), which reads “Enter Sir John with Bucks head upon him.” The direction itself lines up with what the wives have instructed Falstaff to wear to their nighttime meeting; however, it is unclear whether Falstaff is wearing a simple set of horns atop his head, or if he is wearing a mask-like apparatus that covers his entire face.

61 Leah S. Marcus finds important meanings in how the skimmington ritual is deployed in the two different versions of the text; for her argument, see “Purity and Danger in The Modern Edition: The Merry Wives of Windsor,” which appears as a chapter in her book, Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), esp. 91.
memorable turn that puts Falstaff in drag. They decide that their final trick against Falstaff will be to lure him into the Windsor woods, with a promise of sexual favors, only to set upon him various children of the town, who will be dressed as “urchins, oafs, and fairies” (4.4.48) and who will be instructed to pinch him and burn him with their tapers. Parson Evans, who to this point has been a quiet observer of the wives’ planning, chimes in with his contribution: “I will teach the children their behaviours, and I will be like a jackanapes also, to burn the knight with my taber” (4.4. 65-66). Not only has Evans committed himself to wearing some kind of monkey disguise—the “jackanapes” to which he refers—he has also appointed himself director of the children who will dress as fairies and torture Falstaff.

For Regina Buccola, Evans’s commitment is crucial for understanding the subtle religious undertones that Shakespeare injects into The Merry Wives, most of which can be seen in the play’s depiction of fairy lore, which had several crucial meanings in early modern culture. In its most harmless incarnations, fairy lore was often deployed to account for social misbehaviors that were prompted by the strains of domestic life—flawed children went missing, and fairies were to blame; sexual indiscretions were the result of fairy meddling. But during the Reformation, fairy lore also became a central target of the most zealous reformers, who drew parallels between fairy belief and Catholic worship practices. Belief in fairies was akin to worship of the saints, the superstitious practices of fairy belief were replicated in the superstitions of Catholics, and pagan ignorance—belief in the fairies—was the same as popish ignorance—belief in the supremacy of the Church of Rome. By the time James VI of Scotland (the future James I
of England) wrote his *Daemonologie* in 1597, fairy lore had become so associated with Catholic belief that James was able to claim that the lore of fairy transformation—in which a fairy was able to shape-shift and contract its body into something much smaller—was the same as Catholic belief in transubstantiation. To the average Protestant in early modern England, both shape-shifting and transubstantiation were equally ludicrous ideas on which to base one’s faith.

Without the inclusion of Evans, the use of fairies for the final trick on Falstaff may well have played as a simple, non-controversial invocation of rural rituals persisting in a nostalgic Windsor. Yet the dynamic between Evans, a Welsh transplant in the Windsor community, and Falstaff, a character whose history had controversial Protestant associations, suggests that the Catholic resonances with fairy lore deserve careful attention. This is, in large part, due to Evans’s Welshness, a fact that Buccola highlights with great success. By noting that England’s lingering suspicions about Welsh Catholicism (suspicions that were made plain in the work of John Penry), Buccola argues that Evans should remind readers of the corrupt Welsh clergy who were in desperate need of education and who retained “persistent loyalties” to the Catholic faith.”

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63 Buccola, “Shakespeare’s Fairy Dance,” 16. There is one other aspect of Evans’s character that may recall the Catholic clergy, one that Buccola does not mention—his role as William Page’s Latin teacher. In a scene only appearing in F, Evans rehearses the Latin cases with William, steeping him in a language that had been, in the Reformation,
participation in the trick on Falstaff is decidedly less innocent than the original planning by the wives precisely because he is Welsh: when the women talk fairies, it’s rural skimmington. When the Welsh parson Evans talks fairies, it’s subversive religious statement.

Yet Buccola’s argument regarding Evans’s Welsh pedigree and accompanying Catholic leanings necessitates an extension, however, one that underscores Evans’s centrality to this particular scene. Here, audiences witness the complicated subversion of a plan that had intended for Anne Page, Mistress Page’s daughter, to be disguised as the Fairy Queen—a figure who delivers the longest speeches of 5.5 and who presides over Falstaff’s taunting. Anne Page and her beloved Fenton, however, have devised to subvert the plan so that they might elope, and they arrange to have someone else stand in for the Fairy Queen role. When, then, the scene’s speech prefixes identify “Mistress Quickly” as the Fairy Queen, it appears that Anne and Fenton have been successful. Yet when Slender—a suitor of Anne’s—arrives to steal away the Fairy Queen (having been told that he will be stealing away Anne in disguise), he finds out that he has accidentally abducted “a great lubberly boy!” (5.5.163). Clearly, Mistress Quickly is not a “great

set against the vernacular that was so important to the Protestant faith. Although Evans’s familiarity with Latin is suggestive, I am hesitant to assign it a strictly Catholic resonance, especially because the scene highlights Mistress Quickly’s comic (and bawdy) misappropriation of Latin rather than Evans’s skill at it. Here it also may be worthwhile to remember Frederick J. Harries’s point about Shakespeare’s Welsh schoolmaster—who most certainly would have taught Latin.
lubberly boy” (not to mention that her speeches in this scene are completely free of malapropisms, which have defined her speech throughout the play).  

What then, is the answer to this textual problem, and what exactly does it have to do with Evans? For both T.W. Craik and David Crane, recent editors of The Merry Wives, the issue is resolved by considering staging practices of the period. The speech prefixes assigned to “Mistress Quickly” are in fact meant to indicate that the same actor who was playing Mistress Quickly is now playing the role of the Fairy Queen, who will eventually be revealed as the “great lubberly boy” with which Slender has eloped. This resolution also explains why the Fairy Queen speaks so much more eloquently than Mistress Quickly ever might have been expected to. An unexpected—and extremely interesting—consequence of this textual resolution, however, involves Evans: if the Fairy Queen is played by a boy actor now playing a new role, then the only recognizable character to the audience onstage during the trick on Falstaff is Evans, whose Welsh accent gives him away at every turn. While the trick is designed by key members of the

64 In the case of Merry Wives, editors have sometimes relied on Q to fill in F’s blanks, but here, Q provides no answers, since it has its own inaccuracies in this scene, mostly having to do with costuming (the Fairy Queen, for example, is supposed to be dressed in white, but Slender takes away a figure dressed in red—in complete contrast to the instructions he has received).

65 David Crane’s modern edition of The Merry Wives of Windsor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) deserves special mention here for its careful attention to the issues of staging in the play; his editorial choices—which include changing the Quickly speech prefixes to “Queen of Fairies”—are repeatedly driven by the theatrical realities of the day.

66 One other character onstage during this scene is “Hobgoblin,” who in some speech prefixes is identified as “Pistol.” Both Crane and Craik argue, however, that many of the same problems with Quickly’s appearance here replicate with Pistol’s—if it is Pistol, he behaves entirely differently from his previous appearances, and his presence serves no dramatic function. The confusion over Quickly, of course, has garnered far more
Windsor community, it is crucial that these members of the community have all left the stage by the time the torture of Falstaff begins: we are left, instead, with a host of previously unseen children and our determined leader, the Welsh parson.

Acknowledging the textual complexity of this scene, then, has profound implications for how we understand Evans’s role. Here, he truly becomes the ringleader of this band of fairies.

And this ringleader’s execution of the trick on a character whose history was strongly associated with early Protestant religious reform suggests a telling binary: the Welsh Catholic and the English Protestant are being pitted against each other, with an almost uncomfortable vehemence. Evans, who to this point has been a genial and harmless presence in the play, becomes strikingly aggressive in his role as director of this trick. Ordering the fairies to seek out those who “think not on their sins” (5.5.50), Evans is the first to make the confrontation physical when he sets about burning Falstaff’s fingers, a punishment that recalls the burning of heretics. This initial assault ignites the protracted pinching and burning Falstaff endures at the hands of the “fairies” (Falstaff, for his part, is terrified upon realizing his fairy company: “They are fairies,” he says, “He that speaks to them shall die” [5.5.44]). Evans takes particular pleasure in recounting Falstaff’s sins, which include his being “given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings, and starings, pribbles and prabbles” (5.5.148-50). Promising Falstaff that the fairies will leave off abusing him if he will only “serve Got and leave your desires,” Evans behaves as if he has just

attention both here and in scholarly editions because of the abundance of lines she has in this scene. “Hobgoblin” only speaks twice.
performed a religious intervention. That this religious intervention has involved fairy lore associates the genial and well-integrated Parson Evans with a tradition that had, in early modern England, become associated with a dangerous and seditious version of Catholicism.

If Shakespeare is indeed staging a version of the early modern anxieties over lingering Welsh Catholicism, or if he is staging a version of the often contentious conflicts between the Catholic and Protestant traditions, then does he ultimately take a side? As Buccola puts it, a “profound silence” surrounds Shakespeare’s own religious leanings, and *The Merry Wives* does nothing to tell us more. Neither Evans nor Falstaff comes out of the encounter in the woods unscathed. Although Evans is the seeming victor (Falstaff *has* been proven a drunken lecher and has been ritually shamed, after all), he also undergoes two unflattering transformations. Not only is his character feminized through his association with the wives’ plot, he is also, like Falstaff, disguised as an animal—making their confrontation a curious clash between two beasts. Moreover, the most merciless insults regarding Evans’s Welshness are trotted out here, when Falstaff angrily sums up what has occurred: “Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? Shall I have a coxcomb of frieze? ’Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese. […] Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?” (5.5.131-32; 135-36). For Falstaff, it is Evans’s Welshness that has made his shaming all the more unbearable, and if there is ever a point in the play in which Evans becomes an outsider, it is here.

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68 Ibid., 169-70.
Though Falstaff is cheerfully invited back to the home of Master Page, Evans fades from the play’s final scene, offering no summation of the events in which he has played such an important role.

At the end of *The Merry Wives*, life in Windsor appears to be on its way back to normal: the Pages have accepted the new marriage of their daughter Anne, Falstaff has been taught a lesson and will apparently join the “country fire” (5.5.219) of the Windsor community, and Evans, presumably, will go back to being the harmless, peace-making Welsh parson of Windsor. As many critics have noted, the fairy scene—with its sometimes uncomfortably cruel treatment of Falstaff—demonstrates how this place and these people address outsiders who threaten the social balance of Windsor. But the fairy scene also introduces a level of commentary that reaches outside of the Windsor community. By centralizing Evans and making him the leader of the fairy band, Shakespeare gestures toward contemporary religious controversy in England—controversy that, interestingly, also followed the Falstaff character in his every stage incarnation. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Welshness is not as purely harmless and comic as it may initially seem: instead, it carries with it associations of religious deviance that were strongly tied to the early modern understanding of Wales and its latent Catholic leanings. Like many other Welsh characters of the early modern stage, Evans is “minor” only in his relative number of lines. His presence in *The Merry Wives* is a reminder, even

70 For a detailed discussion of social class and its importance to the play in both the Q and F version, see Marcus, “Purity and Danger in the Modern Edition,” from *Puzzling Shakespeare*. 
in the 1590s, that the Reformation had not been ensured for England’s most amiable Celtic neighbor.

William Rowley’s A Shoemaker, A Gentleman: Conflating and Con founding Ancient British Religious History

In the final chapter of his study of the Reformation in Wales, Glanmor Williams argues that the Reformation had indeed been ensured by the time of Elizabeth’s death in 1603. By this point, the Welsh not only had a New Testament in their native tongue, but they also had a Book of Common Prayer, a central text in English Protestant worship. Following on the heels of these important translations came a wave of Welsh-authored publications that praised the new faith—classical bards and free-meter poets incorporated religious teachings into their work, exposing ever-growing numbers of Welsh men and women to Protestant polemic. More importantly, however, was the influx of competent and committed clergy in Wales: perhaps inspired by the stewardship of Wales’s Reformation heroes (Bishop Davies and William Salesbury chief among them), clergy in Wales had become increasingly skilled at preaching, and the machinery of the Welsh church grew ever more identifiable with that of the English.71

But the Reformation in Wales, Williams argues, was also cemented by a movement far less tangible—a movement that tied Reformation doctrine to native Welsh identity. Men like Bishop Davies, who actively reminded the Welsh people of their early and pure Christian inheritance, had successfully fused Welsh national pride with Welsh religious history, thus drawing connections with ancient British Christianity and

71 Williams, Wales and the Reformation, 397-407.
contemporary English Protestantism. By highlighting the British roots of the Protestant movement, Williams argues, reformers in Wales had successfully “encouraged among the Welsh a belief that they were an elect people, singled out by God . . . Nothing was better calculated to preserve among them their own sense of a separate identity.” It was, in short, a great marketing campaign: although the conversion to Protestantism resulted in an important cultural fusion of England and Wales, the Welsh could be left feeling as if they had simply returned to their ancestral roots, as if they had become more Welsh just by joining up with the English church.

What were the implications of such a narrative, however? Even if it had helped to convert the masses in Wales, did a narrative attributing the success of contemporary Protestantism to the ancestors of the contemporary Welsh really play that well to the English? In the early stages of the Reformation, John Foxe seized upon ancient British Christianity, reminding his readers that the ancient Britons were converted to the faith without ever mixing themselves up with the Roman church; moreover, he argues, the ancient Britons bear the mark of a chosen people:

> Because that amongst the other Gentiles, there haue ben none more strong then the Britones, either in their body, or in their faith, and in their bodely warres there haue ben none more mighty then they. […] Now, in the faith, haue they ben amongst all people the strongest, as before is sayd, because that by no tribulation, could they be compelled to forsake the faith. Wherfore of them, this semeth to me to be vnderståed.

In Foxe’s 1570 text, then, the Britons are held up as an example for the contemporary Protestant movement: their suffering in the face of Roman conquests mirrors English

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72 See above for a quotation from Davies on this very issue, 192.
Protestants’ suffering at the hands of Catholic monarchs like Mary Tudor, and English Protestants, like the ancient Britons, must continue to stand firm in the faith in the face of Catholic threats.

In Foxe’s text, the ancient British Christians and contemporary English Protestants are conflated effortlessly. But as we have seen elsewhere in this study, English appeals to ancient British history were uneven at best, especially when divisive political issues—such as the installation of a prince of Wales or the proposed union of the British Isles—added new inflections to the still-developing sense of English national identity.75 So although British history had been a valuable tool in the Reformation—for both English and Welsh Protestants—it did not necessarily remain an unproblematic symbol of pristine Christianity. Indeed, as England adjusted its narratives about British history, new versions of the story about British Christianity emerged. William Camden, the antiquarian famous for challenging long-standing and sometimes ill-informed accounts of British history, acknowledged the early conversion of the ancient Britons, but suggested that their Christianity was aided by the civilizing influence of Roman conquerors:

This yoke of the Romans although it were grievous, yet comfortable it proved and a saving health unto them: for that healthsome light of Jesus Christ shone withall upon the Britans, whereof more hereafter, and the brightnesse of that most glorious Empire, chased away all savage barbarisme from the Britans minds, like as from other nations whom it had subdued.76

75 See chapter three of this study for a discussion of how these two political developments altered accepted mythology of British identity.
76 Camden, Britain, 63 (sig. F2v). This quotation also appears in Camden’s Latin version of Britannia; see the 1586 edition, 27-28 (sigs. C6v). For a concise discussion of the
It is a curious reversal of Foxe’s narrative: according to Camden, British Christianity was in fact *aided* by the civilizing conquest of the Romans. They may have had the “light of Jesus Christ,” but having their “savage barbarisme” eradicated by the Romans turned that light into a functional religion. In many ways, Camden’s account of native British Christianity mirrors his account of native British heroism: being brave and warlike is good, but having an empire harness that brave and warlike disposition is even better.  

It is this very conflict—the conflict between the ancient version of British Christianity and its contemporary counterpart—that is staged in William Rowley’s early seventeenth-century play *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman.* Although the play has commonly been read as a tribute to the earliest incarnations of British Christianity and its Welsh roots, the play’s calculated invocations of Wales, along with subtle slights to way Camden’s historiography changed England’s view of itself and its neighbors, see Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama,* 50-51.  

77 Camden’s treatment of British heroism is considered in chapters two and three of this study; see esp. 80-81, 150-51.  

78 The precise date for the staging of this play is not a central concern for my argument here, although it has been for the few others who have considered it. John Kerrigan’s essay, “The Romans in Britain, 1603-1614,” argues that the play is commenting obliquely on James’s British union project, obviously endorsing the theory that Rowley’s play was staged within the first decade of the seventeenth century. This corresponds with the 1608 date that has sometimes been proposed for the play, based on the fact that the play is known to have been staged at the Red Bull theater—the home base of The Queen’s Men, with whom Rowley was associated until 1610. However, the title page of the play’s first printed edition, published in 1638, claims that it was staged some “twenty years hence,” making its debut sometime around 1618. As Trudi Darby has shown, this is indeed a plausible conjecture: between 1617 and 1619, Rowley’s company (then The Prince’s Men) temporarily moved to the Red Bull theater (see “The Date of William Rowley’s *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman,*” *Notes and Queries* 53.1 [2006], 83-84). On this point, I agree with Darby’s dating of the play to 1618, which places it slightly outside the time boundaries defined for this project; however, its relevance to the crucial shifts occurring in this period makes it a worthwhile point of study.
Welsh claims to a pure Christian faith, suggest that the English still harbored conflicting views on how exactly Wales fit into the history of the British church. By positioning Wales as a refuge for early Christian converts, *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* acknowledges the Welsh roots of British Christianity. But by infusing that refuge with superstitious and subtly Catholic traits, the play ultimately suggests that the great hope of British Christianity always remained outside Wales—and, unsurprisingly, *inside* England.

In many ways, *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* is a play about conversion. Although the play’s plot is a complex and often confusing account of a Roman invasion of Britain (much like the plots featured in *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman*, two other “Romans in Britain plays”), its central conflict emerges when Alban, a knight who was central in defeating the British king, converts to Christianity.79 His conversion is orchestrated by the knight Amphiabel, who has taken refuge in his native Wales after the Romans defeated British forces.80 Fearing that the Roman presence will destroy the future of the true faith, Amphiabel sets out “to the face of persecuting Alban,”81 “To make a Christian of a bloody fiend” (1.3.138). The next time we see Amphiabel, he has made a believer out of Alban, whose job it was (per the Roman emperor Dioclesian) to

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79 St. Alban is still venerated today as the first British Christian martyr.
80 We learn that Amphiabel is Welsh in 1.1, when he and Hugh discuss whether their homeland will be a safe place for the recently deceased Allured’s queen. Amphiabel explains that the “right” he holds in Wales has also been overrun with Romans: “I have not left one subject to command” (1.1.103). The confusion between “British” and “Welsh” here should be familiar to readers of this study by now: although Amphiabel has been fighting on behalf of “Britain,” Wales is clearly somewhat separate, with its own petty royalties to govern. This is not unlike the versions of Britain and Wales that we find in *Cymbeline* and *The Valiant Welshman*.
81 1.3.123. All quotations from *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* are from the version edited by Trudi L. Darby (New York: Routledge, 2002) and will hereafter be cited parenthetically.
begin a wholesale extermination of Christians in Britain. Alban praises Amphiabel as his “tutor-master” (2.2.14), a man that “of a tyrant makes a proselyte” (2.2.8), and even makes a gesture to Amphiabel’s Welsh heritage, calling him a “prince of Wales” before sending him away to avoid persecution by the approaching Romans. When Alban is confronted by Maximinus, the Roman co-emperor, he freely confesses his newfound Christianity. Moreover, when asked why he is not “wading in a stream of blood” from martyred Christians (2.2.53), as “True Romans” would (2.2.54), Alban answers, “But I am an Englishman” (2.2.55).

There have, apparently, been two conversions here. Not only has Alban been transformed into a Christian, he has also re-affirmed an English identity that he had, apparently, thrown off in service to the Roman empire. Both conversions, apparently, have been inspired by what Maximinus calls a “Cambrian sectarist” (2.2.87)—the Welshman Amphiabel. So far, Wales is looking nothing short of glorified: the knight Alban, who once abandoned his English identity for Roman recognition, has returned to the “British” fold and is a fully reformed Christian, all thanks to a heroic Welsh knight with a holy streak. Alban’s conversion centralizes the role of Wales in British Christianity, suggesting that the English are indebted to the Welsh for religious triumphs over Rome.

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82 The historical Diocletian did, in fact, make his remarkably accomplished general Maximian a co-emperor, though Diocletian was the clear superior. Because Diocletian is famed for his persecution of Christians, he makes an apt subject for Rowley’s play; he did not, however, rule at the same time that Offa, another major character in the play, ruled his kingdom.
Yet the Christianity housed in this ancient Wales is not without its flaws, at least according to contemporary Protestant doctrine. Although Amphiabel has proven himself a worthy ancestor through his conversion of Alban, his most devoted servant in Wales, the virgin Winifred, bears the mark of a decidedly more Catholic aesthetic. In her first appearance onstage, she dons a black veil—looking, John Kerrigan has argued, like a “crypto-nun”\(^{83}\)—and sounding like one, too. While the noble Welsh knight Hugh professes his love to her, Winifred reveals that she has “made a vow” (1.3.75) to “grant my best virginity” (1.3.77) to the Lord, her “celestial bridegroom” (1.3.63). Her vow of chastity remains a central conflict of the play: Amphiabel, the play’s consummate Christian model, presents a Protestant-sounding counterpoint to Winifred’s vow:

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\begin{align*}
    &\text{I come to strengthen you, fair Winifred;} \\
    &\text{So to continue, I hope I need not;} \\
    &\text{Yet not so strictly to virginity} \\
    &\text{As to the Christian faith.} \\
    &\text{For wedlock is an ordinance from heaven,} \\
    &\text{Though junior to the single purity.} \\
    &\text{In this, chaste wedlock doth the conquest win:} \\
    &\text{She knows the tree forbid, it will not sin. (1.3.67-74)}
\end{align*}
\]

Despite this counsel, Winifred denies Hugh’s marriage proposals again and again, until he eventually loses all hope for the future: deciding to give up fighting against the Romans, he resigns himself to a reign of Roman tyranny.

It is not just Winifred’s cloistered behavior, however, that echoes the trappings of Catholicism. She is also the arbiter of a holy well, where “thronging visitants” (1.3.3) come in hopes of miraculous cures for any number of ailments. Rowley’s version of Winifred’s holy well changes the story of its origins: in Welsh legend, the well was

\(^{83}\) Kerrigan, “The Romans in Britain,” 119.
created when the chaste Winfred was decapitated by a lecherous prince whose advances she had refused—from where her head fell came a spring of healing water and her legendary status as Saint Winifred. For Rowley, however, Winifred’s well springs up in a moment of Christian contemplation and is consecrated by an angel (who makes a surprise appearance at the well—rising up to proclaim the well’s miraculous properties). Its powers go on display in the play’s third act, when Roman officers come to arrest Winifred; when one of the officers mocks the well by splashing water in his face, he immediately goes blind and must plead with Winifred to have his sight restored. She has powers to do so, and does, prompting the Roman officer to call her a witch (3.1.133). One wonders if the average English Protestant would have agreed.

Black veils? Cloistered chastity? Holy wells and pilgrimages? It’s everything “a hot Protestant such as Foxe would disapprove of,” and although Rowley makes Winifred central in his account of early British Christianity, he also inserts echoes of superstitious Catholicism, suggesting that the religious tradition in Wales is not as perfect as it should be. As John Kerrigan has argued, these details may be hinting at contemporary superstitiousness in Wales (a characteristic that, as we have seen, the English often associated with Welsh religion), but they also introduce a new wrinkle into the mythology of pure British Christianity. The Welsh Amphiabel may have brought Christianity to Alban, but the ancient Welsh Christianity in Rowley’s play was still not an accurate reflection of contemporary English Protestantism.

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84 For a detailed description of Winifred’s well and her reputation as a renowned Welsh saint (along with an impressive list of sources for her reputation, see Elissa R. Henken, Traditions of the Welsh Saints (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), 141-151.
85 Kerrigan, “The Romans in Britain,” 119.
But even John Foxe would be pleased with what comes next, “an exercise in British patriotic hagiography,” in which Winifred, Amphiabel, Alban, and Hugh are martyred for their Christian beliefs. Alban is thrilled to be “Britain’s first Martyr for the Christian faith” (4.3.23), and Amphiabel compares his death march to Caesar’s greatest triumph (4.3.41). Just as in Foxe’s account of the Diocletian martyrdoms, these too are gruesome: Winifred asks that her arm be cut open so that she can slowly bleed to death (better to enjoy her contemplation of the angels who are coming “To meet and welcome me unto the land of bliss” [4.3.111]). Moreover, Winifred herself has had a conversion that would please even the staunchest of Protestants: conceding that her vow of chastity was misguided, she calls Hugh her “earthly love” (4.3.94), pledging that their wedding in death will bond them forever. Tristan Marshall, who argues that the martyrdoms in A Shoemaker are meant to illustrate the Christian dimension of the British myth, might also have added that the martyrdoms in A Shoemaker move British Christianity from its superstitious, Catholic-leaning past to its triumphant Protestant future.

After the martyrdoms, the play shifts gears: the newly-conquered Roman Britain is now under siege from the Goths and Vandals, and the Romans enlist the help of two lowly shoemakers, Crispin and Crispianus—the disguised Offa and Elred, who help defeat the new invaders, securing victory for the Roman side. When their identities are revealed, the Roman co-emperors are both grateful and lenient, agreeing to let Offa rule in the north and Elred in the south: “Being English born, be Briton kings again” (5.2.183). This final scene re-inscribes England as Britain’s center and its natural

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86 Tristan Marshall, Theatre and Empire, 64.
87 Ibid., 64-65.
descendant, not to mention the imperial successor to Rome. It is an Anglo-centric end to the play, a fact that is perhaps not surprising, given that this is an English play. But it is also a play that has, to this point, set half of its scenes in Wales, where Christianity has flourished.

What then, is finally made of the Welsh contribution to this English/British Christian heroism? Offa ends the play by offering a humble suit to his Roman emperor, an acknowledgment of the Christians’ suffering:

’Tis this:
A church, then, and a beauteous monastery
On Holmhurst Hill, where Alban lost his head,
Offa shall build, which I’ll St Alban’s name,
In honour of our first English martyr’s fame. (5.2.191-95)

Offa’s speech, finally, leaves nothing to make of the Welsh contribution. The only martyr honored here is Alban—the “Englishman” who became a Christian late in the game, with a new church to be built in England. John Kerrigan has argued that A Shoemaker honors Wales by “emphasizing the Welshness of the British saints,” but the parting shot of the play neither honors Welshness nor emphasizes it.\(^\text{88}\) Indeed, all the Welsh characters—Hugh, Amphiabel, and Winifred—are dead, and the action of the play has shifted completely to England. Moreover, the new British kings are not “British” at all—in Rowley’s sources, Offa and Elred are Saxon kings, and their inheritance in A Shoemaker leaves Wales off the map. Those who know their history will note, too, that

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\(^{88}\) Kerrigan argues that “Offa finally erases Alban’s British identity” when he names Alban as an English martyr (“The Romans in Britain,” 121). However, this ignores the fact that Alban never claimed a British identity, only an English one (see again 2.2.55 for Alban’s declaration of Englishness). Offa has not really erased anyone’s British identity; indeed, he has done worse by completely neglecting to mention that it exists.
Offa was indeed famous for building an important British monument, but it wasn’t a church. It was, instead, an impressive dyke designed to separate his Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia from the Welsh.

*A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* is, like many other “Romans in Britain” plays of the period, a sometimes uneven conglomeration of sources and mythologies. Here, Roman emperors battle it out with Saxon kings who are also supposed to be British, men who claim to be “English” find solace in the religious teachings of a Welsh knight, and Welsh saints become prototypical martyrs. What is unique about *A Shoemaker*, however, is the way it acknowledges and then refigures the ancient roots of British Christianity in order to focus the narrative on the *English* rather than the Welsh. Early in the play, Wales is figured as a refuge for Christians under siege, but the superstitious practice surrounding its pilgrimage site and the crypto-Catholic nun make it an inhospitable locale for what would ultimately become the true and respectable house of the British Christian tradition. The suffering of three Welsh martyrs is eclipsed by the suffering of one English martyr, and the holy well at which they worshipped is replaced by a proper church in England.

Understanding why a play like *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* made sense to English audiences in the early seventeenth century means understanding the narratives that informed England’s understanding of its own religious history and that of its neighbors. Though the mythology of ancient British Christianity had provided a compelling narrative for reformers looking to bring Wales into the Protestant fold, it also had the unfortunate side effect of supplanting English claims to religious superiority. As the English adapted their understanding of British history, however, they were also able to
develop new ways of marginalizing the Welsh as the ancestors of the first British Christians. In *A Shoemaker*, the Welsh become famed but flawed progenitors of the Christian religion: the glory is saved for the English. Given the English penchant for remaking ancient British history in an Anglo-centric image, this new incarnation of Christianity’s history in Britain should, finally, come as no surprise. Moreover, given the wide range of perceptions of Welsh religion available to the English—perceptions that had been shaped by an extremely complicated Reformation process in Wales—*A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* is only doing what plays like *1 Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* did before it: staging a version of Welsh religion that had been molded by the changing tides of history, politics, and religious reconciliation.
CONCLUSION

HAVING IT ALL WELSH: THE PROTOTYPAL STAGE WELSHMAN ACHIEVED?

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that stage Welshmen—and stage versions of Wales itself—are deeply important expressions of contemporary English politics and English national identity during what was a particularly charged historical moment. In examining Welsh princes, Welsh soldiers, Welsh parsons, and more, we can ascertain a specific logic that English playwrights deployed when referring to Wales or the Welsh in their plays. A bombastic Welsh soldier, in other words, is rarely just a joke at the expense of perceived Welsh temperament; it is also a reflection of how England negotiated its own sense of militarism and ancient British heroism. When read carefully, a bumbling Welsh parson becomes more than just the sum of the cheese jokes and the funny accent: he becomes a nuanced representation of English preconceptions and anxieties regarding Welsh Catholicism.

Representations like these provide us with a unique lens for examining the early modern English understanding of what was, undoubtedly, a complex historical and political landscape. The wars, the settlement projects, and the religious reforms that occurred in this quarter-century allowed for dynamic and highly relevant invocations of Wales, a territory that bore particular relation to all of these historical developments. Yet
my imposition of a time limit to this project should in no way suggest that Wales or the Welsh ceased to be a relevant force in the English cultural landscape. Indeed, although my project focuses specifically on the period ushered in by a vibrant wave of English patriotism during the 1590s, culminating in a wave of newly-fashioned “British” patriotism in the early Stuart period, there was still much to be decided in England about what it meant to be British—and wherever there is Britishness, there is always Welshness.

In order to demonstrate this fact, and to gesture toward the work that still begs to be done on Wales and the stage in the early modern period and beyond, I’d like to take a final look at a stage production that is, without a doubt, the most densely-packed and difficult to understand representation of stage Welshness: Ben Jonson’s 1618 *For the Honour of Wales*. If there was ever a production that gathers every stereotype of Welsh behavior into one place, it is *For the Honour of Wales*, a short antimasque featuring three Welshmen, who, at various points in the action, talk about cheese, Cadwaladr, goats, flannel, St. David, the princedom of Wales, extensive family trees, and fighting—that favorite of Welsh pastimes. It is a virtual playground of Welsh “stockness,” and one wonders why J.O. Bartley, the surveyor of stage stock characteristics, did not devote an entire chapter to this brief but rich display of stage Welshness. In its sheer volume of jokes, its complete saturation with stereotypes, and the apparent total lack of necessity to

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1 Bartley, does, in fact, consider *For the Honour of Wales* throughout his chapter on “The Stage Welshman,” and also provides a somewhat extended analysis under the heading “Jonson’s Welshmen.” In the summation of his reading of the Welshmen in this antimasque, Bartley contends that the three major characters “are meant to symbolize their nation and provide entertainment.” See *Teague, Shenkin, and Sawney*, 58.
either explain or contextualize such jokes and stereotypes for its audience, *For the Honour of Wales* appears, at least on the surface, to achieve a version of stage Welshness that is so surface-driven as to be completely apolitical.

This is, of course, not the case; as my dissertation has proven thus far, such displays are rarely apolitical, and *For the Honour of Wales* is certainly no exception. But in order to apprehend the subtleties of this production, we must first understand its unique context. *For the Honour of Wales* was, for all intents and purposes, a remedy for an embarrassing failure. In January 1618, Jonson’s masque *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* was staged in celebration of the Epiphany feast. Although *Pleasure* has remained one of the most widely read of Jonson’s masques, it was not a favorite of King James, who interrupted with complaints about being bored and who invited his courtiers to take over with a dance of their own instead. Leah S. Marcus posits a number of simple explanations for James’s impatience: maybe the room was too hot, maybe he was concerned for his queen, who was ill, or maybe he just had not understood the deeper meaning of Jonson’s masque. In the end, however, Marcus is convinced that the events leading up to the masque, combined with Jonson’s embedded commentary on those events, prompted James’s distemper, and, ultimately, the rewrite that Jonson would attempt with *For the Honour of Wales*.²

Marcus’s essay does a fine job of recounting the occasion of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, and I would point readers to her essay for a full and detailed account. For our purposes here, it is only necessary to note the basics: just a few months prior to the

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performance of *Pleasure*, James had returned from an almost seven-month progress that took him all the way to Scotland, which he had not visited since coming to the English throne in 1603. His most important errand was to convince Scottish Presbyterians to come into the fold of Anglicanism; were he to succeed, his plan for an official union with Scotland (and, indeed, for the whole of the British Isles) would be that much easier to achieve. The trip did not go quite as planned; Marcus details only a few of the protracted disputes that occurred on this journey. The Presbyterians objected to James’s plans for Anglican church services, which they thought reeked of Catholic holdovers; they protested James’s encouragement of feasting and sporting as the measure of hospitality, claiming instead that such behavior was sacrilegious and too reminiscent of traditional Catholic pastimes. On the way back to England, things did not improve for James. In Lancashire, eager townspeople hoping to show their endorsement of James’s policy on feasting and sporting disrupted Anglican church services with excessive merry-making, forcing James to criticize what he had once encouraged. He wanted sport, feasting, merry-making—all signs of a properly English good time—but he didn’t want all that at the expense of proper Anglican religious observance.³

*Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* is Jonson’s attempt to celebrate James’s *via media*; it depicts allegorical versions of James vanquishing foes both self-indulgent and self-sacrificing, ultimately demonstrating that pleasure can indeed exist harmoniously with virtue. For Marcus, Jonson’s intentions were pure but ultimately misunderstood. James, she argues, may not have been pleased with a reminder of this controversy; moreover, the

³ For Marcus’s discussion of the conflicts in Scotland, see “The Occasion,” esp. 273-76; for her discussion of the Lancashire events, see “The Occasion,” esp. 276-78.
gluttonous figure of Comus—meant to represent the excessive side of pleasure—may have smacked too heavily of some of the more licentious aspects of James’s court. When Jonson restaged the masque six weeks later, he cut some of the most heavy-handed allegory from the masque’s early lines (but kept the dancing of the later lines) and replaced it with For the Honour of Wales—roughly 400 lines of what would seem, to many present-day readers, a bunch of Welsh nonsense.

What was achieved by inserting Welsh characters and a Welsh landscape into a masque so loaded with contemporary controversy? For Jonson, setting his antimasque in Wales with a roster of Welsh characters allowed for both conciliation and criticism. When the show opens, three Welsh gentlemen—Griffith, Jenkin, and Evan—are discussing the possibility of the king’s visit to Wales. Jenkin, who is particularly ruffled about the king’s absence, makes his case:

What doe yow caull rassnesse, Evan y Gynrn? is not aull the Cyntrie, and aull Welse, and the Prince of Wales too, abus’d in him? By this hand, I will tell it the Kings owne eares every ’oord, doe you see him now? Blesse your ursip, pray God is in Heaven blesse every ince of your ursip, from top to tow, with aull his hearts aull over, by got ’utch me, and would be glad as a silling to see yow in him. Come it downe once a day and trie; I tell yow now, yow s’all be as welcomely there, as where yow were in your owne Cyntries last two Symmers, and pershance wee’l made yow as good s’eere too; weele promise your ursip as good a peece of Seeze, as yow need pit in your head, and pleas’ yow s’all be toasted too…

4 For the Honour of Wales (in Ben Jonson, eds. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954-1965], 7: 495-597), ll. 16-29. Hereafter, all citations to For the Honour of Wales will be made parenthetically. The stage Welsh here is particularly difficult, and for readers unaccustomed to the dialect Jonson is deploying, I here offer a translation that both modernizes the spelling and accounts for the Welsh accent:

What do you call rashness, Evan and Griffin? is not all the Country, and all Welsh, and the Prince of Wales, too, abused in him? By this hand, I will tell it the King’s own ears every word, do you see him now? Bless
Although Jenkin’s brashness is an embarrassment to his (for now) more collected compatriots, his speech sets up the central issue of the antimasque: why James would be better off coming to Wales than Scotland. Jenkin, in his promise of toasted cheese for the monarch, merely starts off what will become a laundry list of arguments for Wales’s superiority.

As the antimasque continues—though not without interruption, as Griffith, Jenkin, and Evan, argue with each other throughout, providing several amusing distractions—the Welshmen outline why Wales would have made a better setting all along for *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*. Better for the prince of Wales, they argue, who is “aull over Welse,” (l. 159-60), better for a main character (Cadwaladr, they suggest, would be a better hero than *Pleasure*’s Hercules [l.189]), better for music (“the ancient Welse harpe” [ll. 200-201]), better for food and drink (cheese, mutton, goat’s milk, and metheglin), and better for dancing, too (“The Welse Goate is an excellent dancer by birth” [ll. 328-329]). The three Welshmen ultimately agree that to “have it aull Welse” (l. 158)—to replace everything in the masque with something of Welsh significance—is ultimately the way to entertain and pacify the king and his audience. As Marcus notes briefly in her essay on the original staging of *Pleasure*, the Welsh antimasque allowed Jonson to showcase a more palliative version of British union, one that did not bring with your worship, pray God is in Heaven bless every inch of your worship, from top to toe, with all his hearts all over, by God judge me, and would be as glad as a silling to see you in him. Come it down once a day and try; I tell you now, you shall be as welcomely there, as where you were in your own Country’s last two Summers, and perchance we’ll made you as good as here, too; we’ll promise your worship as good a piece of cheese, as you need pit in your head, and please you shall be toasted too…
it the complications he had encountered in his visit to Scotland: Wales offered “easy positives instead of strenuous and challenging negatives.”\(^5\) Welshmen, in other words, and Welsh settings, too, were easy, uncomplicated, and funny to boot.

Marcus qualifies her reading by suggesting that there is another subtext for the Welsh presence in the antimasque. Jonson gets a dig in at his audience by having a group of comic Welshmen recast *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* in light of their own misunderstanding about the original masque’s symbolism—when they argue for a Welsh mountain or a Welsh hero, it is because they have missed the point of the allegory all along.\(^6\) So too did Jonson’s audience, and equating their critical response to *Pleasure* with that of three hot-headed Welshmen was most certainly intended as a slight, albeit a sly one. More recently, Andrew Hiscock has made a similar argument about the antimasque, suggesting, like Marcus, that *For the Honour of Wales* happily replicates an unproblematic version of British union while still maintaining a sense of humor for the inflated claims of the Welsh to ancient British origins. The Welsh, in Hiscock’s reading, form a “convenient cultural safety valve” in which British union can be both important and comically overstated.\(^7\)

These conclusions, however, are made richer and more complete if we consider much of the complicated history I have outlined throughout this dissertation, not only of Wales, but also of stage representations of Wales. While Marcus and Hiscock are content

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\(^5\) “The Occasion,” 292.
\(^6\) Ibid., 292.
to see subversion only in Jonson’s comic mocking of the Welshmen’s misapprehensions, I would argue that some of the production’s most subversive moments occur in the calculated references to Welsh figures and Welsh events that had been featured elsewhere on the early modern stage, including in Jonson’s own body of work. The first and most obvious invocation of such precedent is in Jonson’s re-purposing of the “Atlas” interlude in *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*: in the masque, the bleak and forbidding mountain “Atlas” is meant to recall the forbidding problems James encountered on his trip to Scotland and Lancashire. Hercules, the hero of this portion of the masque, must vanquish the twin evils of over-indulgence and excess temperance; when he does, Atlas is transformed into a welcoming, regal landscape, the backdrop for the next portion of the masque.

When Jenkin hotly calls for a new setting in Wales, he wonders that the king has let “your ’ursips Sonne and Heire, and Prince of Wales, the first time he ever play Dance, to be pit up in a Mountaine (got knows where) by a palterly Poet, how doe you say him, Evan?” (ll. 37-40). Here Jonson makes reference to the young prince Charles’s participation in *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*; it was the new prince of Wales’s (formally invested in 1616) first appearance in a masque. Although Jenkin’s inability to understand the allegorical function of “Atlas” in *Pleasure* is a comic indictment of a Welsh superiority complex (and an audience misinterpretation), it is also a reference to another of Jonson’s masques, the 1611 *Oberon*, staged in honor of then-prince of Wales Henry Frederick. The “Wales” of *Oberon* was represented by a giant mountain, too, with Oberon—played by Henry Frederick—trapped inside. There, the splitting of the
mountain revealed a glorious crystal palace, complete with “Arthur’s chaire” upon which Henry Frederick would sit. It was, as chapter one of this study has shown, an invocation of an ancient and honorable past that Henry Frederick was meant to reclaim through his position as prince of Wales.8

When “Cadier Arthur” (Arthur’s chair) is spoken of in For the Honour of Wales, it is a joke, another suggestion that the Welshmen have for re-naming the setting of the masque (l.69). When they beg that the Prince of Wales be made “a Welse hilles” (l. 64) for the masque, they are not only re-writing Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, they are also implicitly re-writing Oberon. The mountain of Oberon that revealed a glorious Arthurian kingdom has been transformed to Craig-Eriri, a non-descript mountain that only the locals know, and one that reveals a trio of fools with little recognizable connection to the heroic compatriots of Henry Frederick’s masque. Britain in 1610 was a symbol loaded with glory and hope. In 1618, Britain appears to have become something else entirely. Is that, perhaps, a cruel insult to the young Charles, whose sickly youth prevented him from growing into the imposing figure that Henry Frederick cut in his masque debut? Or is it, perhaps, Jonson’s subtle commentary on the evolution of an idea on which James had staked much of his hopes for the kingdom? A unified “Britain” may once have suggested the glorious return to ancient roots, but was it now just the reality of facing one’s rural and backwards neighbors? The invocation of Oberon allows Jonson—and us—to suggest new interpretations of stage Welshness in For the Honour of Wales.

8 See chapter one, esp. 68-72.
Although the critical consensus on *For the Honour of Wales* (with what little criticism there has been) suggests an unproblematic incorporation of Wales into James’s vision of Britain, there are two moments in the antimasque that suggest otherwise. One comes about midway through the action, when Evan and Jenkin, now accompanied by two other Welshmen, Howel and Rheese, consider the replacement of Hercules with a Welsh hero. Their suggestions include not only Cadwaladr, the last Briton king that has loomed large throughout this dissertation, but also “Lluellin,” “Reese ap Griphin,” “Cradock,” and “Owen Glendower” (ll.189-191). Three of the figures mentioned here—all but Rhys ap Gruffydd, the twelfth-century Welsh prince who warred and made peace with England’s Henry II—were at one point portrayed on the English stage. Lluellen, the prince of Wales of George Peele’s *Edward I*, made an impression by first claiming all of Britain for himself, then by quickly retreating to the woods to play Robin Hood.⁹ Owen Glendower was the mysterious Welsh rebel of Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV*,¹⁰ and Caradoc was both the valiant anti-Roman king of *The Valiant Welshman* and the stalwart last Briton standing of Fletcher’s *Bondoça*.¹¹ These figures—especially Llewelyn ap Gruffydd and Owain Glyndwr—represent in both their historical and stage incarnations a disturbance of the perfect peace between Wales and England. In invoking them, Jonson also invokes a less appeasing version of Welshness that remained active in the English cultural imagination—in part because of the plays that staged (and contained) their rebellions.

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⁹ See chapter two, esp. 82-100.
¹⁰ See chapter four, esp. 173-90.
The second moment comes in the antimasque’s final lines, in which Griffith makes his final plea for recognition from the king. Humbly entreating him to forgive their collective ineloquence, Griffith reminds the audience of Welsh history:

Yow will rather for their sak[e]s, who are to come in the name of Wales, my Lord the Prince, and the others, pardon what is past, and remember the Cyntrie has always been fruitfull of loyall hearts to your Majestie; a very garden and seed-plot of honest mindes and men: What lights of learning hath Wales sent forth for your Schooles? What industrious Studiengts of your Lawes? what able Ministers of your Justice? whence hath the Crown in all times better servitors, more liberall of their lives and fortunes? where hath your Court or Councell (for the present) more noble ornaments or better aydes? I am glad to see it, and to speake it, and though the Nation bee sayd to be unconquer’d, and most loving liberty, yet it was never mutinous (and please your Majestie;) but stout, valiant, courteous, hospitable, temperant, ingenious, capable of all good Arts, most lovingly constant, charitable, great Antiquaries, Religious Preservers of their Gentry, and Genealogie, as they are zealous and knowing in Religion. (ll. 387-405)

It is a lengthy and winding account of Welsh successes and Welsh virtues, especially as they apply to union with England. But as John Morrill would put it in his account of British union and the Welsh incorporation, “it was a success story that flattered to deceive.” While many English authors (and English monarchs) relished the opportunity to espouse a peaceful version of Welsh annexation, the Welsh, in fact, had been mutinous, they had been resistant to the “Religion” espoused by the English, and they had used all their “stout, valiant” temper to defend their “unconquer’d” liberty against the English. One wonders—given the lengthy historical and theatrical context for Wales and the Welsh in this period—whether Jonson too was “flattering to deceive.” In his invocation of every available stage Welsh stereotype, Jonson also subtly recalls every

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12 “The Fashioning of Britain,” in Ellis and Barber, Conquest and Union, 8-39, esp. 19.
available stage Welshman—including Lluellen and Glendower—characters that presented more complicated versions of Welshness than is offered here by Griffith.

*For the Honour of Wales* is not really about Wales; it is about *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* and all its attendant context. But as this dissertation has shown, many plays that are not ostensibly about Wales alone are actually important expressions of how Wales and the Welsh were perceived by the English, and of how Wales and the Welsh were *used* by the English. That Jonson’s audience was aware of—and had an ability to keep up with—heavy Welsh accents and a string of seemingly obscure ethnic jokes at the Welshmen’s expense is certainly proof that English audiences had been exposed to some version or another of stage Welshness for quite some time. That Jonson could also rely on a specific set of precedents for Welsh characters and Welsh landscapes suggests that the stage had had a profound effect on how Wales and the Welsh were perceived in early modern England.

Like many stage productions before it, *For the Honour of Wales* uses Welsh characters to comment on contemporary political controversy; what makes it particularly

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13 In their edition of Jonson’s works, C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson include evidence of audience response to *For the Honour of Wales*, which suggests not only that the audience understood the masque, but also enjoyed it; one spectator commented on “the pleasant merry speeches” by the “Counterfeyted wels men.” See Ben Jonson, 10: 576. Moreover, one of the antimasque’s early lines references three peerages with strong Welsh ties—the earldoms of Worcester (though in England, Worcester was on the border, and had, in the time of Henry Tudor, been considered Welsh), Pembroke, and Montgomery—and all three peerages were occupied by members of James’s inner circle. The earl of Worcester was Edward Somerset, who served as Lord Privy Seal to James; the earl of Pembroke was William Herbert, known most commonly for his patronage of William Shakespeare; finally, Philip Herbert, brother to William, was earl of Montgomery and was a great favorite of James. The joking may have had special meaning—and special humor—at a court with such Welsh ties.
unique and important as a closing to this dissertation is how it uses Welsh characters to comment on a contemporary *stage* controversy. “Having it all Welsh” was, for Jonson, a way to have it all: a clever and comic apology for a theatrical bomb, a subtle indictment of his audience, and a nuanced commentary on the state of Britain (and Wales) in 1618. All of the historical and political movements I have covered in this dissertation—unions, wars, investitures, and religious reforms—continued to percolate long after 1618, and representations of the Welsh on the stage (and beyond the stage) are certain to reflect the changing landscape of an evolving Britain. I have shown here that the fabric of early modern England was woven with many Welsh threads, and much of that important work was performed on the stages of London. My hope is that this project is only the beginning of continued inquiry into the role of Wales and the Welsh in the English historical and literary tradition.
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