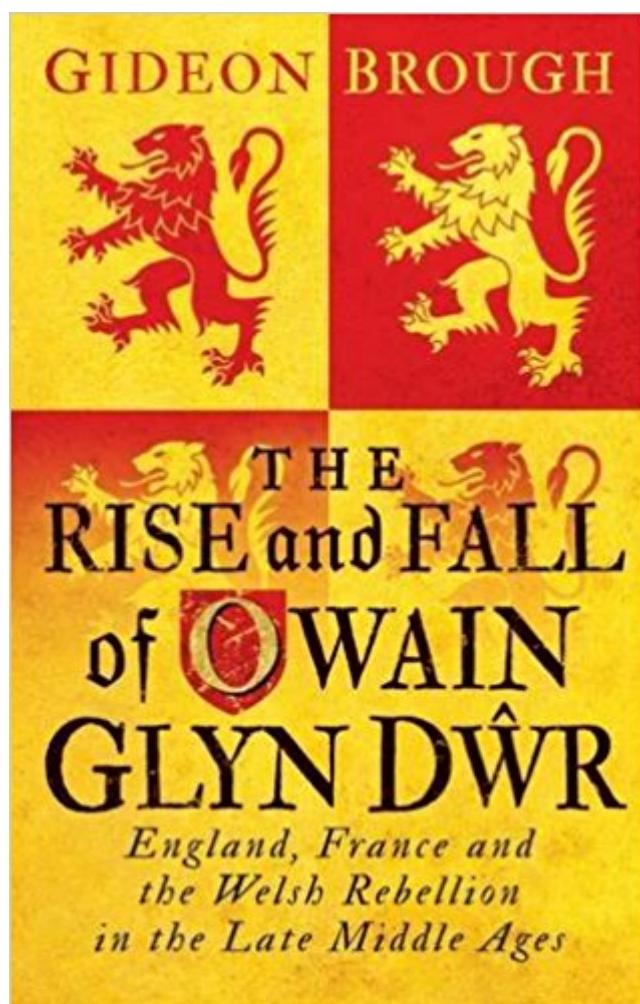


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The Rise And Fall Of Owain Glyndŵr: England, France And The Welsh Rebellion In The Late Middle Ages



Synopsis

Owain Glyndŵr is a towering figure in Welsh history, best known for a revolt against the English crown in the early years of the fifteenth century. Despite facing overwhelming odds, Owain was successful enough, for a time, to re-establish native rule in a Wales deemed to have been conquered over a century previously. The rebels proved to be surprisingly capable opponents during the ensuing conflict. Militarily, their campaigns were well-planned and more efficiently executed than those of the better equipped and highly-regarded Crown troops, who heavily outnumbered the rebels. Flexible and adaptable, the Welsh demonstrated that they were effective troops, commanded by an excellent leader who was supported by talented subordinates. Although the king sent some of his finest commanders against them, notably the earl of Arundel, the Percys and the Charltons, the Welsh repeatedly prevailed. Henry IV, a crusader and renowned warrior, also failed in his campaigns against Owain's rebels. This conflict was also a vital proving ground for his heir, the future Henry V. Due to their successes and leadership, the rebels' military and political strategies evolved, enabling Glyndŵr to call himself 'Prince of Wales', in direct challenge to the English heir. The Welsh, scorned by the king as being a people of meagre reputation, also displayed an unexpected political maturity, creating a native parliament which, in probably its third sitting, produced a charter outlining their vision for an independent future. In addition, Glyndŵr established diplomatic contacts with France, Brittany, Scotland, both popes, Irish lords and rebel English factions. These diplomatic initiatives led to a treaty with France, followed by the insertion of a sizeable French expeditionary army into Wales; a hugely significant event in British history. England's efforts to kill the rebellion met with repeated defeat, until Henry's diplomats skilfully managed to become involved in the power struggle at the heart of the French court. Their quiet, barely perceptible but brilliant achievements gained England a critical advantage, enabling it to defeat the rebellion politically, then militarily. Although the Welsh revolt did not secure lasting political independence and therefore proved unsuccessful, it did spur into action a reluctant rebel, who is portrayed in this study not only as a warrior of notable prowess, but moreover a thinker and an exceptional leader.

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Customer Reviews

Gideon Brough teaches warfare and medieval European history at Cardiff University, Wales. His main academic interests are warfare, diplomacy, power relations, geopolitics, insurgencies and identity in western Europe, particularly in France and the nations of the British Isles.

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