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Welsh History Review

5, 1970-71

# DAVID AP LLYWELYN, THE FIRST PRINCE OF WALES

WHILE scholars still await a new history of Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is clear that J. E. Lloyd's views need to be substantially reconsidered. It is no longer acceptable to end a history of medieval Wales with the Edwardian Conquest of 1282 and date a new beginning from that year. Welsh society had changed fundamentally already, as is now generally recognized.<sup>1</sup> Feudal arrangements were introduced by Welsh princes, not by the English monarchy. This feature is most evident in the creation of the prince of Wales, a title which was adopted by the princes of Gwynedd. This title and its governmental implications were alien to the earlier non-feudal nature of Welsh society. The study of their introduction into Wales itself throws some light on the transition of Welsh society in the thirteenth century, if only at one specific point. It is well known that in 1267 Llywelyn ap Gruffydd was granted the title 'prince of Wales' by King Henry III. The treaty of Montgomery (September 1267), by which Llywelyn was able to secure the gains which he had made during the English civil war,<sup>2</sup> included the conferment of the title:

... Ceterum dominus rex Anglie uolens prefati Lewelini magnificare personam et in eo ceteros honorare qui sibi hereditario iure succedent, . . . dat et concedit prefato Lewelino et heredibus suis Wallie principatum, ut idem Lewelinus et heredes sui princeps Wallie uocentur et sint: insuper fidelitatem et homagia omnium baronum Wallie Wallensium, ut dicti barones a prefatis principe et heredibus in capite teneant terras suas . . .<sup>3</sup>

Llywelyn had adopted this title as early as 1258, and it may be legitimately asked whether his earlier title had the same connotation as the later one. Some light on this question may be drawn from an earlier period: from the reign of Llywelyn's uncle, David ap Llywelyn (1240-46), one original document has been preserved in which David styles himself 'prince of Wales', *princeps Wallie*.<sup>4</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (2 vols., 1911); the innovations of the century before the Edwardian Conquest have so far been discussed most thoroughly in the rather conservative field of law, cf. T. Jones Pierce, 'Social and Historical Aspects of the Welsh Laws', *ante*, Special Number, 1963; 'The Welsh Laws', pp. 33-50.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. F. Tout, 'Wales and the March during the Barons' War', *Collected Papers*, II (1934), 47-100.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Littere Wallie* (1940), p. 2; also *ibid.*, p. xxxvi.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (1935), pp. 49f. The instances in which David is called *princeps Wallie* in the chronicles (cf. *infra*, n. 19) are of no relevance in this context.

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is the purpose of this article to analyse both the background and the implication of this first occurrence of the title which has attracted the curiosity of scholars without being sufficiently analysed.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (c. 1200–40) had taken the title *princeps Norwallie* until in 1230 he began to style himself 'Prince of Aberffraw and Lord of Snowdon',<sup>6</sup> his son David, who succeeded in 1240 in a manner which disregarded the Welsh laws of succession, is not known to have held this latter title. From the chancery of David ten documents have been preserved which refer to him in two different ways: as 'David, *princeps Norwallie*',<sup>7</sup> and as 'David *filius Lewelini quondam principis Norwallie*'.<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking only the former is a proper title; the latter, in recalling the eminent position of David's father but not applying it to his heir, may be regarded as no title at all—even a positive denial of the son's right to the title of the father.

Ten documents do not offer a sound basis for satisfactory conclusions and they are not even sufficiently representative, since they stem, with one exception, solely from the year 1241. Yet their respective significance may be grasped from their chronological distribution, since the year 1241 was an important one in David's career. Between February and the latter half of August 1241, David appears as 'Prince of North Wales', whereas in May 1240 (the only document from that year) and from 29 August to 24 October 1241 (the latest document) David appears as 'Son of Llywelyn, formerly Prince of North Wales'. This distribution corresponds significantly to political events at the time. On 15 May 1240 David did homage to King Henry III for Gwynedd,<sup>9</sup> and he had to submit again to the king on 29 August 1241 at Gwern Eigron,<sup>10</sup> in the fifteen months between David tried to establish some kind of independence from his feudal overlord which was eventually checked by the English king through large-scale military campaigns. The submission of David to Henry on 29 August 1241, as it is preserved, did not include *verbatim* a prohibition on the use of the title 'Prince of North Wales' in future, but such a demand may have been implied in the terms

<sup>5</sup> Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, p. xlii; F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (2 vols., 1947), II, 630 f.

<sup>6</sup> Lloyd, *op. cit.*, II, 682.

<sup>7</sup> Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, nos. 15, 19, 20, 271.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Lloyd, *op. cit.*, II, 695.

<sup>10</sup> Powicke, *op. cit.*, II, 632 f.

under which David renounced all homage paid to him by minor Welsh princes in favour of the English king.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it appears that David, while trying to assert himself as prince of North Wales along the lines of his father, used the title *princeps Norwallie* until the superior power of the English king forced him to abandon it. Although the initial use of the title did not fully reflect the political reality which lay behind Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's title, it indicates perhaps the direction in which David tried to modify the political situation. It will be shown later that the title *princeps Wallie* which is preserved in one document (dated probably about January 1245) similarly indicates a tendency rather than a reality.

As far as *royal documents* are concerned, there is no consistency in the way in which the English Chancery referred to David. The Close Rolls of Henry III, which are the main source, speak of him in two different ways: either as 'David filius Lewelini quondam principis Norwallie'<sup>12</sup> or simply as 'David filius Lewelini'.<sup>13</sup> No general pattern can be derived from the respective forms employed, but significantly the title *princeps Norwallie* does not occur at all. There is thus a marked difference between the way in which the English royal Chancery and the chancery of David refer to the prince of Gwynedd. The son of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth used for some time a title which was never acknowledged by the English king.

Llywelyn ab Iorwerth had two sons, Gruffydd by a Welsh woman, and the younger, David, by his wife Joan, the natural daughter of King John. Their marriage had taken place c. 1205 and sealed the truce between Llywelyn and John.<sup>14</sup> Whereas according to Welsh law both sons should have inherited the possessions of their father in common, Llywelyn had made sure at an early stage, in 1220, of obtaining Henry III's consent to the succession of his son David as

<sup>11</sup> 'Promitto similiter eidem domino regi quod reddam ei omnia homagia que dominus J(hannes) rex pater suus habuit et que dominus rex de iure habere debet, et specialiter dimitto ei homagia omnium nobilium Walensium', Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> e.g., *Close Rolls*, 1237–42, pp. 202, 240, 243, 280, 344, 357, 458; *CR.*, 1242–47, pp. 71, 138, 211, 346, 347.

<sup>13</sup> e.g., *CR.*, 1237–42, pp. 348, 350, 426, 437, 497; *CR.*, 1242–47, pp. 357, 359.

<sup>14</sup> Lloyd, *op. cit.*, II, 616 f. It is interesting to note that Llywelyn had earlier attempted to heighten his prestige by marrying into the royal family of the Isle of Man. Cf. C. R. Cheney and M. G. Cheney (eds.), *The Letters of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) Concerning England and Wales, A Calendar* (1967), nos. 168, 469, 600. It has been shown recently with reference to Roger II, the first king of Sicily, that marriage to a member of a royal family can in itself be an indication of a prince's aspirations to yet higher rank: cf. Reinhard Elze, 'Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien', *Festschrift P.E. Schramm*, I (Wiesbaden, 1964), 102–16; also W. Holtzmann, 'Maximilla regina, soror Rogerii regis', *Deutsches Archiv*, 19 (1963), 149–67.

his only heir.<sup>15</sup> Shortly before his death, he attempted to secure further the exclusive succession of David, and the Welsh *Chronicle of the Princes* records that on 19 October 1238 'all the princes of Wales swore allegiance to Dafydd ap Llywelyn ab Iorwerth at Strata Florida'.<sup>16</sup> The succession of David was secured in this way, a way which was alien to the traditions of Wales and gives evidence of the reforming ideas of Llywelyn Fawr.

Llywelyn had attempted to establish his son as liege lord over the Welsh princes. But his plans failed after his death, for at the convention of Gloucester on 15 May 1240 the king 'cepit homagium prefati David de predicto iure suo Norwallie', under the condition, however, 'quod per hanc pacem remanent domino regi et heredibus suis omnia homagia baronum Wallie quieta'.<sup>17</sup> Yet it has been shown above that it took the Crown a further fifteen months to force the prince of Gwynedd to accept this restriction. In the treaty of Gwern Eigron, David lost more than his title: he had to hand over his half-brother Gruffydd, whom he had held in captivity, to the king. As a hostage in the hands of Henry III, Gruffydd became a dangerous potential rival to David's leadership in north Wales as long as he lived, for the king could legitimately argue that according to the Welsh law of succession Gruffydd was entitled to share David's power. Gruffydd died on St. David's day 1244 while trying to escape from his prison in the Tower of London.<sup>18</sup> His death removed David's only dangerous rival and gave him a freer hand for other enterprises; the English king lost a precious pledge.

Matthew Paris records in his *Chronica Majora* under the year 1244, 'David, intending to free his neck from the yoke of fealty to the lord king, took flight to the wings of papal protection, pretending that he held a part of Wales from the pope directly. The pope was

<sup>15</sup> Welsh law did not make the distinction between legitimate and natural children. This together with the 'deep-rooted principle of division of the inheritance' (*Littere Wallie*, p. xxxvii), had made it virtually impossible for any Welsh prince to create a territorial state for himself. Llywelyn saw a way out of this dilemma by adopting current English law in his principality: cf. also *infra*, n. 41.

<sup>16</sup> T. Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogion (Red Book of Hergest)* (1955), p. 235; cf. the comment by Sir Goronwy Edwards: 'by striving to gain for himself the homage and fealty of the other Welsh princes, he (Llywelyn ap Gruffydd) was striving to make himself chief lord, in other words, to establish a suzerain within Wales itself', *Littere Wallie*, p. xlv.

<sup>17</sup> Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, pp. 5-6; also *CR.*, 1237-42, p. 240, and T. Rymer (ed.), *Foedera*, I, i, 239 f.

<sup>18</sup> Lloyd, *op. cit.*, II, 700 ff. with further references. The difficulties which Llywelyn ap Gruffydd had with his co-heirs have been well described by Sir Goronwy Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, pp. xxxviii-xl.

favourable to him'.<sup>19</sup> A little earlier, Matthew had stated the same, ascribing, however, the initiative for the subjection of Wales to the pope and giving the valuable information that David was obliged to pay annually five hundred marks to him.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, according to Matthew's account David became a papal vassal, in recognition of which he paid annually a fixed sum of money. Matthew is the only informant about such a payment, but he was usually well informed and there is no reason to doubt his account.

Official documents would not allow such a precise statement. Yet when taken together with Matthew's account it is possible to reconstruct what happened in 1244. One letter from the pope has been preserved, issued at Genoa on 26 July 1244.<sup>21</sup> It tells how David, prince of north Wales, had complained to the pope about the war which the English king had waged against him; that, although his parents had given him to the Roman Church as an *alumnus*, the king had acted violently against David, forcing him to give an oath of subjection to England. The pope commissioned two persons, the abbots of Aberconway and Cymmer, to inquire into the case, and if the oath had been given under duress to absolve David from it. The letter implies a recognition of David by the pope as prince of north Wales.

On this, the only extant evidence of David's initial success, one has to reconstruct in outline what David did and how the pope responded. On 26 July 1244 the pope sent his letter to Wales, where he ordered an enquiry. It seems unlikely that this is the only document issued by him on this question even at such an early stage, for already the pope had accepted implicitly the subjection of David to him. There is no certain way to establish either by whom or on what exact terms David approached the pope, but apparently he

<sup>19</sup> H. R. Luard (ed.), IV (Rolls Series, 1877), 323. Other references to this are *ibid.*, p. 316, and *idem*, *Historia Anglorum*, II (Rolls Series, 1866), 482, 483, n. 3. Other chronicles which mention David's attempt are of no independent value. Thomas de Wykes (H. R. Luard (ed.), *Annales Monastici* (Rolls Series, 1869), IV, 92) himself uses Matthew Paris for the period 1066-1256; cf. N. Denholm-Young, 'Thomas de Wykes and his Chronicle', *Collected Papers*, II (1969), pp. 245-66. Another reference to it is in the *Annals of Dunstable* (*Ann. Mon.*, III, 168), for which see C. R. Cheney, 'Notes on the Making of the Dunstable Annals', pp. 79-98; cf. also T. Hog (ed.), *Nicholai Trivetii Annales (English Historical Society, no. 9, 1845)*, p. 233.

<sup>20</sup> *Chron. Majora*, IV, 316.

<sup>21</sup> Printed in A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (1869), I, 470 f. Innocent IV stayed at Genoa for about six weeks after 7 July on his way from Rome to Lyons; cf. Elie Berger, *Saint Louis et Innocent IV* (Paris, 1893), pp. 24 ff. The letter is not in Innocent's register.

informed Innocent that he had been a papal vassal in the past and that injustice had been done to him by Henry III. It is, however, unlikely that the Welsh prince approached the pope much earlier, for barely four months elapsed between the death of Gruffydd and the extant papal pronouncement, and David would hardly have done anything in this direction so long as his half-brother was alive.<sup>22</sup> The prince of Gwynedd thereby appears as a shrewd and able politician who grasped his chances as soon as they offered themselves; such is not the conventional view held by historians. It is hard to believe that his move to subject his territory to the pope was not premeditated, although there is no evidence to confirm this. From the papal letter we can deduce that David subjected himself to the pope as *princeps North-Wallie*; from the account of Matthew Paris we know that he had to pay in return a fixed sum annually. For about nine months (until 8 April 1245, when the pope reversed his earlier decision) David stood under papal protection as 'Prince of North Wales'. Yet he styled himself during this time 'Prince of Wales'. One document showing this has been preserved, and there may have been others which are now lost. If any new documents should come to light from the chancery of David in which he is styled 'Prince of Wales', it is very likely that they would come from the second half of 1244 or the first quarter of 1245. That during this period he called himself 'Prince of Wales', although being recognized only as 'Prince of North Wales', agrees with the observations which we have made for 1241: he aspired to a title higher than the one conceded to him, either by the English king or by the pope, and he used a 'superior' title in his own documents.

Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the papacy had succeeded in subjecting a number of secular lords to the Apostolic See. This was done on lines similar to the exemption of religious houses, bishoprics and Church provinces from subjection to any authority other than the papacy. The best known cases of subjection are perhaps those of the kingdom of Hungary in the tenth century, the Norman territories in southern Italy and Sicily after 1059 (a kingdom established by Roger II of Sicily and given legal recognition by the anti-pope Anaclet II in 1130, but finally also accepted by Pope Innocent II<sup>23</sup>), Aragon (1063), Poland, Denmark, Bohemia, Croatia

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Paris supports this assumption, *Hist. Angl.*, II, 483, n. 2 (original version): 'comperiens fratrem suum primogenitum Griffinum . . . valedixisse seculo, tutius solus regnaret, significavit domino papae . . .'.  
<sup>23</sup> R. Elze, loc. cit. (*supra*, n. 13).

and Dalmatia, and Portugal.<sup>24</sup> In these cases, the initiative had come from the secular power, and the motives of the rulers concerned were the desire to gain recognition for their conquests, to gain protection, or to escape the cumbersome sovereignty of powerful neighbours.<sup>25</sup> These kings and princes accepted the pope as their overlord and paid in recognition of this overlordship a certain sum of money. The payment of money was a sign of papal protection and a welcome addition to the increasing financial needs of the Apostolic See.<sup>26</sup> It is true that at an early stage the popes would attempt to give their overlordship a specific ideological basis, just as Gregory VII claimed that 'regnum Hispaniae ex antiquis constitutionibus beato Petro et Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae in ius et proprietatem esse traditum',<sup>27</sup> or Pope Hadrian IV, with regard to Ireland, expressed in his famous bull *Laudabiliter* that 'Hiberniam et omnes insulas, . . . ad jus beati Petri et sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae . . . non est dubium pertinere'.<sup>28</sup> But such justification of papal sovereignty over particular areas seems almost amateurish compared to the doctrine developed by Pope Innocent III and completed by Pope Innocent IV of full papal sovereignty over the whole of Christendom which is expressed most neatly in a sentence from Innocent IV's bull *Aeger cui lenia* (1245): ' . . . the Lord Jesus Christ . . . established not only a pontifical but also a royal monarchy in the Apostolic See'.<sup>29</sup>

A well-documented case of the subjection of a kingdom to the pope is that of England under King John. John became a papal vassal after the Interdict of 1208-14, and he had to concede the annual payment of a thousand marks sterling 'as a token of this our perpetual offering and concession'.<sup>30</sup> The only, but significant, difference between John and the other sovereigns was that John was forced into subjection to Rome on these terms, and resentment of the annual tribute was expressed in the thirteenth century both

<sup>24</sup> P. M. Cocheril, 'Saint Bernard et le Portugal', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, 54 (1959), 426-77. A more general study of these cases is found in P. Fabre, *Étude sur le Liber Censum de l'Eglise Romaine* (Paris, 1892), pp. 116 ff. and the important study by Karl Jordan, 'Das Eindringen des Lehnswesens in das Rechtsleben der römischen Kurie', *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, XII (1932), 13-110, which ends with Innocent III.

<sup>25</sup> P. Fabre, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 125: 'le cens suffit, à ses (i.e., the Church) yeux, pour affirmer son droit'.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Cocheril, loc. cit., p. 242, n. 1.

<sup>28</sup> J. F. Dimock (ed.), *Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera*, V (Rolls Series, 1867), p. 317.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Brian Pullan, *Sources for the History of Medieval Europe* (1966), p. 128; cf. also P. Herder, 'Eger cui lenia', *Deutsches Archiv*, vol. 23 (1963), pp. 468-538.

<sup>30</sup> C. R. Cheney and W. H. Semple (eds.), *Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III Concerning England (1198-1216)* (1953), no. 67, p. 179 (dated 21 April 1214).

*add note In 1245 Henry III paid to the pope an annuity of 1000 marks*

by the king and his subjects.<sup>31</sup> By his submission John had gained papal support against the threatened French invasion of England and the establishment of a French monarchy there.

A closer parallel to the attempt made by David ap Llywelyn is perhaps the way in which the king of the Isle of Man became a papal vassal. A letter has been preserved, dated 21 September 1219, in which Raynald demanded to be recognized as a papal vassal.<sup>32</sup> Before the papal legate, Pandulf Maska (bishop-elect of Norwich), Raynald proposed to hold the island as a papal fief, to do homage for it to the pope or his representatives, and to pay 'in recognitionem domini' annually twelve marks sterling. The king mentioned that the papal legate invested him with a golden ring. Although the legate had already invested him and the king paid the annual tribute, Pope Honorius III granted the protection only after three years.<sup>33</sup>

The relevant feature of this case is that the recognition of the king of the Isle of Man as a papal vassal did not come immediately, although payment was apparently accepted from the outset. The payment of money would not necessarily indicate a step towards establishing the existence of a feudal relationship between a kingdom and the Apostolic See. But it may be relevant to the case of David that King Raynald of Man's letter to the pope is attested in the first place by Cadwgan, 'Bangornensi episcopo de Wallis' (1215–1235). It is possible that the bishop of Bangor provided the link between the subjection of the king of Man and the principality of Gwynedd, although there is no proof.<sup>34</sup> In any case, it has to be noted that David's subjection to the pope, whatever the precise terms were, was something not uncommon at that time and a move which popes would encourage since it corresponded to their developing doctrine of a papal monarchy in both spiritual and temporal affairs.<sup>35</sup>

There is one passage in the letter of the pope to Wales which may indicate that David did not subject himself quite like the king of Man. The first few sentences in Innocent's letter reproduce, though

<sup>31</sup> The last payment of this sum was made in July 1333: *Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1330–34*, p. 407; *Cal. Papal Reg., Papal Letters, 1362–1404*, IV, 16. I owe this information to Dr. E. B. Fryde.

<sup>32</sup> Printed in Mgr. Duchesne, D. Fabre, G. Mollat (eds.), *Le Liber Censuum de l'Eglise (Romaine Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, Paris, 1905–52)*, I, 260b–61a.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, n. p. 261a: 'Nota quod littera ista eodem modo scripta est in regesto domini Honorii seprimi anni, in quo etiam est protectio ipsius regis concessa sibi ab eodem domino Honorio'.

<sup>34</sup> Cadwgan, bishop of Bangor, was a protégé of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth: cf. Lloyd, *op. cit.*, II, 688.

<sup>35</sup> J. A. Watt, *The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century* (1965).

not necessarily *verbatim*, David's demands to the pope; he appears to have claimed papal protection because 'parentes eius [eum] in *alumnus* Romanae Ecclesiae donaverunt'.<sup>36</sup> It seems that David claimed to have been a ward of the Roman Church, although occasionally the term also occurs in the sense of 'vassal'.<sup>37</sup> In both instances, however, the assumption that David had been given as an *alumnus* to the Roman Church would have made a new act of submission and fealty to a papal emissary superfluous and would have admitted David to the status of a papal vassal by the back-door, as it were. The assessment as to whether the pope in 1244 immediately and fully accepted David as his vassal or put him on the waiting list, as had been done with the 'kings' of Portugal in the twelfth century<sup>38</sup> and later with the king of Man, hinges on the interpretation of the status of an *alumnus*. I have not been able to find in contemporary papal documents a satisfactory legal definition of this term.

Matthew Paris, commenting in his usual sharp and critical way on David's ambitions towards the papacy, had pointed out that the prince was proud of his descent from the *stirps regia* through his mother.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the marriage of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth to the daughter of the English king, while being a conventional way of sealing a peace between England and Gwynedd, undoubtedly heightened the prestige of the house of Gwynedd. It showed that in a way Llywelyn was now an equal of the king and perhaps might become king himself.<sup>40</sup> As early as 1222 Pope Honorius III confirmed a petition of Llywelyn guaranteeing the succession of his legitimate son David, born of Joan, daughter of the late king of England.<sup>41</sup> The arrangement had been drawn up between the English king, the archbishop of Canterbury, the papal legate Pandulf and the prince, but the pope was approached to give his blessing to it. This act of

<sup>36</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, I, 470; see also the pope's reversal of his earlier decision, issued on 8 April 1245 at Lyons, *ibid.*, p. 471: 'nobis falso suggerens, quod Romanae Ecclesiae a suis parentibus datus fuerat in *alumnus*'. The term was singled out as being important by F. M. Powicke, *op. cit.*, II, 634 n. 1.

<sup>37</sup> O. Prinz et al. (eds.), *Mittelaltersches Wörterbuch* (Munich, 1967), I, col. 528 f.

<sup>38</sup> Cocheril, *loc. cit.*, p. 426.

<sup>39</sup> *Hist. Angl.*, p. 482: 'nam in oculis propriis sibi, pro eo quod de stirpe regia procrearetur...'

<sup>40</sup> W. Holtzmann, *loc. cit.* (*supra*, n. 14): 'Vielleicht hat die Tatsache, dass diese junge "Königin" an dem sizilischen Grafen Hof neben ihren jüngeren Brüdern aufwuchs, in dieser Familie den Ehrgeiz nach Höherem entfacht.'

<sup>41</sup> P. Pressutti (ed.), *Regesta Honorii Papae III* (2 vols., Rome, 1888–95), II, 73, no. 3996 (of 26 May 1222): 'Confirmat statutum quod ipse in terra suae ditioni subiecta... fecerat... contra abusum in eius terra introductum, ut illegitimi succederent in hereditates sicut et legitimi, ordinando ut David filius suus quem ex Iohanna filia clem. mem. regis Angliae uxore sua legitima suscepit, haereditario jure in omnibus bonis suis ei succedat'.



Llywelyn shows, if nothing else, a new spirit of self-assurance on the part of the Welsh prince towards his secular overlord, King Henry III. It is possible that the papal pronouncement of 1222, or others from the same time which have not been preserved, could have been interpreted, even if in an exaggerated way, as papal wardship over David.

Four years later the same pope was approached again by Llywelyn, and as a consequence Joan, the natural daughter of King John, was declared legitimate, ascertaining thereby that her son David would also be legitimate and could succeed his father, but without prejudice to the king or realm of England.<sup>42</sup> On this occasion Llywelyn once again secured papal support for David as his heir and successor. Although by the papal dispensation David would have no claim to the English throne, his mother became truly a king's daughter.<sup>43</sup> This 'royal' descent was adopted also by David, who occasionally enriched his title of 'Prince of North Wales' by the addition of 'nepos domini regis Anglie'.

That David was regarded, by virtue of his descent, as a valued supporter of demands made by King Henry III, is aptly shown in a letter from the first half of 1241 which David wrote on the king's behalf to Pope Gregory IX, asking for papal confirmation of Boniface, archbishop-elect of Canterbury.<sup>44</sup> Although no other letters to the papacy have been preserved, it becomes apparent that the status of the prince of north Wales as a relative of the English king had increased. When Henry III asked David to support the new archbishop-elect of Canterbury in Rome, he may himself have indicated the means which David would later use to his own advantage. The prolonged vacancy in Rome after the death of Gregory IX (August 1241) and before the accession of Pope Innocent IV would be one reason why David had to postpone, even on the level of preliminary contacts, his attempt to gain independence, while the last obstacle at home was removed only when his half-brother Gruffydd was dead.

Not quite nine months after Pope Innocent IV had referred to David as an independent lord, as 'Prince of North Wales' and a vassal

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., II, pp. 417 f., nos. 5906, 5907 (of 29 April 1226). For the political implications of such a pronouncement as in the famous decretal *Per Venerabilem* by Innocent III in 1202, see Watt, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 f.

<sup>43</sup> F. Jones, 'Cronica de Wallia', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, XII (1946), 27-44, s.a. 1237: 'Domina Johanna, filia regis Anglie, uxor Lewelini principis Wallie, obiit'.

<sup>44</sup> Edwards, *Littere Wallie*, no. 20, pp. 20 f.

of the Apostolic See, he reversed his decision. This was announced in a letter dated at Lyons on 8 April 1245 and addressed to Bishops Hugh of Ely and Walter of Carlisle.<sup>45</sup> The pope declared that the grounds on which he had based his earlier decision in favour of David had proved untenable. It was apparently not true that David had been given as an *alumnus* to the Roman Church, while in addition it was well known that David's ancestors had been vassals of the English king from time immemorial. Matthew Paris, commenting on this new pronouncement, stated sarcastically: 'Is there a Christian who does not know that the prince of Wales is a minor vassal (*vassalulum*) of the English kings?'<sup>46</sup>

The decision is clear enough as it stands, and it does not need any further elaboration. It was the end of David's independence as a papal vassal from the English king. But attention must be drawn to the reasons which perhaps induced Innocent IV to reverse his earlier verdict. For this pope had at least as high a conception of his office as his predecessor and namesake Innocent III. He would have granted sovereignty<sup>47</sup> to the Welsh prince, regardless of the legal position of this prince towards his secular overlord, if it had suited his policy.

The present writer contends that in 1245 the pope needed Henry III's support for his own international ambitions and would, therefore, be more prepared to concede demands made by the king. Anglo-papal relations were at this time over-shadowed by the growing demands of the pope for financial support for various schemes, notably the struggle against the Emperor Frederick II.<sup>48</sup> Innocent IV was constantly in touch with England, as well as at the time when he wrote his first letter to Wales favouring David's ambitions.<sup>49</sup> Henry III, on the other hand, acted quickly to crush David's independence. In November 1244 his proctor at the Roman

<sup>45</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, I, 471 f. The date is incorrectly given as 1244. The letter is dated 'pontificatus nostri anno secundo'; the second pontifical year of Innocent IV ended in June 1245.

<sup>46</sup> *Chron. Majora*, IV, 324. Matthew himself was not kindly disposed towards Innocent; cf. E. Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> In support of the emphatic word 'sovereignty', I quote the comment by R. Elze on the act of doing homage and fealty to the pope: 'Eindeutig zeigt sich dann der Wille des neuen Königs (i.e., Roger II), die Legitimität nicht nur, sondern auch die Souveränität des neuen Königtums vor aller Augen zu zeigen und alle Zweifel daran auszuschließen' (the italics are mine), *loc. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods*, II, i, 1205-65 (Oxford, 1964), pp. 388-98. Matthew Paris is a good guide to public opinion in England towards the pope: 'Credens enim dominus Papa, quod flexibiles Angli colla sua iam dictae contributioni juxta consuetudinem suam iam subdidisset . . .', *Chron. Majora*, II, 368.

<sup>49</sup> The letter from Genoa to Henry III, dated 29 July 1244 (*Chron. Majora*, IV, 364 ff.), was certainly written at the request of the king. Apparently the delegations from England and Wales stayed at Genoa at the same time, and it is hard to believe that Innocent IV granted the Welsh request without being aware of its wider implications.

curia, Master Lawrence of St. Martin, was appointed.<sup>50</sup> Master Lawrence was sent to the pope with three main objectives, it seems: to crush the ambitions of David ap Llywelyn, to negotiate the recognition of Boniface of Savoy as archbishop of Canterbury, and to speak for the bishop-elect of Chichester, Robert Passelewe. The appreciation of his successful mission can be gathered from the number of benefices which were showered on Master Lawrence in the next few years, until in 1251 he was made bishop of Rochester.<sup>51</sup> The pope had shown the first signs of goodwill to Henry III and created, by sacrificing David ap Llywelyn, an atmosphere favourable to compromise over his great scheme, the successful outcome of the Council of Lyons.

The first Council of Lyons in 1245 was in its result, at least on the surface, a demonstration of papal supremacy in Europe: it witnessed the deposition of the emperor by the pope. Yet this result was only achieved by considerable interference with conciliar procedures by the pope. The support he received from the attending bishops—the attendance from England was poor—was given in the most reluctant way. This had been clear from the outset, and thus Innocent IV may have been prepared to make concessions to the attending emissaries. It is conceivable, although direct evidence is lacking, that Innocent annulled, as a token of goodwill towards Henry III, his earlier decision in favour of David ap Llywelyn.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the pope was not prepared to compromise over another point in the debate with the English king: the tribute which Henry owed to the Apostolic See as a papal vassal. That this tribute was disliked in England is attested by Matthew Paris,<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, III (1959), 2211–12.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. It appears that for his success in the Welsh affair Master Lawrence was given the church of Llanbadarn Fawr, Cardiganshire, in September 1246, the advowson of which lay with the king. Master Lawrence died in 1274, having lived to see the creation of the prince of Wales in 1267.

<sup>52</sup> A. Pliche, 'Le Procès de Frédéric II au Concile de Lyon (1245)', *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Federiciani* (Palermo, 1952), pp. 47–51. David's failure resembles in this respect very closely the failure of Giraldus Cambrensis, who wanted to be recognized as archbishop and primate of Wales directly subordinate to Rome. He negotiated about this in Rome between 1199 and 1203, and calculated that the papacy would receive an annual sum of 200 marks of Peter's Pence from this exemption (W. S. Davies, 'De Invectionibus', *Y Cymmrodor*, 30 (1920), 139, 167). His failure was brought about less by an inherent weakness of his case (the official version was that his election had not been made canonically, though at that time the question of what made an election canonical was much disputed; cf. R. L. Benson, *The Bishop-Elect* (Princeton, 1968), esp. pp. 116–49), but because Innocent III did not want to annoy the English king, a relative of the favourite candidate for the German imperial throne at that time, Otto IV.

<sup>53</sup> The English clergy went to Lyons 'gravem super his et praecipue super exactione tributis, in quod nunquam consensit regni universitas, coram concilio querimoniam reposituri': *Chron. Majora*, IV, 419. See also Frederick II's letter to Henry III, *ibid.*, p. 372: 'Addidit etiam, quod si rex Angliae suis obtemperaret consiliis, regnum Angliae a tributo, quo injuste Papa Innocentius tertius illud ligaverat, potenter ac iuste liberaret . . . Per quod dominus imperator multorum corda sibi conciliavit'.

and it was one of the grievances which the English prelates wanted to put on the agenda of the Council. In view of this, it is significant that Henry III did not commit himself in the dispute about the tribute which, at the best of times, was a considerable strain on the royal Treasury. In 1244 Henry had not paid the tribute for the past three years. This could be accounted for by the vacancy in Rome after the death of Gregory IX, but the new pope repeatedly pressed the English king to pay. Henry claimed financial difficulties; whether he was sincere or not, a year later the king exhibited remarkable haste in paying the tribute, at a time when David had become a papal vassal and the king was planning the first steps against him. In view of the discontent over this tribute in general, it is significant that 'on 25 January 1245 the king finally got abreast of his debt by the payment . . . of 1500 marks, which rather more than covered both the remainder of arrears and the instalment due for 1244'.<sup>54</sup> It would be difficult to deny a direct connection between this remarkable willingness to pay the tribute, which was unpopular both at the royal Exchequer and with the people of England, and the simultaneous attempt to make the pope withdraw his protection from David. More money may have been involved in both cases, from David and from Henry III, but the five hundred marks which David had paid as tribute was also acknowledged as such by contemporary writers when they commented that the pope did not return David's tribute when depriving him of his protection.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, there was mutual give-and-take between Innocent IV and Henry III at the expense of Welsh independence. The king paid the money he owed as a vassal to the Apostolic See, at the same time inducing his clergy to vote against the emperor at the Council. The pope gave way over the issue of Welsh independence, which was of minor importance to him, while insisting on the tribute from England and securing English support for the deposition of Frederick. How far does such conjecture agree with the more general policy of Innocent IV? Before becoming pope he had been an eminent scholar of canon law at Bologna, the school which discussed the legacy of Pope Innocent III. It has been pointed out that Innocent IV, while being aware of the wide spectrum of opinions concerning the position of the papacy in the world, later developed strictly the line held by the 'ultra-pontifical' group of that school.<sup>56</sup> The ultimate sovereignty

<sup>54</sup> W. E. Lunt, *Financial relations of the Papacy with England to 1327* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), p. 148.

<sup>55</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, I, 471: 'Quod cum cognovisset dominus Papa, conniventer haec omnia dissimulabat, praemio tamen quod acceperat ab ipso David non restituito'.

<sup>56</sup> Marcel Pacaut, 'L'autorité pontificale selon Innocent IV', *Le Moyen Age*, 66 (1960), 85–119, esp. p. 115; also J. A. Watt, *op. cit.*

of the papacy in his view amounted to the right to interfere in the temporal sphere whenever he thought it desirable, much more so than his predecessor Innocent III. Yet whereas Innocent IV consolidated the theory of complete papal sovereignty, he mainly directed his efforts towards the destruction of the Empire which had no place in his system. He made concessions to the growing national kingdoms to secure this higher aim, and naturally he would find justification for such an attitude in the vast body of canonistic literature which was then available.<sup>57</sup>

Our case shows in a forceful way that an evaluation of Innocent IV as both politician and theoretical thinker must take into account both his doctrines and the way in which he applied them. According to his doctrine, the recognition of a Welsh prince as his vassal would have been justifiable by virtue of his position as the Vicar of Christ who binds and looses in secular and spiritual matters. Yet since the chief concern of his system was the destruction of the Empire in order to establish the uncontested leadership of the Church, he encouraged the stability of a plurality of kingdoms.<sup>58</sup> Like every practical politician, he had to make concessions in practice to save the superstructure and, if need be, to adapt the ideological basis according to political needs.<sup>59</sup>

The increase in power of the north Wales princes in the thirteenth century was made easier by a number of factors, not least by the chronic weakness of the English monarchy between the death of Henry II and the accession of Edward I. Various attempts were made by individual princes to maintain this growing independence beyond their life-time. This shows best how the Welsh principality developed away from a political structure which depended on the momentary strength of the ruler and towards a 'state' along western European lines, in which the institution would outlive its representative.

Llywelyn Fawr (ab Iorwerth) profited from the weakness of the English monarchy during the years of the Interdict and made the first

<sup>57</sup> On the one hand, there is a strong emphasis on the Innocentian 'plenitudo potestatis', expressed, e.g., by 'Licet in multis distincta sunt officia et regimina mundi, tamen quandoquaque necesse est, ad papam recurrendum est . . .'; Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 70. On the other hand, Innocent showed at times a genuine respect for the relationship between a feudal overlord and his vassal, which was to him a purely temporal bond, as expressed in his *Apparatus super quinque libros decretalium*: 'Hoc autem dicimus, si principatus vel castellaniam vel alia huiusmodi concedantur in feudo, quia si de eis agitur inter aliquos, coram domino feudi agendum est, . . . non papa', quoted by Pacaut, *loc. cit.*, p. 95, n. 24. Cf. also R. Gênestal, *Histoire de la légitimation des enfants naturels en droit canonique* (Paris, 1905), pp. 212 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Pacaut, *loc. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>59</sup> See also the thoughtful article by B. Tierney, 'The Continuity of Papal Political Theory in the Thirteenth Century', *Medieval Studies*, 27 (1965), pp. 227-45.

ambitious step in the international arena by a treaty of friendship with the French king in 1212.<sup>60</sup> That this alliance was short-lived is less relevant than the fact that it came into existence at all. The prince was able to improve his strong position in the following three decades. He failed to transform Gwynedd into a feudal state within his life-time; perhaps three decades were too short to accomplish the necessary changes, especially in view of the precarious military position of the country.

David ap Llywelyn attempted something greater. In appealing to the pope, he approached the only institution in western Europe which arbitrarily created and destroyed kingdoms. In spite of the decline of his personal recognition in Wales and England compared with his father, David gained for a short time recognition as 'Prince of North Wales' as a papal vassal, thereby severing his bond with his feudal overlord, the English king. By appealing to the pope he followed the only feasible way open to his ambition for independence. Moreover, his ability as a statesman is forcefully demonstrated by his following conventional methods which had been established by earlier popes and had found a new and vigorous defender in Innocent IV. For two-thirds of his brief reign David was seriously restricted in his possibilities, but he made a courageous advance as soon as his position was more secure. He calculated with the strained Anglo-papal relations in mind, exhibiting a masterly awareness of realities. David styled himself 'Prince of Wales' at a time when he was recognized as an independent 'Prince of North Wales', thereby indicating that he had not yet reached the summit of his ambition. His eventual failure was due not to any miscalculation on his part, but to the fact that the papal plenitude of power was, at the time of the first Council of Lyons, a claim upheld exclusively towards the Empire, with the pope having to make considerable concessions to the established kingdoms of Europe.

When Llywelyn ap Gruffydd was recognized as 'Prince of Wales' in 1267, the increasing power of the princes of Gwynedd since the beginning of the century was recognized in due form. The English king was accepting a title which Llywelyn himself had adopted earlier. Yet Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's concept of 'Prince of Wales' was fundamentally different from David's. The earlier indicated David's ambition for independence and sovereignty, the latter established that the prince of Gwynedd was a vassal of the English king, a mere suzerain in Wales.

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<sup>60</sup> R. F. Treharne, 'The Franco-Welsh Treaty of Alliance in 1212', *Bull. Board of Celtic Studies*, XVIII (1958-59), 60-75.