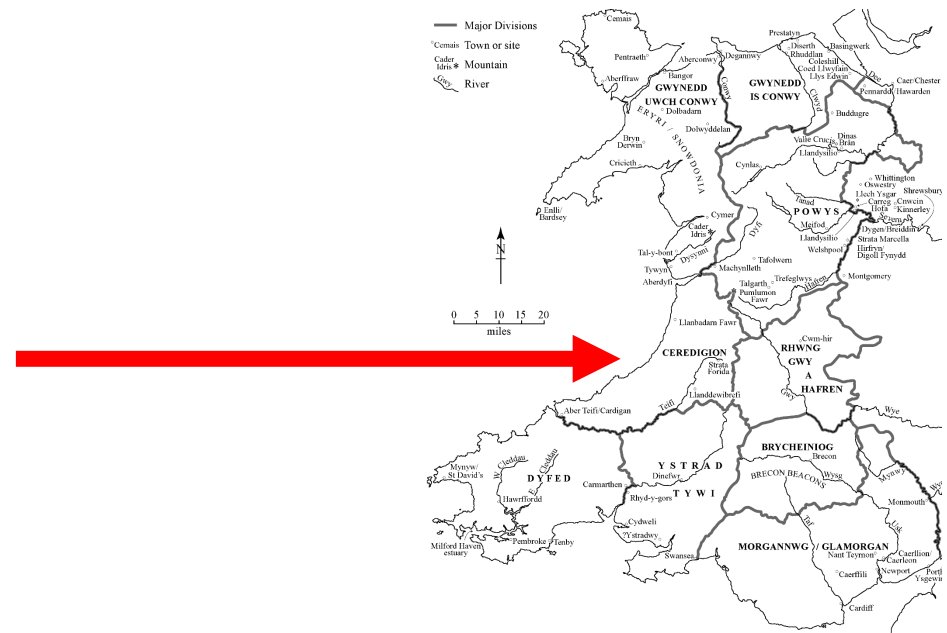


Hywel ab Owain(c.1120–1170)

- Son of Owain Gwynedd and Ffynnod Wyddeles, an Irish woman, or a woman of Irish descent.
- May have been his eldest son, but was illegitimate.
- In the wake of the successful campaign of Owain and his allies in south-west in 1136–7, Ceredigion was divided between Hywel (south) and his uncle Cadwaladr (north).
- **1143:** Cadwaladr's war-band kill Anarawd ap Gruffudd, prince of Deheubarth (a former ally), angering Owain. Hywel seizes the northern part of Ceredigion and burns Aberystwyth.
- **1145:** Hywel and his brother Cynan attack Cardigan castle and take plunder (but it remains in the hands of the Clare family).



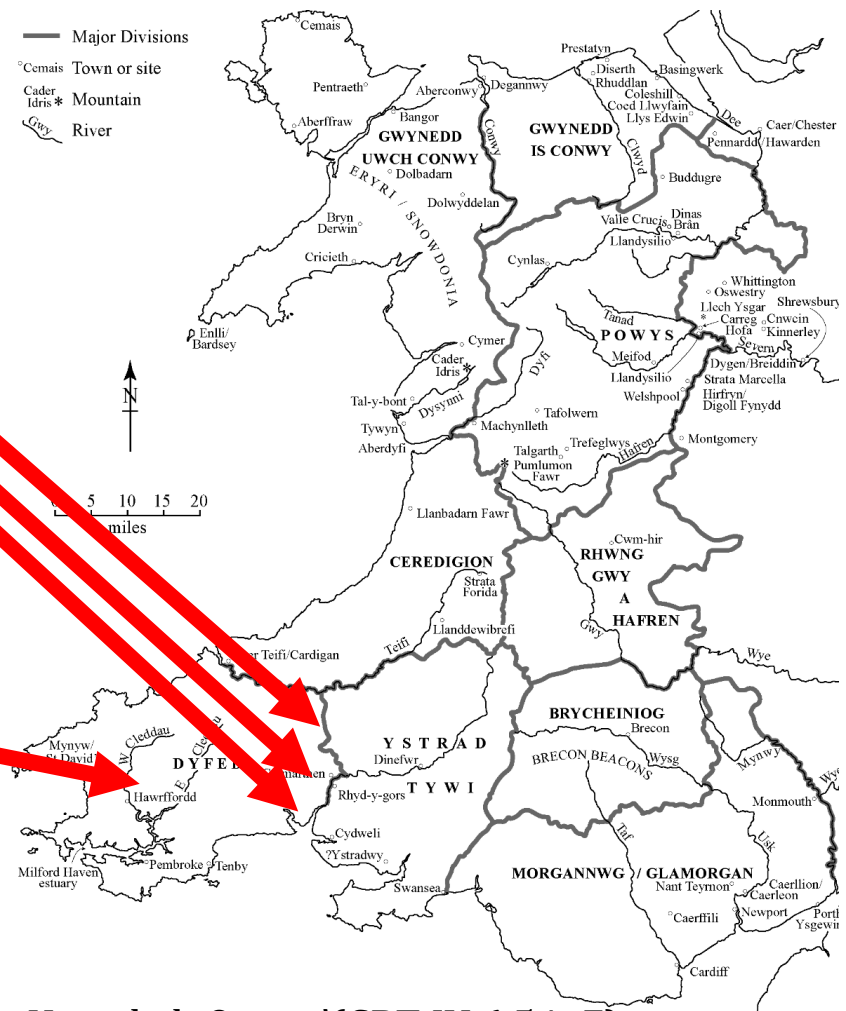
*Am byrth Caer Fyrddin porthes gwŷr gwaedlin
A gwawr trin bu trechaf;
Gwâl teilu, tâl im a ganaf!*
Cynddelw, 'Canu Hywel ab Owain', CBT IV 6.272–4

'Around the gates of Carmarthen warriors sustained a flow of blood / and the lord of battle proved the strongest; / leader of the war-band, a payment for me for my song!'

Hywel ab Owain(c.1120–1170)

- **1146:** Hywel assists Cadell and his brothers Maredudd and **Rhys**, princes of Deheubarth, in fighting the Normans in Ceredigion, Dyfed and Ystrad Tywi (castles of Dinwileir (Pencader?), Carmarthen and Llanstephan)
- **1147:** Hywel joins alliance with Cadell and his brothers and William fitzGerald (lord of Carew) and his brothers to take Wiston castle from Walter fitz Wizo (lord of Daugleddau).

*Ac ar Gastell Gwis gogwys – yd orfu
Godwrfllu, lluchiad gwrys,
Arwr falch arfoliant ysbys,
Arfoloch dragon, draig efnys.*

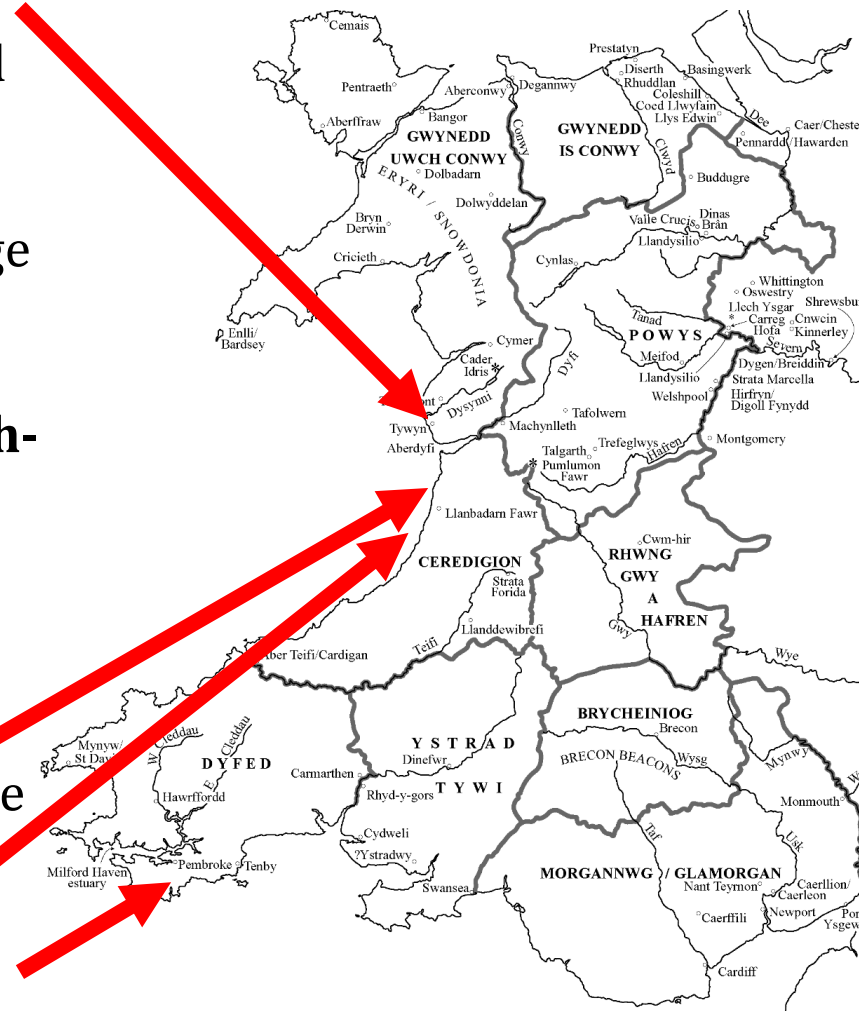


Cynddelw, 'Canu Hywel ab Owain'(CBT IV 6.54–7)

'And against Wiston Castle it is known that [one causing] tumult in a host was victorious, lightning in battle, / a heroic splendid-one whose praise is manifest, / one who threatens dragons, [himself] a wrathful dragon.'

Hywel ab Owain(c.1120–1170)

- **1147:** Hywel and his brother Cynan take Cynfael castle (held for Cadwaladr by abbot Morfran of Tywyn). Hywel probably retained Meirionydd.
- **1149:** Cadwaladr, having regained northern Ceredigion by this time, places it in the charge of his son Cadfan.
- **1150:** Hywel captures Cadfan and seizes northern Ceredigion (again). **This is the high-point of his power: holds both Ceredigion and Meirionydd.**
Cadell ap Gruffudd and his brothers take southern Ceredigion.
- **1151:** Cadell and his brothers take most of northern Ceredigion, except Pen-gwern castle (Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn). But Hywel retakes Llanrhystud castle. (Cadell gravely injured when attacked by Normans at Tenby in the same year)



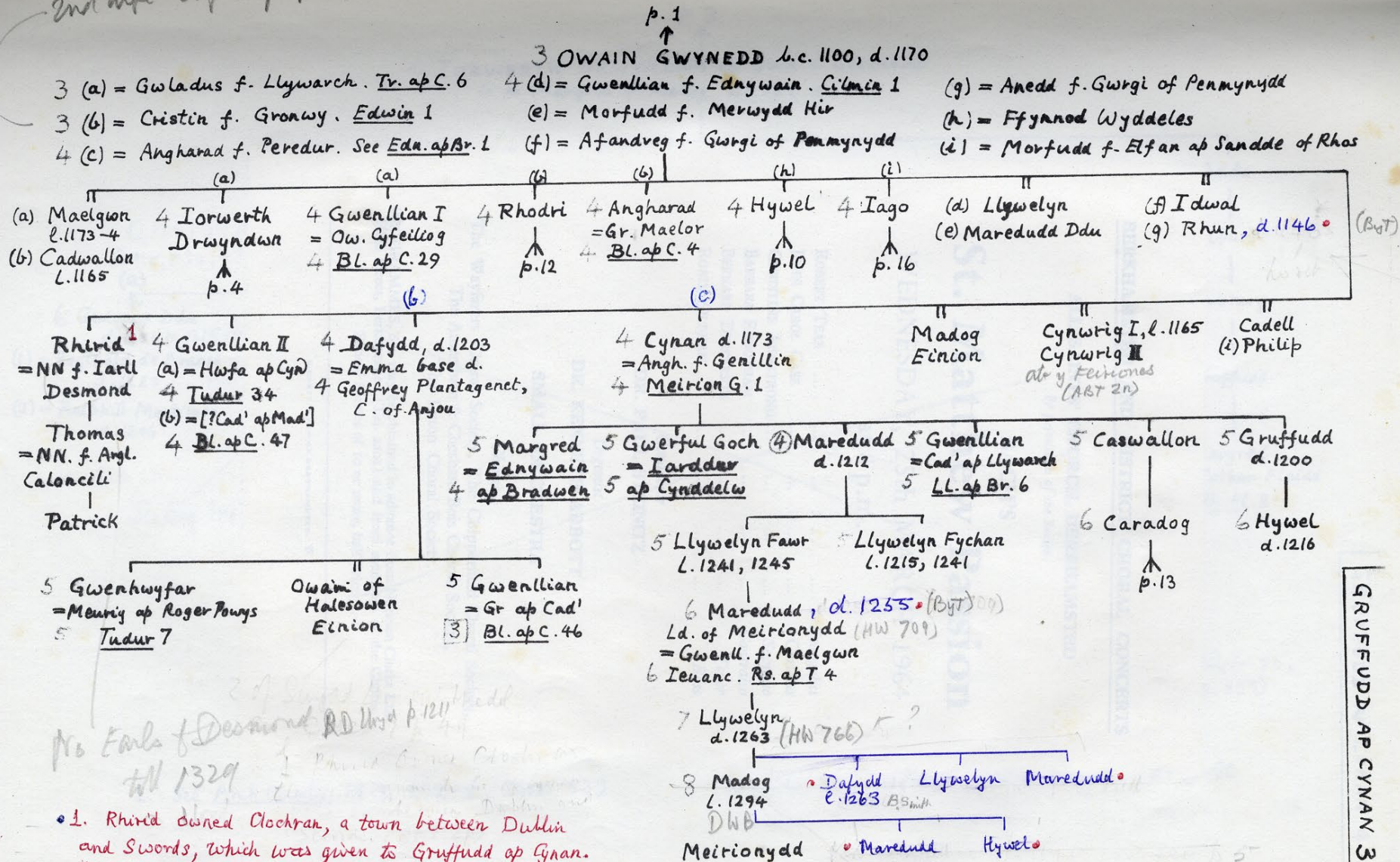
Hywel ab Owain(c.1120–1170)

- (1152: Owain Gwynedd drives his brother Cadwaladr out of Anglesey)
- **1153:** Maredudd and Rhys ap Gruffudd complete their acquisition of northern Ceredigion.
- **1157:** Hywel and his brothers Cynan and Dafydd join Owain Gwynedd in his fight against Henry II's forces (allied with Cadwaladr and Madog ap Maredudd) at Coleshill in the north-east. Cadwaladr regains his lands and Owain yields Tegeingl.
- **1159:** Cadwaladr, Hywel and Cynan join a Welsh, Norman and Fleming alliance against Rhys ap Gruffudd (after relations break down between him and Henry II).
- **November 1170:** Owain Gwynedd dies
- Conflict between Hywel and his brothers over the succession.
- **1170/1:** Hywel is killed by his half-brother Dafydd at the battle of Pentraeth.



His family (I)

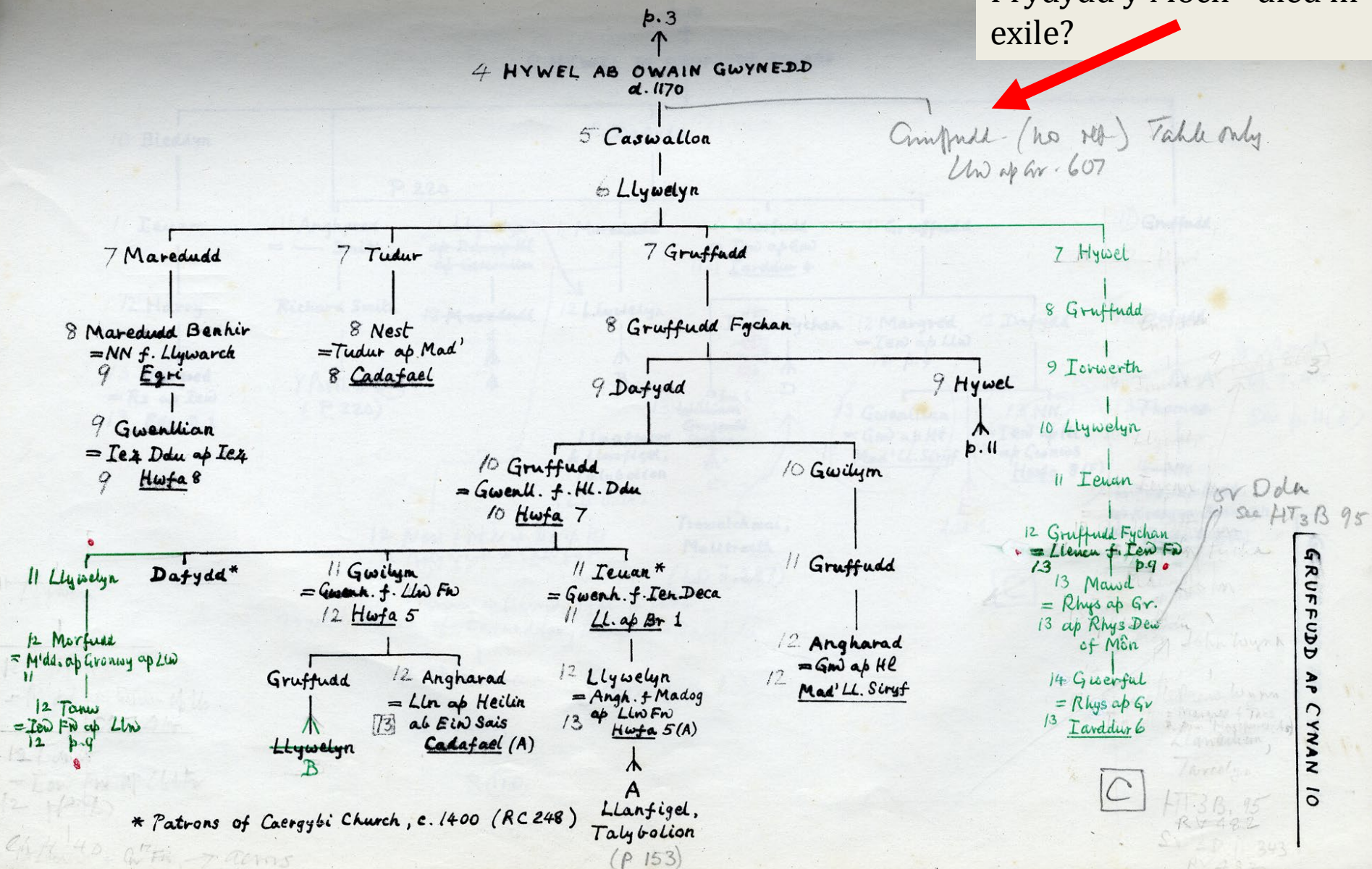
2nd wife Owain Comp. p.574



GRUFFUDD AP CYNAN 3

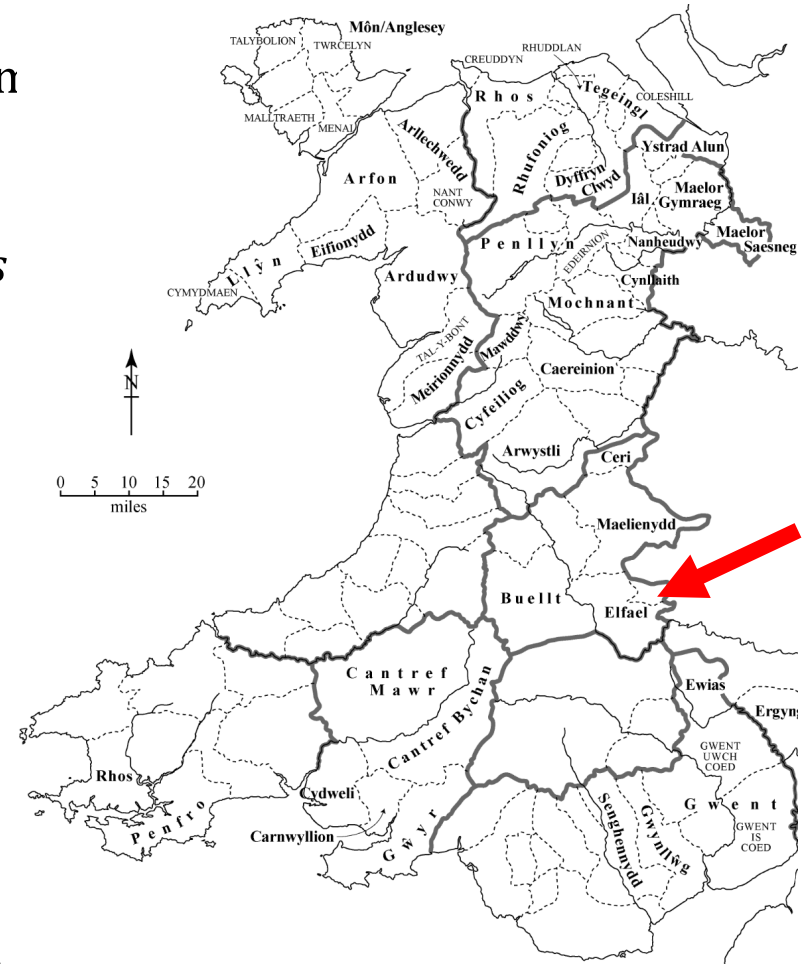
His family (II)

subject of an elegy by
Prydydd y Moch - died in
exile?



His foster family (I)

- We know about them from the two elegies by Peryf ap Cedifor: one focusing more on Hywel alone and the other (this week's set text) for him and his foster brothers.
- Hywel's elegy gives his foster fathers' name:
Llas gyda Hywel, [...] / Plant Cedifor wyn Wennwys
(CBT II 21.17–20)
‘slain with Hywel were the children
of fair Cedifor Wennwys’
- The epithet implies his family originally came from Gwent; possibly one of the families from there who moved to Powys (Elfael, part of Rhyng Gwy a Hafren)
- Owain Gwynedd had connections there: his sister Rhanillt married Madog ab Idnerth (d. 1140), lord of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, and their sons were later his allies
- But seems unlikely he'd have been raised so far from home - perhaps Cedifor or his forebears had moved to Gwynedd to escape Norman incursions



His foster family (II)

- Is this same Cedifor also the 'Cedifor Wyddel' who was the father of a young man (Ithael) killed fighting for Owain Gwynedd in Rhuddlan, according to an elegy by Cynddelw?
- If so, might he have been related to Ffynnod Wyddeles, Hywel's mother?
- No firm evidence that the two Cedifors were the same. But for Hywel to have been raised with his mother's kin is a very plausible scenario.

Hywel ab Owain as poet and patron (I)

- Eight or nine poems survive:
 - five short love poems
 - his ‘Gorhoffedd’, which could be one or two poems
 - two poems ‘to celebrate the victories of Gwynedd’ (probably 1157 as one of them mentions both burning Rhuddlan and defeating a fleet at Menai (battle of Tal Moelfre))
- Since Peryf ap Cedifor was a poet, perhaps his father Cedifor was too, and trained them both.
- Hywel could also have been influenced by Gwalchmai ap Meilyr
 - they grew up in the same circles and probably fought in the same battles when they were young.
 - Hywel’s ‘Gorhoffedd’ could have been influenced by Gwalchmai’s (or *vice versa*)
 - their poetry is similar in style, *cynganedd*, etc. (Rhian Andrews)
- Llywelyn Fardd may have composed ‘Canu Cadfan’ under Hywel’s patronage soon after he took Meirionydd (1147).

Hywel ab Owain as poet and patron (II)

- Hywel also came into contact with Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr - there are similarities between their poems, too, and Cynddelw composed 'Canu Hywel ab Owain', perhaps to promote his claim to the kingship.
 - refers to his patronage for poets generally:
Caffwn ei radau, caffawd ein gwawdau, / Cathlau clau, cerddau caw.
'We receive his gifts, he receives our praises, / ringing praise-songs, well-crafted poems.'
- Cynddelw never praised the later princes of Gwynedd who deposed Hywel and there are hints of concern in his elegy for Owain Gwynedd:
 - *Gwynedd wen ... pa wledig a wledych arnai?* 'fair Gwynedd ... which king shall rule her?'
- It has been suggested that the extreme and hopeless grief in an elegy for Owain by Daniel ap Llogwrn Mew reflects the loss of Hywel too.
 - *Yni fwyf hynwyf, hynefydd - galar / [...] / Cof Owain i'm calon yd fydd, / Difuner ucher ac echwydd*
– 'Until I am a old man of grief, of strong emotion, / [...] / the memory of Owain shall be in my heart, / without a lord, morning and evening.'
- Prydydd y Moch did praise Hywel's successors: but even he, in a poem to Dafydd ab Owain, praised *gwâr Hywel* ('courteous/civilised Hywel') for his hospitality and military prowess.

His death in battle (I)

- Recorded in *Brut y Tywysogion*:

‘The age of Christ was 1170 when Dafydd ab Owain killed Hywel ab Owain, his eldest brother.’

- More detailed evidence in the poetry.

- A poem composed for Dafydd ab Owain by Prydydd y Moch about four or five years later refers to three battles between him and Hywel: Cerrig Morllwch, Buarth Cadfan, and the one near Penraeth. (The former two locations are unidentified)

- Two elegies by Peryf ap Cedifor Both express family grief in relatively simple style and metre (series of *englynion*); different from ‘official’ elegies for princes and kings. Both refer to the circumstances of his death:

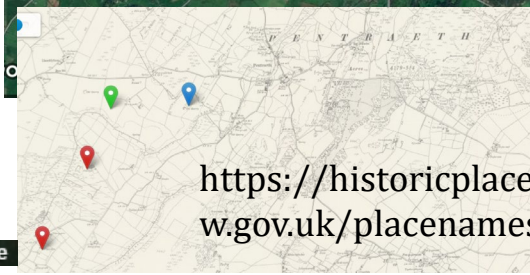
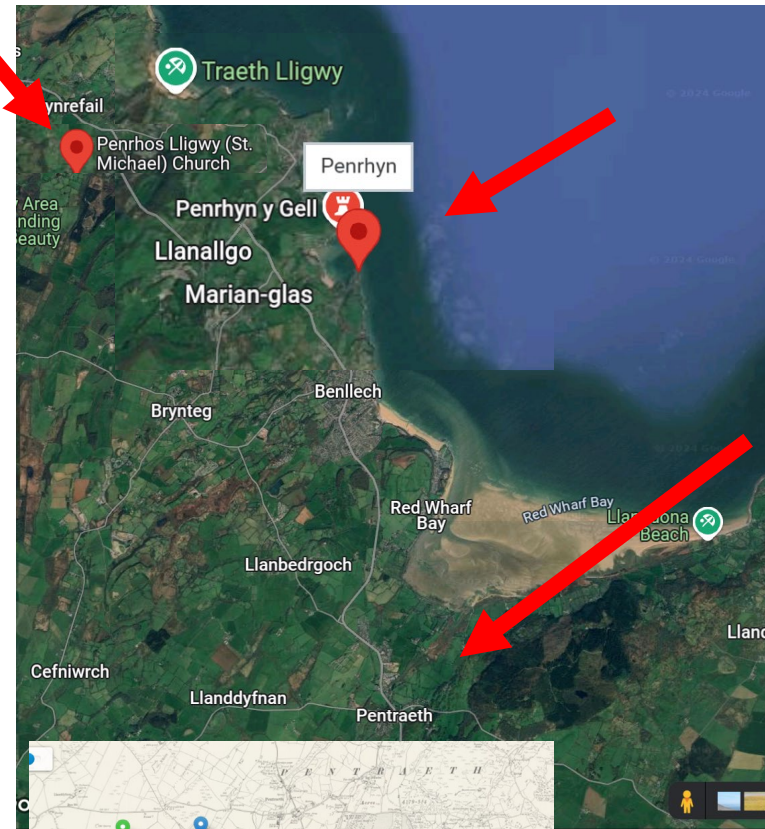
*Difiau in diau leas
Yn y Penrhyn uch Penrhos,
Ym Mon, i mewn ei hynys,
Ydd ym lleddir a llafn glas.*

Dielid Mab Duw ddygn alaeth – Hywel [...]

Efa’i frodyr, mawrwyr, maeth. (CBT II 21.5–8)

On Thursday without doubt was slaughter for us / in Y Penrhyn above Penrhos, / on Anglesey, within her island, / I am struck with a bright blade.

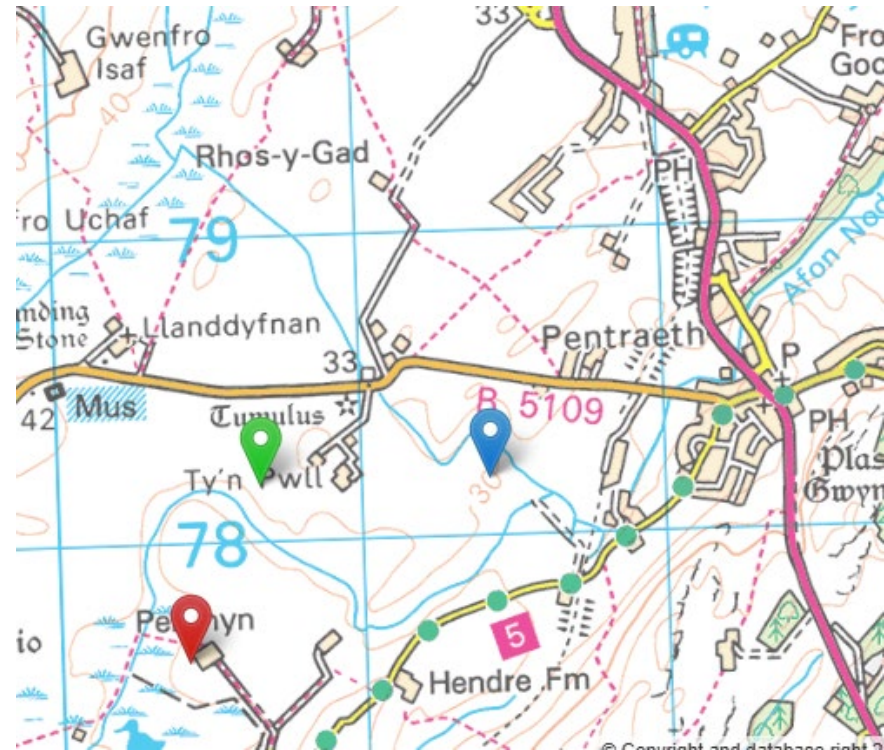
May God avenge the grievous grief for Hywel, [...]
him and his foster brothers, great men.



<https://historicplacenames.rcahm.gov.uk/placenames?q=penrhyn>

His death in battle (II)

- Graves discovered in 1903 at Rhos-y-gad ('the marsh of battle') have been supposed to be those of men killed in the battle of Pentraeth.
- In Hywel's elegy, five sons of Cedifor are said to have been killed: Aearddur, Rhirid, Addaf, Brochfael and Iddon.
- The latter two killed *ar lles draig yn llys dragon* 'for the benefit of a dragon in the dragons' court'; perhaps captured and executed later.
- Also Caradog ap Cedifor, in a stray englyn (but need not be the same battle).
- Elegy for Hywel and his foster brothers (the set text) says that of seven, only three remain, i.e. four killed: presumably the first three named above and Hywel himself.
- The set text was probably composed very soon after the battle, with the other elegy composed some time later, for his funeral...



<https://historicplacenames.rcahm.gov.uk/placenames?q=penrhyn>

His death in battle (III)

Am fyned Hywel, hawl ddiachor – traws,

(Daeth tristyd i'm cyngor),

Yn naear franar Fangor

Doe, a dau fab Cedifor.

(CBT II 21.33–6)

‘Because of Hywel’s going, one of the insuperable right of the mighty, / sadness came to my mind, / into the fresh-turned earth of Bangor / yesterday, and the two sons of Cedifor.’

Fy nghalon a gryn rhag erchlais – y frân,

Dechrau gwân, dychrynais,

Gwae fi, pan 'i harhoais:

Gwayw yn Hywel a welais.

(CBT II 21.37–40)

‘My heart trembles from the terrible voice of the crow/ at the beginning of the attack, I became fearful, / woe is me, when I suffered it: I saw a spear in Hywel.’

Brân a gre yn y gyfarthfa,

Ni ddarogan im ddim da

Bod mab brenin gwyn Gwynedd

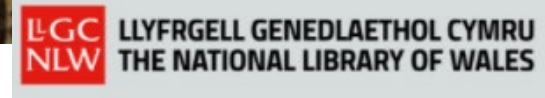
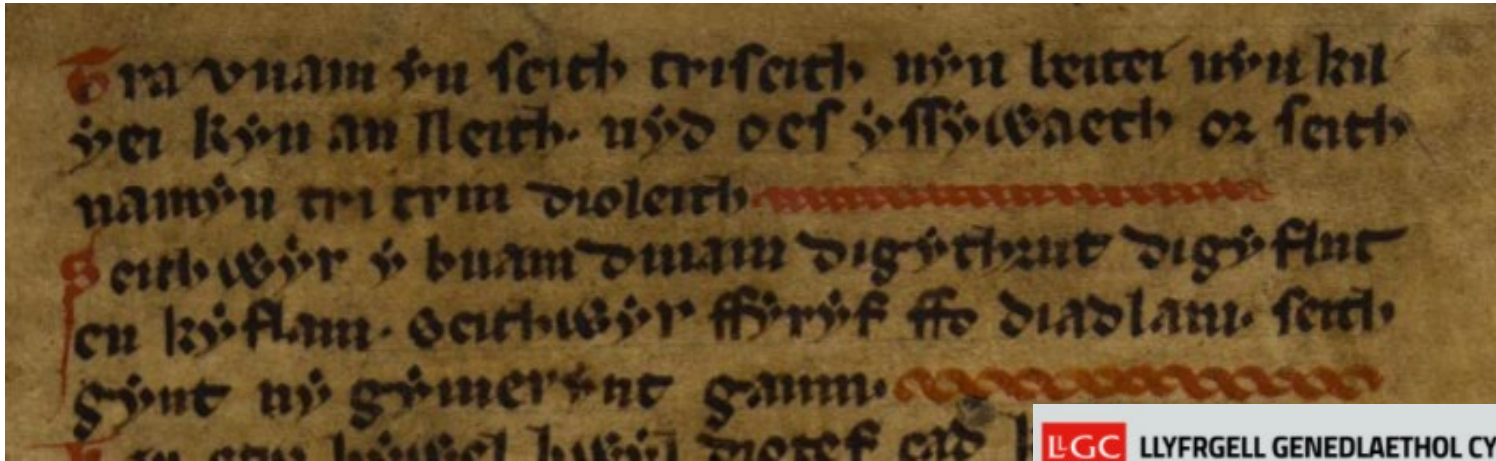
Yn gorwedd yn yr aerfa.

(CBT II 21.41–44) (last *englyn*)

Crows caw in the battle [literally. ‘barking’], / it prophecies no good to me / that the fair son of the king of Gwynedd / lies on the battlefield.



Marwnad Meibion Cedifor



6 x *englyn unodl union*

- A four-line stanza with the first two lines being a *toddaid byr* of 10 and 6 syllables, and the last two a couplet of 7 syllables each.
- A single main rhyme is sustained within each stanza. but ...
- ... in the first, 10-syllable line the main rhyme is sustained not by the word at end of the line but by one ending with the seventh, eighth or ninth syllable. A dash ('-') is placed after this word in modern editions, and the one, two or three syllables that follow it are called the *gair cyrch*.

The manuscript: **Llawysgrif Hendregadredd**, folio 130r (and some later copies)
<https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/hendregadredd-manuscript>

Sources

Nerys Ann Jones (ed.), *Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd: Bardd-dywysog* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2009)

Kathleen Anne Bramley, Nerys Ann Jones, Morfydd E. Owen, Catherine McKenna, Gruffydd Aled Williams a J.E. Caerwyn Williams (goln.) *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1994) [*Peryf ap Cedifor's poems were edited by Morfydd E. Owen, and Hywel's by Kathleen Anne Bramley*]

Translations from the poems (other than the set text, translated by Ann Parry Owen) are my own (Jenny Day).