

living in 1329/30 and presumably died in that year, he would have been between eighty five and ninety years old on his death. Surely the coincidence of two successive octogenarian generations is most improbable.^{1.}

There are some discrepancies in the pedigree with regard to the wives of Meurig Vychan. In one pedigree Dwnn gives Meurig two wives - first, Angharad, daughter of Gruffydd ap Bleddyn ap Owen Brogyntyn; secondly Eva, daughter of Enion Vychan of Mochdre.^{2.} In another, however, he gives one only - Angharad.^{3.} "Llyfr Silyn" gives the mother of Meurig Llwyd ap Meurig Vychan as Gwladus, daughter of Gruffydd ap Owen ap Bleddyn ap Owen Brogyntyn.^{4.} Griffith, in the Nannau pedigree, gives the one wife with her ancestry as in "Llyfr Silyn", but her name is given as Angharad.^{5.} In the Hengwrt pedigree, however, Griffith gives her name as Gwladus and adds: "in some books Angharad".^{6.}

1. The reference in the bibliography to Dr. Richards' article ("Bywgraffiadur", P.640) to another document in "Littere Wallie", no.283, is in all probability not to this Meurig Vychan of Nannau. In this document, dated the 6th. October, 1284, a "Meuric Vychan" is one of those bound to keep the peace towards Rhys ap Maredudd. Apart from the chronological difficulty, the document is concerned with South Wales and is dated at Talyllychau (i.e. Talley). It refers presumably, therefore to another Meurig Vychan.

2. Dwnn, P. 84. 3. *ibid.* PP.226-7.

4. "Llyfr Silyn" P.214. 5. Griffith, P.200. 6. *ibid.* P.201

Is it not possible that in this case the two Meurig Vychans in the Nannau pedigree have been confused, as the wife of Meurig Vychan ap Hywel Sele was Angharad, in this instance a daughter of Dafydd ap Cadwgan of Llynwent, Co. Radnor?¹.

The other five sons of Ynyr Vychan, according to Robert Vaughan, were: Howel, who received the lands bordering on the river Iddon; Enion who had Camerch; Gruffydd; Llewelyn; and Ynyr.² Griffith, while not including Enion, Gruffydd, Llewelyn and Ynyr in the Nannau pedigree adds a further son - Dafydd.³

In this respect Griffith agrees with Dwnn⁴. There is a discrepancy here, however. Whereas in the Nannau pedigree Griffith makes no mention of an Enion son of Ynyr Vychan, yet in the Bryn y Neuadd pedigree⁵ an Elin, daughter of Einion ap Ynyr Vychan of Nannau marries Gwilym, second son of Evan Lloyd of Bodsilin.

1. Griffith. P.200.

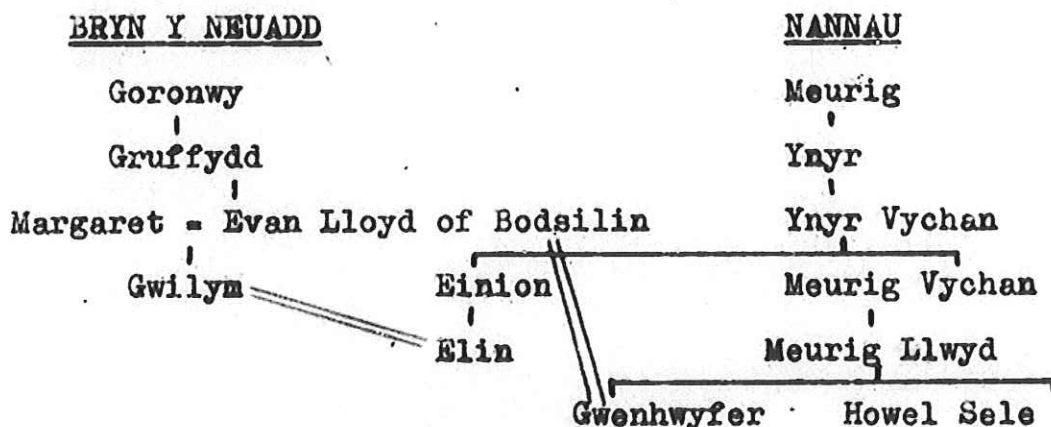
2. Robert Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, P. 130.

3. Griffith. P.200.

4. Dwnn. P.226-7.

5. Griffith. P.355.

Moreover, in the pedigree of Ty Calch and Cerrig Gwyddel¹. Ieuan ap Einion marries a Gwenhwyfer, daughter of Einion ap Ynyr Vychan of Nannau. In the PLAS TREGAYAN pedigree². however, in which this marriage is mentioned, Gwenhwyfer is described merely as the daughter of Ynyr Vychan. The situation is most complicated and appears even more so when we compare the pedigrees of Nannau and Bryn y Neuadd:-



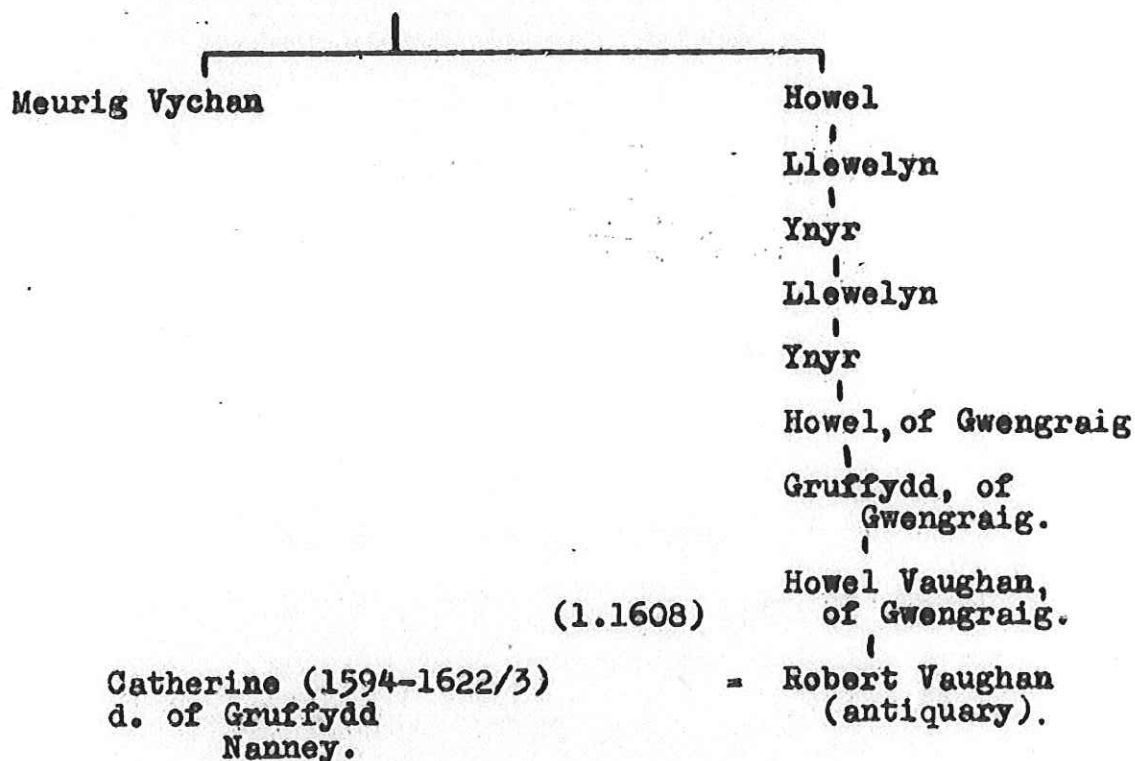
If the marriage of Gwenhwyfer, daughter of Meurig Llwyd, to Evan Lloyd is correctly stated, it will be seen that although a generation younger than Elin, yet she married the latter's father-in-law. What evidence there is suggests that there was an Einion ap Ynyr Vychan of Nannau, but the pedigrees are not at all clear on this point.

1. Griffith. P.148.

2. ibid. P.149.

Nothing is known of any of these other sons except Howel, the second son. It was from him that the first of the many cadet branches of the family descended - that of Hengwrt, thus:¹.

Ynyr Vychan = Gwenhwyfer (in some books Gwenllian)



Robert Vaughan gives further additions to the pedigree in the form of two more sons for this Howel ap Ynyr.

1. Griffith. P.201.

"Howel ap Ynyr Vaughan", he writes, "had 3 sonnes and divided his lands amongst them, Llewelin the eldest had y Ddwy, Boething, Maeston, Arddyn and twelve tenements more; Meredith the 2 sonne had all the lands from Maesyllech to the river Iddon, hafod Meredith, Crosgarnedd, and many other tenements. Howel Goz, the 3 sonne had Maesyllech and the remainder of his father's inheritance whose lands were escheated to the crown."¹

Robert Vaughan adds a note on Hywel ap Ynyr Vychan - "I find in the records at Caernarvon a^o XI of the King Edward the 3rd. (1337/8) that Howel ap Ynyr was elected Coroner of Ardudwy, Talbont and Estimanner; and continued in that office until the 17 yeare of the same King (1343/4), and then leaving the office, one Griffith ap Iorwerth was chosen in his roome."² Like his father and brother, Howel served the English Crown in a minor official capacity for an appreciable number of years.

1. R. Vaughan. "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, P.131.

2. ibid. P. 131.

It is Robert Vaughan, too, who has preserved for us the only other reference to this Howel. In some notes which he took from the Records of Inquisitions held for the county of Merioneth, probably in the Exchequer at Caernarvon, none of which are supposed to be now in existence, there is a reference dated 1347/8 to the insufficient return made by the sheriff of Merioneth to a certain writ which Griffinus de la Pole had brought against Howel ap Eher in a plea of debt.¹ For the same year there is a reference to a Howel ap Eher who did not appear to reply to one Rhys ap Madoc de Hendor in a plea of debt.² There is also a further reference to a "Howell ap Ynyr" Coronator Merioneth et Ardydwy, anno 16 Edwardi 2."³ (1342/3).

Meurig Vychan, according to Griffith, had only one son, Meurig Llwyd.⁴ There is sufficient evidence,

1. Robert Vaughan, "Notes from the Records of Inquisitions held for the County of Merioneth", Arch. Camb. 1846. P. 396.

2. *ibid.* P. 397.

3. *ibid.* P. 398.

4. Griffith. P. 200.

however, to warrant adding at least another son, Howel. Robert Vaughan states that Meuric Vychan had six sons, "as GuttynOwen recordeth" and that "Howel the eldest he left noe essue male."¹.

This would explain why he finds no place in the pedigrees. The other sons mentioned by Robert Vaughan were: Meuric Lloyd², of Nanney, Griffith Lloyd, Ieuan, Llewelyn, David and Ynyr Lloyd, who all shared in the partition of their father's lands. That Howel did indeed exist is proved both by a eulogy written by Gruffydd Llwyd to Hywel and Meurig Llwyd of Nannau³, sons of Meurig Vychan, and by reference to the Ministers' accounts.

According to Gruffydd Llwyd there was an excellent exchange of gold for good poetry at Nannau. In fact, the Lords of Nannau, Hywel and Meurig,
 "urddasant am foliant fi
 ar eu gwleddoedd, arglwyddi."⁴.

1. Robert Vaughan. "Notes on the House of Nannau." Arch. Camb. 1863. PP.131-2.

2. Griffith. P.200, states he married Mallt, daughter of Howel Pichhill ap Dafydd ap Gorenwy ap Iorwerth ap Howel ap Moreiddig ap Sandde Hardd, Lord of Mostyn.

3. E.D.Jones, op.cit. P.8.

4. E.D.Jones, op.cit. P.8. "Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill", PP.119-121.

The same impression is conveyed by another contemporary poet, Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen. He was an uncle to Hywel and Meurig Llwyd and wrote a "cywydd" describing the snow which kept him from going to visit his patrons in South Wales. But he was compensated by the kindness of his two nephews. "He describes their common delights - reading the law, and the old Welsh chronicles, playing on the 'crwth', and following greyhounds."¹ In other words, they were not uncultured self-seekers. They honoured the bards and their traditional culture. They were taking an intelligent interest in the affairs of the world and particularly of their own estates - in so far as these existed - laying the foundation for future expansion by assimilating legal principles and practice.

And yet they were also faithfully serving the alien English administration in their commote. In the Ministers' Accounts for 1391/2², "Meur' Lait" is found as rhaglaw of Talybont (this seems to have been almost a hereditary office) and he shared the farm of the havotry of Talybont with Howell ap Meurik.

1. E.D. Jones, op.cit. P.8.

2. P.R.O. SC6/1203/2.

In the account for 1395/6¹. they are both in possession of the farm of the havotry this time of "Talpont et Tundaday". After this reference, Howel's name does not occur, and Meurig Lloyd occurs only in one more account - that of the Sheriff of Merionethshire for 1399/1400.² - as the woodward of Talybont and joint farmer with Eignion ap Ithel of the havotry of Merioneth. This may have been due to the Crown's changing hands, but it was more probably because of Hywel and Meurig's deaths, as Meurig's son, Hywel Sele, holds various minor offices in this same account, and another son Gruffydd Derwas appears in the Accounts from 1414/5.³

There is a further reference to a Meurig Llwyd in the Patent Roll dated 23rd. November, 1398. This is "a pardon to Meuruc Lloid for all treasons and felonies committed before Thursday the last day of January last, except murders and rapes, on condition that he was not indicted before that date for a common thief, or approver, nor appealed of murder, nor compassed the King's death."⁴

1. P.R.O. S06/1203/4.

2. P.R.O. S06/1203/5.

3. P.R.O. S06/1203/7.

4. Cal.Pat. Rolls, 1398, P. 453.

If this is Meurig Lloyd of Nannau¹ it must surely infer that he was a follower of the Duke of Gloucester. In the Parliament of 17th. September, 1397, Gloucester, together with the Earls of Arundel and Warwick, was found guilty of treason.² This was the conclusion of the long contest between Richard and Gloucester. Gloucester himself died, probably murdered, on the 24th. September, before his trial could be held.³ In the Parliament of the following year opened at Shrewsbury on the 28th. January⁴ a general pardon was promulgated, and all previous pardons had to be renewed at a heavy price.⁵ We must presume, therefore, that this Meurig Lloyd received one of these charters of pardon as a former adherent of the Duke. If this is the Meurig Lloyd of Nannau it would appear he held the offices he did despite his connection with Gloucester.

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1. Note, however, that Robert Vaughan stated that "Meurig Lloyd dyed few years before the death of Richard 11." (1399) - "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, P.131.
 2. Stubbs, "Constitutional History of England", 3rd. ed. Vol. 11, PP.517-8; Anthony Steel, "Richard 11", P.236.
 3. Steel, op.cit., P.237.
 4. Stubbs, op.cit., P.520.
 5. Steel, Op.cit. P.242.

It may be significant, however, that Gloucester had been appointed Justice of Chester and North Wales in June, 1388, and had continued to hold the appointment until March 1394.¹

Meurig Lloyd's son, Hywel Sele,² continued the family tradition of co-operation - with the English administration, if not necessarily with the English Crown. In the Ministers' Account previously referred to for 1399/1400, "Hoel sely ap neur' lleyt" pays seven pounds rent for the farm of the Amobr of Talybont, which has been granted to him for two years, of which this is the first. He also pays six shillings and eight pence for the "pistar" of Abermawe which he has been granted for two years, of which this is the first.³

1. Steel, op.cit., PP. 201-2.

2. Griffith, P. 200, states he married Mali, daughter of Einion ap Gruffydd ap Llewelyn ap Cynwrig ap Osborn Wyddel of Corsygedol. E.D. Jones, op.cit. P. 14, has an interesting chart illustrating this and subsequent marriages between the families of Nannau and Corsygedol.

3. P.R.O. SC6/1203/5.

61.

These are the only documentary references to Hywel Sele, but his name is connected with one of the many romantic legends which surround the story of Owen Glyndŵr. Sir J.E. Lloyd, however, in his biography of Owen Glyndŵr, seeking, as he tells us to "clear away a good deal of the undergrowth of legend and error which had gathered around the story of the champion of Welsh independence,"¹ was presumably so suspicious of the late appearance of this legend that he did not mention Hywel Sele once in his book. The legend first appeared in the seventeenth century, from the pen of the Merionethshire antiquary Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt.² It grew a little in the course of time until it was given its modern form, with all the later accretions

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1. J.E. Lloyd, "Owen Glendower", Preface, P.vii.
 2. R. Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau" Arch. Camb. 1863, PP. 131-2; also in Panton MS. 53, transcribed in an appendix to "A History of the Island of Anglesey", 1775 ed., as "Memoirs of Owen Glendower", P. 66. The title page states that the memoirs were originally written by Thomas Ellis, Rector of Dolgelley, but J.E. Lloyd, ("Owen Glendower", P.148), claims it is the work of Robert Vaughan as found in Panton MS. 53.

included, by T.P. Ellis in 1928.¹ It might be of interest to include here his summary of the legend, as he has attempted to place it in its chronological setting.

In June, 1401, T.P. Ellis tells us, Hotspur, the Governor of North Wales, visited Dolgelley, probably invited by Hywel Sele of Nannau, who, like many other landlords disliked the "peasant" revolt led by Glyndŵr.² As Hywel Sele was a dangerous man to be at liberty, Glyndŵr decided to capture him, and

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1. T.P. Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", PP. 72-74.

One of the most fanciful accounts of the legend is that given by Louisa Stuart Costello, in "The Falls, Lakes and Mountains of North Wales" (1845), PP. 177-183, under the heading "Nannau Park, or The Ravines."

2. As T.P. Ellis does not provide footnotes I have been unable to discover the source of many of his statements, such as the invitation by Hywel Sele to Hotspur and the fact that the Glyndŵr rebellion was a peasant revolt.

early in 1402¹. he attacked Nannau suddenly and made Hywel Sele a prisoner. Returning to Dolgelley, Glyndŵr found his way blocked at Llanelltyd bridge by Gruffydd ap Gwyn, the son-in-law of Hywel Sele who had come with two hundred men to rescue the prisoner. A battle ensued on the bridge and Owen eventually succeeded in cutting his way through the opposing force, leaving sixty of his enemies dead. The Abbot of Cymer then intervened and made an arrangement whereby Hywel Sele agreed to support Glyndŵr or at any rate not to oppose him and was therefore set free. A short while later Glyndŵr visited Nannau, probably to discuss terms of support, and he and Sele went out into Nannau park together.

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1. This date is confirmed by the "Memoirs of Owen Glendower", op.cit., P. 66., which states under A.D.1402: "Owen burnt the house of Howel Sele, of Nanney, who withstood out for the King, and took him along with him. Griffith ap Gwyn, of Ardudwy, who came to attempt the rescue of his cousin Howel, was beaten and most of his men killed. Howel was so disposed that he was never seen or heard of again by his friends." This is also a convenient summary of Robert Vaughan's account of the event as contained in Arch. Camb. 1863, P.131-2., the one difference being that in this latter account he writes: "It is said that Owen Glyndower caused Howel Sele to be lette down into a hollow oak where he ended his life....." *ibid.*, P. 132.

While strolling there they saw a deer and Hywel, pretending to aim at it with his arrow, suddenly turned and shot at Glyndŵr. Glyndŵr, however, was wearing a coat of mail, and therefore escaped injury.^{1.} In revenge he immediately slew Hywel Sele and, carrying the corpse a little way, he thrust it into the hollow trunk of an old tree where it remained for about forty years. This tree was known in the locality as "Ceubren yr Ellyll".^{2.}

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1. A piece of nineteenth century doggerel dressed up as verse paints the following delightful picture:

"Then cursed Howel's cruel shaft,
His royal brother's blood had quaffed.
Alas! for Cambria's weal!
But the false arrow glanced aside,
For 'neath the robe of royal pride,
Lay plate of Milan steel."

Walter Thornbury (1828-76),
"The Demon Oak."

Quoted by E. Rosalie Jones, "History of Barmouth and Vicinity." P.210.

2. A legend grew that this tree was haunted, and this prompted the following remarkable effusion from Thomas Pennant: "How often has not warm fancy seen the fairy tribe revel round its trunk! or may not the visionary eye have seen the Hamadryad burst from the bark of its coeval tree?" - Pennant, "Tours in Wales", 1883 ed., Vol. 3, P.243.
- When Richard Fenton visited Nannau in 1813 with Sir Robert Colt Hoare, the latter made a sketch of this infamous oak on the 27th. July and that same night the tree was blown down by a gale. - Journal Mer. Hist. Rec. Soc., Vol.11., P.139. Its site is now marked by a sundial and brass plate - T.P. Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd." P.74.

In this account of the legend T.P. Ellis seems to be combining two versions - that of Robert Vaughan and that of Pennant.¹ Some additional points mentioned by these two antiquaries but not included in T.P. Ellis's account may be noted, namely that according to Robert Vaughan², Hywel had refused to do homage to Glyndŵr "although he had been proclaimed Prince of Wales", and also that when Glyndŵr captured Hywel Sele he also "spoyled" and burned his house which was the stateliest structure in all North Wales (built by Cadwgan ap Bleddyn Prince of Powys about 300 years before)." Also, when Hywel Sele met his untimely end, he left, according to Vaughan, a two year old son called Meurig Vychan. Pennant's account³ states further that forty years after the event the skeleton of a large man, such as Howel, was discovered in the hollow of a great oak. He also states that in his time (1778) the ruins of the old house were to be seen in Nannau Park "a mere compost of cinders and ashes".

1..Pennant, op.cit. Vol.111. P.310-311.
R. Vaughan, "Notes of the House of Nannau"
Arch. Camb. 1863.

2. R. Vaughan. op.cit., P.131.

3. Pennant. op.cit., P.311.

Yet another piece of circumstantial evidence is provided by the anonymous contributor to "The Cornhill Magazine" of 1884, who, quoting Pennant's version of the legend, adds: "As to Howel Sele, when the blackened ruins of his burnt castle were cleared away some years ago to build a lodge for Nannau deer park, three immense bronze cauldrons were brought to light. They have since been kept at Hengwrt and the biggest appears to me quite capable of boiling down into venison broth the whole of that doe which Howel Sele should have shot, instead of aiming at the terrible Glendower."¹ It may be significant that there is no reference at any other period to the destruction of the mansion at Nannau.

It is indeed possible that an incident similar to this legend, though perhaps not quite as romantic, may have occurred. We know that in Pennant's time the house standing in Nannau Park had been built by Hugh Nanney Hên at the beginning of the seventeenth century²; and that the remains of the old house would be of an earlier date.

1. "A Glimpse of Wales a Hundred Years Ago", in "The Cornhill Magazine", 1884, P.417, being extracts from the eighteenth century diary of Mrs. Baker, lady housekeeper to Hugh Vaughan, Squire of Hengwrt.

2. E.D. Jones, op.cit., P.11.

Moreover, although there is no contemporary evidence to prove the truth of the incident, what evidence there is would suggest that Hywel Sele was not likely to join a rebellion against the English Crown. It is much more probable that, like Gwilym ap Gruffydd of Penrhyn, he would have been a political opportunist who would have joined Glyndŵr with reluctance and deserted him at the earliest possible opportunity.¹ Hywel's father, grandfather and uncle had all worked with the new administration and he himself had held minor offices under the Crown. Moreover, his brother Gruffydd Derwas and his own son, Meurig Vychan, continued to serve the English Crown in Merionethshire. Gruffydd Derwas, indeed, is found holding various minor offices in 1414/15² - within nine years of the time when Glyndŵr was at the height of his power, that is, in 1405/6.³

But all one may conclude from the evidence is that such a legend might well have had some basis of truth.

1: J.R. Jones, "The Development of the Penrhyn Estate up to 1431", PP.132-3.

2. P.R.O. SC6/1203/7.

3. J.E. Lloyd, op.cit., P. 126.

Moreover, as the only reference to Hywel Sele in the Ministers' Accounts is for 1399/1400¹, and as his name does not occur in the next Account - that for 1413/14 - we can presume that he died between these dates, possibly in 1402 at the hands of Glyndŵr. The approximate date of his death is further fixed by the life-span of his son Meurig Vychan, who flourished from 1436 to 1460.² This would tally with a birth-date of c.1400.

1. P.R.O. SC6/1203/5.

2. Nannau MSS. 2 - 13.

CHAPTER 111c. 1400 - c. 1540

"..... the course of my auncestors w'ch with
wisdome longanimity and temperance from tyme to
tyme had raised their fortunes... ."

Sir John Wynn,

"History of the Gwydir Family."

The hundred and fifty years which followed the Glyndŵr revolt saw vast changes in the political, economic and social structure of Wales. This period witnessed the accumulation of landed properties in the estates of the new gentry class, with all its consequent social chaos, aggravated by the effects of the Black Death, the Glyndŵr Rebellion and the Wars of the Roses. The end of this period produced that Tudor legislation which tied Wales to England with both visible and invisible chains, and which marked the culmination of all those Anglicising influences which had been at work since and even before the English conquest. For the family at Nannau this was a crucial stage in their history. The descendants of Ynyr Vychan, like many others of their class in Wales, can be seen building up during this period, the nucleus of a large "modern" estate which was to ensure the emergence of their children and grandchildren among the foremost of the Merionethshire gentry.

• This period has been graphically portrayed by Sir John Wynn of Gwydir.¹ Sir John Wynn was a

1. Sir John Wynn, "The History of the Gwydir Family".

71.

representative of the same social class as the dwellers at Nannau. He died in 1627 and had written an account of the lives and times of his ancestors, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which presents a vivid picture of the society in which Meurig Vychan, his son Dafydd and his grandson, Hywel, lived. Sir John writes, for the most part, of Eifionydd, the southermost section of Caernarvonshire. It was in Eifionydd that Sir John's uncle, when yet a child, saw Howel ap Madog Vaughan, mortally wounded in a family feud, "layd in his bed, and his wounded men in a great number lyinge in a cocherie above the degree neer the highe table all the breadth of this hall all gored and wallowinge in their owne blood and sawe the gent milch kine brought to the hall doore and there milked. And their milke caried hotte from the kine to the wounded men by them to drunke for the restoringe of their blood."¹.

Conditions much the same as those which prevailed here must have prevailed also in Merionethshire, immediately to the south. Sir John tells us, indeed, of a certain "Evan krach" - "a man of great account in those dayes at Arduddy and dwelt at kelli lydan

1. Sir John Wynn, "The History of the Gwydir Family",
P.55.

in the p'ishe of maentwrog." - and reports the threat made to the beseigers of the house of Sir John's ancestor, Evan ap Robert (1437 - 68)¹, that "as soone as the water at Traethmawr will geve leave Jeuan krach my m'r his kinsman wilbe here with Ardudwy men, and then yow shalbe all. slayne."² This Evan ap Robert's son, Maredudd, bought a lease on Dolwyddelan castle in Nantconwy in order to avoid the family feuds in Eifionydd, "where there was nothings but killinge and fightinge."³

Sir John describes the outlaw-ridden countryside and the many feuds which seemed to thrive in the desolation left by the Glyndŵr revolt and the Wars of the Roses, and which continued to such effect in Eifionydd "that in those dayes and in that wilde worlde everye man stood upon his garde, and went not abroad but in sorte and soe armed as yf he went to the field to encounter with his enemies."⁴ We can also see the far from salutary effects of the wars in France in the way one returning soldier attacked the

1. "Bywgraffiadur", P.1031.

2. Sir John Wynn, op. cit. P.45.

3. Sir John Wynn, op cit. P. 51.

4. *ibid.* P.P. 38 - 39.

mansion of Hoell ap Rees in Eifionydd"after the maner he had seene in the frenche warres."¹. The whole country, including Merionethshire, was in a state of acute lawlessness. Sir John refers to a "damnable custom" in the Marches where it was possible for offenders against the law, even murderers, to pay a fine of five pounds for their release - provided they were not involved in a case of treason. This custom "was used also in mowddwy untill the new ordinance of wales made in vicesimo septimo of Henry the eight."²

We also get a glimpse of the physical nature of the country, for we "are to understand that in those dayes the countrey of Nanconway was not onelie wooded, but also all Car'r, Merionythshire, and denbigheshire seemed to be but one forrest and wood, havinge few inhabitants."³.

Such was the social and physical setting of the lives of Meurig, Dafydd, and Hywel. It was a time when land was coming on the market and the stronger or more fortunate were buying up the lands of their

1. Sir John Wynn, op.cit. P. 46.

2. ibid. P. 42.

3. ibid. P. 53.

74

less fortunate and weaker neighbours. It has been shown that in Caernarvonshire "roughly between 1460 and 1550..... a revolution in land-ownership may, perhaps, be said to have taken place as land, loosened from the hold of its medieval organization, became available for exploitation and possession by a new kind of landed proprietor."¹ What was true of Caernarvonshire seems also to have been true of Merionethshire, and the Nanneys, like the Wynns of Gwydir, the Maurices of Clenennau and others during this period took advantage of the market. Their activities in this sphere will be considered later.²

According to Robert Vaughan, Hywel Sele died at the hands of Glyndŵr, leaving a two-year old son called Meurig Vychan.³ This may well be correct, for if we accept a birth date of 1400 for Meurig Vychan, this would be consistent with the date of his death - that is, between 1460 and 1480.⁴ Elsewhere,

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1. W.O. Williams, "Calendar of the Caernarvonshire Quarter Sessions Records", Introduction P, lxxiii - a summary of the work of Professor T. Jones Pierce.
 2. Vide Infra, Ch. 4.
 3. R. Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, p. 132.
 4. There is a gap in the Nannau MSS. between 1460 and 1480, presumably on account of the Wars of the Roses. The last document in which Meurig Vychan appears is dated 1460 - Nannau MS. 13.

76

This Mallt was herself one of the patrons of Lewis Glyn Cothi.¹

The second daughter mentioned by Robert Vaughan was called Lleuku, and she married Ieuan ap Meredydd of Ystumcegid.² This marriage is referred to by Sir John Wynn: "Indeede Jeuan ap m'edd' maryed in his youthe lleikye the daughter of howell Sele ap meiricke of the house of Nanney in merionythshire and begat by her Meredith ap Jeuan."³ Lleuku married a man who equalled her father in the strength of his loyalty to the English Crown and opposition to Glyndwr. Sir John Wynn tells us that "Jeuan beinge maryed enioyed both their houses, viz keven y van and kesel gyfarch and for that Jeuan then Counstable of Cruketh clave faste to the kinge. Owen glyndoor burned them bothe to coulde ashes."⁴

1. E.D. Jones, "The Family of Nannau of Nannau", P.9.

2. Griffith, P.200; N.L.W. Peniarth 131, P.98.

3. Sir John Wynn, op.cit. P.20.

i.e. Jeuan ap Meredith = Lleuku, d. of Hywel Sele
of Nannau

Meredith, of Ystumcegid = Margaret, d.
of Einion ap
Ithel, of
Rhiwaedog.

4. *ibid*, P.18. Recent excavations at Cefn y Fan have shown that although "the destruction of the house in 1403, by Owen Glyndwr, can be accepted with some confidence", yet "the excavation showed that the destruction had not been by fire." - A.H.A. Hogg, "A Fourteenth Century House - Site at Cefn-y-Fan", *Caerns. Hist. Soc. Trans.* 1953, PP 1-7.

Jeuan, moreover, had married his son Meredith to Margaret, daughter and heiress of Einion ap Ithel of Rhiwaedog, "whoe belonged to ye house of lancaster soe he clave fast to that house in that tyme when Owen glyndoor rebelled in wales so that in the tyme of that warr he and m'edith ap hulkyn lloyd of Glynllivon had the charge of the towne of Caern'von and an Englishe capteyne was over the castell in revenge whereof Owen burned his two houses....."¹. When we remember that according to Robert Vaughan² it was a Griffri ap Gwyn of Ardudwy, husband of one of the daughters of Hywel Sele³, who had attempted to rescue Hywel from Glyndŵr at Llanelltyd bridge, more circumstantial evidence accrues which seems to point to the veracity of the Sele legend, and to a family "alliance" (if that is not too strong a word) against Glyndŵr.

It seems that Gruffydd Derwas, in his capacity as guardian to his nephew, resided at Nannau, taking the place of the head of the family. He continued the family policy of co-operation with the English administration and his name is found in the Ministers' Accounts for 1414/5,⁴ in the very wake of the Glyndŵr Rebellion.

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1. Sir John Wynn, op.cit. P.21. Einion ap Ithel of Rhiwaedog was an Esquire of the Body to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in 1395. - "Bywgraffiadur", P.541.
 2. R. Vaughan, op.cit. P.132.
 3. Presumably a fourth daughter of Hywel Sele.
 4. P.R.O. Min.Acc. SO6/1203/7.

In the Account of the ringilds of Talybont for that year Gruffydd Derwas is recorded as paying ten shillings rent ~~for the~~ farm of the "ffrith" of Penantigi. He appears in the same Ministers' Account to have inherited what must have been regarded as the family office of rhaglaw of Talybont, for which he pays forty shillings and four pence. He is also recorded as paying thirty shillings and fourpence for the farm of the office of woodward, and twenty one shillings and eight pence for the farm of the "amobr." There seems to be sufficient evidence here to justify - in part at least - Robert Vaughan's claim that Gruffydd Derwas "was the chiefest man of command in our country all his tyme,"^{1.} and Tudur Penllyn's eulogy:

"Gruffydd Derwas, gwanas gwŷr,
y blaena o bobl Ynyr." ^{2.}

strengthens this impression. In the following year, however, - 1415/16, Gruffydd Derwas is recorded in the Accounts^{3.} as holding only the "ffrith" of Penantigi and the farm of the "amobr". He is not recorded either as rhaglaw or as woodward. In the Accounts for 1416/17^{4.}

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1. R. Vaughan, op. cit. P.133.
 2. E.D. Jones, op. cit. P.9.
 3. P.R.O. Min.Acc. S06/1203/9.
 4. S06/1203/10.

Gruffydd Derwas again appears as holding the office of rhaglaw, but none of the other offices.

He does not appear again, however, in any Account until that for 1424/5¹. when he holds the raglotry and mill of Talybont and the court, toll, and mill of Dolgelley. He may have fallen out of favour during the latter part of the reign of Henry V, only to be reinstated under Henry VI, for this Account is the first extant for Merionethshire of the new King's reign. Robert Vaughan may therefore have been correct in his claim that Gruffydd Derwas was an "Esqr., of the body of King Henry Sixth."² In any case he continued to hold office in Merionethshire under Henry VI, appearing as rhaglaw and as farmer of the mill of Talybont and farmer of the court, toll and mill of Dolgelley in 1425/6.³ In the Account for 1427/8⁴. he is not recorded as rhaglaw of Talybont, but he is

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- 1. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1203/13.
 - 2. R. Vaughan, op. cit. P.133.
 - 3. SC6/1204/1.
 - 4. SC6/1204/2.

recorded as farmer of the vill of Dolgelley. This is significant, as Dolgelley was a bond vill, and is recorded as such in the survey of Merioneth made by Edward 1's officials.^{1.}

This was not the first time such a grant had been made, however, for it was noted in the last chapter^{2.} that Meurig Vychan ap Inyr Vychan received in 1338 the bailiwick of the raglotry of Talybont and the town of Dolgelley. We have also seen that Gruffydd Derwas had himself had some interest in Dolgelley since 1424/5 - namely the farm of its court, toll and mill. Professor Jones Pierce has shown^{3.} that there was "a widespread decay in the bond townships" during the fifteenth century. He has also commented on the failure of the adventurous spirits among the official and upper landed classes during this century to make investments, in the form of leases in crown property, pay their way.^{4.}

1. Arch. Camb. 1867, P.184.

2. Supra, Ch. 2. P.47.; Cal. Fine Rolls, 1338, P.83.

3. T. Jones Pierce, "Some Tendencies in the Agrarian History of Caernarvonshire during the Later Middle Ages," Caerns. Hist. Soc. Trans., 1939, P.25.

4. ibid. P.26.

The Nanneys were no different, but it is worthy of note that as early as 1338 Meurig Vychan received the farm of a bond township, and that Gruffydd Derwas received the same in 1428. The ground was well prepared for any future extension of the Nanney estates into the Crown territory of the bond vill of Dolgelley.

In the next Account - that for 1428/9¹. - Gruffydd Derwas continues as farmer of the vill of Dolgelley and also farms the "standum" and mill of Llanfachreth. He continues to hold these appointments in the Accounts for 1430/1, 1431/2 and 1434/5². (there being no extant accounts between 1431 and 1434).

It is at this time that Meurig Vychan's name occurs in the Accounts and the first of the Nannau Manuscripts appears in which one of the Nannau family is mentioned. In 1436 a certain Llewelyn ap Evan ap Owain, free tenant of the Lord King in the township of Llwyngwrl, leased to Meurig Vychan ap Howel Sele, another free tenant,

1. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1204/4.

2. (SC6/1204/5;
(SC6/1204/6;
(SC6/1204/7.

a tenement called Tyddyn yn y Fron Goch in Llwyngwrl, for four years at an annual rent of twenty shillings.¹.

In 1436, Meurig would be, presumably, about thirty six years old and is here described as a free tenant. When he was about nineteen years old, in 1419/20, he was found to be co-heir, with Gruffydd Derwas and others, to a "gwely" in the Extent of Merionethshire.². In the section of this Extent which deals with the hundred of Talybont, it is recorded that in the township of Nannau there is one "gwely" of free land, the heirs of which are Gruffydd Derwas, Meurig Vuchan, Ieuan Lloyd ap Howel, Gruffydd ap Meurig ap Meredudd Du ap Einion Penlloyd, and others. These heirs pay to the Lord Prince an annual sum of £4. 12. 8d. in four equal portions of twenty three shillings and two pence. Moreover, they all owe suit at the Hundred Court. They pay the Lord Prince ten shillings in relief, ten shillings "gobr" and ten shillings "amobr". They owe suit at the mill of the Lord King at Llanfachreth, and pay to the Lord Prince

1. Nannau MS. 2.

2. "Record of Caernarvon", P.269.

a due called "gogr" and "evan",¹ namely eighteen shillings and sixpence.

There are two opinions regarding the date of this survey. The editor of the "Record of Caernarvon" gives the date referred to above, that is, 7 Henry V (21 March 1419 - 20 March 1420)². T.P. Ellis, however, decides on 1445 as the date of the survey.³ Whichever is correct - and I see no reason to doubt the former - the survey is admittedly of a later date than those of Caernarvonshire and Anglesey. It is also evidently a product of the post-Glyndŵr epoch, for it is fragmentary, incomplete, and "bears on it the impress of the country having gone through a terrible period of stress, for over and over again is it said that land, which once paid dues to the Crown, is now lying derelict for want of use."⁴ The actual date is not all that

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1. T.P.Ellis, "Welsh Tribal Law and Custom", Vol.11, P.439: a levy in kind in Merioneth. "Gogor" = winter food for cattle and "Ebran" = provender; but since "efran" appears to be connected with "yfed" (to drink), he renders "Gogor ac efran" as "food and drink."
 2. "Record of Caernarvon", Introduction, P.xx.
 3. T.P.Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", P.79; "Y Cymrodor", Vol.38, P.20. He gives no reason for choosing this particular date, however.
 4. T.P. Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", P.79.

important; what is important is the way in which these facts illustrate a general theme in the social history of this period. The theme has been stated by Professor Jones Pierce.¹

Having established that the "gwely" comprised "both an organic territorial structure and an association of persons bound together by reciprocal rights and duties", he continues: "the dissolution of the personal elements in the constitution of the "gwely" will usually leave the organic shell intact, until concentration of holdings under single proprietorship, through the mediums of purchase, mortgage and exchange, transforms the hamlet into a consolidated farm."²

In this Survey of Merioneth, in which the effects of the Glyndŵr revolt are so evident, we can see one stage of this process. The aftermath of the Glyndŵr Rebellion was itself to play an important part in the decay of the "personal elements" in tribal society and can be seen to some extent in this survey. Moreover, in the portion dealing with the township of Mannau we can see the "organic shell" minus the "personal elements" of the "gwely".

1. T. Jones Pierce, "Some Tendencies in the Agrarian History of Caernarvonshire", Caerns. Hist. Soc. Trans. 1939.

2. *ibid*, P. 30.

The future will show Meurig Vychan and his descendants concentrating holdings under their single proprietorship and thus transforming the hamlet into a consolidated farm. The process is particularly evident in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries -- "this age of universal change in social equilibrium,"¹... during the lives of Meurig Vychan, his son, and his grandson. The Nannau collection of deeds, while not enabling us to make a detailed study of this process of consolidation or any full reconstruction of the size and extent of the estate thus built up,² yet contain sufficient evidence of the work of these three members of the family to provide at least the bare outlines of the story. This process will be discussed later.³

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1. T. Jones Pierce, "The Gafael in Bangor MS. 1939", Cymmr. Trans. 1942, P.160.
 2. There are no extant rent-rolls, for example, before 1701 (Nannau MS.467). The "rental" of 1590 (Nannau MS. 169) is not a complete rental, but deals with only a fragment of the Nannau estate.
 3. Infra, Ch. 4.

Meurig Vychan's name first appears in the Ministers' Accounts in conjunction with that of his uncle. In the Account for 1444/5¹. Muruk Vaghan and Gruff Derwas hold the farm of the mill of Llanfachreth. S.R. Meyricke, the editor of Dwnn's "Heraldic Visitations", states in a footnote that Meurig Vychan was foreman of a jury in a session held at Caernarvon in 1444/5.² In the next Account - that for 1448/9³. - Gruffydd Derwas no longer has the farm of the vill of Dolgelley. His son Hywel is in possession, while he himself, with Meurig Vychan, retains the farm of the mill of Llanfachreth. The next mention of Meurig is in the first extant record of a purchase of land by a member of this family. In 1451⁴. Gruffydd Derwas, a free tenant in Nannau, sold two "tyddynod" to Meurig Vychan, another freetenant in Nannau.

1. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1204/8.

2. Dwnn, P.226, n.12. As Meyrick expresses his obligations to W.W.E. Wynne of Peniarth, it is possible that this footnote was based on family material.

3. SC6/1205/1.

4. Nannau MS. 9.

Meurig's name appears next in some notes made by Robert Vaughan, the antiquary, from some Records of Inquisitions.¹ In an Inquisition held at Caernarvon for Merionethshire in 1452/3, Meurig Vychan and Hywel ap Gruffydd Derwas were among the jurors when David Lloyd ap Sir Griffith Vychan de Pol², gent., Hugh ap Ieuan ap Llewelyn de Bol, gent., and Hulkan ap Ieuan ap Llewelyn of the same, were accused of killing a certain Howel ap Gruffith ap Jenkin "cum lancea".³ In another, held the same year, this time at Dolgelley, Gruffydd Derwas and Meurig Vychan were among the witnesses who deposed that a certain Thomas ap Howell ap Griffith Bach of Llanuwchllyn, burnt the house of Hywel ap Gruffydd Derwas at Garthgynfawr, a township near Dolgelley, and that Ynyr ap Ithel Banwr of Llanbedr stole the goods of Ieuan Vychan ap Gruffith ap Gwyn.⁴ In the Ministers' Accounts for that year (1452/3)⁵ Meurig Vychan and Gruffydd Derwas are again recorded as farmers of the mill of Llanfachreth, although the vill of Dolgelley has been taken over by a certain John Glyfford.

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1. R. Vaughan, "Notes from the Records of Inquisitions, held for the County of Merioneth", Arch.Camb. 1846, 1847, 1848. These notes seem to be taken from the proceedings of the Justice's Sessions.
 2. i.e. Welshpool.
 3. R. Vaughan, op.cit., Arch.Camb., 1846, P.399.
 4. ibid, Arch.Camb., 1847, P.20.
 5. P.R.O. Min.Acc. SC6/1205/2.

88

Robert Vaughan's notes from the Records of Inquisitions provide further evidence of lawlessness in Nannau, as in other parts of Merionethshire at this time - that is, at the beginning of the Wars of the Roses.¹ In an Inquisition held at Caernarvon at the court of the Justice, Thomas Stanley, in 1453/4,² Meurig Vychan and Hywel ap Gruffydd Derwas were among the witnesses who stated that Guttyn ap Rys ap Einus of Garthgynfawr carried away three cows, valued at fifteen shillings, the property of Meurig Vychan. There seems to have been quite an extensive cattle raid on Nannau, for these witnesses also state that Ieuan Goch ap Llewelyn ap Griffith of Mathavarn, and others, stole four cows from a certain Ieuan ap Ynyr ap Ieuan ap Meurig at Nannau, and that Gwilim ap Einus ap Madogyn of Garthbeibio, with his brother Hwllyn ap Einus, took six cows, the property of Siankin ap Gwennach, again at Nannau.

In the next three Ministers' Accounts - that is, for 1456/7, 1457/8 and 1458/9³ - these two, Meurig

1. Vide supra, P.87...

2. R. Vaughan, op.cit. Arch.Camb. 1848, P.69.

3. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1205/3;
SC6/1205/4;
SC6/1205/5.

Vychan and Gruffydd Derwas, continue to farm the mill of Llanfachreth. This is the last reference we have to Gruffydd Derwas; the last mention of his nephew is in a deed of sale by Evan ap Adda ap John Wynn, a free tenant in Nannau, dated at Meurig's house in Nannau in 1459/60.¹ There is a gap in the Nannau manuscript for the next twenty years, so we must presume that Meurig Vychan died between 1460 and 1480.²

Gruffydd Derwas must have died at about the same time. He had married Mabli, the daughter of Ivan Lloyd ap Ivan Blaene³. One authority gives Gruffydd Derwas's house as Gwanas,⁴ presumably because he is recorded in the Ministers' Accounts⁵ as farmer of the "ffrith" of Penantigi.⁶ According to Robert Vaughan, "he had

1. Nannau MS. 13.

2. Meurig Vychan married Angharad, daughter of Dafydd ap Cadwgan, of Llynwent, co. Radnor, by whom he had a son Dafydd and a daughter Mary, who married Gruffydd Lloyd of Rhagatt. - Griffith, P.200.

3. Dwnn, P.84.

4. Glenn, "Griffith of Garn and Plasnewydd", P.202.

5. P.R.O. Min.Acc. SO6/1203/7; SO6/1203/9;
Vide Supra, PP.77-80.

6. Glenn later states that Gruffydd's son Hywel was a "Crown lessee of Pennartigi in Gwanas" - ibid, P.202. In the 1" Ordnance Survey map of Dolgelley and District, a Penantigi Uchaf is given in 16:81, within two miles of a Gwanas Fawr.

two sonnes, Howel the eldest, and Gwillim 2 sonne.^{1.}
From him, by his son Hywel, descends the family at
Caerynwch.^{2.} This Hywel "lived in great credit all
his tyme"^{3.}, and was farmer of the vill. of Dolgelley
in 1448/9^{4.}, one of the ringilds of Talybont in
1456/7^{5.}, a rhaglaw in 1458/9^{6.} and farmer of the
"ffriddoedd" of Penantigi, Gwanas and Llanfihangel in
1471/2^{7.}. He was a "jurator" at an Inquisition at
Caernarvon in 1452/3, referred to above,^{8.} and in
another of the same year (also referred to above^{9.})
is a record of the burning of his house at Garthgynfawr,
near Dolgelley, by a certain Thomas ap Howell ap
Griffith Bach of Llanuwchllyn. In 1453/4 he was a
witness at an Inquisition held at Caernarvon and
referred to above.^{10.} It appears from a "cywydd" of

1. R. Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nanneu", Arch.
Camb. 1863, P.133.

2. Griffith, P.322.

3. R. Vaughan, op.cit. P.133.

4. SC6/1205/1.

5. SC6/1205/3.

6. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1205/5.

7. SC6/1205/6.

8. Supra, P.27...; R. Vaughan, "Notes from Records of
Inquisitions", Arch. Camb. 1846, P.399.

9. Supra, P.27; R. Vaughan, op.cit. Arch.Camb.1847,P.20.
This seems to disprove Glenn's statement that Gruffydd
Derwas lived at Penantigi in Gwanas, although

Tudur Penllyn that a dispute had arisen between Hywel ap Gruffydd Derwas and Hywel the son of Gruffydd ap Jenkyn of Llwydiarth, by Mellt, daughter of Hywel Sele.¹ In his poem the poet advises Mellt, if she is unable to reconcile the two young men, to bring them before her uncle, Gruffydd Derwas. Tudur Penllyn promises to help by composing more "cywyddau" to these young men, and if that proved ineffective,

"cywydd dychan a ganaf."²

9. (Cont. from previous page.)

we must remember that Tudur Penllyn referred to Gruffydd as "gwanas gwŷr", supra, P.78.

10. Supra, P.88.; R. Vaughan, op.cit., Arch. Camb. 1848, P.69.

1. E.D. Jones, op. cit., P.9.

2. E.D. Jones, op. cit., P.9.

The second son referred to by Robert Vaughan - Gwilym - is mentioned in the notes from the Records of Inquisitions. In 1457 / 8 a Gwylim ap Griffith Derwas was one of the witnesses who stated that a certain Jeuan ap Jeuan Morgan stole a horse from Enner Ddwyd at Garthmaelen.¹ Another son - Meredydd - is included by Griffith in the Caerynwch pedigree.² Robert Vaughan mentions that Gruffydd Derwas "had many daughters whom he proferred to great houses, as Cŏchwillan, Ynysymaengwyn, Plas du, Madryn, and Penllech etc."³ Griffith records the marriages of all but one of these daughters:- Mallt married Gruffydd ap Robin of Cochwillan,⁴ Elliw married Jenkin ap Iorwerth of Ynysymaengwyn;⁵ another (either Elliw or Gwenllian) married Ieuan ap Rhys of Plas Du, Llanarmon⁶ while another married Morgan ap Evan of Penllech.⁷

1. R. Vaughan, op.cit. Arch.Camb., 1848, P.259.

2. Griffith, P.322.

3. R. Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, P.133.

4. Griffith, P.186. William Williams, "Observations on the Snowdon Mountains" (1802), PP.136-7, gives Mallt as the grand-daughter of Gruffydd Derwas, an obvious misconception. He has taken "Derwas" to be a separate person, whose son Gruffydd had a daughter, Mallt. He mentions "an eminence, or a hillock, which is called Bryn Derwas" near the mansion house at Cochwillan.

5. Griffith, P.237.

6. ibid, P.205.

7. ibid, P.175. There is no record of the Madryn marriage.

The years covered by the lives of Meurig Vychan Gruffydd Derwas, and Meurig's son Dafydd were good ones for the bards. The family at Nannau seem to have been liberal supporters of the traditional Welsh culture, unlike certain others of the "banheddig" class who, as a result of Glyndŵr's revolt, no longer welcomed the bards.¹ In the "cywydd" of Tudur Penllyn referred to above² the poet mentions the wine which will be his at Nannau:-

"a gwin yn Nannau a gaf"³.

Meurig Vychan was particularly noted for his hospitality and generosity. Guto'r Glyn praised Meurig and his wife Angharad, and their son Dafydd and his wife Elin.⁴ He also wrote an elegy on the death of Meurig and Angharad and their burial in Cymer Abbey and referred to their many gifts of gold.⁵ He wrote another poem

1. Francis Jones, "An Approach to Welsh Genealogy", Cymmr. Trans. 1948, P.342.

2. Supra, P.75.

3. E.D. Jones, op.cit., P.9.

4. ibid, P.10; "Gwaith Guto'r Glyn", ed. Ifor Williams, P.153.

5. E.D. Jones, op.cit. P.10; "Gwaith Guto'r Glyn", P.155.

thanking Dafydd ap Meurig Vychan for the gift of a horse.¹ An anonymous "englyn" of this period gives a concise yet effective picture of the hospitality offered at Nannau:

"Eistedd yr wyf wrth eirias dân - ymhlwy
ym mhlas Meurig Vychan,
cefaïs lety a thŷ a than,
yfory, mi gaf arian." ².

Another poem, by Tudur Aled - addressed to Hywel ap Dafydd ap Meurig-suggests that Meurig and Dafydd died fairly soon after each other, leaving Hywel a minor.³ This is confirmed to some extent by record evidence. Meurig Vychan died some time between the years 1460, when his name last occurs in a document⁴, and 1480, when, in the next extant manuscript, Dafydd ap Meurig's name appears⁵. Dafydd's will is extant, dated 1494.⁶

1. E.D.Jones, op.cit., P.10. "Gwaith Guto'r Glyn", P.227.

2. E.D.Jones, op.cit., P.10; N.L.W. Peniarth 287, Part 1, P.306 - Robert Vaughan's Book of Pedigrees. This "englyn" is written at the foot of the page (referring to Meurig Vychan ap Howel Sele) with the caption: "says an old Bard."

3. E.D.Jones, op.cit. P.10.

4. Nannau MS.13.

5. Nannau MS.14.

6. Arch.Camb. "Original Documents", Vol.1, 1877, P.143.

15

The gap in the Nannau collection of deeds, from 1460 to 1480, is suggestive and must obviously be connected in some way with the havoc caused by the Wars of the Roses. There is no direct evidence relating to the part played by the family during the War. We may infer that in common with the rest of Merionethshire they were loyal to the Lancastrian cause.¹ But this is by no means certain. We must assume also that the lawlessness which affected the whole of Wales also affected the Nannau district. We have seen direct evidence of this lawless state at Nannau during the first decade of the Wars of the Roses.² This assumption is supported by the gap of twenty years in the Nannau manuscripts, possibly because "in the time of that civill warres land was not ought worth..."³. The rule of law seems to have been non-existent in this part of the count ry. It may be true that during these Wars "life carried on in many parts of the country as though the kings and claimants, the great nobles and their riotous retainers, the politicians and soldiers, had not been busy cutting each other's throats on the public stage."⁴. In Gwynedd, however, life did not

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1. H.T.Evans, "Wales and the Wars of the Roses", P.89.
 2. Supra, PP. 87-8.
 3. Sir John Wynn, "History of the Gwydir Family", P.33.
 4. G.R. Elton, "England under the Tudors", P.2.

carry on as before. In the Parliament for 1455, for example, part of its business was "to ordeine and purvey for restfull and sadde reule in Wales, and sette aparte such riottes and disobeisaunces as have be there afore this tyme used."¹ This, it will be noted, was at the very beginning of the troubles. Lawlessness was prevalent throughout Wales, and "Merionethshire subsisted on cattle stealing, private feuds, burning of houses and murders,"² while market day at Dolgelley and Conway was "a festival of looting and plunder".³ Later this state of anarchy was to be intensified as a result of the heroic stand taken at Harlech by Dafydd ap Einion and the garrison of the castle. The Yorkists had not, in the winter of 1461-2, pursued their advantage by compelling this sole remaining Lancastrian stronghold in Wales to surrender. Indeed, "Edward's supine indifference to the existence of this remote garrison kept North Wales in a state of war for several years after the rest of the country had been brought into subjection."⁴

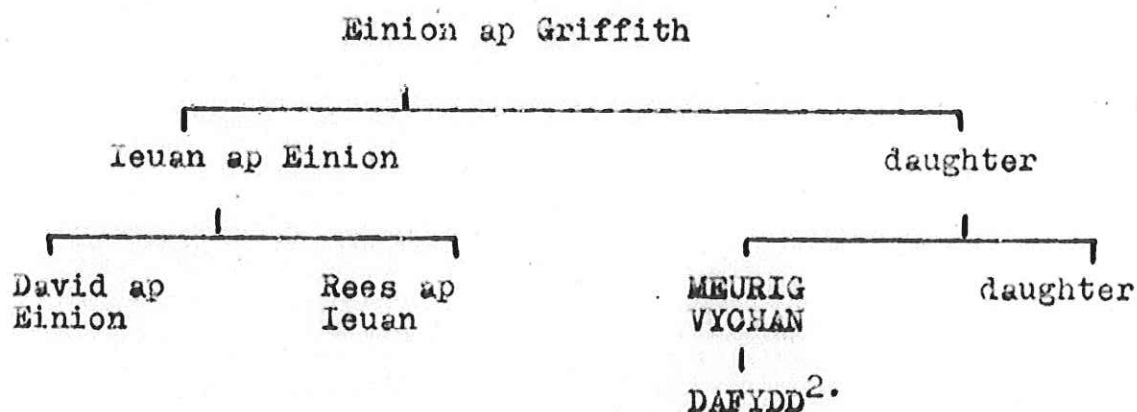
1. Rot. Parl., Vol. 5, P. 279.

2. H. T. Evans, op. cit., P. 86. He bases this statement on Robert Vaughan's "Notes from the Records of Inquisitions", Arch. Camb. 1846, 1847, 1848.

3. H. T. Evans, op. cit. P. 86.

4. ibid, P. 144.

There is no record of any member of the family actively participating in these Wars. They were not, for example, among the members of the garrison at Harlech.¹ But there was an indirect link between Meurig Vychan and his son Dafydd on the one hand, and Dafydd ap Einion the commander of the castle. Meurig Vychan was Dafydd's cousin, thus:



While not taking an active part in the Wars, the family may, in common with their neighbours, have been sympathetic to the Lancastrian cause; and the Nannau district must, in common with the rest of Merionethshire and Gwynedd, have suffered from the desolation

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1. A list is given in H.T. Evans, op.cit. P.144.
 2. H.T. Evans, op.cit., P.145., n.1, following Wynn, "History of the Gwydir Family", 1878 ed., P.28. Reference to Griffith (FP.200,189) confirms this link.

which followed the ravages of Herbert's army during the campaign which saw the capture of Harlech castle in 1468.¹ Sir John Wynn tells us "Ed'd the fourth sent Will'm Earle of Penbrooke with a great armie to waste the mountaine countreys of Caern'vonshire and Merioneth shire and to take in to the castle of harlech.....". Sir John cryptically remarks: "Which earl did execute his chardge to the full."²

By the end of the thirty years struggle we find that Meurig Vychan has disappeared from the scene and a new name, that of his son Dafydd, appears in the various records. His name first occurs, in fact, in 1471/2,³ as farmer of the mill of Llanfachreth, and as a rhingyll of Talybont. He continues to hold the office of rhingyll throughout the reign of Edward IV.⁴ This

1. H.T. Evans, op.cit. PP.167-9.

2. Wynn, op.cit. PP.33-4.

3. P.R.O. Min. Acc. SC6/1205/6.

4. SC6/1205/7; SC6/1205/8; SC6/1205/9;
SC6/1205/10.

suggests that although Lancastrian in sympathy, like their neighbours, yet they continued in the middle way and were not averse to serving a Yorkist government. They would seem, in fact, throughout the Middle Ages, to have been prepared to serve whichever faction was in power. And yet their names are not recorded in the Ministers' Accounts for Henry VII's reign,¹ although Dafydd's son Hywel is recorded in the Accounts for Henry VIII's reign.² We cannot be certain, of course, of the facts, but it seems highly probable that they trimmed their sails to suit the prevailing wind. Possibly Dafydd made a slight mistake and over-trimmed his sails, with the result that he held no office in his county under Henry Tudor.

We cannot hope to discover the truth in this instance. All we know with certainty is that Dafydd held these offices under Edward IV, that he held no offices under Henry VII, that he married Elin, daughter of Hywel ap Rhys ap Dafydd, Lord of Rûg³.

1. P.R.O. D.L.29/10336/635; SC6/1645/H.VII;
SC6/1646/H.VII; SC6/1647/H.VII; SC6/1648/H.VII;
SC6/1649/H.VII.

2. Vide *Infra*, P.110.....

3. Griffith, P.200.

that he bought a tenement in Penllyn in 1480¹, that he became involved in a dispute over part of his inheritance in 1487², that he encroached on Crown lands in Llwyngwril in 1490³, and that his will was proved in 1496.⁴

The dispute in which Dafydd was involved is mentioned by Robert Vaughan.⁵ The antiquary deals at length with the case, using, he tells us, a document kept at Nannau. The account given by Robert Vaughan is as follows: Meurig Vychan had two sons - Dafydd, the elder, and Gruffydd, who died in his father's lifetime. Gruffydd's portion of his father's lands was inherited by a daughter. She married Robert ap Rees ap Howel Vaughan, gent., of Caernarvonshire, "who much contested with David ap Meurig for the said lands."⁶ Then in 1486/7 the controversy was referred to arbitration - on Robert's side to his brother Howel ap Rees of Bronyvoel in Caernarvonshire and Griffith ap Jenkyn ap Rees of Trawsfynydd, and on Dafydd's side to Howel ap Jenkin of Ynysymaengwyn and John ap Rees ap Griffith ap Aron of Peniarth. There is a bond among

1. Nannau MSS. 14, 15.

2. Nannau MS. 16; R. Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch.Camb. 1863, PP.132-3.

3. Nannau MS. 17.

4. Arch.Camb. "Original Documents", Vol.1, 1877, P.143.

5. R. Vaughan, op.cit., P.133.

6. ibid. I have been unable to identify these in the pedigrees, unless the person referred to is Robert Wynn ap Rhys... (cont. over.)