

Rheinwg: The Lost Kingdom of South Wales

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Abstract: This article argues that the rare Welsh territorial name ‘Rheinwg’ originally referred to the greater Dyfed of the eighth century, which stretched from Brycheiniog in east central Wales to the later heartlands of Dyfed in the south west. The name may have arisen in memory of Rhain ap Cadwgon, who by the ninth century would have been perceived as the common ancestor of two competing branches of the ruling dynasty.

Keywords: Medieval Wales, South Wales, Rheinwg, Rhieinwg, Dyfed, Demetia, Brycheiniog, hagiography, Padarn, *Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*, genealogy, *Indarba na nDéisi*.

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One of the difficulties of writing the political history of early medieval Wales is our relative ignorance of its political geography. Old texts abound with old territorial names, sometimes obscure and sometimes recognisable from later evidence. But rarely are we able to describe the boundaries of such territories with any precision. It is often impossible even to specify where exactly a certain named territory should be located, let alone clarify how any rulers associated with that territory might have fitted into the fluctuating political hierarchies of the day. The temptation to extrapolate backwards from later evidence should always be treated with circumspection. Unfortunately, the denizens of the twelfth century were just as liable to make anachronistic pronouncements about the past as we are today, especially when

important political ideas were at stake. As knowledgeable as the court poets and the compilers of texts like *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* seem to have been about the early medieval history and geography of Wales, such people are unlikely to have had access to abundant and unambiguous sources of information about earlier centuries.¹ Even if they did, they had little cause to transmit such information to us with what we might deem to be ‘historical accuracy’.

One such old name of potential significance for the history of South Wales is Rheinwg, sometimes spelled Rhieinwg. In the past century or so, the name has been seriously discussed by only three scholars: Egerton Phillimore, J. E. Lloyd and Peter Bartrum.² Phillimore and Lloyd both understood Rheinwg to be an alternative name for the early medieval kingdom of Dyfed in south-west Wales.³ They both suggested that the name was coined as a designation for the reduced kingdom ruled by the kings of Dyfed following the alleged annexation of Ystrad Tywi, formerly part of the kingdom of Dyfed, by Seisyll, king of Ceredigion, in the eighth century.⁴ The opinions of the two scholars fluctuated as to whether Rheinwg took its name from the *Regin rex Demetorum* (‘Rhain, king of the men of Dyfed’) who died in 808, or from the latter’s great-grandfather and namesake, known only from genealogies.⁵ The views of Phillimore and Lloyd were scrutinised by Peter Bartrum in a

¹ For the ‘mental geography of the Poets of the Princes’, see Euryrn Rhys Roberts, ‘Mental Geographies and Literary Convention: The Poets of the Welsh Princes and the Politics and Provinces of Medieval Wales’, *Studia Celtica* 46 (2012) 85–110.

² For the importance of the former two, see Ben Guy, ‘Egerton Phillimore (1856–1937) and the Study of Welsh Historical Texts’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, new series 21 (2015) 36–50 and Huw Pryce, *J. E. Lloyd and the Creation of Welsh History: Renewing a Nation’s Past* (Cardiff 2011).

³ Egerton Phillimore *apud* J. E. Lloyd, ‘Welsh Place-names: A Study of Some Common Name Elements’, *Y Cymmrodor* 11 (1890–91) 15–60: 55–57; Egerton Phillimore, ‘The Publication of Welsh Historical Records’, *Y Cymmrodor* 11 (1890–91) 133–75: 140–41 n. 3; Egerton Phillimore *apud* Henry Owen (ed), *The Description of Penbrokshire [sic] by George Owen of Henllys, Lord of Kemes*, 2 vols in 4 parts (London 1892–1936) iii, 224–25 n. 1 and 285–86; J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols, 3rd edn (London 1939) i, 262 and 281–82.

⁴ For the purposes of this article, ‘Ystrad Tywi’ (‘the Vale of the Tywi’) refers to the region that became the two cantrefws of Cantref Mawr and Cantref Bychan, which are indicated on Map 1. For the cantref boundaries, see William Rees, *An Historical Atlas of Wales from Early to Modern Times*, 2nd edn (Cardiff 1951) pl. 28. Note that, at pl. 22, Rees includes Cydweli and Gŵyr in Ystrad Tywi, but see below, p. ???.

⁵ Phillimore favoured the younger Rhain in ‘Publication’, 140–41 n. 3 but remained ambivalent in Owen, *Description* iii, 224–25 n. 1. Lloyd favoured the elder Rhain. For the sources, see David N. Dumville (ed), *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel* (Cambridge 2002) 8–9, s.a. 808; Peter C. Bartrum (ed), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* [hereafter *EWGT*] (Cardiff 1966) 11 and Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study* [hereafter *MWG*] (Woodbridge 2020) ??? (HG 13).

short article published in 1970.⁶ Bartrum's two main points were (1) that, in most sources, the form of the name is 'Rheinwg' rather than 'Rheiwg', implying to him that it was not formed from the Old Welsh personal name *Regin* (spelled in modern Welsh *Rhain*); and (2) that, according to his interpretation of the evidence, 'Rheinwg' was most probably an old name for Brycheiniog or a wider area around it, rather than a name for the western portion of the old kingdom of Dyfed.⁷ Subsequent notices of the name have generally referred back to Bartrum's article or taken his opinion for granted without further discussion.⁸

The purpose of the present article is to review the evidence for the name Rheinwg/Rheinwg and suggest that it might be interpreted somewhat differently.⁹ For convenience, I use the form 'Rheiwg' below until the matter of the spelling is addressed directly. It is argued that the available sources, when interpreted in their proper contexts, can bear more nuanced interpretations than Bartrum's discussion allowed. Although by the end of the eleventh century the name Rheinwg was already liable to be misunderstood, enough remains to suggest that it had previously been used to designate the 'greater Dyfed' of the eighth and possibly early ninth centuries. Such usage may, however, have arisen only retrospectively. By the early ninth century, the elder of the two men named Rhain mentioned above would have become perceived as the key common ancestor of what had emerged as two competing branches of the ruling dynasty. As the former kingdom of Dyfed fragmented during the ninth century, it would have been natural to look back to an earlier time of unity

⁶ Peter C. Bartrum, 'Rheinwg and Rheiwg', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 24 (1970) 23–27, restated in Peter C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000* (Aberystwyth 1993) 554.

⁷ His first point was anticipated by Ifor Williams (ed), *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff 1935) 97–98.

⁸ For example: Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the Englynion* (Cambridge 1990) 534; R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'Awdl Fawl Ddienw i Hywel ap Goronwy', in R. Geraint Gruffydd (ed), *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion* 1 (Cardiff 1994) 15 n. 45; Nerys Ann Jones, 'Golwg Arall ar "Fawl Hywel ap Goronwy"', *Llên Cymru* 21 (1998) 1–7: 5; Morfydd E. Owen, 'Royal Propaganda: Stories from the Law-Texts', in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen & Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh King and his Court* (Cardiff 2000) 224–54: 233; Rhian M. Andrews, *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff 2007) 49.

⁹ The basic evidence is assembled in Bartrum, 'Rheinwg', 26–27.

that was, by then, represented genealogically by the common dynastic ancestor Rhain. Bartrum was correct to observe that the name is most frequently spelled ‘Rheinwg’ rather than ‘Rheinwg’ in the sources, but it is argued below that the original form of the name was ‘Rheinwg’ and that the name does indeed derive from the personal name ‘Rhain’. The ‘kingdom of Rheinwg’ may never have equated unproblematically with a contemporary political unit; it may have been, from the start, a nostalgic term for a time of former grandeur. Such ambiguity may well have caused the confusion about the name visible in later sources.

Rheinwg and Seisyllwg in the Late Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

Remarkably, present understanding of the eighth-century political history of South Wales is predicated on a passage found at the end of the literary tale *Pwyll*, the First Branch of the Mabinogi. The dating of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi is endlessly debated, but in its present form the text is unlikely to predate the late eleventh or twelfth century.¹⁰ The passage appears as follows:¹¹

Ac y gwledychwys ynteu Pryderi seith cantref Dyuet yn llwydannus, garedic gan y gyuoeth a chan pawb yn y gylch. Ac yn ol hynny y kynydwyys trychantref Ystrat Tywi a phedwar cantref Keredigyawn, ac y gelwir y rei hynny seith cantref Seisyllwch.

¹⁰ For a survey of attempts to date the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, see Ian Hughes, *Math uab Mathonwy: The Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi* (Dublin 2013) xv–xxi; for important critical comment, see Simon Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature: Evidence from the Verbal System* (Aberystwyth 2013) 4–10 and Simon Rodway, ‘The Where, Who, When and Why of Medieval Welsh Prose Texts: Some Methodological Considerations’, *Studia Celtica* 41 (2007) 47–89: 48–55 and 59.

¹¹ *Pwyll*, ll. 645–49, edited in R. L. Thomson, *Pwyll Pendeuic Dyuet* (Dublin 2003) 23. Translation is my own.

And Pryderi ruled the seven cantrefs of Dyfed successfully, loved by his subjects and by everyone around him. And after that he conquered the three cantrefs of Ystrad Tywi and the four cantrefs of Ceredigion, and those are called the seven cantrefs of Seisyllwg.

Although it might be self-evident that a literary text dating to no earlier than the eleventh century cannot be used as reliable evidence for events of the eighth century, it has nevertheless been taken as such by multiple generations of historians, presumably because of the high status of the Four Branches in the Welsh literary canon. The attribution of the name Seisyllwg to the combined cantrefs of Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi was interpreted by Lloyd and others of his generation to be the result of eighth-century political manoeuvring.

According to the genealogies, the father of the *Arthgen rex Cereticiaun* ('Arth(i)en, king of Ceredigion') who died in the year 807 was called Seisyll.¹² Consequently, Lloyd deduced that 'Seisyll, who was king about 730, embarked on a career of conquest and added to Ceredigion the three cantrefs of Ystrad Tywi, the whole dominion being henceforth known from the name of its founder as Seisyllwg'.¹³ It was this deduction from *Pwyll* that caused Phillimore and Lloyd to postulate that 'Rheinwg' was the name for the portion of western Dyfed that had remained unconquered by Seisyll of Ceredigion. Lloyd was aware that the idea in *Pwyll* of Ystrad Tywi being formed from three cantrefs is artificial, and that in early sources 'Ystrad Tywi' (probably referring to an area later comprising Cantref Mawr and Cantref Bychan) is always named separately from Cydweli and Gŵyr (the constituent components of the alleged 'third' cantref of Ystrad Tywi, known to later cantref lists as 'Cantref Eginog').¹⁴ But he

¹² Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 8–9, s.a. 807; *EWGT*, 12 (HG 26), 47 (JC 21), 49 (JC 42) and 100 ('ABT' 6j); *MWG*, ??? (HG 26), ??? (JC 21), ??? (JC 42) and ??? (LIIG 18).

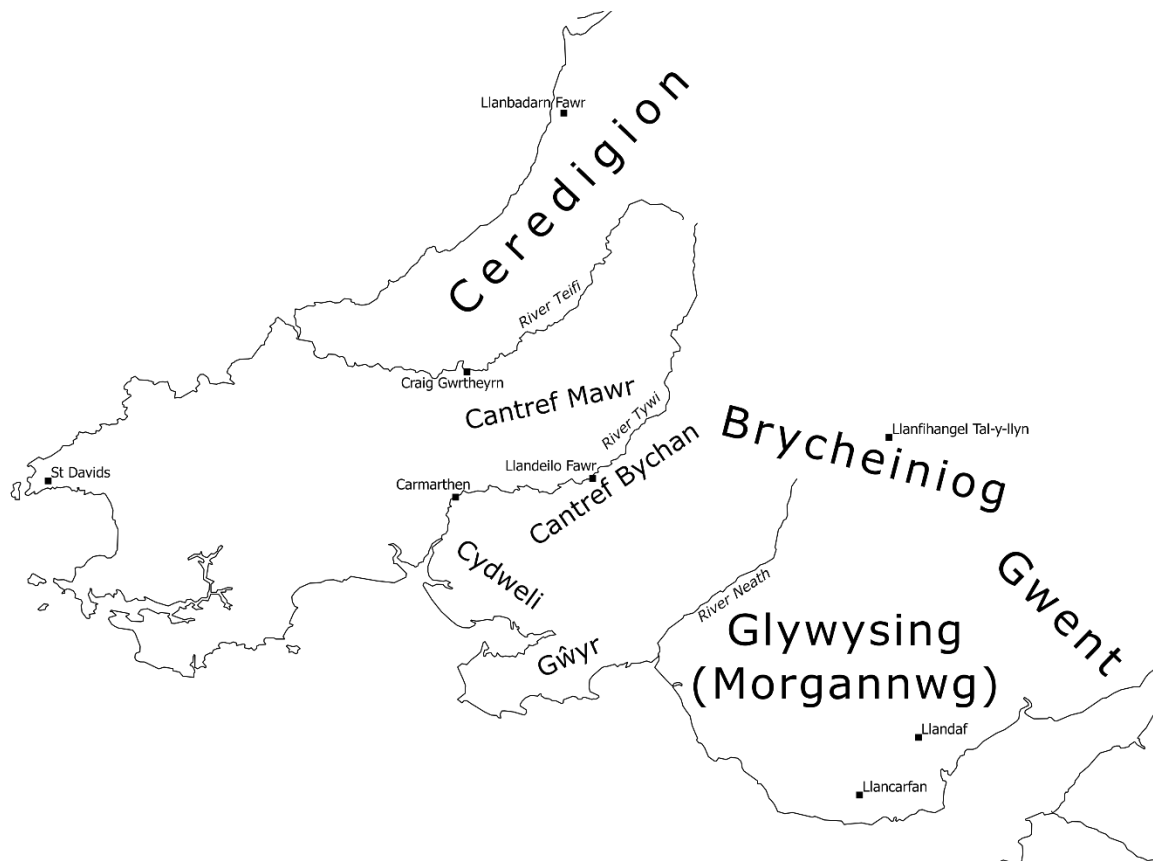
¹³ Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 257. The same was suggested by Phillimore *apud* Owen, *Description* iii, 224–25 n. 1.

¹⁴ See Map 1; cf. Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 266–70. For Ystrad Tywi, Gŵyr and Cydweli as separate units, see Thomas Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version*, 2nd edn (Cardiff 1973) 34–35, s.a. 1091 [*recte* 1095], and 46–47, s.a. 1100 [*recte* 1102]. The same is probably implied in the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* §14, edited in Edmond Faral, *La légende arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols (Paris 1929) iii, 12–13, as discussed below.

nevertheless persisted in confidently projecting *Pwyll*'s formulation of the political geography of south-west Wales back to the eighth century. More recently, Alex Woolf has referred to Lloyd's proposed scenario as 'one of the best-known "facts" of early Demetian history', and, despite the scare quotes, has used this 'fact' to support his argument.¹⁵ T. M. Charles-Edwards, meanwhile, has stated that 'a division between the core of Dyfed, called Rheinwg, and Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi, called Seisyllwg, may have occurred in the mid-eighth century, if the eponymous Rhain (*Regin*) and Seisyll have been correctly identified; but it is not to be assumed that this division was permanent'.¹⁶ Even if one could trust the interpretation of the name 'Seisyllwg' offered in *Pwyll*, the historical reconstruction that has been offered by modern scholars to explain the name relies on too many prior assumptions to command credence, and so does not form the basis for interpretation below.

¹⁵ Alex Woolf, 'The Expulsion of the Irish from Dyfed', in Karen Jankulak & Jonathan M. Wooding (eds), *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages* (Dublin 2007) 102–15: 109. Woolf is incorrect to say that 'despite its regular appearances in the historiography the name Seisyllwg appears once only in medieval sources and then in the tale *Pwyll*' (109 n. 53). Other instances are noticed in Bartrum, 'Rheinwg', 26–27 (which article Woolf does not cite) and in Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 257 n. 161 (though Lloyd's reference to the spurious Myvyrian third series of triads should be ignored).

¹⁶ T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford 2013) 20.



Map 1: Places mentioned in the text. Territories under discussion are not labelled (Rheinwg, Seisyllwg, Dyfed, Ystrad Tywi)

A better starting point for the names Rheinwg and Seisyllwg is provided by the Life of St Padarn, possibly supported by a statement in the Welsh laws. The Life of St Padarn survives as part of a well-known collection of saints' Lives copied at Monmouth Priory in the last third of the twelfth century.¹⁷ The Life was probably composed late in the eleventh century at Llanbadarn Fawr, quite possibly by a member of the family of Sulien of Llanbadarn, sometime bishop of St Davids (1073–78 and again 1080–85) and father of the famous hagiographer Rhygyfarch (d. 1099), author of the Life of St David.¹⁸ One of the chief

¹⁷ I follow Teresa Webber for the dating: see Ben Guy, 'The Life of St Dyfrig and the Lost Charters of Moccas (Mochros), Herefordshire', *CMCS* 75 (2018), 1–37: 6 n. 17.

¹⁸ For Sulien and his family, see especially James Conway Davies, *Episcopal Acts and Cognate Documents Relating to Welsh Dioceses 1066–1272*, 2 vols (Historical Society of the Church in Wales 1946–48) ii, 493–506; Michael Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin Poetry of Sulien's Family', *Studia Celtica* 8/9 (1973/74) 68–106; and Sarah Elizabeth Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest in Late-Eleventh-Century Wales'

concerns of the Life is to show that Padarn had once been bishop of a defined territory, like the more famous saints David and Teilo. The persistence of the same notion was recorded by Gerald of Wales in his *Itinerarium Cambriae*, written around 1191.¹⁹ It was to this end that an addendum to the Life of St Padarn concerning the lands possessed by the saint declared the following.²⁰

Presente, igitur, patriarcha Ierusalem, successerunt tria regna dextralia sub tribus
episcopatibus trium sanctorum. Regnum Seisil consecrationem ecclesiarum et impositionem
graduum ecclesiasticorum et confirmationem episcopalis baptismi oleumque crismale et
omnia debita episcopalia ab episcopatu sancti Paterni accepit. Regnum autem Rein hec
predicta iura ab episcopatu sancti Daidi accepit. Ac regnum Morgant a sancto Eliud
episcopalia debita suscepit. Itaque tercius episcopalis locus est apud dextrales Britannos
ciuitas sancti Paterni episcopi.

Thus, while the Patriarch of Jerusalem was present, three southern kingdoms were subsumed under the three bishoprics of the three saints. The kingdom of Seisyll received the consecration of its churches and the conferment of its ecclesiastical ranks and the confirmation of episcopal baptism and the chrismal oil and all episcopal duties from the bishopric of St Padarn. And the kingdom of Rhain received these aforesaid rights from the

(unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University 2012). I find no evidence to support Thomas and Howlett's assertion that the Life of St Padarn was written by Sulien's son Ieuan in particular: Charles Thomas & David Howlett, *Vita Sancti Paterni: The Life of St Padarn and the Original Miniature*, *Trivium* 33 (2003) 65–67, 75–77 and 93.

¹⁹ Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium* II 4, edited in James F. Dimock, *Itinerarium Cambriae et Descriptio Cambriae*, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* 6 (London 1868) 121–22; translated in Lewis Thorpe, *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales* (Harmondsworth 1978) 181. On Gerald, see now the essays collected in Georgia Henley & A. Joseph McMullen (eds), *Gerald of Wales: New Perspectives on a Medieval Writer and Critic* (Cardiff 2018).

²⁰ *Vita sancti Paterni* §30, edited and translated in A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae: The Lives and Genealogies of the Welsh Saints*, new edn by Scott Lloyd (Cardiff 2013) 266–67; also edited and translated in Thomas & Howlett, *Vita Sancti Paterni*, 15–45. The translation given is my own. A new edition and translation by David Callander will be published by the *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project based at the University of Cambridge and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth.

bishopric of St David. And the kingdom of Morgan received its episcopal duties from St Eliud [i.e. Teilo]. And so the third episcopal house among the southern Britons is the monastery of St Padarn the bishop.

This passage is very unlikely to have been drafted in this form prior to the tenth century, because the Morgan commemorated in the appellation *regnum Morgant* is almost certainly identifiable as Morgan ab Owain, who ruled Glywysing in south-east Wales from c. 930 to his death in 974. It is most probably this Morgan who is commemorated in the territorial names Morgannwg and Glamorgan ('Gwlad Morgan'), which came to replace Glywysing.²¹ A slightly later *terminus post quem* is implied by the reference to St Teilo, since it is only from the time of Bishop Joseph (1022–45) in the first half of the eleventh century that one finds positive evidence associating a bishopric in Morgannwg (*regnum Morgant*) with St Teilo.²² It is conceivable that a bishopric based in Llandeilo Fawr, to the north-west of Morgannwg, could have claimed to exercise jurisdiction in the kingdom of Morgan or his descendants prior to Bishop Joseph's time, but the loss of Llandeilo Fawr's Gospel Book (the Lichfield Gospels) sometime during the first half of the tenth century (and certainly by 963/4 × 975) is usually interpreted as indicating that Llandeilo Fawr had, by then, undergone a dramatic diminution in its status.²³ This had certainly occurred by no later than 1130, when

²¹ As is stated in the Jesus College 20 genealogies, in a pedigree of which Morgan ab Owain is the subject: *EWGT*, 45 and *MWG*, ??? (JC 9). Lloyd suggested that Morgannwg was named after the earlier Morgan ab Athrwys, on the basis that the latter lived around the same time as the Rhain and Seisyll after whom Lloyd believed Rhieinwg and Seisyllwg to be named, but this is unlikely: *History of Wales* i, 274 (esp. n. 257) and 281. See below, ??? and ???.

²² Wendy Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm: Studies in the Llandaff Charters* (London 1978) 155; John Reuben Davies, 'The Saints of South Wales and the Welsh Church', in Alan Thacker & Richard Sharpe (eds), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford 2002) 361–95: 368–69; John Reuben Davies, *The Book of Llandaf and the Norman Church in Wales* (Woodbridge 2003) 16–17.

²³ For this interpretation, see Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm*, 153–54; Davies, 'Saints of South Wales', 368–69; Davies, *Book of Llandaf*, 17. For the date, see Gifford Charles-Edwards and Helen McKee, 'Lost Voices from Anglo-Saxon Lichfield', *Anglo-Saxon England* 37 (2008) 79–89: 79 n. 1 and 85. For Llandeilo Fawr as a bishopric in the ninth century, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 591.

the lands of Llandeilo Fawr were being disputed by the bishops of St Davids and Llandaf.²⁴

Overall, it seems most probable that the passage is referring to the bishopric of

Glamorgan/Llandaf as it was perceived during or after the episcopate of Bishop Joseph.

There thus seems little reason to think that the passage was not originally composed in its present context in the late eleventh century, at the time when the rest of the Life was written.

The only indication to the contrary is the fact that the addendum is introduced with its own *incipit*, which reads ‘Incipit possessio agrorum sancti Paterni episcopi’ (‘Here begins [the section concerning] the possession of the lands of St Padarn the bishop’). This could

conceivably mean that the addendum was composed a little later than the rest of the Life, but there is no compelling reason to believe so; either way, it would not affect the argument below.

The same division of South Wales between the kingdoms of Seisyll, Rhain and Morgan can also be understood to appear in one version of the story about Maelgwn Gwynedd and his floating chair, found among the *Damweiniau* in manuscripts of the Iorwerth recension of *Cyfraith Hywel Dda*. Morfydd Owen has argued convincingly that this story reflects the events of the year 1216, when Llywelyn ab Iorwerth redistributed the lands of Deheubarth among the descendants of the Lord Rhys.²⁵ The story describes how the men of Wales came together to select who should be their chief king. To this end, one version states ‘Ac yno y doethant góyr Góyned a góyr Powys a góyr Deheubarth a Rieinóc a Morgannóc a Seissyllóc’ (‘And then came the men of Gwynedd and the men of Powys and the men of Deheubarth...’).²⁶ The latter part of the sentence may simply be read as a continuation of the

²⁴ J. Gwenogvryn Evans, with John Rhys, *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv: Reproduced from the Gwysaney Manuscript* (Oxford 1893) 56 and 253–5; cf. Davies, ‘Saints of South Wales’, 367–68; Davies, *Book of Llandaf*, 71–72.

²⁵ Owen, ‘Royal Propaganda’, 234–36.

²⁶ See the edition and translation in Owen, ‘Royal Propaganda’, 251–52. The relevant readings occur in manuscripts Ll and D, for which see the variants at 251 ns 2 and 3. Owen’s translation of Col would need to be altered for Ll and D. The text of D is given above.

preceding list ('...and Rhieinwg and Morgannwg and Seisyllwg'), perhaps the result of three archaic territorial names having been added arbitrarily to the end of the sentence. But it might instead be understood as a list of the constituent parts of Deheubarth ('...[comprising] Rhieinwg and Morgannwg and Seisyllwg'), implying a tripartite division of South Wales similar to that envisaged in the Life of St Padarn. It should be stressed that in neither the Life of St Padarn nor, potentially, the Maelgwn story does the division of South Wales into these three units correspond with the political reality prevailing at the time of the sources' composition. Rather, it was a deliberately archaic way of expressing the chief political divisions of South Wales.²⁷

The question of present concern is how the writers of these texts envisaged the extents of Seisyllwg and Rheinwg. In the case of the Life of St Padarn, the explicit equations between the bishoprics of St Padarn and St David and the kingdoms of Seisyll (Seisyllwg) and Rhain (Rheinwg) respectively can provide a clue. The only other clear statement about the extent of Padarn's jurisdiction in the Life of St Padarn is found in chapter 14, where it is said that 'Tunc Paternus monasteria et ecclesias per totam Cereticam regionem edificavit, quibus duces statuit' ('Then Padarn built monasteries and churches throughout Ceredigion, in which he placed leaders').²⁸ As one might expect, Padarn is described as exercising authority and even wielding episcopal power throughout Ceredigion. Nowhere in the Life is it implied that Padarn ought to have exercised similar authority south of the Teifi in Ystrad Tywi, as one would expect working on the assumption that *Pwyll's* definition of Seisyllwg was universally correct and applicable. It is much easier to imagine that the author of the Life of St Padarn (and the author of the addendum, if they were separate individuals) envisaged Ystrad Tywi as forming part of the bishopric of St David, and therefore of Rheinwg. The

²⁷ As realised in Thomas & Howlett, *Vita Sancti Paterni*, 114–15.

²⁸ *Vita sancti Paterni* §14 (Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum*, 256–57). For the form *Cereticam regionem*, see David N. Dumville, 'Notes on Celtic Latin', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30 (1983) 283–88: 285–86.

most natural supposition is that the author envisaged a bishopric of St David corresponding roughly to the diocese of St Davids as it emerged in the twelfth century, though of course without Ceredigion. In the twelfth century, the diocese of St Davids stretched from St Davids in the far west to the eastern confines of Brycheiniog in the east, encompassing the ‘three cantrefs’ of Ystrad Tywi mentioned in *Pwyll*.²⁹ Ystrad Tywi may have been increasingly drawn into the episcopal ambit of St Davids following the decline of Llandeilo Fawr as an alternative episcopal focus in the ninth and tenth centuries. There is no reason to presume that the author of the Life of St Padarn was boldly claiming that Seisyllwg, and thus Padarn’s authority, stretched into Ystrad Tywi, and thus that Rheinwg, along with David’s authority, was either divided between the lands to the east and west of Ystrad Tywi, or else restricted only to the west. One cannot help but conclude that the Life of St Padarn, in contradiction to *Pwyll*, used *regnum Seisil* as an archaic synonym for Ceredigion, presumably on account of the neat parallels that could then be drawn with the *regna* of *Rein* and *Morgant*.³⁰ The corresponding deduction would be that the Life of St Padarn used *regnum Rein* as an archaic synonym for a large area of South Wales corresponding roughly to the medieval diocese of St Davids, outside of Seisyllwg/Ceredigion. In favour of this interpretation is the Life’s insistence that the kingdoms of Seisyll, Rhain and Morgan, and therefore also the corresponding dioceses, encompassed all the southern Britons, presumably including those of Brycheiniog in the east. Nevertheless, considering the specific political concerns of the Life of St Padarn, it would be unwise to conclude from this that, in other contexts, Seisyllwg and Rheinwg could not have been construed as overlapping concepts.

²⁹ For the twelfth-century diocese of St Davids, see Davies, *Episcopal Acts* i, 144 and 188–90. For the relationship between the diocese of St Davids and the cult of St David, see Heather James, ‘The Geography of the Cult of St David: A Study of Dedication Patterns in the Medieval Diocese’, in J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (eds), *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge 2007) 41–83.

³⁰ One might posit that the envisaged *regnum Seisil* could have included some portion of land to the east of the Cambrian mountains, perhaps as far east as Maelienydd and Elfael, if it were imagined to encompass the more easterly dedications to St Padarn: see Rees, *Historical Atlas*, pl. 26; Melville Richards, *Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units* (Cardiff 1969) 102–03. My thanks to Barry Lewis for this point.

Around the same time that the Life of St Padarn was written, a poem was composed in praise of Hywel ap Goronwy. The poem survives in the Black Book of Carmarthen, which was written in the middle of the thirteenth century.³¹ The poem itself has been dated variously to the years between 1096 and 1105. In 1102, Hywel ap Goronwy became one of the most powerful men in South Wales, when Henry I granted him rule over Ystrad Tywi, Cydweli and Gŵyr (Gower).³² He held these lands for only three years before he was expelled from his territory in 1105 and killed through treachery in 1106.³³ This suggested to Geraint Gruffydd that the extant praise poem composed in Hywel's honour should be dated to 1102 × 1105.³⁴ Nerys Ann Jones subsequently argued that the poem should be dated slightly earlier, to *c.* 1096, partly on the basis that one line of the poem might be interpreted as implying that Hywel did not yet have any children at the time of its composition.³⁵ More recently, David Stephenson has argued effectively against this proposition.³⁶ However, Stephenson's own argument, that the poem was composed to mark Hywel's alleged succession to Brycheiniog upon the death of his father Goronwy in 1101, is equally problematic.³⁷ Most importantly, there is no evidence to suggest that either Hywel or his father Goronwy ever held any power in Brycheiniog.³⁸ Rather, the annals imply that the dynasty attempted to conquer the region,

³¹ See Myriah Williams, 'The Black Book of Carmarthen: Minding the Gaps', *National Library of Wales Journal* 36 (2017) 357–410: 357–58 and works cited therein.

³² As described in the various versions of *Brut y Tywysogyon*, for example Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon [...] Red Book of Hergest Version*, 46–47, s.a. 1100 [*recte* 1102].

³³ Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon [...] Red Book of Hergest Version*, 48–51, s.a. 1102 [*recte* 1105–06].

³⁴ R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'The Early Court Poetry of South West Wales', *Studia Celtica* 14/15 (1979/80) 95–105: 99; Gruffydd, 'Awdl Fawl Ddienw', 3.

³⁵ Jones, 'Golwg Arall', 3 and 6.

³⁶ David Stephenson, 'Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy: Dating and Context', *CMCS* 57 (2009) 41–49: 45–46.

³⁷ Stephenson, 'Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy', restated in David Stephenson, 'Conquerors, Courtiers and Careerists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Brycheiniog, 1093–1282', *Brycheiniog* 44 (2013) 27–51: 29–30. Doubts about Stephenson's views are voiced in Roberts, 'Mental Geographies', 92–93, though Roberts follows Stephenson's date.

³⁸ Stephenson cites Lloyd when he suggests that Hywel ap Goronwy's family may have ruled in Brycheiniog rather than Buellt because the latter had been annexed by Philip de Briouze by *c.* 1100; but the evidence quoted by Lloyd, which Lloyd would date to 1098 × 1102, suggests that Buellt and Brycheiniog were *both* claimed, if not actually ruled, by Normans at the same time: Stephenson, 'Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy', 45; Lloyd, *History of Wales* ii, 403 n. 13.

but ultimately failed.³⁹ Furthermore, the crucial line in the poem to Hywel that reads ‘Tir Brycheinauc dy iaun priaud: paup a’e gwelhvyy’ (‘The land of Brycheiniog [is] your true right, may everyone see that’) should not necessarily be taken to mean that Hywel already ruled Brycheiniog. The text may imply that he *should* rule Brycheiniog, or, if the present subjunctive *gwelhvyy* is understood as having a future force, *will* rule Brycheiniog. I therefore prefer to follow Gruffydd in dating the poem to 1102 × 1105, during Hywel’s rule of Ystrad Tywi, Cydweli and Gŵyr.

Two lines from near the end of the poem are relevant to the present discussion:⁴⁰

Terruin am tir, ri reith kywir, o hil Morgant
O Morccanhvc, o Rieinvc, radev rvytheint

One who is fierce for land, a king of righteous rule, from the lineage of Morgan,
From Morgannwg, from Rhieinwg, favours of generosity.⁴¹

This section of the poem seems to praise Hywel by referring to his genealogical and geographical associations. It is not clear which Morgan is implicated in the phrase *o hil Morgant*, though the juxtaposition with the phrase *O Morccanhvc* at the beginning of the next line suggests an identification with Morgan ab Owain (d. 974), from whom Morgannwg was named.⁴² According to surviving genealogies, Hywel could only have claimed descent from Morgan through Morgan’s alleged daughter Lleucu, who is said by the sixteenth-century genealogist Lewys Dwnn to have married Severus, a shadowy tenth-century ancestor of

³⁹ For example, Hywel ap Goronwy’s uncle Llywelyn was killed by the men of Brycheiniog in 1099: Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon [...] Red Book of Hergest Version*, 38–39, s.a. 1095 [*recte* 1099].

⁴⁰ *Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*, ll. 44–45, edited in Gruffydd, ‘Awdl Fawl Ddienw’, 7. Translation is my own.

⁴¹ I follow the interpretation of the difficult *radev rvytheint* offered in Gruffydd, ‘Awdl Fawl Ddienw’, 11 and 15 n. 45.

⁴² See above, [???](#). Gruffydd and Jones also take the poem’s *Morgant* to be Morgan ab Owain: Gruffydd, ‘Awdl Fawl Ddienw’, 15 n. 44; Jones, ‘Golwg Arall’, 5.

Hywel ap Goronwy.⁴³ More interesting is Hywel’s apparent association with Morgannwg and Rheinwg. Again, the poet presumably used these names as archaic terms of reference, and may have done so in a deliberately vague way; but it seems more likely that they were intended to allude to the lands ruled by Hywel, from which he could grant *radev rvytheint*.⁴⁴ By the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Gŵyr and Cydweli (including the latter’s subdivision Carnwyllion) were at least sometimes considered to be cantrefs of Morgannwg.⁴⁵ Cantref Bychan may have been considered the same during certain periods, if one can lend credence to the Book of Llandaf’s claim that Cadwgon ap Meurig (fl. 1066) was king ‘in Glatmorcant usque ad uadum Trunci super Tyuui’ (‘in Glamorgan as far as the ford of *Trunci* on the Tywi’), which apparently included ‘Guhir et Cetgueli et Cantref Bichan’ (‘Gŵyr and Cydweli and Cantref Bychan’).⁴⁶ One is left, therefore, with Cantref Mawr, the largest constituent part of Ystrad Tywi, as the only remaining territory ruled by Hywel that is not conceivably encompassed by ‘Morgannwg’ at its greatest extent. It is difficult to see how the poet could have considered Cantref Mawr a part of Morgannwg, but, bearing in mind the testimony of the Life of St Padarn, it may well have been considered a part of Rheinwg. Just

⁴³ See Peter C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400*, 8 vols (Cardiff 1974) i, sheets 43 and 46, ii, s.n. ‘Elystan Glodrydd 1’, and v, 83, s.n. ‘Lleucu f. Morgan Mawr’; Samuel Rush Meyrick, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the March Between the Years 1586 and 1613, Under the Authority of Clarencieux and Norroy, Two Kings at Arms. By Lewys Dwnn, Deputy Herald at Arms*, 2 vols (Llandovery 1846) i, 297 and 313, and ii, 152. Severus is named as an ancestor of Hywel’s dynasty in *EWGT*, 39 and *MWG*, ??? (MG 4, spelled *Senerys*) as well as in *EWGT*, 104 and *MWG*, ??? (‘ABT’ 11/LIIG 31.1, spelled *Seferus*), though curiously not in the pedigree given in a short genealogical tract dedicated to Hywel ap Goronwy that is preserved in the Jesus College 20 genealogies: *EWGT*, 48 and *MWG*, ??? (JC 30–34). This tract was probably composed between 1102 and 1105, while Hywel was lord of Ystrad Tywi, Cydweli and Gŵyr: *MWG*, ???; cf. Stephenson, ‘*Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*’, 48. Dwnn also mentions that another descendant of Morgan ab Owain, Efa ferch Gwrgan ab Ithel, married Hywel ap Goronwy’s grandfather Cadwgon, but the more reliable tract in the Jesus College 20 genealogies specifically states that Hywel’s maternal grandmother was one Angharad ferch Lawr, rather than Efa ferch Gwrgan: Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies* iii, s.n. ‘Iestyn 1’, and v, 184, s.n. ‘Efa f. Gwrgan ab Ithel’; Meyrick, *Heraldic Visitations* i, 242, 271, 297 and 313, and ii, 152–53; *EWGT*, 48 and *MWG*, ??? (JC 31).

⁴⁴ Jones overlooked the significance of this line when she stated that ‘prin yw’r sôn am y tiroedd a feddiannodd Hywel yn 1102, sef Ystrad Tywi, Cydweli a Gŵyr’ (‘there is hardly any mention of the lands which Hywel took possession of in 1102, namely Ystrad Tywi, Cydweli and Gŵyr’): ‘*Golwg Arall*’, 5; cf. Stephenson, ‘*Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*’, 43.

⁴⁵ Philip Jenkins, ‘Regions and Cantrefs in Early Medieval Glamorgan’, *CMCS* 15 (1988) 31–50: 35–36 and 49. For Cydweli and Carnwyllion as later subdivisions of an earlier territory called Cydweli, see Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 269.

⁴⁶ Evans, with Rhys, *Text of the Book of Llan Dâv*, 278–79; cf. Davies, *Book of Llandaf*, 26 and 67; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Book of Llandaf as a Historical Source* (Woodbridge 2019) 18–19 and 176.

as Gŵyr and Cydweli (and possibly Cantref Bychan) could have been described as *Morccanhvc*, Cantref Mawr (and possibly Cantref Brychan) could have been described as *Rieinvc* as a synecdoche, where the part is represented by the whole, implying in turn that Rheinwg was usually conceived to be something greater than the territory of Cantref Mawr alone. The poet may have been describing the lands ruled by Hywel in an intentionally maximal way.

The Origins of Rheinwg

The earliest extant reference to Rheinwg may be that surviving in the ‘Cottonian chronicle’, usually known as the C-text of the *Annales Cambriae*. The manuscript was written in St Davids in the late thirteenth century, but the chronicle it contains is a witness to a chronicling tradition that dates back to the late eighth and ninth centuries.⁴⁷ In an annal deduced to pertain to the year 795, the chronicle records ‘uastatio Rienuch ab Offa’ (‘the ravaging of Rhieinwg by Offa’).⁴⁸ Although this annal does not occur in the other representatives of this chronicling tradition, in either Latin or Welsh, recent work has demonstrated that isolated annals pertaining to the early Middle Ages extant only in later chronicles can still preserve accurate information.⁴⁹ The content of the annal certainly accords with other, more widely

⁴⁷ For the manuscript, see Catherine Margaret Rooney, ‘The Manuscripts of the Works of Gerald of Wales’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 2005) 80 and 158. For chronicling in eighth- and ninth-century Wales, see Ben Guy, ‘The Origins of the Compilation of Welsh Historical Texts in Harley 3859’, *Studia Celtica* 49 (2015) 21–56: 25–45. For the Cottonian chronicle in particular, see Henry Gough-Cooper, ‘Deconnovenal Reason and Unreason in the C-Text of *Annales Cambriae*’, in Erik Kooper & Sjoerd Levelt (eds), *The Medieval Chronicle 11* (Leiden 2017) 195–212 and Henry Gough-Cooper, ‘Meet the Ancestors? Evidence for Antecedent Texts in the Late Thirteenth-Century Welsh Latin Chronicles’, in Ben Guy, Georgia Henley, Owain Wyn Jones & Rebecca Thomas (eds), *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies, and Texts* (Turnhout ???) ???–???

⁴⁸ Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 9. Note that the spelling in *-uch* is probably a mistaken updating of an earlier spelling in *-uc*, with *c* for */g/*.

⁴⁹ Erik Grigg, ‘“Mole Rain” and Other Natural Phenomena in the Welsh Annals: Can *Mirabilia* Unravel the Textual History of the *Annales Cambriae*?’, *Welsh History Review* 24 (2009) 1–40: 22, 24 and 27–28.

preserved annals of a similar date. For example, the earliest surviving Welsh chronicle, extant in the form that it had assumed by c. 954, records, in an annal dateable to 778, ‘uastatio Brittonum dexteralium apud Offa’ (‘the ravaging of the southern Britons by Offa’), and again, in an annal dateable to 784, ‘uastati[o] Brittonum cum Offa in estate’ (‘the ravaging of the Britons by Offa in the summer’).⁵⁰ If the 778 record of Offa’s ravaging of the southern Britons can be seen to establish a pattern, then perhaps the 795 record about *Rienuch* can be understood as a reference to some part of South Wales. Unfortunately, the annals do not provide any further information about the location of Rheinwg.

The 795 annal may provide a *terminus ante quem* for the coining of the name. If so, the name was established prior to the death of Maredudd, *rex Demetorum* (‘king of the men of Dyfed’), which occurred in the following year.⁵¹ It may be pertinent that a posthumous miracle described in Lifris’s *Life of Cadog*, probably composed between 1095 and 1104, features a certain ‘Margeduð rex Reinuc’ (‘Maredudd, king of Rheinwg’).⁵² Another posthumous miracle story depicts a *rex Reinmuc* intending to invade Glamorgan from a camp on the bank of the river Neath, perhaps implying specifically that Rheinwg encompassed Gŵyr and other lands to the west.⁵³ These posthumous miracle stories may have been inherited by Lifris from records kept in Llancarfan, and therefore preserve earlier usage. One only hesitates to accept their testimony because of the identification in the latter story of the *rex Reinmuc* as Cynan Garwyn, who is otherwise well-known as an early king of Powys.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 6–7. For the ways in which the Latin prepositions *cum* and *apud* are used in these annals, see David N. Dumville, ‘*Annales Cambriae* and Easter’, in his *Celtic Essays, 2001–2007*, 2 vols (Aberdeen 2007) ii, 26–27, and references cited therein.

⁵¹ Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 8–9, s.a. 796.

⁵² Lifris of Llancarfan, *Vita sancti Cadoci* §41 (Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum*, 112–13). For the date of Lifris’s *Life of St Cadog*, see Christopher N. L. Brooke, *The Church and the Welsh Border in the Central Middle Ages*, edited by David N. Dumville and C. N. L. Brooke (Woodbridge 1986) 73 and 89.

⁵³ Lifris of Llancarfan, *Vita sancti Cadoci* §44 (Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum*, 114–15).

⁵⁴ Cynan Garwyn is the subject of the early Welsh poem *Trawsganu Kynan Garwyn*. For recent views on this poem, see Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘Powys and Early Welsh Poetry’, *CMCS* 67 (2014) 33–54: 38–41; John T. Koch, *Cunedda, Cynan, Cadwallon, Cynddylan: Four Welsh Poems and Britain 383–655* (Aberystwyth 2013) chap. 2.

It was established above that the later evidence, such as it is, seems to imply that Rheinwg was a relatively large area corresponding in some way to the later diocese of St Davids, and was probably thought to include at least parts of Ystrad Tywi. It is striking that the early medieval kingdom of Dyfed seems to have extended across a very similar area.⁵⁵ During the Roman period, the *ciuitas* capital of the Demetae, the tribal group whose name is continued by ‘Dyfed’, was located at Carmarthen, implying that the territory of the Demetae once extended further east than the later bounds of Dyfed would imply. In the First Life of St Samson, which may date to the late seventh century, *Demetia* (Dyfed) is said to be adjacent to *Ventia* (Gwent), again implying that at that time, if not also during the lifetime of the sixth-century saint, Dyfed was thought to extend at least as far east as the later kingdom of Glywysing, which may then have been known as *Ventia*.⁵⁶ Even in the ninth century, later than the alleged conquest of Ystrad Tywi by Seisyll of Ceredigion postulated by Lloyd and others, Ystrad Tywi was still considered a part of Dyfed. In the *Historia Brittonum*, written in 829 or 830, the hill-fort in which Vortigern and his men were burnt alive is located ‘in regione Demetorum juxta flumen Teibi’ (‘in the region of the men of Dyfed next to the river Teifi’).⁵⁷ The text calls the hillfort ‘arx Guorthigirni’ (‘Vortigern’s citadel’), and it has been identified with Craig Gwrtheyrn near Llandysul.⁵⁸ Craig Gwrtheyrn lies in the north-west of

⁵⁵ That the name Dyfed or *Demetia* could formerly refer to a greater part of South Wales than was later customary is recognised by Lloyd, following the detailed work of Phillimore, and has been recently emphasised by Alex Woolf: Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 260–61; Phillimore *apud* Lloyd, ‘Welsh Place-names’, 55–57; Phillimore *apud* Owen, *Description* i, 199 n. 2, 224 n. 1 and 257–58 n. 4, and iv, 402–04; Woolf, ‘Expulsion’, 104–07; cf. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 18–20.

⁵⁶ *Vita prima sancti Samsonis* §1, edited and translated (into French) in Pierre Flobert, *La vie ancienne de Saint Samson de Dol* (Paris 1997) 146–47. For the emerging consensus about the date of the First Life of St Samson, see Lynette Olson, ‘Introduction: “Getting Somewhere” with the First Life of St Samson of Dol’, in Lynette Olson (ed), *St Samson of Dol and the Earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales* (Woodbridge 2017) 1–18: 15–16; Barry Lewis, ‘The Saints in Narratives of Conversion from the Brittonic-Speaking Regions’, in Roy Flechner and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh (eds), *The Introduction of Christianity into the Early Medieval Insular World: Converting the Isles I* (Turnhout 2016) 431–56: 432–34. Recent thinking on this matter was stimulated by the work of Richard Sowerby: ‘The Lives of St Samson: Rewriting the Ambitions of an Early Medieval Cult’, *Francia* 38 (2011) 1–31. For the possibly more restricted meaning of ‘Gwent’ in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm*, 91–92.

⁵⁷ *Historia Brittonum* §47 (Faral, *La légende arthurienne* iii, 34).

⁵⁸ E.g. Alex Woolf, ‘Fire from Heaven: Divine Providence and Iron Age Hillforts in Early Medieval Britain’, in Paul Rainbird (ed), *Monuments in the Landscape* (Stroud 2008) 136–43: 141–42.

Ystrad Tywi, to the east of the later boundary of Dyfed, but in this period it must have been considered a constituent part of Dyfed.⁵⁹ The same geography is probably implied by the *Historia Brittonum*'s claim that the Irish sept Uí Liatháin ruled 'in regione Demetorum et in aliis regionibus, id est Guir [et] Cetgueli' ('in the region of the men of Dyfed and in other regions, that is Gŵyr [and] Cydweli'), before being expelled by Cunedda and his sons.⁶⁰

Thomas Charles-Edwards has even posited that Hyfaidd (d. c. 893), king of Dyfed later in the ninth century, 'was ruler of Ystrad Tywi and at least overlord of Ceredigion'.⁶¹ This is partly because of Asser's silence about these regions in his *Life of King Alfred* (written in 893), which includes a description of Welsh politics in the 880s, and partly because Hyfaidd's son Rhodri was beheaded in Arwystli in 904; Charles-Edwards reasons that such beheading is likely to have been the outcome of defeat in battle, and that it is doubtful that Rhodri ap Hyfaidd would have been campaigning as far north as Arwystli had he not already controlled Ceredigion (and probably also Ystrad Tywi) to the south.⁶²

⁵⁹ Woolf probably goes too far when he suggests that the author of the *Historia Brittonum* might have 'principally' equated *regio Demetorum* with Ystrad Tywi: 'Expulsion', 109.

⁶⁰ *Historia Brittonum* §14 (Faral, *La légende arthurienne* iii, 13).

⁶¹ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 495. For the slight ambiguity about the date of Hyfaidd's death, see *ibid.*, 495 n. 127 and 507.

⁶² Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi* §80, edited in William Henry Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annal of Saint Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, with an introductory article by Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford 1959) 66–67; translated in Simon Keynes & Michael Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth 1983) 96; Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 14–15.

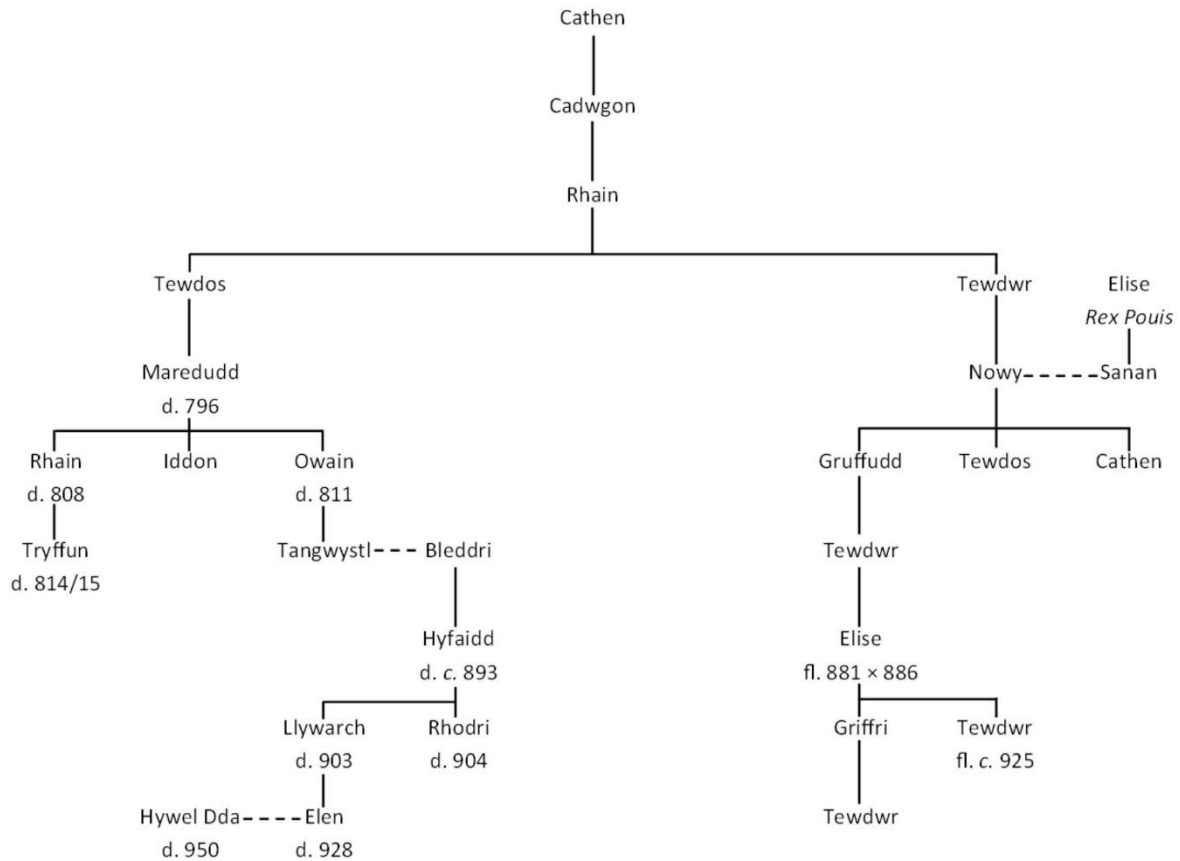


Figure 1: The royal dynasty of Dyfed

Genealogical evidence provides another important perspective. The Harleian genealogies, which reached their extant form in *c.* 954, preserve a short tract on the royal dynasty of Dyfed in the early ninth century.⁶³ The tract describes two branches of the descendants of Rhain ap Cadwgon. One branch, descended through Rhain ap Cadwgon’s son Tewdos, includes a number of figures found in the annals: Tewdos’s son Maredudd, *rex Demetorum* (d. 796), Maredudd’s son Rhain, *rex Demetorum* (d. 808), Rhain’s brother Owain (d. 811), and Rhain’s son Tryffun (d. 814/15).⁶⁴ The other branch, the members of which are not found in the annals, descended through Rhain ap Cadwgon’s son Tewdwr, and are named

⁶³ *EWGT*, 11 and *MWG*, ??? (HG 13–15). This tract is discussed in Ben Guy, ‘The Earliest Welsh Genealogies: Textual Layering and the Phenomenon of “Pedigree Growth”’, *Early Medieval Europe* 24 (2018) 462–85. For a detailed analysis of the Harleian genealogies, see *MWG*, chap. 2.

⁶⁴ Cf. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 662.

as Nowy, Nowy's wife Sanan, daughter of Elise king of Powys, and Nowy's three children Gruffudd, Tewdos and Cathen.⁶⁵ Tewdwr ap Rhain is not named in the extant form of the tract in the Harleian genealogies, but he is named in a tenth-century version of the same text preserved in the Jesus College 20 genealogies.⁶⁶ In this version, the beginning of the pedigree has been updated, so that it is now traced back from a certain Tewdwr ap Griffri, great-great-grandson of the Gruffudd ap Nowy named in the Harleian genealogies. Tewdwr ap Griffri's pedigree is traced back through Tewdwr and Rhain ap Cadwgon to Rhain's grandfather Cathen, whose mother is said to be a certain Ceinddrech ferch Rhiwallon. The latter Rhiwallon is then made a great-great-grandson of Rhain Dremrudd, son of Brychan Brycheiniog.

The insistence on tracing the line of Tewdwr ap Griffri back to Brychan, eponym of Brycheiniog, through an otherwise unknown female link bespeaks of a desire by Tewdwr ap Griffri to claim a deep ancestral connection with the land of Brycheiniog. Other evidence confirms that this branch of Rhain ap Cadwgon's descendants ruled in Brycheiniog. Tewdwr ap Griffri's grandfather, Elise ap Tewdwr, is almost certainly Asser's *Helised [...] filius Teudubr, rex Brecheniauc*, who submitted to King Alfred sometime between 881 and 886 for fear of Anarawd of Gwynedd and his brothers.⁶⁷ It is probably an otherwise unknown son of this Elise who is named as *Teudur rex Brecheniauc filius Elised* in a charter preserved in the Book of Llandaf, dated by Wendy Davies to c. 925.⁶⁸ Either this Tewdwr ab Elise or his

⁶⁵ The text is corrupt, but the corruption has been convincingly explained as the result of a misplaced gloss in David N. Dumville, 'Late-Seventh- or Eighth-Century Evidence for the British Transmission of Pelagius', *CMCS* 10 (1985) 39–52: 48–49. The genealogical table in Woolf, 'Expulsion', 115 does not take account of Dumville's explanation, and instead reproduces the older reconstruction of Bartrum: Peter C. Bartrum, 'Noë, King of Powys', *Y Cymmrodor* 43 (1932) 53–61: 57; *EWGT*, 127 n. 15; Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies* i, sheets 20 and 23. Bartrum himself accepted Dumville's explanation: Bartrum, *Welsh Classical Dictionary*, 509.

⁶⁶ *EWGT*, 45 and *MWG*, ??? (JC 8). The text should be read alongside Dumville, 'Late-Seventh- or Eighth-Century Evidence', 48–49 and Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies', 475–77.

⁶⁷ Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi* §80 (Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, 66). For the date of the submission, see the discussion in Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 488–94.

⁶⁸ Evans, with Rhys, *Text of the Book of Llan Dâv*, 237; Wendy Davies, *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth 1979) 124; Sims-Williams, *Book of Llandaf*, 69.

nephew Tewdwr ap Griffri (the subject of the pedigree) would be a credible candidate for the *Teowdor* who attested a charter of Æthelstan at Winchester in 934, which survives in its original single-sheet form.⁶⁹ It is not known for how long the dynasty survived in power in Brycheiniog beyond 934.⁷⁰

It has always been something of a puzzle for historians that one branch of the descendants of Rhain ap Cadwgon should be found reigning in Brycheiniog in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. So far as Lloyd was concerned, it was Brychan, through his son Rhain Dremrudd, who ‘may perhaps be regarded as the real founder of the dynasty’, and he considered the genealogical evidence in the Jesus College 20 genealogies to be the result of ‘some confusion with the line of Dyfed’.⁷¹ Peter Bartrum disagreed with this assessment, arguing instead that Ceinddrech ferch Rhiwallon, the alleged great-grandmother of Rhain ap Cadwgon, was the ‘heiress of Brecknock’, and that, following her marriage into the ruling Demetian dynasty, Dyfed and Brycheiniog were ruled jointly until the alleged invasion of Ystrad Tywi by Seisyll of Ceredigion, after which Rhain’s son Tewdos inherited Dyfed and Rhain’s son Tewdwr inherited Brycheiniog.⁷² More recently, Alex Woolf has made the more compelling suggestion that the genealogical evidence simply indicates that Brycheiniog had formerly been ruled as part of the kingdom of Dyfed.⁷³ A consequence of this view is that the

⁶⁹ S 425: see the table of attestations in Simon Keynes, ‘Welsh Kings in Anglo-Saxon Royal Assemblies (928–55)’, *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 26 (2014) 69–122: 84. The identity of this *Teowdor* has exercised scholars. Lloyd, followed by Wendy Davies, assumed that he is the Book of Llandaf’s Tewdwr ab Elise: *History of Wales* i, 336 and 353; Davies, *Llandaff Charters*, 77. Dumville favoured Tewdwr ap Griffri, going so far as to suggest that Tewdwr ab Elise may be ‘a ghost of Llandaf creation’: ‘Late-Seventh- or Eighth-Century Evidence’, 44 n. 26. More recently, Charles-Edwards (followed by Keynes) and Sims-Williams have reverted to Lloyd’s opinion: Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 516 n. 79 and 548 n. 63; Keynes, ‘Welsh Kings’, 85 and 90–91; Sims-Williams, *Book of Llandaf*, 69.

⁷⁰ Robin Fleming posits that Brycheiniog ceased to be an ‘independent state’ by about the middle of the tenth century: ‘Political Innovation in a Forgotten Welsh Kingdom: Rethinking the Grand Narrative of Viking-Age Britain’, *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 20 (2008) 31–36: 36. Charles-Edwards plausibly suggests that Tewdwr ap Griffri’s dynasty was ejected by Hywel Dda: *Wales and the Britons*, 548.

⁷¹ Lloyd, *History of Wales* i, 271 and n. 239, followed implicitly by K. D. Pringle, ‘The Kings of Demetia’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1970–71) 70–76 and 140–44: 75.

⁷² Bartrum, ‘Noë’, 56–59; Bartrum, ‘Rhieinwg’, 24; seemingly followed by Dumville, ‘Late-Seventh- or Eighth-Century Evidence’, 50–51.

⁷³ Woolf, ‘Expulsion’, 106–07.

genealogical connection between Tewdwr ap Griffri and Brychan through Ceinddrech ferch Rhiwallon, as claimed in the Jesus College 20 genealogies, can be understood more clearly as a fabrication designed to lend local legitimacy to Tewdwr ap Griffri's regime. In reality, Tewdwr ap Griffri was a descendant of the early kings of Dyfed, but in the local context of Brycheiniog it was more expedient for Tewdwr to demonstrate his descent from the territorial eponym, even if via a female link. One might compare the more famous Merfynion dynasty: although probably descended from a line of Manx kings, the creator of Merfynion pedigree in the Harleian genealogies chose to trace their descent through Merfyn's mother Epyllt, who was a member of the dynasty that had previously ruled Gwynedd.⁷⁴

It is possible that, prior to the monopolisation of royal power in Brycheiniog by Tewdwr ap Griffri's branch of the dynasty of Dyfed, another dynasty had ruled in Brycheiniog, perhaps as sub-kings under the kings of Dyfed.⁷⁵ This is implied by three charters in the book of Llandaf that feature a certain Awst, king of Brycheiniog, and his three sons Eludd, Rhiwallon and Elwystl, the last of whom apparently succeeded Awst as king.⁷⁶ There are, however, problems with the charters. In two of them (146 and 154), Awst, with his sons Eludd and Rhiwallon, grants land to Euddogwy, bishop of Llandaf. It has been shown that the association between the donor/estates and the beneficiary/witness lists in these charters is false, the latter having been appropriated from some version of charter 157.⁷⁷ What is not known is whether the forger of the charters had any prior reason for associating Awst, Eludd and Rhiwallon with Brycheiniog and the two estates. In the third charter (167), Elwystl ab Awst is synchronised with Tewdwr ap Rhain, the eighth-century ancestor of Tewdwr ap Griffri; both are said to have been kings of Brycheiniog at the same time. There follows a

⁷⁴ *EWGT*, 9 and *MWG*, ??? (HG 1).

⁷⁵ For sub-kings of peripheral territories in early medieval Wales, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Dynastic Succession in Early Medieval Wales', in R. A. Griffiths and P. R. Schofield (eds), *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to J. Beverley Smith* (Cardiff 2011) 70–88: 70–72 and 78–79.

⁷⁶ Davies, *The Llandaff Charters*, 98, 101 and 106 (charters 146, 154 and 167).

⁷⁷ Davies, *The Llandaff Charters*, 83–84 n. 16, 98 and 101; Sims-Williams, *Book of Llandaf*, 49 and 57.

story that is typical of the narrations in the Llandaf charters: the two kings swear on the altar of St Dyfrig to abstain from treachery towards one another; Tewdwr breaks the peace and the oath by killing Elwystl; Bishop Gwrfan of Llandaf excommunicates Tewdwr; and Tewdwr grants land to the saint and his church in exchange for forgiveness. Different views have been expressed about the charter. Wendy Davies noted that the land granted by Tewdwr ap Rhain, now identified as Llanfihangel Tal-y-Llyn, is the same as the land granted in the tenth-century charter of his descendant and namesake Tewdwr ab Elise (charter 237b), mentioned above.⁷⁸ This may suggest that the allegedly earlier charter 167 was fabricated at some point to support the claim expressed in charter 237b. Sims-Williams, on the other hand, has argued that charters 167 and 237b are both genuine, because neither of them fits neatly into the Book of Llandaf's imagined historical scheme.⁷⁹ Whatever view one takes of charter 167, it can at least be said that there existed by the twelfth century, and possibly much earlier, the idea that a local line of kings ruled in Brycheiniog at the same time as the eighth-century king Tewdwr ap Rhain, but not apparently afterwards.

If it be posited that the Dyfed of Rhain ap Cadwgon included Brycheiniog and Ystrad Tywi as well as the later heartland of Dyfed further west, the Dyfed of the eighth century begins to look a lot like the twelfth-century diocese of St Davids, and perhaps, therefore, the *regnum Rein* of the Life of St Padarn. As we have seen, there is no reason to lend credence to Phillimore and Lloyd's interpretation of *Pwyll* and assume that, during Rhain's reign, Seisyll of Ceredigion conquered Ystrad Tywi. Nor, moreover, is there need to follow Bartrum in imagining that whatever remained of Rhain's large kingdom was divided between his sons, Tewdos taking Dyfed 'proper' in the west and Tewdwr taking Brycheiniog in the east. This scenario is rendered unlikely by the pedigree of the kings of Dyfed preserved in the famous

⁷⁸ Davies, *The Llandaff Charters*, 106. Davies identified the land as Llanfihangel Cwm Du, but the reason to prefer Llanfihangel Tal-y-Llyn is explained in Jonathan Baron Coe, 'The Place-Names of the Book of Llandaf' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth 2005) 443–44.

⁷⁹ Sims-Williams, *Book of Llandaf*, 66–70.

Old Irish tale *Indarba na nDéisi*, ‘The Expulsion of the Déisi’.⁸⁰ The tale claims that one of the sons of the legendary Art Corp, Eochaid Allmuir, travelled to Dyfed, and that his descendants still live there. A pedigree of the kings of Dyfed is then given, traced back from *Tualador mac Rígin* (in manuscript R) or *Taulodar mac Rigind* (in manuscript L) to Eochaid Allmuir. There has been disagreement about whether the former figure should be identified with Tewdos ap Rhain (OW *Teudos map Regin*) or Tewdos’s brother, Tewdwr ap Rhain (OW *Teudebur / Teudubir / Teudubr map Regin*).⁸¹ Unfortunately, the corruption of the Irish forms makes certainty impossible, but *Tualador*’s trisyllabic form alongside its final consonant seem to make Tewdwr the slightly more favourable candidate. Since Tewdos and Tewdwr can be estimated to have lived in the middle of the eighth century, *Indarba na nDéisi* has been dated to that time.⁸² This supposition has been supported recently by the demonstration that *Indarba na nDéisi* is closely related to genealogical material concerning the Déisi that was probably composed in the time of Dúnchad mac Eógain (d. 764).⁸³

If *Tualador* can be equated with Tewdwr, rather than his brother Tewdos, the existence of the pedigree implies that, around 750, Tewdwr was the most notable member of the dynasty, despite the fact that Tewdwr’s descendants would later be associated with Brycheiniog rather than ‘Dyfed’ in the west. Perhaps Tewdwr was *rex Demetorum* following his father Rhain but preceding his nephew Maredudd ap Tewdos, who died in 796. If so,

⁸⁰ For a useful introduction to the ‘early version’ of *Indarba na nDéisi*, see Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, ‘The Expulsion of the Déisi’, *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 110 (2005) 68–75, repr. in his *Coire Sois / The Cauldron of Knowledge: A Companion to Early Irish Saga*, edited by Matthieu Boyd (Notre Dame, IN 2014) 283–92. The two best witnesses to the early version were published in K. Meyer, ‘The Expulsion of the Dessi’, *Y Cymmrodor* 14 (1901) 101–35 and K. Meyer, ‘The Expulsion of the Déssi’, *Ériu* 3 (1907) 135–42. There are also two partial witnesses, published in S. Pender, ‘Two Unpublished Versions of the Expulsion of the Déssi’, in S. Pender (ed), *Féilscribhinn Torna* (Cork 1947) 209–17.

⁸¹ For varying identifications of *Tualador*, see, for example, *EWGT*, 124 (Tewdos) and Molly Miller, ‘Date-Guessing and Dyfed’, *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977/8) 33–61: 34 and 42 (Tewdwr). For Old Welsh spellings of Tewdwr, see *EWGT*, 10 and *MWG*, ??? (HG 5, *Teudebur*); *Historia Brittonum* §49 (Faral, *La légende arthurienne* iii, 35) (*Teudubir*); Dumville, *Annales Cambriae*, 6, s.a. 750 (*Teudubr*); Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi* §80 (Stevenson, *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, 66) (*Teudubr*).

⁸² Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, ‘The Déisi and Dyfed’, *Éigse* 20 (1984) 1–33: 21, repr. in his *Coire Sois*, 301–29: 320.

⁸³ Bart Jaski, ‘The Genealogical Section of the Psalter of Cashel’, *Peritia* 17–18 (2003–04) 295–337: 326–27; David E. Thornton, *Kings, Chronologies and Genealogies: Studies in the Political History of Early Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Woodbridge 2003) 128 and 141–42.

Rhain ap Cadwgon's kingdom may not simply have been divided between his two sons as soon as he died. After all, this is not how royal succession worked in medieval Wales: kings were usually succeeded by a single male heir, normally a son, brother or nephew who may or may not have been designated beforehand, though other close male relatives could be granted royal rights in outlying territories.⁸⁴ It may have been only through convoluted power politics, now largely invisible to us, that it was Tewdos ap Rhain's descendants who monopolised the kingship of (western) Dyfed, while Tewdwr ap Rhain's descendants became associated with the kingship of Brycheiniog. A significant point may have been the death of Rhain ap Maredudd, Tewdos's grandson, in 808. He is the last *rex Demetorum* noticed in the annals. His brother Owain and son Tryffun are both accorded obituaries, but they are not given any titles. Perhaps by their time, their cousins were sufficiently well established in Brycheiniog, in the eastern part of greater Dyfed, that the title *rex Demetorum* could no longer be borne by any one individual with conviction; from now on there would be two *reges* ruling within Rhain's former kingdom. Indeed, by Asser's time, power in the western areas of Dyfed had been usurped by another dynasty, whose representative, Hyfaidd, is called king and who is interestingly described by Asser as commanding 'omnes habitatores Demeticae regionis' ('all the inhabitants of the Demetian region'); he is never called *rex Demetorum*, like the old kings.⁸⁵ A tenth-century pedigree claims that Hyfaidd's mother, Tangwystl, was the daughter of Owain ap Maredudd of the old line, but, according to a triad found in the fourteenth-century White Book of Rhydderch, Hyfaidd's father Bleddig (probably an error for Bleddri) was sprung from a line of villeins.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ The key works on royal succession in medieval Wales are J. Beverley Smith, 'Dynastic Succession in Medieval Wales', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 33 (1986) 199–232 and J. Beverley Smith, 'The Succession to Welsh Princely Inheritance: The Evidence Reconsidered', in R. R. Davies (ed), *The British Isles, 1100–1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh 1988) 64–88; see too Charles-Edwards, 'Dynastic Succession'.

⁸⁵ Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi* §§79–80 (Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, 65–66).

⁸⁶ *EWGT*, 9 and *MWG*, ??? (HG 2); Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 4th edn (Cardiff 2014) 189 and 402.

The question then arises: did the name Rheinwg emerge as a retrospective term for the wider kingdom of Dyfed of the eighth century, due to the subsequent division of that kingdom between two competing branches of Rhain ap Cadwgon's descendants? If the annal for 795 preserved in the Cottonian chronicle reflects the original wording of the record (which is by no means guaranteed), the name had already arisen by the reign of Maredudd ap Tewdos (d. 796). This would imply that the name could not derive from Maredudd's son Rhain (d. 808), as Phillimore once thought. In that case, it is possible that the two power blocks within Rhain ap Cadwgon's former kingdom that split apart perhaps after 808 were already competing with one another by 795. The antagonists were chiefly linked together by their common descent from Rhain, whose reign may have been remembered as something of a golden age due to the subsequent disunity of the kingdom. An analogous scenario is provided by Glywysing in south-east Wales. During the tenth century, all Glywysing had been ruled together by Morgan ab Owain (d. 974), albeit with a family of sub-kings ruling in Gwent in the latter part of his reign.⁸⁷ But from no later than 1023, Rhydderch ab Iestyn and his descendants began to achieve dominance, at times forcing the main line of kings descended from Morgan to be subordinated to them.⁸⁸ The last king of Morgan's line, descended from Morgan's son Owain, disappeared soon after 1066, though the descendants of Morgan's son Idwallon, which included Iestyn ap Gwrgan and his progeny, remained important as lords of the uplands of Glamorgan into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁸⁹ In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the former unity of the kingdom came to be best

⁸⁷ Charles-Edwards, 'Dynastic Succession', 75–76; cf. Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm*, 95–96.

⁸⁸ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 557–60.

⁸⁹ For Iestyn ap Gwrgan, see J. Beverley Smith, 'The Kingdom of Morgannwg and the Norman Conquest of Glamorgan', in T. B. Pugh (ed), *Glamorgan County History. Volume III: The Middle Ages* (Cardiff 1971) 1–43: 7–8, 25–27 and 36–39; David Crouch, 'The Slow Death of Kingship in Glamorgan, 1067–1158', *Morgannwg* 29 (1985) 20–41: 30–34; K. L. Maund, *Ireland, Wales, and England in the Eleventh Century* (Woodbridge 1991) 192–93 and 203–06.

encapsulated by the name ‘Morgannwg’, recalling the long and unified reign of Morgan ab Owain.⁹⁰

What of Bartrum’s objection that the original form of the name was ‘Rhieinwg’, which cannot derive from the personal name Rhain, OW *Regin*? In early sources, one finds the following distribution of forms.⁹¹ Of the ‘Rheinwg’ type, there is *Reinuc* (and *Reinmuc*) in the Life of St Cadog in Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, and *Reinyawc* in *Canu Llywarch Hen* (where the rhyme implies that the ending should be *-wc* rather than *-yawc*).⁹² Of the ‘Rhieinwg’ type, there is *Rienuch* in the Cottonian chronicle (conceivably preserving OW *e* for /ei/); *Rieinvc* in the Black Book of Carmarthen; *Rieinwc* in early manuscripts of *Bonedd y Saint*; and *Rieinŵc* in the Peniarth 32 copy of *Cyfraith Hywel Dda* (*Ryeynnwc* in the lost Llanforda manuscript). Additionally, there is more than one instance of the name being understood to derive from the personal name Rhain: thus the Life of St Padarn, as we have seen, Latinizes it as *regnum Rein*, while manuscripts of *Bonedd y Saint* almost always call the eponym of Rhieinwg *Rein*.⁹³ Although a greater number of texts supports the spelling ‘Rhieinwg’, as Bartrum observed, it should be noticed that the earliest manuscript, Cotton Vespasian A. xiv (s. xii^{3/3}), twice has forms in *Rein-*. One is therefore left with a choice. Was the name originally ‘Rhieinwg’, but reinterpreted as ‘Rheinwg’ under the influence of the personal name Rhain, as Bartrum would have it? Or was the name originally ‘Rheinwg’, but reinterpreted as ‘Rhieinwg’, probably under the influence of the common noun *rhiaïn* < Celtic *rīganī* (‘maiden, queen’)?

⁹⁰ For the originally wide meaning of Morgannwg, see Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm*, 92. This term later became restricted to the somewhat smaller area of modern Glamorgan. Judging by this parallel, it is possible that the term Rheinwg similarly acquired a more restricted meaning over time. However, with respect to the subsequent development of the names (as opposed to their initial emergence), an important difference between the terms Morgannwg/Glamorgan and Rheinwg is that the former entered common parlance, whereas the latter did not.

⁹¹ As set out in Bartrum, ‘Rhieinwg’, 26–27.

⁹² For the latter, see Williams, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, 97, note to I.46b; see too Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘The Provenance of the Llywarch Hen Poems: A Case for Llan-gors, Brycheiniog’, *CMCS* 26 (1993) 27–63: 47–48.

⁹³ *EWGT*, 56 (*ByS* 13).

Various factors suggest that the latter interpretation is to be preferred. Firstly, every other certain instance of a regional name in *-wg* (or *-iwg*) is based on a personal name (Cynllibiwg, Morgannwg, Seisyllwg, Gwrthefyriwg).⁹⁴ This throws doubt on Bartrum's suggestion that 'Rheinwg' itself includes the common noun *rhiain*. Secondly, Rhain is not a common personal name, and seems unlikely to have exercised a strong influence on a pre-existing place-name. The etymology of the name is disputed: it may be identical with the common noun *rhain* ('stiff, rigid', OI *rigin*), but Sims-Williams has noted that there is also a Roman name *Regin(i)us*, which could have provided an appropriate source.⁹⁵ Either way, the name was not long-lived in Wales. In Bartrum's indices of all men born before c. 1400 who appear in Welsh genealogies, only five men named Rhain are found: these are Rhain ap Cadwgon and Rhain ap Maredudd, both members the family under discussion; Rhain ap Hywel Dda;⁹⁶ *Rein* eponym of *Rheinwg* in *Bonedd y Saint*, mentioned above; and Rhain Dremrudd, son of the legendary Brychan of Brycheiniog.⁹⁷ Judging by these examples, the name does not seem to have outlived the descendants of Rhain ap Cadwgon for long. Hywel Dda may have named his son Rhain to reflect the power that he held in Dyfed and possibly Brycheiniog; such appropriation of names borne by earlier families who ruled the same territories was common in early medieval Wales.⁹⁸ Moreover, given that the earliest dateable attestation of the legendary Rhain Dremrudd, son of Brychan, is in the genealogy of Tewdwr ap Griffri discussed above, it is conceivable that Rhain Dremrudd himself was named after the territory of Rheinwg, of which Brycheiniog was arguably a part. This would have been an

⁹⁴ Melville Richards, 'Early Welsh Territorial Suffixes', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 95 (1965) 205–12: 207 and 209–10.

⁹⁵ Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain: A Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages, First to Twelfth Century A.D.* (Edinburgh 1953) 445 and 453; Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, 'On Some Romano-British Place-Names', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 38 (1948) 54–58: 58; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400–1200* (Oxford 2003) 92 n. 469.

⁹⁶ *EWGT*, 101 ('ABT' 7i) and *MWG* ??? (LIIG 28.2.1).

⁹⁷ All five are listed in *EWGT*, 209 and Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies* v, 77 (there are no men named Rhain listed in the indices of other volumes of *Welsh Genealogies*).

⁹⁸ David E. Thornton, 'Predatory Nomenclature and Dynastic Expansion in Early Medieval Wales', *Medieval Prosopography* 20 (1999) 1–22 (12–13 for Rhain ap Hywel Dda).

appropriate way for Tewdwr ap Griffri, the last known male-line descendant of Rhain ap Cadwgon, to evoke his wider heritage.

Conclusion

Bartrum's conclusion that 'Rheinwg' was a name for Brycheiniog was no doubt unduly influenced by the sixteenth-century manuscript (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 132, part i) from which he quotes a text claiming that the 'seven cantrefs of Rhain Dremrudd ap Brychan Brycheiniog' were the three cantrefs of Brycheiniog, the three cantrefs of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, and Buellt. This account could be set alongside certain versions of *Plant Brychan*, which claim that 'Rheinwg' was named from Rhain ap Brychan.⁹⁹ However, it is more likely that these are reinterpretations of an archaic and misunderstood place-name, which has been foisted onto Brychan's son, Rhain Dremrudd, simply because of his name.¹⁰⁰ The relationship may, ironically, have been the other way around.

If it has done anything, the discussion above should at least serve as a warning that old territorial names cannot form the basis for political history in the way that some modern historians, following their medieval predecessors, have assumed. Seisyllwg might mean something, but our evidence simply does not allow us to know what that something is; it is unlikely to mean that an eighth-century king conquered some adjacent cantrefs. Similarly, Rheinwg seems to have signified neither the reduced Dyfed nor Brycheiniog, as earlier commentators have suggested, but rather, in a nostalgic fashion, the greater whole of which

⁹⁹ Three such versions of *Plant Brychan* are known to me. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales (= NLW), Peniarth 131, part viii, p. 277 (Ieuan Brechfa, 1494 × 1509): 'Rain ap Brychan yn Riw wnnawc'; NLW, Peniarth 132, part i, p. 118 (1509 × 1547): 'Kein ap Brychan, o dyna Rieinwc'; NLW, Brogyntyn I. 15, p. 386 (George Owen Harry, 1593–96): 'Rain ap Dremrydd ap Prychan, Riennwg ap Prychan' (this is clearly corrupt). These versions are textually related to one another: see *MWG*, [???](#)–[???](#). One version of *Bonedd y Saint* also equates Rhain, eponym of 'Rheinwg', with Rhain Dremrudd (NLW, Peniarth 27, part ii).

¹⁰⁰ As realised already by Phillimore in 1906: Phillimore *apud* Owen, *Description* iii, 279.

they were both once a part. It is so often the case that a place-name incorporating a personal name arises *after* the lifetime of the person concerned, whatever subsequent speculation might suggest. One wonders what other aspects of early medieval history could be re-written if this principle were applied more rigorously.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ I would like to thank Professor Barry Lewis, Dr David Callander and Dr Rebecca Thomas for kindly commenting on an earlier draft of this article.