

Garth Bryngi is Dewi's honourable hill,  
 And Trallwng Cynfyn above the meadows;  
 Llanfaes the lofty—no breath of war shall touch it,  
 No host shall disturb the churchmen of Llywel.<sup>251</sup>

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It may not be amiss to recall the fact that these possessions of St. David's brought here in the twelfth century, to reside at Llandduw as Archdeacon of Brecon, a scholar of Penfro who did much to preserve for future ages the traditions of his adopted country. Giraldus will not admit the claim of any region in Wales to rival his beloved Dyfed, but he is nevertheless hearty in his commendation of the sheltered vales, the teeming rivers and the well-stocked pastures of Brycheiniog.<sup>252</sup>

#### IV. THE CANTREFS OF MORGANNWG.

The well-sunned plains which, from the mouth of the Tawe to that of the Wye, skirt the northern shore of the Bristol Channel enjoy a mild and genial climate and have from the earliest times been the seat of important settlements. Roman civilisation gained a firm foothold in the district, as may be seen from its remains at Cardiff, Caerleon and Caerwent. Monastic centres of the first rank were established here, at Llanilltud, Llanancarfan and Llandaff, during the age of early Christian enthusiasm. Politically, too, the region stood apart from the rest of South Wales, in virtue, it may be, of the strength of the old Silurian traditions, and it maintained, through many vicissitudes, its independence under its own princes until the eve of the Norman Conquest. It had its own bishop, seated at Llandaff, and never acknowledged the supremacy of David, whose sway was so mighty in the rest of Deheubarth.

Until the middle of the seventh century the political history of the district is obscure.<sup>253</sup> Tradition spoke of a King Glywys, who ruled over the greater part of it, namely, that portion between the Tawe and the Usk afterwards known as Glywysing, and whose sons, including Gwynllyw, the father of St. Cadog, divided their father's realm between them.<sup>254</sup> But the dynasty

<sup>251</sup> *Myv. Arch.* I. 271 (194).

<sup>252</sup> *Wks.* vi. 33, 36 (*Itin.* i. 2).

<sup>253</sup> Without accepting every document contained in the *Liber Landavensis* as authentic, one may use the evidence supplied by the compilation in drawing the broad outlines of the history of the period, and this I have endeavoured to do.

<sup>254</sup> *Cambro-Br. SS.* 22, 145. The antiquity of the form Glywysing is shown by its appearance in *Hist. Britt.* c. 41 (Gleguissing in the best texts), the chronicle

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was short-lived; in a generation or two its place was taken by another, represented about 630 by one Meurig ap Tewdrig, who held not only Glywysing but also the region between the Usk and the Wye known from the ancient tribal centre of Venta or Caerwent as Gwent. The legend ran that Meurig's father Tewdrig had been mortally wounded in conflict with the English at the ford of Tintern on the Wye,<sup>255</sup> and it is most probable that this river now formed the boundary between the two races for a considerable distance from its mouth. In due course, Meurig was succeeded by his grandson, Morgan ab Athrwy's,<sup>256</sup> known as Morgan Mwynfawr or the Benefactor; this prince was a contemporary of Rhain of Dyfed and Seisyll of Ceredigion (*circa* 730), so that it was pretty certainly from him the realm gained the name, in later ages so familiar, of Morgannwg.<sup>257</sup> Morgan was succeeded by his son Ithel; in the next generation a division of the realm seems to have taken place between the sons of Ithel. Ffernfael ab Ithel, who died in 775,<sup>258</sup> was king of Gwent, where also his descendants bore rule,<sup>259</sup> until the line ended with his grandson, Ithel ab Athrwy's, in 848.<sup>260</sup> The other sons, Rhys, Rhodri and Meurig, seem to have been kings of Glywysing, but the course of events west of the Usk in the

in Harl. MS. 3859, *s.a.* 864 (*Cymr.* ix. 165), and Asser, c. 80 (Gleguising). It did not include Gwent, and, on the other hand, while it included Gwynllwg (*Cambro-Br.* SS. 95), it was not, as is alleged in *Iolo MSS.* 18, a mere *alias* of it. In *Lib. Land.* the term seems often to be used loosely as an equivalent of Morgannwg (see pp. 137, 156, where Gwent is included), but this may well be due to the ignorance of the compiler.

<sup>255</sup> *Lib. Land.* 141-2.

<sup>256</sup> Athrwy's does not seem to have ruled himself, unless he was under king in Gwent (*Lib. Land.* 165-6).

<sup>257</sup> This view differs from that of Mr. Phillimore (Owen, *Pemb.* i. 208), who ascribes the origin of the name to Morgan the Aged (d. 974). It certainly does not occur in any good authority of older date; on the other hand, the "seven cantrefs of Morgannwg" were not as a whole under the rule of the later Morgan, and it seems but natural to suppose the name came into existence at the same time as Rheinwg and Seisyllwg. Since the elder Morgan's grandson Ffernfael died in 775, I do not think he can well be the "Morcant" of Harl. MS. 3859 *s.a.* 665; he belongs rather, with Rhain and Seisyll, to the beginning of the eighth century.

<sup>258</sup> Harl. MS. 3859 *s.a.* (*Cymr.* ix. 162).

<sup>259</sup> This may be inferred from the grants ascribed to Ffernfael and his sons in *Lib. Land.*

<sup>260</sup> "Iudhail rex guent a iuris broceniawc (Brycheiniog) occisus est" (Harl. MS. 3859, *s.a.* in *Cymr.* ix. 165). His pedigree is given in the same MS. (*Cymr.* ix. 181-2) as far back as Tewdrig and, stopping short with him, implies that he left no descendants.

middle of the ninth century is involved in much obscurity, for, when the political arrangements of the district of Morgannwg are once more clearly revealed, about 870, Gwent is under the sway of a great-grandson of Ithel, one Meurig ab Arthfael ap Rhys,<sup>261</sup> while Glywysing has as its ruler one Hywel ap Rhys, of quite uncertain pedigree.<sup>262</sup>

Like Dyfed, Morgannwg was reputed a land of seven cantrefs.<sup>263</sup> Six of these were generally known; they were Gorfynydd, Penychen, Y Cantref Breiniol ("The Privileged Cantref"), Gwynllwg, Gwent Iscoed and Gwent Uchcoed ("Below" and "Above the Wood"). As to the seventh there was less agreement; the likeliest view is that it lay in our Herefordshire, where the two regions of Erging (Archenfield) and Ewias remained thoroughly Welsh up to the time of the Norman Conquest. The first five of these cantrefs bordered on the sea; each had its tract of fertile land along the coast and behind this a wide extent of mountain or forest; the "bro" or champaign country was thickly peopled, while the "blaenau" or mountain glens, now among the busiest seats of industry in the Empire, were left to the browsing cattle and the hunter's quarry. From the mouth of the Tawe to that of the Thaw (anciently the Naddawan) stretched the cantref of Gorfynydd;<sup>264</sup> here were the ancient churches of Margam and Llanilltud Fawr, the former of unknown history,<sup>265</sup> the latter a wealthy foundation, main-

<sup>261</sup> For Meurig's pedigree see Harl. MS. 3859 in *Cymr.* ix. 182. His position is indicated in *Lib. Land.* 200, 226.

<sup>262</sup> The pedigree of Hywel ap Rhys is not to be found in Harl. MS. 3859, probably because Owain ap Hywel Dda was unwilling to recognise the rights of the family. In Jesus Coll. MS. 20 (*Cymr.* viii. 85, No. ix.) he is connected with Ithel ap Morgan, but the pedigree is a generation or two too long and its details are not attested by other authorities.

<sup>263</sup> *Mab.* 59. Cf. *Cambro-Br.* SS. 145: "septem pagos rexit Gulat morgantie," though this is a wrong use of Gwlad Forgan.

<sup>264</sup> So termed in the Red Book of Hergest (*Bruts*, 412) and therefore to be explained, it may be, as the land beyond the mountain (from the point of view of Gower). Other forms found are Gorenydd (so practically in *Cymr.* ix. 331), Gorfennydd (*Triad* iii. 14) and, most unsatisfactory of all, Gro Nedd. For the boundary between Gorfynydd and Penychen see *Cambro-Br.* SS. 53. The commotes of the two cantrefs, as usually given, appear to me to be subsequent in date to the Norman Conquest. They are the "members" of the lordship of Glamorgan, and do not include its main body, now known as the Vale or "Bro". Cf. Owen, *Pemb.* i. 427.

<sup>265</sup> *Margan* (the *m* does not occur in any ancient authority) was originally the name of a district, probably a commote of Gorfynydd; see Geoff. Mon. ii. 15:

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taining with dignity the traditions of the days of Illtud, and both remarkable for the many examples they had to show of elaborate carving in the Celtic fashion. The wheel crosses of Margam and Llanilltud, adorned with intricate plait-work, form a group of monuments of great interest and bear witness to the existence in Gorfynydd in the ninth and tenth centuries of a school of carvers in stone of considerable technical facility.<sup>266</sup> The inscriptions which many of them bear have not cast much light upon the history of the period; probably, however, one may recognise the Hywel ap Rhys of Asser and the Liber Landavensis in the person who speaks in the following epitaph from Llanilltud: "In the name of God the Father and the Holy Spirit Houelt set up this cross for the soul of his father Res".<sup>267</sup> Llanilltud may well have been a royal burying-place, for its abbot was one of the three great ecclesiastics of the diocese of Llandaff and the revenues of its "clas" were drawn from many a manor of Morgannwg.<sup>268</sup> Across the Thaw was the cantref of Penychen,<sup>269</sup> extending as far as the Taff; this also contained two ecclesiastical centres of the first rank, the one the seat of the bishop of Morgannwg, the other at Nant Carfan (corruptly, Llancarfan),<sup>270</sup> the principal "clas" of St. Cadog and a match in affluence and historic dignity to the not far distant Llanilltud Fawr. The abbot of Nant Carfan ruled over a community of thirty-six canons, who included a priest, a master or teacher, a sexton, and three custodians of sacred relics; broad lands around

"in pago Kambriae qui, post interfectionem Margani, eius nomine, videlicet Margan, hucusque a pagensibus appellatus est". Merthyr Mawr was within it (*Lib. Land.* 224).

<sup>266</sup> *Lap. W.* 8-15, 25-30; *Margam Abb.* chap. x.; *Arch. Camb.* V. xvi. (1899), 136-68; Allen, *Celtic Art*, p. 186.

<sup>267</sup> Rhys does not accept this identification (*Arch. Camb.* V. xvi. (1899), 155), but this is because he is concerned to show that the stone may be of as early a date as the seventh century. As against this date see Allen, *Celtic Art*, p. 179.

<sup>268</sup> See *Lib. Land. passim* for "abbas sancti Ilduti" ("abbas Lannildut," 145). The "abbas Carvani vallis" (or "Sancti Catoci") and the "abbas Docguinni" (of Llandough near Penarth—*Margam Abb.* 3) appear no less frequently. There is no direct evidence as to the possessions of Llanilltud, but the statement of *Cambro-Br.* SS. 168 (habentes . . . singuli suam villam) rests, no doubt, upon fact.

<sup>269</sup> The district appears (as Penn Ohen) in Wrmonoc's life of Paul Aurelian (*Rev. Celt.* v. p. 418), and was therefore a well-known area in the ninth century.

<sup>270</sup> See chap. vii. note 52.

the settlement provided the means of its support.<sup>271</sup> There was nothing essentially different in the organisation of the cathedral church of Llandaff. The place of the abbot was taken, indeed, by the bishop, but in other respects the analogy was close. A "priest of Teilo" represented the later dean; twenty-four canons (if not a greater number) formed the "clas" or "household" of the saint,<sup>272</sup> and if the territorial claims of Llandaff, as put forward by enterprising bishops, were more ambitious than those of Llancarfan, this was a circumstance due to the wider distribution of Teilo churches than of those which claimed the protection of Cadog.

The Taff and the Rhymini, flowing south from the mountains of Brycheiniog in parallel valleys but a few miles apart, were the western and eastern boundaries of Cantref Breiniol. Wherein the privilege of this cantref stood is not stated by tradition; it is possible, indeed, that the name is of later date than the Norman Conquest of Glamorgan, for there are some indications that the ancient title was Senghenydd, a term limited in later times to that part of the cantref which lay north of the ridge of Cefn On.<sup>273</sup> The district contained no important church or ecclesiastical manor and may, therefore, have always been, as it certainly was in later ages, the chief seat of civil power in Morgannwg. But there is no good evidence that the site of Cardiff Castle was occupied by any royal residence in the interval between the ruin of the Roman fort and the choice of

<sup>271</sup> *Cambro-Br.* SS. 82-96. Both the "presbiter" or "sacerdos" and the "magister" or "doctor" of St. Cadog find a place in *Lib. Land.* (258, 268, 272, 273, 274).

<sup>272</sup> The "sacerdos teiliav" and the "familia teliaui" are mentioned in the marginalia of the Book of St. Chad (*Lib. Land.* xliii. xlvi.); for the former see also *Lib. Land.* 247, 258, 264, 273. Bishop Urban gives the number of canons (*Lib. Land.* 88).

<sup>273</sup> The "Tref Eliau in Seghenid" of *Lib. Land.* 255-7 has been supposed to be Roath (*ibid.* 382) and was certainly on the coast. Thus the term at this date included Cibwyr or Kibor, as well as the Senghenydd of later times, for the limits of which see Owen, *Pemb.* i. 258, and *Arch. Camb.* IV. viii. (1877), 264-9. Before its division into the commotes of Uwch Caeach and Is Caeach, Senghenydd was itself a commote, which is what Giraldus means when he calls it the fourth part of a cantref (vi. 170 (*Descr.* i. 4); cf. 34 (*Itin.* i. 2)—"kemmoti, id est, quartae partis cantaredi"). It may be added that the way in which he seems in this passage to leave Cibwyr out of account in his analysis of the constitution of the diocese of Llandaff suggests that the authority he followed used Senghenydd in the older and wider sense. The "Sein Henyd" of B.T. (*Bruts.* 353, 355, 359, 360, 363) is a place in Gower.

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the spot by Robert Fitz Hamon as the head of his newly won lordship.<sup>274</sup> The remaining cantref of the old realm of King Glywys lay between the Rhymni and the Usk; it took from his son Gwynllw the name of Gwynllwg which, in the form Wentloog, has survived to the present day.<sup>275</sup> On a height near the mouth of the Usk, looking out over the marshy flats of the Severn estuary, was the church of Gwynllw (now St. Woollo's), served by a "clas," ruled by an officer, who, though he once may have been an abbot, was in more recent times a dean, and consecrated in the affections of the cantref by many a tale of miraculous help rendered to the men of Gwynllwg in their days of sore need and tribulation.<sup>276</sup> Another church of high standing in the cantref was Basaleg, a "basilica"<sup>277</sup> of which the ancient traditions were submerged by the devouring tide of the Norman Conquest, but which is known to have been the mother church of most of the land between the Rhymni and the Ebbw.<sup>278</sup>

The two cantrefs of the kingdom of Gwent occupied the region enclosed by the Usk, the Wye, the Monnow and the sea. A great forest, of which a large portion still remains under the name of Wentwood, divided the low-lying tract along the Bristol Channel from the northern uplands and thus parted the realm into Gwent Iscoed and Gwent Uchcoed.<sup>279</sup> Of these two divisions the seaboard one, though much the smaller, was the more important. It was famed for its fertility; the renown of the wheat and the bees of Maes Gwenith, on the banks of the Troggy, passed for a proverb throughout the whole of

<sup>274</sup> So Mr. J. S. Corbett in the *Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society*, vol. xxxiii. (1900-1), pp. 26-7. Mounds of the type of that on which the keep is erected are no longer regarded as pre-Norman.

<sup>275</sup> See chap. v. note 168.

<sup>276</sup> *Cambro-Br. SS.* 145-57 (Vita S. Gundleii). The "decanus ecclesie" is mentioned on p. 156.

<sup>277</sup> The derivation is suggested by Prof. Hugh Williams (*Gildas*, p. 29). Notwithstanding the occurrence in mediæval Welsh literature of the form Maesaleg, this cannot be the Campus Elleti of *Hist. Britt.* c. 41, which is rather to be looked for in the neighbourhood of the Palus Elleti of *Lib. Land.* 148, *i.e.*, near the river Thaw in S. Glamorgan.

<sup>278</sup> In addition to the chapels of Henllys and Risca assigned to it by Rees (*Welsh SS.* 342), Machen, Bedwas, Mynydd Islwyn, and Coed Cemyw were regarded as chapels of Basaleg about 1100 (*Cartae Glam.* i. 2).

<sup>279</sup> "Coit guent" is mentioned in *Lib. Land.* 262 (bounds of "Hennriu in Lebinid").

Wales.<sup>280</sup> Here the princes of Gwent held court,<sup>281</sup> and here was Caerwent, from which the region took its name, once the Silurian capital—if we may dignify it with such a name—but since the days of St. Tathan the ecclesiastical and not the civil centre.<sup>282</sup> The saint was reputed to have been a famous teacher, the head of a “studium” or college of the same monastic type as that of Illtud; he founded a “clas” of the first rank, of which an abbot had the direction. All the men of Gwent revered him as the father of their land, its guardian and the avenger of its wrongs. In Upper Gwent there were no sites of like importance. It was a thriving land, dotted over with churches, but its traditions were matters of local interest, which had not caught the fancy of Wales at large. The bishop of Llandaff, it should be added, drew no small part of his income from the prosperous plains of Gwent; important manors at Llangadwaladr (now Bishton), Merthyr Tewdrig or Mathern, Llaneuddogwy or Llandogo, and in the valley of the Trothy sent their produce to maintain the state of the great monastery on the Taff.<sup>283</sup>

Two outlying members of the older Morgannwg remain to be noticed, namely, Ewias and Erging.<sup>284</sup> The former lay between Brycheiniog and the valley of the Dore—a land of long and narrow mountain glens, of which the streams run southward side by side to the Monnow. Most of it is now included in the county of Hereford, which has also absorbed the richer

<sup>280</sup> Triad i. 30 = ii. 56 = iii. 101. The place is a little north of Llanfair Discoed (Owen, *Pemb.* i. 236).

<sup>281</sup> The royal court of “Lisarcors” was somewhere in lower Gwent (*Cambro-Br.* SS. 156), and so too the “palacium” to which King Caradog ab Ynyr moved when he resigned Caerwent to St. Tathan, for it was between that city and the Severn, perhaps at Caldicot (*Cambro-Br.* SS. 259).

<sup>282</sup> The life of St. Tathan, a saint’s day homily (“cuius hodiernam festivitatem celebramus,” p. 263) composed by a Norman writer (observe the use of “indigene” on p. 264), is to be found in *Cambro-Br.* SS. 255-64. Caerwent Church is now dedicated to St. Stephen, but evidence is not lacking to show that Tathan was the original patron—see *Ann. Theokesb. s.a.* 1235 (p. 96); *Iolo MSS.* 114, 132, 151. Hence the “presbiteri tathiu” of *Lib. Land.* 270 are clergy of Caerwent; the “abbas guentonie urbis” appears on p. 222, and on pp. 243, 245 a “lector urbis guenti”.

<sup>283</sup> *Lib. Land.* 180-3, 141-3, 156, etc.; *Tax. Nich.* 280; *App. Land Com.* 446.

<sup>284</sup> The translator of “Brut y Brenhinoedd” perversely renders the “Wissei” and “Gewissei” of Geoff. Mon. as “Ergig ac Ewas,” the latter, it may be remarked, a late Welsh form (*Bruts*, 109, 127, 252).

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district of Erging, known to the English by the name of Arch-enfield. Erging was bounded by the Wye, the Worm and the Monnow; though so close to the gates of Hereford, it was a stronghold of Welsh customs and ideas as late as the end of the twelfth century. The Welsh saints were honoured throughout the district, and among them St. David had a great church at Much Dewchurch,<sup>285</sup> and Dyfrig, who was (if we may believe his legend) by birth and residence a man of Erging, a group of churches which commanded the allegiance of the dwellers along the winding banks of the Wye.<sup>286</sup>

#### AUTHORITIES FOR EARLY WELSH TOPOGRAPHY.

##### I. LISTS OF CANTREFS AND COMMOTES.

Four lists of the cantrefs and commotes of Wales are to be found in MS., representing the work of four editors or compilers. The oldest is probably that contained in Cottonian MS. Domitian viii. ff. 119-20b (printed, not very accurately, in Leland's *Itinerary*, ed. 1769, v. 16-20), for, though the writing is said to be of the fifteenth century, the forms of the names imply an original of the twelfth or thirteenth (*Cymr.* xi. 168). Next comes the list in the Red Book of Hergest, cols. 377-80, written about 1400 and printed, first in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, II. 606-12 (737-40), where it is printed on the lower half of the page, and more recently by Rhys and Evans in *Bruts*, 407-12. A third list occurs in Hengwrt MS. 34 = Peniarth MS. 50 (Y Cwta Cyfarwydd), pp. 133-8, written about 1450 and printed in *Cymr.* ix. 326-31. The fourth is in Hengwrt MS. 352 = Peniarth MS. 163, pp. 57-60, and was transcribed by Gruffydd Hiraethog in the year 1543; it will be found in full in Evans, *Rep.* i. p. 952-54. The upper list in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* (II. 606-13 (735-7)) is substantially that of Gruffydd Hiraethog.

Not one of these lists can be implicitly trusted, though they go far to correct each other's errors. The Cottonian list is defective in the section Ceredigion and throughout is atrociously spelt, but in other respects it is fairly accurate. Its order is—Y Berfeddwlad, Powys (including Arwystli), Gwynedd (including Penllyn), Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, Deheubarth, Morgannwg. The chief mistakes are the misplacement of Nant Conwy, the transposition of Uwch and Is Rhaeadr (this runs through all the lists save that of Gruffydd Hiraethog), the omission of Buellt and serious confusion in Gwynllwg and Gwent. The Red Book list follows the order—Y Berfeddwlad, Gwynedd (including Penllyn, Cyfeiliog, and other border districts), Powys (including Arwystli), Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, Deheubarth, Morgannwg. In the North Wales portion there are many errors, but the Dyfed and Ystrad Tywi sections are almost flawless. The older Peniarth list follows the same order as Dom. viii. but places Arwystli at the end of Gwynedd; its chief defect is wrong bracketing, which extends to nearly every section. Morgannwg, where it was written, naturally shows the fewest blunders. Gruffydd Hiraethog's order is his own, *viz.*, Gwynedd (including Arwystli and Penllyn), Powys, Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, Deheubarth, with Morgannwg and Gwent sandwiched between Brycheiniog and Dyfed. This list professes to be based on a

<sup>285</sup> Rees, *Welsh SS.* 53.<sup>286</sup> Chap. v. note 114.