

**MONASTIC DEVELOPMENT AND DISSOLUTION IN WALES:
CONTINUITY OR CHANGE FOR UCHELWYR? A CASE
STUDY OF STRATA FLORIDA'S BLAENAERON GRANGE**

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of what happened to monastic estates in Wales following the Dissolution of the Monasteries between 1536 and 1540, when the majority of former monastic land in Wales was absorbed into the estates of secular Welsh elites, or *uchelwyr*. The lens through which this broad topic is viewed is one of the granges of the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida, namely Blaenaeron grange. Through this case study the thesis accomplishes two things: it identifies elements of continuity in land use and occupancy despite the change from monastic to secular lordship, and at the same time, determines the impact of that newly-acquired land on the social and political lives of the landowners.

The effects of the Dissolution on former Welsh monastic land has not been studied in the same depth as for England. Yet Wales cannot be treated as a shadow of England. The dissolution occurred at the same time as the passage of the Acts of Union with Wales (1535-1542), making the period immediately post-dissolution a time of great change for Wales in more ways than one. It saw not only an availability of large swathes of former monastic land, but also changes in laws allowing native Welshmen more freedoms in landownership, society, and government. How these changes were felt by the *uchelwyr*, and the importance of these monastic lands in the processes of the changes, were previously left unaddressed.

This thesis addresses two questions: was there continuity of land use from the pre-monastic period to post-dissolution, and how did the sudden availability of land for purchase in Wales coinciding with legal changes allowing native Welsh to purchase land impact on the Welsh elite class, or *uchelwyr*? Strata Florida's grange of Blaenaeron was the case study selected for this research as there is a large body of documentary evidence for the grange post-dissolution through estate records, most notably the Trawscoed Estate records belonging to the Vaughan family, and government documents. Documentary evidence is supported by landscape clues found in place names, monuments, maps, and narrative histories, all of which are applied to the manorial template established in the *Llyfr Iorwerth*.

What emerges through this material is the story of long family connections with their lands, and the application of previously established social and political connections to return the land to the control of the family. The Vaughan family of Trawscoed had obtained ownership of Blaenaeron grange in its entirety by 1630, nearly a hundred years after dissolution. However, their documented family associations with that land began as early as the thirteenth century. Estate records support Vaughan relationships with landholdings within Blaenaeron grange beginning with the earliest surviving records, offering a picture of multilevel continuity on the land. The Vaughan family's pre-existing political and social standing appears to have aided in their 1630 land purchase, rather than the land purchase facilitating their rise in standing. All of this indicates a strong affiliation with family land in Wales leading to a determination to remain in place despite changes happening in the larger political and social spheres.

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Abbreviations

Repositories

NLW: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales

PRO: Public Record Office

TNA: The National Archives, Kew, Surrey

C: Chancery

E: Exchequer

SC: Special Collections

Periodicals

AC: *Archaeologia Cambrensis*

Primary Sources

Augm: *Records of the Court of Augmentations relating to Wales*, ed. E. A. Lewis and J. Conway Davies, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1954

AWR *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010)

BT *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS 20 Version*, ed. by T. Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952)

Charter: *Calendar of the Charter Rolls* (London: HMSO, 1903–)

Close: *Calendar of the Close Rolls* (London: HMSO, 1902–)

GW Journey *The Journey Through Wales/ The Description of Wales*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978)

LC: *Letters to Cromwell*, ed. by G. H. Cook (London: J. Baker, 1965)

LP: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London: HMSO, 2nd edn. 1920–)

- Monasticon*: William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (London: Brown & Smith, 1718), revised by J. Caley, H. Ellis, and B. Bandinel, 6 vols in 8 (London, 1817–30)
- Patent*: *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* (London: HMSO, 1903–)
- VE: *Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp. Henry VIII*, ed. J. Caley *et al* (London: Record Commission, 1810–1834)

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Introduction

The dissolution of the monasteries has been seen by many as a cataclysmic event in the history of religious observance in England and Wales. Certainly, it brought to an end a way of life for a minority of individuals – those men and women who followed a monastic rule. In some cases, it had an immediate impact on the built environment, as monastic houses fell into ruins. According to one strand of historical scholarship it also brought about a revolution in land tenure and organisation. This thesis makes a contribution to this historical debate about the significance of the closure of the monasteries under King Henry VIII of England between 1536 and 1540. It is about a neglected subject: the impact that the dissolution of the monasteries had on the administration of lands owned by the religious orders in Wales. It poses fundamental questions. How did the dissolution impact upon the tenants of former monastic lands, if at all? Did the landowners who came into possession of these lands gain political and social status as a result of the acquisitions of these landholdings, or, conversely, did their previous status play a part in their gaining possession of the estates? These broad questions are approached through a case study of the grange of Blaenaeron, an estate of the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida. This estate is particularly well represented in documentary evidence, and also offers the potential for archaeological investigation of the landscape.

Wales and the Dissolution

As will be demonstrated in Chapter 1, the dissolution of the monasteries in England has been investigated in depth by historians since the nineteenth century. Not only has that same event (or series of events) in Wales received less attention, but a

further problem can be discerned: the tendency to treat the history of Wales as a subsection within the history of England, which is problematic because their histories, whilst connected, are not the same. Indeed, in common with monastic studies generally, historians have tended to exhibit an Anglocentric approach, treating English and Welsh religious houses as a single phenomenon and, when writing of particular orders such as the Cistercian, have grouped English and Welsh houses together, with no discrimination. For instance, the Welsh houses are found alongside the English houses in Glyn Coppack's *The White Monks: The Cistercians in Britain 1128–1540*,¹ and in Colin Platt's more general *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England*.² Dom David Knowles, the great historian of English monasticism, only occasionally mentions Wales in his works, and when he does he is generally disparaging.³ They cannot be criticised too much for this as both Platt and Knowles indicate in the titles of their works that their intended focus is on England. It is notable, however, that Knowles is dismissive of the Welsh houses, as if they are second class. In Janet Burton's 'The Cistercian Adventure', in David Robinson's *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Men*, the Welsh Cistercians are recognized separately from the English Cistercian monasteries, and her more recent publications with co-author Karen Stöber *Monastic Wales, New Approaches* and *Abbeys and Priories of Medieval Wales* focus specifically on the religious

¹ Glyn Coppack, *The White Monks: The Cistercians in Britain 1128–1540* (Stroud: Tempus, 1998).

² Colin Platt, *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1984).

³ Dom David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vols 1–3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948, 1955, 1959); David Knowles, *Bare Ruined Choirs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940–1216*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1963); see also the comments in Janet Burton, 'After Knowles: new directions in monastic studies in England and Wales', in Dominic Aidan Bellenger and Simon Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule: David Knowles and the writing of history* (Stratton-on-Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2014), pp. 117–38.

houses in Wales.⁴ While David Williams's *Tudor Cistercians* includes the Welsh with the English, he did write a separate volume specifically addressing *The Welsh Cistercians*, as well as an *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales*.⁵ Wales did indeed have its own medieval monastic history, separate from that of England or the rest of the monastic world, and the end of the monastic era in Wales was, arguably, distinctive. It will be demonstrated that it was a time of both continuity and change.

The disruptive nature of the dissolution in England has been considered in many works. Among the losses felt in England, Baskerville includes such intangibles as the loss of prayer and pilgrimage. Services provided by religious houses such as medical and spiritual care also ended with the closing of the monasteries. In many cases, the physical buildings, as well as their contents, vanished. New proprietors stripped the interiors of what remained following the Crown's men taking what they could at the time of the closure. Monastic lands saw perhaps the most dramatic change. The Court of Augmentations was created in 1536 for the dispersal of former monastic property. Great monastic estates were split up and sold to local buyers or awarded to those loyal to the Crown. Officials of the Court of Augmentations took advantage of their posts to further their own landholdings through acquiring monastic property as well.⁶

⁴ Janet Burton, 'The Cistercian Adventure', in David Robinson, ed., *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Men* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1998), pp. 7–33; Janet Burton and Karen Stöber, ed., *Monastic Wales, New Approaches* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013); Janet Burton and Karen Stöber, *Abbeys and Priors of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015).

⁵ David H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians*, 2 vols (Caldey Island, Tenby: Cyhoeddiadau Sisteriaidd, 1984), revised in a single volume under the same title (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001); references in this thesis are to the revised edition. See also David H. Williams, *The Tudor Cistercians* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014); David H. Williams, *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990).

⁶ Geoffrey Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937) pp. 275–78; G. W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012); G.W. Bernard, 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries', in Dominic Bellenger and Simon Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule – David Knowles and the Writing of History* (Stratton-on-the-Fosse: Downside

In spite of the upheaval felt in Wales as the monasteries closed, it can be argued that the same people remained in the same places, doing roughly the same things before and after the dissolution. Austin and Bezant have noted that the pollen record in Wales does not reflect the agrarian troubles, desertion of farms, and market collapses which were taking place in the rest of Europe in the late medieval period that preceded the dissolution.⁷ Rather, that same period in Wales shows economic continuity reflected in the Welsh landscape. As will be discussed below, in studying the palynology from the wetland Cors Caron and vicinity, which later included the lands of Blaenaeron grange, Austin and Bezant have found pre-monastic evidence of what they term ‘survivals of practice as embedded in the landscape’, a clear pattern of mixed farming centred on lowland foci, with access to common resources in the vicinity.⁸ This may explain why, when large landowners in England were transitioning to leasehold farming, Strata Florida seems to have been doing this from the start.

This thesis will argue that the pattern of continuity remained unbroken following the dissolution in Wales as well. Daily life did not alter on the former monastic estates when they returned to secular oversight, except that the landlord was someone new. The connected nature of locality and identity in Wales is an important link which kept people living on and working the same lands as their ancestors, maintaining continuity regardless of the changing identity or nature of the

Abbey Press, 2014), pp. 211–36; James Clark, ‘The Religious Orders in England and the End of the Middle Ages’, in Dominic Bellenger and Simon Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule – David Knowles and the Writing of History* (Stratton-on-the-Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2014), pp. 177–207; Knowles, *Bare Ruined Choirs*, pp. 281–87; See also Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, iii, p. 383 et seq., p. 456 et seq.

⁷ David Austin and Jemma Bezant, ‘The Medieval Landscapes of Cardiganshire’, *Cardiganshire County History* vol. 2 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 1–42 (pp. 8–9).

⁸ Austin and Bezant, ‘Medieval Landscapes’, pp. 5–9.

centre of power as it moved from regional lord to monastic estate and, eventually, back to individual family possession post-dissolution.

Dissolution in Wales was at the same time a potential engine of change for social and political development, providing new opportunities for the Welsh elite, or *uchelwyr*, to take the reins. The availability of monastic land in Wales to the *uchelwyr* post-Dissolution provided a means through which *uchelwyr* could expand their landholdings and increase their political and social influence. The land, though, saw little change in management despite the shift from monastic grange to secular estate.⁹

The dissolution of the monasteries in both England and Wales was, on one level, an act of state by the English Crown. Yet on another level, on the ground, it was carried out by the Welsh *uchelwyr*.¹⁰ It was not the English, but the *uchelwyr* who held the land and set the laws in Wales during that time of great change for the nation, following the Act of Dissolution and the Act of Union. In the same period, large areas of land were made available for purchase, and Welshmen were legally permitted to purchase it.

Following the dissolution of the abbey, Strata Florida lands made their way into the hands of local Welsh landowners. Blaenaeron grange was no exception, as it was purchased in 1630 by Welsh landowner Sir John Vaughan, at which point it became part of the Vaughan family's Trawscoed Estate. The 1630 purchase was a turning point for the vast expansion it provided the estate, but whether the possession of the Strata Florida lands made the Vaughan family the force it became, politically

⁹ This is discussed further in Chapter 3 below.

¹⁰ Glanmor Williams, *Renewal and Reformation Wales c. 1415–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 289–93.

and socially, has previously gone unexamined. This research will provide some understanding of the importance that the formerly monastic lands may have held on a rising elite in Wales, and what that meant within the context of Wales's social and political structures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Objectives of study

This study will use the Strata Florida grange of Blaenaeron as a window through which to explore continuity and change. It argues for a fundamental continuity in the majority of former monastic land in Wales that fell into the hands of secular Welsh elites, or *uchelwyr*, after the dissolution, and identifies elements of continuity in land occupation or use despite the shift from monastic to secular lordship. The identification of continuity of the occupancy and purpose of the lands begins with an understanding of pre-monastic, secular patterns of settlement through the application of an early Welsh maenorial template, of the type described in the *Llyfr Iorwerth*,¹¹ and later clarified primarily through the work of Glanville Jones.¹² This template therefore establishes a pre-monastic starting point for these properties. Tracking the subsequent transfer of ownership of Blaenaeron grange properties to and from Strata Florida Abbey, as well as tenancy agreements between Strata Florida and tenants, or later, between landowners or managers and tenants, will provide evidence of

¹¹ Aled Wiliam, ed., *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960).

¹² The maenorial template theory Jones puts forth has met with some criticism, notably the work of Andrew Seaman. This criticism is discussed in Chapter 4 below. Andrew Seaman, 'The Multiple Estate Model Reconsidered: Power and Territory in Early Medieval Wales', *Welsh History Review* 26 (2012), 163-81; Glanville Jones, 'Early Territorial Organization in England and Wales,' in *Geografiska Annaler*, 43, no. 1/2, *Morphogenesis of the Agrarian Cultural Landscape: Papers of the Vadstena Symposium at the XIXth International Geographical Congress* (1961), pp. 174-81; Glanville Jones, 'Multiple Estates Perceived', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 11, 4 (1985), 352-63; Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol 1, part 2, ed. H. P. R. Finberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 281-382.

continuity. This is accomplished through a combination of documentary evidence and landscape study, with particular focus on the records of the Vaughan family's Trawscoed Estate, supported in large part by governmental records and later tithe maps.

At the same time, this study also seeks to determine whether the rather sudden post-dissolution increase in native Welsh secular land possession effected change on the social and political lives of the *uchelwyr* who developed estates out of the formerly monastic lands, or on Welsh social and political spheres in general. The impact that the shift from these lands being managed institutionally to being managed by secular Welsh elites (*uchelwyr*) had on the social and political landscape in post-dissolution Wales will also be ascertained through this interdisciplinary approach. The post-dissolution period was a time of great change for Wales, as it saw not only an availability of large swathes of former monastic land, but also changes in laws allowing native Welshmen more freedoms in landownership, society, and government.¹³ How these changes were felt by the *uchelwyr*, and the importance of these monastic lands in the processes of the changes, have as yet not been addressed. This is a study of the Welsh people within the context of their land: did the land make the people, or were the people and their increased status in the sixteenth century making their impact on the land?

¹³ J. Gwynfor Jones, *Early Modern Wales, c. 1525–1640* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1994); W. H. Rees, 'The Union of England and Wales [with a transcript of the Act of Union]', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, vol. 1937 (1938), 27–100.

Chapter 1

Historiography, Sources, and Methodology

In order to demonstrate the contribution of this thesis to the scholarship on the dissolution of the monasteries in Wales this chapter begins with a discussion of the historiography. As the approach employed in this study is an interdisciplinary one, it is necessary to cover numerous areas of research in the process of reviewing the relevant literature. What follows is an analysis of what has already been written about the dissolution of the monasteries, Welsh monasticism, continuity, manorial patterns, Cistercian studies, monastic economics, and medieval monastic archaeology. Developing an understanding of the scholarship ongoing in all of these areas is important, as each of these topics has a part to play in this thesis. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the major sources and concludes with an outline of the methodology of the thesis.

Historiography

The Dissolution of the Monasteries

While not much attention has been given to the dissolution as it specifically affected Wales, the literature on the impact of the dissolution of the monasteries in England is expansive and ranges widely in scope and approach. Accordingly, in order to place Wales in its broader context it is necessary to identify the different interpretations of the significance of this phenomenon. During the Victorian era the dissolution was studied extensively, in large part due to the romantic views accorded by the ruins of monasteries still standing in many places. One such work is Benedictine monk Francis Gasquet's eloquent, two-volume *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*

(1888–1889).¹ Gasquet (d. 1929) was first a student, then a teacher, and at last became the prior of prestigious Downside Abbey from 1878 to 1885. Having made Downside his spiritual and intellectual home, during his tenure there he compiled the first catalogue of the monastery’s library. Gasquet presents in detail the governmental and religious circumstances which provided the context for the eventual dissolution of the monasteries, albeit also with considerable bias and, reflective of the era, a sense of poignant loss.² His work met with considerable criticism for having heavy influence from the Catholic Church, and for endeavouring to right what he perceived to be an unfair anti-Church sentiment in much of the earlier dissolution scholarship. Gasquet’s own writing on the dissolution was the first of its kind to make full use of Thomas Cromwell’s papers, the records of the Court of Augmentations, and Cardinal Pole’s *De Unitate Ecclesiastica*, which criticised Henry VIII’s efforts toward a split with the Church in Rome. His effort to employ archival material was ‘an attempt to ally himself with the “scientific” approach to history’.³ For the past century, Gasquet’s historical analysis regarding medieval monasticism and Reformation has remained influential.⁴

Another Benedictine monk and historian, Dom David Knowles (d. 1974) has widely been considered the authority on monastic history in England, especially as it pertains to dissolution. His four volumes on the history of the monastic and other orders in England are said to be among the finest works on medieval studies in the

¹ Francis Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, 2 vols (London: John Hodges, 1889).

² Dom Aidan Bellenger, ‘Cardinal Gasquet, O.S.B. (1846–1929): Monk Historian,’ in John Broadley and Peter Phillips, ed., *The Ministry of the Printed Word: Scholar-Priests of the Twentieth Century* (Stratton-on-the-Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2016), pp. 145–61 (p. 151).

³ Bellenger, ‘Cardinal Gasquet’, pp. 155–58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

twentieth century.⁵ Interestingly, Knowles was also a monk at Downside Abbey, and editor of the *Downside Review* from 1930 to 1934. Under Knowles's leadership the *Review* became the premier Catholic intellectual journal in Britain.⁶ It was a brave endeavour to follow Gasquet's work. However, most of Knowles's writing bridges the gap, chronologically as well as ideologically, between Gasquet's more romantic Victorian look backward, and modern revisionist views. Without being overly sentimental, Knowles still conveys the great loss felt to English culture and society with the closing of the monasteries.⁷

One more recent work on the dissolution in England is Geoffrey Moorhouse's *The Last Divine Office*, in which he makes a careful study of the Benedictine priory at Durham. Heavily researched, this work is clearly leaning in favour of the monasteries. Moorhouse (d. 2009) follows Knowles's example in examining the extent of the damage incurred as the dissolution deprived local populations of their monastic support economically, socially, and spiritually. While not representative of all cases during the dissolution, the availability of documents regarding Durham enables Moorhouse to provide a glimpse into this dramatically changing world during the end of English monasticism and the birth of the Church of England.⁸

Two more extreme views on the dissolution are those of Geoffrey Baskerville and Eamon Duffy. Geoffrey Baskerville (d. 1944) argues in *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* that many works on the dissolution fail to examine

⁵ Knowles, *The Religious Orders*. For an analysis of the life and work of David Knowles see Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), pp. 287–326.

⁶ Norman Cantor, *Inventing*, p. 297; also Nicholas Vincent, 'Arcadia Regained?: David Knowles and *The Monastic Order in England*' in Dominic Bellenger and Simon Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule – David Knowles and the Writing of History* (Stratton-on-the-Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2014), pp. 41–115 (p. 100).

⁷ Knowles, *The Religious Orders*; Knowles, *Bare Ruined Choirs*.

⁸ Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Last Divine Office: Henry VIII and the Dissolution of the Monasteries*

conditions within the monasteries, but instead launch an offensive in the direction of the king and his agents.⁹ Baskerville defends the character of Henry VIII, Cromwell, and the agents of monastic visitation as having been unjustly maligned by negative press and propaganda, of the time of the dissolution and still by his contemporary historians. The monasteries, on the other hand, he sees as having fallen short of their obligations in every regard. Baskerville examines the dissemination of properties and money during and immediately following the dissolution, and argues that greed was rampant, amongst courtiers, gentry, lawyers, and every rank of the religious. *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* relies primarily on governmentally generated primary sources. There are admittedly scant records from the monasteries themselves, and contemporary narrative histories are not generally impartial historical records. However, Baskerville's source material offers little variance in opinion as to the character of the religious houses in the fifty years leading up to their dissolution. Baskerville himself held little regard for what he termed 'sentimentalist' historians; rather, Baskerville maintains that the Crown rightfully dismantled an ineffective religious construct.¹⁰

Irish historian Eamon Duffy, writing over fifty years after Baskerville, took a new look at the English Reformation with *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*.¹¹ His argument is that medieval English Catholicism was not a feeble, dying religion which had lost its way, but in fact was thriving right up to the point of its dissolution. Duffy's is not the only nor is it the

(New York: BlueBridge, 2009).

⁹ Geoffrey Baskerville, *The English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).

¹⁰ Baskerville, *English Monks*, pp. 273–90.

¹¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

first revisionist perspective on this period, but it is distinctive in its conclusions. Duffy's main point is that the Reformation was not the natural result of a Church on its deathbed, unable to provide for a changing world what its people needed, but rather it was a great disturbance in the history of the Church, and for England it was a time of 'traumatic cultural hiatus'.¹² In defence of his thesis, Duffy examines the high level of lay involvement and investment in the late medieval Church, and the similarly high degree of doctrinal orthodoxy prior to the Reformation. *The Stripping of the Altars* is focused mainly upon the Church as it is related to the lay parishioner. As a result, Duffy does not include any discussion of the religious orders, which is a disappointment, as there has been some suggestion among revisionist historians that the monasteries did have some influence upon the laity prior to their dissolution. The last section of the book is devoted to the impact of the Reformation upon the Church in England, and the dissolution and destruction of the monasteries most certainly would have warranted a place there.¹³

Duffy's work has since inspired response in the work of other historians. One such is G. W. Bernard's *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome*. Bernard argues that Duffy's work was too narrow in scope and failed to provide a complete picture of the situation the Church faced in the years before the Reformation. A self-professed revisionist in his early career, Bernard declares his aim in writing this volume to be to explore a middle ground between what he calls the Church's 'vitality and vulnerability'.¹⁴ He does succeed in developing a balanced look at the Church's strengths as well as its

¹² Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. xxxiii.

¹³ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 377–593.

¹⁴ G. W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. ix. See also G. W. Bernard, 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries', in Bellenger and Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule*, pp. 209–36.

weaknesses as it approached the Reformation, and includes a chapter focused on the state of the religious houses before, as well as after, the dissolution. Most of the chapter is devoted to monastic accomplishments and the continued appeal of monastic life, but Bernard does conclude with some explanations as to why the monasteries were not revived.¹⁵ James Clark, in his chapter ‘The Religious Orders in England and the End of the Middle Ages’, addresses the study of the dissolution in scholarship after Knowles. He notes that Knowles’s view that the monasteries were declining in the years preceding dissolution has been re-examined in more recent works by his successors, resulting in findings to the contrary. Despite the limitations of Knowles’s perspective, Clark concludes that the work done by historians influenced by Knowles has led into new revisionism.¹⁶

As noted in the introduction, the process and aftermath of the dissolution in Wales has received less attention than England. Gasquet’s volumes, for example, include nearly all aspects of the dissolution in great detail, but the monasteries are arranged by their order, and in his chapters regarding post-dissolution properties, he does not question whether the Welsh experience might have differed in any way from that in England. The possibility simply did not arise. No volume exists that is focused solely on the dissolution in Wales, though in a few recent works it is granted some discussion, or mention is made of specific abbeys for which there is documentary record. Glanmor Williams’s *Renewal and Reformation Wales c. 1415–1642* does include a detailed chapter on the years preceding dissolution, circumstances in Wales as it unfolded, the immediate aftermath, and what it meant for Wales. Williams’s view is that the rising gentry in Wales were the largest

¹⁵ Bernard, *Late Medieval Church*, pp. 164–205.

¹⁶ James Clark, ‘The Religious Orders in England and the End of the Middle Ages’, in Bellenger and Johnson, ed., *Keeping the Rule*, pp. 187–207.

beneficiaries of the situation as monastic land was returned to secular hands, and that in many cases these were the same people who were lessees from the monasteries of the very land they purchased. He touches on the concept of continuity of monastic management sufficiently to raise questions which are not resolved in his brief handling of the subject.¹⁷ On a micro level, Williams also wrote an account of the suppression of the monasteries in Glamorgan.¹⁸ David H. Williams's *The Tudor Cistercians* includes the Welsh religious houses, but they are treated as parts of the larger Cistercian world of England and Wales combined, rather than as Welsh specifically.¹⁹

A recent publication edited by Janet Burton and Karen Stöber, *Monastic Wales: New Approaches* presents an array of essays on various elements of monasticism in Wales by experts in the field. This volume takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining the influence of the monasteries in the social, political, and economic development of Wales. Even more recently, the same authors have published *Abbeys and Priors of Medieval Wales*, which is, alongside *Monastic Wales: New Approaches*, a part of the larger Monastic Wales Project.²⁰ This volume is primarily a highly detailed gazetteer of the religious houses within Wales, and as such, is a valuable resource for monastic scholars as well as those with casual interest in the religious houses of Wales. However, neither of these works directly address the questions raised in this study. With the exception of this gazetteer and some histories of individual religious houses, such as Rhys Hays's work on

¹⁷ Williams, *Renewal*.

¹⁸ Glanmor Williams, 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries in Glamorgan,' *Welsh History Review*, 3/1 (1966), 23–43.

¹⁹ David Petts, *The Early Medieval Church in Wales* (Brimbscombe Port Stroud: The History Press, 2009); Huw Pryce, *Native Law and the Church in Medieval Wales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); David Williams, *The Tudor Cistercians* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014).

Aberconwy, there is no comprehensive history of monasticism in Wales, much less a specific study of the effects of its ending.²¹

Continuity

A study of continuity is to look at things that did not change where it is expected that they would have. The pattern of behaviour remains constant, in contrast to other elements which are changing, such as politics, social constructs, national borders, regional leaders, or even just the passage of time. Martin Carver makes a case in a recent article for continuity as a crucial element in understanding early monasticism in Britain. He argues that in many locations, prehistoric ritual practices and locations of power served as predecessors for later Christian monastic sites, as the incoming Christian elements took advantage of sites of earlier (Iron Age and before) recognised power and importance in order to further their cause, which was converting the locals to their system of belief and worship.²²

This is not a new idea in the history and archaeology of Britain, and precedents can be seen in Wales. Reuse of monuments, religious sites, and burial grounds is something that has been identified in many places in Wales and elsewhere. This ritual reuse appears to have been a practice employed to develop a relationship with the mythic past. The link between ancient monuments and later Anglo-Saxon burials was first identified by Charles Thomas in his work on early Christian archaeology.²³ Later study of ritual continuity by R. J. Bradley has led to the view that monument

²⁰ Burton and Stöber, *Monastic Wales*; Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priors*. For the Monastic Wales Project, see <http://www.monasticwales.org>

²¹ Rhys W. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway 1186–1537* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963).

²² Martin Carver, 'New Directions in Scottish History,' *The Scottish Historical Review*, 88:2, no. 226 (October 2009), 332–51.

²³ Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 51–58.

reuse served as a source of power for regional leaders of elite status.²⁴ Nancy Edwards has done extensive work on the reuse of ancient stones specifically in Wales, both ritually and for purposes of practical application. Bronze Age and Neolithic stone monuments have been found in situations of later reuse as markers for identifying land ownership in early medieval Wales. This was a time in Wales marked by the rapid spread of Christianity and significant numbers of incoming settlers from Ireland and Scotland, all of whom were perceived as threats to Welsh *uchelwyr* landholdings. In efforts to hold onto their land, the *uchelwyr* found new uses for prehistoric monuments and structures as boundary markers and declarations of land claims.²⁵

David Petts's work on the early church in Wales, mentioned above, also makes the point that prehistoric monuments were sometimes later reused, and the same is characteristic of sites of religious importance. In the case of Strata Florida, recent archaeological work has indicated that the abbey may be on the location of a former religious site of significance. There is what has been suggested as a pre-existing holy well located on the abbey site, beneath the crossing, but oriented differently than the abbey itself. David Austin, director of The Strata Florida Project suggests it may be evidence of an earlier, pre-Cistercian monastery dedicated possibly to St Cynfelin, a local saint. This well is among four identified holy wells which align up the Glasffrwd valley south-east of the abbey.²⁶ The parish burial ground having been

²⁴ Richard Bradley, 'Time Regained: The Creation of Continuity,' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 140:1, (1987), 1–17 (pp. 1–4).

²⁵ Nancy Edwards, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales*, vol. 2, *South-West Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 34.

²⁶ David Austin, 'A Short History of Strata Florida,' The Strata Florida Project website, <http://www.strataflorida.org.uk/en/short-history.php> (Accessed 5 May 2018). Further detail on the location of holy wells in the region can be found in Francis Jones, *The Holy Wells in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), pp. 156–63. See also David Austin, 'The Archaeology of Monasteries in Wales and the Strata-Florida Project', in Burton and Stöber. ed., *Monastic Wales*, pp. 3–20.

overlaid by monastic structure is also suggestive of the idea that this site held an early Christian burial ground and religious centre before the Cistercians settled there. An Anglo-Saxon inscribed stone in the churchyard marking a grave is undoubtedly an instance of monument reuse. This instance is the only example in Wales of secondary use found *in situ* with its associated grave, though other Anglo-Saxon cross-carved stones have been found in Wales.²⁷ For the Cistercians establishing themselves at Strata Florida in the twelfth century, creating a link to a religious past that was familiar to the people of the area may have been viewed as a means to connect with the local populace. Strata Florida Project's David Austin argues that this continuity may help explain the strong affinity Strata Florida had with native Welsh culture.²⁸ Furthermore, Madeleine Gray has suggested that some of the early graves located at Strata Florida may, in fact, be reburials intended to help establish and/or reinforce the concept of the mythic past and continuity for the abbey.²⁹ Howard Mytum has done extensive research into the use of language on gravestones.³⁰ The use of Welsh on memorials may be a choice to exclude many English speakers who are monoglot, as well as being 'a commitment to that language, a statement of affiliation and confidence that the language will continue and the monument will continue to function'.³¹ However, it could also be that it was a natural choice for Welsh speakers to use their native language. Regardless the language chosen, the name of the deceased as well as the place name of their home is

²⁷ Edwards, *Corpus*, pp. 55-57.

²⁸ Austin, 'The Archaeology of Monasteries in Wales and the Strata Florida Project'. This is not to say that Strata Florida was alone in their alliance with the Welsh; Cistercian houses Margam Abbey and Valle Crucis were likewise affiliated with the Welsh. See Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priors*, pp. 137-42; 213-15.

²⁹ Madeleine Gray, pers. comm., 4 July 2019.

³⁰ Harold Mytum, 'Language as Symbol in Churchyard Monuments: The Use of Welsh in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Pembrokeshire' *World Archaeology*, 26, no. 2, Communication and Language (Oct. 1994), 252-67.

made clear. More than just markers for the dead, gravestones in their burial grounds ‘were used to explain and perpetuate the memory of kinship relations which stretched back over generations’.³²

As indicators of continuity, place names – even more than memorial stones – rely on the written word in manuscripts. In some instances, the material evidence, such as standing stones and settlement patterns, are given context and locality through the *Mabinogi*. An oral tradition long before it was recorded on paper, this assemblage of stories provides Wales with a heroic past as the basis on which later histories rest. John Bollard’s work on geography within the *Mabinogi* supports these tales as a starting point for later Welsh works. Some of the locations in the *Mabinogi* are clearly identifiable on modern maps, a significant contribution to our understanding of landscape continuity in Wales.³³ As discussed below, it is likely that one version of the *Mabinogi*, *The White Book of Rhydderch*, was written in Strata Florida’s scriptorium.³⁴ David Petts examined this mythologisation of landscape further at the very critical point at which Wales moved from an oral tradition to the written word.³⁵ The Welsh verse *Englynion y Beddau* (Stanzas of the Grave), or *Beddau Milwyr Ynys Prydein* (The Graves of the Warriors of the Island of Britain), were devised as bardic oral works, but were eventually written down. These three-line verses date to the ninth or tenth century and contain recognisable landscape features and mythic heroes based on those regionally specific features.

³¹ Mytum, ‘Language as Symbol in Churchyard Monuments’, p. 260.

³² Mytum, ‘Language as Symbol in Churchyard Monuments’, p. 260.

³³ John Bollard, ‘Landscapes of The Mabinogi’, *Landscapes*, 10.2 (2009), 37–60. See also Andi Carla Skinner, ‘Courts and Journeys in the Mabinogi: An Investigation into the Toponyms in the Mabinogi’ (unpublished MA thesis, UWTSU, 2014).

³⁴ See Chapter 2 below for further discussion on this.

³⁵ David Petts, ‘De Situ Brecheniauc and Englynion y Beddau: Writing about Burial in Early Medieval Wales,’ *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology History*, 14 (2007), pp. 163–72.

Petts sees the structure of these works, as well as the kind of language employed and the geographic specificity, as suggestive of conscious efforts to bring forward a mythic past, and to fix these spoken-word verses into a format that was not easily altered, thereby ensuring that the stories told therein would also be carried forward intact, even before they were written down and preserved in that manner.³⁶

Continuity, in terms of landscape and property, relies upon recordkeeping. When Welsh society became increasingly literate as well as Christianised, religious houses and churches within Wales established ownership of their own written works, usually illuminated manuscripts containing Gospels or other ecclesiastical works.³⁷ These manuscripts were perceived as being of great value and were protected and cared for as such. As a result, they also came to be regarded as useful repositories of information that was considered to be important. Therefore, in the margins of these manuscripts, monks or clergy recorded land transactions between local persons, undoubtedly a service which was offered in exchange for a donation to the religious house which maintained the manuscript. For the purposes of this study, the manuscript in question is the Lichfield Gospels, also known as the Book of St Chad, or the Book of St Teilo. This volume has been digitised and is available to view in that format at the church of St Teilo in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. There has been considerable speculation in regard to the origins and travels of this particular manuscript, notably Henry Savage's study in 1915.³⁸ However, the starting point for detailed research on the marginalia within the manuscript and its contextual significance is the 1983 two-part work by Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen

³⁶ Petts, 'De Situ', pp. 163–72.

³⁷ Pamela James, 'The Lichfield Gospels: The Question of Provenance', *Parergon*, 13 no 2 (January 1996), 51–61 (pp. 53–54, 60–61).

³⁸ Henry Savage, 'The Story of the St Chad Gospels', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 41 (1915), 5–21.

entitled ‘The Welsh Marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels’, published in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*.³⁹ Jenkins and Owen focus, particularly in the second part of this publication, on the marginalia referred to as the ‘Surexit Memorandum’ and why (and by whom) it was recorded. This work is expanded on by Glanville Jones, who applies the clues found within this marginalia to features in the landscape to pinpoint the location of the land in question and connect the ninth-century memoranda with the existence and implementation of a manorial template, thereby establishing continuity with manuscript and standing stones both.⁴⁰ The connections Jones identified have been criticised in later scholarship. Rhys Jones, while acknowledging that the *maenor* concept was taken from the earlier meaning of the term, stone settlement, and expanded to include the estate associated with the settlement, still questions the conclusions Glanville Jones made in the absence of a clear documentary trail of evidence.⁴¹ Andrew Seaman appreciates Jones’s template as a functional framework in which to place archaeological evidence, and with which to study a landscape over time. Yet he finds the template flawed, in large part due to the absence of evidence to support it.⁴²

This kind of continuity has been applied to other monastic estates in England and Wales. A potential secular example of continuity in the immediate vicinity of Strata Florida is the Hospitaller site of Ystrad Meurig, located southwest of the abbey. An important medieval outpost for weary pilgrims, there is evidence,

³⁹ Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen, ‘The Welsh Marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels Part I’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 5 (Summer 1983), 37–66; Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen, ‘The Welsh Marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels Part II: the Surexit Memorandum’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 7 (Summer 1984), 91–120.

⁴⁰ Glanville Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, pp. 281–382.

⁴¹ Rhys Jones, ‘Problems with Medieval Welsh Local Administration—the Case of the *Maenor* and the *Maenol*’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 24, no. 2 (1998), 135–146.

⁴² Andrew Seaman, ‘The Multiple Estate Model Reconsidered: Power and Territory in Early Medieval Wales’, *Welsh History Review* 26 (2012), 163–81.

according to Jemma Bezant's article 'The Hospitaller Estate at Ystrad Meurig', that it was also the location of secular and military activity of Castell Ystrad Meurig as well as being an earlier *llys* or court.⁴³ Assuming relationships between early medieval *llys* sites and castles is a risky endeavour, but Bezant sees evidence at Ystrad Meurig as having real potential for this type of link. The castle was established by Gilbert fitz Richard de Clare around 1116.

As this study focuses on the continuity of the landscape as well as the people on the landscape, genealogical material is another documentary source of value. This includes the work of Gerald Morgan on the Vaughan family's history, as well as the work of Francis Jones on the prominent families of south-west Wales.⁴⁴ This study has also incorporated a genealogical chart as an aid to following the lines of inheritance and relationships amongst landowners.⁴⁵

Cistercian Economic Activity

At the centre of this thesis is Blaenaeron, one of the granges of the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida. It is therefore necessary briefly to discuss developments in scholarship on Cistercian economic practice. Recent studies by historians such as Constance Berman and Emilia Jamroziak have challenged the traditional views on the establishment of the Cistercian Order, its level of standardised community design, and its economy.⁴⁶ Earlier approaches to Cistercian history are, generally, in

⁴³ Jemma Bezant, 'The Hospitaller Estate at Ystrad Meurig', *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 1 (2014), 1–14 (pp. 2–3).

⁴⁴ F. Jones, 'The Old Families of South-West Wales', *Ceredigion*, IV, no. 1 (1960), 1–18; idem, *Historic Cardiganshire Homes and their Families* (Dinas, Newport: Brawdy Books, 2000); Gerald Morgan, *A Welsh House and its Family: The Vaughans of Trawscoed* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1997); Peter Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400*, 8 vols (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974) Cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/handle/2160/4026. Accessed 16 February 2020.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 14.

⁴⁶ Constance Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Emilia Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe 1090–1500* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

two areas: that of the field of economic history, which Jamroziak notes overlooks the religious nature of the order entirely, choosing to see the Cistercians as predecessors to modern capitalism;⁴⁷ and that of traditional Cistercian history, which follows the lead of Knowles and the Cistercian monk Louis Lekai in supporting the idea of a Cistercian golden age (broadly identified as the era of expansion, that is, the twelfth century) and subsequent decline.⁴⁸ Economic practices loomed large in this discourse, as the Cistercian ‘ideal’ was seen to have become corrupted by the ‘reality’ of change.

However, a new school of thought has developed in which the Cistercians are viewed as being remarkably flexible in nature, so that ‘modern scholarship is focused on change and adaptability as the key feature of the medieval Cistercian experience’.⁴⁹ Rather than a rigid template for behaviour being gradually corrupted by outside influence, as earlier historians have interpreted, Jamroziak and other modern historians, including Constance Berman, Janet Burton and Julie Kerr, have shown that the Cistercian Order survived in large part due to its ability to accommodate regional differences as well as political, social, and economic shifts.⁵⁰ Cistercian economic structures did not follow a template but were widely varied. The order was spreading throughout Europe, and in some cases established entirely new communities, and in others incorporated pre-existing monastic communities. This meant that there was no reasonable way for every community to follow a prescribed economic model. The Cistercians excelled at taking advantage of whatever

⁴⁷ For example, see Robert B. Ekelund, and Robert F. Hébert, Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, Audrey B. Davidson, *Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴⁸ Louis J. Lekai, *The White Monks: A History of the Cistercian Order* (Okauchee, Wisconsin: Cistercian Fathers Our Lady of Spring Bank, 1953).

⁴⁹ Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution*; Janet Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*

opportunities a locality had to offer. While it is true that the Cistercians were not subject to inheritance and partition as were other landholders, and their estates were considerably vaster, Jamroziak argues that the ability of Cistercian monasteries to take a long view on land acquisition and planning, in combination with the wide variety of economic practices, led to their successes.⁵¹

These ideas together echo earlier historians' writings on Cistercian economics. In 1954 James Donnelly looked at twenty-eight Cistercian houses in England and Wales. He determined that it was indeed the distractions of medieval feudal and manorial property management that brought on the demise of the monasteries. Donnelly's reliance on Knowles is reflected in his insistence that the order had an established model for their economic business.⁵² R. A. Donkin's work sits somewhere between Ekelund and Donnelly. He repeatedly asserts that there was a Cistercian way of doing things, but then follows up with the observation that these regulations were frequently overlooked. Donkin stops short of making the argument that each religious house made accommodations for local and regional differences, although in many cases he does note the differences.⁵³

In *The Welsh Cistercians*, David H. Williams focuses on the Cistercian economy in Wales, including the grange system and estate management in general. Williams agrees with the findings of T. Jones Pierce, that in many cases in the thirteenth century, Welsh monasteries appear to be following or adapting earlier patterns of manorial administration, rather than the expected monastic demesne

(Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011).

⁵¹ Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, pp. 183–84.

⁵² James Donnelly, 'Changes in the Grange Economy of English and Welsh Cistercian Abbeys, 1300–1540', *Traditio*, 10 (1954), 399–458.

⁵³ R. A. Donkin, 'The Cistercian Order in Medieval England: Some Conclusions', *Transactions and Papers* (Institute of British Geographers), no. 33 (Dec. 1963), 181–98.

system.⁵⁴ D. M. Robinson notes that the Welsh monastic granges were not the self-contained farms as called for by the Cistercian model; instead they were ‘hamlets of a still-dependent peasantry... transferred by charter from secular to monastic lordship’.⁵⁵ Indeed, at their foundation and later, some Cistercian abbeys obtained populated villages and manors, which were in many cases left unchanged and used as sources of income for the abbeys. Others were entirely depopulated to make way for the creation of a home grange or the isolation of an abbey.⁵⁶ In the case of Strata Florida, it seems that many of the granges were already ‘developed hamlets, many with servile tenants, transferred by charter from secular to monastic lordship’.⁵⁷ This provides for the possibility that there was some continuance of occupancy amongst the tenants of some monastic properties, originating before Strata Florida took ownership of the land.

Important to note in tandem with the evolution of Cistercian studies is the changing approach within medieval archaeology, which is moving toward a more contextual view, exploring cultural artefacts and landscape studies to develop ideas about the Cistercians’ place within their communities. The ongoing Strata Florida Project, led by David Austin and Jemma Bezant, is an example of this. The project grew, according to Austin in his work noted above, as an exercise in contextualisation, an examination of Strata Florida not just as a religious house in its

⁵⁴ Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians*; T. Jones Pierce, ‘Strata Florida Abbey,’ *Ceredigion*, 1 (1950–51), 18–33.

⁵⁵ D. M. Robinson, *The Cistercians in Wales: Architecture and Archaeology, 1130–1540* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 2006), p. 268.

⁵⁶ Donkin, ‘The Cistercian Order’, p. 186.

⁵⁷ Pierce, ‘Strata Florida Abbey,’ p. 28.

time, but as also having a place within the landscape, the regional history, and the local community.⁵⁸

The Strata Florida Landscape Project is, according to Bezant, focused in part on a study of ‘[t]he relationship of the Abbey with the surrounding landscape and the precise extent, location, and operation of its grange farms’.⁵⁹ Her study examined Henfynachlog (Old Abbey Farm), located roughly to the south of Blaenaeron grange on the edge of the raised bog Cors Caron; and Troedyrhiw, which is east of the abbey. The project’s study of Troedyrhiw was complemented by a published landscape history and topographical survey by Fleming and Barker.⁶⁰ At Troedyrhiw, located within the home grange of Pennardd (as well as the old commote of the same name), Fleming and Barker determined that the farms there were occupied in much the same fashion from the pre-monastic period onward, with some adjustments for reorganization of enclosures. It is mostly upland grazing land there, perhaps larger farms grown out of *hafodydd* with signs of a possible monastic sheepcote and associated barn structures as well. There is some evidence of Bronze Age occupation in the vicinity, but Fleming and Barker attribute the older boundaries and housing platforms found within the survey area to probably being of the medieval era.⁶¹ The Strata Florida Landscape Project makes use of similar and, in some instances, the same resources as this case study. With advances in technology, the use of mapping and analysis has become a larger part of understanding the past. In a study of the

⁵⁸ David Austin, ‘The Archaeology of Monasteries in Wales and the Strata Florida Project’, in Burton and Stöber (ed.), *Monastic Wales*, pp. 3–20 (p. 4).

⁵⁹ Jemma Bezant, ‘Geophysical Survey at Strata Florida Abbey, Henfynachlog Farm and Troedyrhiw Upland Settlement, Ceredigion’, *Archaeology in Wales*, 47 (2007), 53–58 (p. 53).

⁶⁰ L. Barker and A. Fleming, ‘Monks and Local Communities: The Late Medieval Landscape of Troed Y Rhiw, Caron Uwch Clawdd, Ceredigion’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 52 (2008), 261–90 (p. 279).

history of a specific place, or even the history of an idea within a specific place, Geographic Information System, or GIS, provides a visual platform to integrate and present evidence at varying levels of detail. GIS stores geographic facts in digital layers. Each layer is linked to its own database of information about that location, such as property boundaries, owner names and land values, the paths of roads and rivers, etc. These layers can be stacked together to illustrate the change or continuity a location has experienced. The Strata Florida Project provides a template for the application of such tools as estate and tithe maps, and estate records, toward compiling an interdisciplinary, composite view of what changes the grange in question may have endured over the centuries.⁶²

A survey of Dyffryn Cwannon undertaken by members of the Llangynidr Local History Society, using maps dated to 1587, tithe maps, and documentary sources, hints at the possibility of surviving elements of a manorial pattern there as well.⁶³ In an interesting contrast, most of the sixteenth-century rentals within this survey were paid in cash, whereas the Strata Florida rentals of the same era were often paid in more traditional manners, to include commorth, grain, livestock, and labour. The conclusion can be drawn that the Llangynidr properties were administered in a manner more anglicized than were the Strata Florida properties. Why that was the case is something as yet to be clearly determined.

Primary sources

⁶¹ Barker and Fleming, 'Monks', p. 279; Jemma Bezzant, 'Medieval Settlement and Territory: Archaeological Evidence from a Teifi Valley Landscape', *British Archaeological Monographs British Series* 487 (Oxford: Hadrian Books Ltd., 2009), pp. 59, 67, 71.

⁶² <http://www.strataflorida.org.uk>.

⁶³ Jemma Bezzant and Jan Bailey, 'Survey of a Late Medieval Landscape, Dyffryn Cwannon,

The survival of documentary evidence from Strata Florida is disappointingly sparse. This study relies on a broad assortment of sources over and above those generated by the monks themselves, namely written sources of diverse type and origin, maps, and the physical landscape. First, however, we need to consider Strata Florida's own archive in the context of the types of written sources usually produced by religious houses. In general, monastic records can be classified into three categories. The first comprise the archives of a monastery, which were records created within a religious house, as a part of its daily activities. Within these records might be charters, cartularies, and account rolls. Charters were individual documents that recorded the transfer of land from one party to another; in a monastic context they represented the grant and confirmation of lands and other assets to a monastery by its benefactors. They thus established legal title to monastic estates and could be produced in case of litigation. At some stage in their history, it was common for monasteries to copy their charters and other legal documents into a cartulary.⁶⁴ This provided a safeguard against the loss of originals. However, pitfalls to consider in using cartularies are concern over accuracy in transcription and forged documentation. Account rolls were internal documents relating to the management and finances of the religious house. Unfortunately, surviving documentation of these types from Strata Florida are scarce.

Government records, the second category of records relating to monasteries, are more abundant for Strata Florida. Records for *Pura Wallia* before the Edwardian Conquest are scant due to the irregularity of recordkeeping and record preservation,

Llangynidr (SO 1153 1761)', *Archaeology in Wales*, 49 (2009), 65–72.

⁶⁴ Trevor Foulds, 'Medieval Cartularies', *Archives*, 18 (77) (April 1987), 3–35; Georges Declercq, 'Originals and Cartularies: the organization of archival memory (ninth–eleventh centuries)', in Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 147–70.

and the survival rate of records created after the Edwardian Conquest is also quite low. The acts of the Welsh Rulers have been collected by Huw Pryce, however.⁶⁵ In contrast, record keeping in England has been consistent from the reign of King John (d. 1216), when the practice of keeping of copies of official documents began. English governmental records are impressive in the volume generated as well as their preservation, and access to these records at the National Archives, Kew, has been facilitated over recent years through digitisation. Much of this documentary evidence contains considerable material relevant to Wales. Monasteries such as Strata Florida do appear in sources like the close and patent rolls before the 1280s, but the frequency of their appearance increased after that decade when their patronage (excepting monasteries whose patronage was granted elsewhere) passed de facto to the English Crown. Examples of this record type include *inspeximi*, petitions, and fines. *Inspeximi* are charters beginning with the Latin word *inspeximus*, meaning ‘we have inspected’, and within these charters are confirmations of the validity of previous charters. Several twelfth-century grants to Strata Florida by Rhys ap Gruffudd and his heirs have survived within charters and *inspeximi*.⁶⁶ Currently housed in the National Archives, the holdings of the Court of Augmentations include records relating to Crown revenues accrued from formerly monastic lands following the dissolution of monasteries.⁶⁷ Also housed within these records are earlier documents belonging to these institutions that went to the Crown during the dissolution, as well as administrative and legal records postdating the Court of Augmentations, relating to audits of land revenue and the sale and leasing

⁶⁵ *AWR*.

⁶⁶ *AWR* no. 25 (pp. 167–68); no. 28 (pp. 171–75), no. 35 (pp. 180–83); no. 50 (pp. 19); no. 55 (pp. 193–95).

⁶⁷ *TNA*, E 324 (Records of the Court of Augmentations and Exchequer).

of Crown lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Significant amongst these kinds of records are the exchequer proceedings, which provide details regarding land titles, manorial rights, tithes, debts, wills, and other concerns involving formerly monastic properties, especially illustrative for tracking properties and tenants during the turbulent post-dissolution period.

The final category of monastic record is that of narrative histories. The most recognizable examples of this kind of record for England are the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the works of the Venerable Bede. Although there is no Bede or Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for Wales, there is the sixth-century British monk Gildas, best known for his three-part sermon *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*; and Nennius, a ninth-century Welsh monk, to which the authorship of *Historia Brittonum* is attributed. Gildas is not a reliable source for specifics of dates, names, and locations, but for developing a sense of the ethos of Britain at the time, he is invaluable. Nennius's work appears to rely heavily on earlier writing by Eusebius, Bede, and Gildas. It also includes some Anglo-Saxon genealogy and stories of Arthurian legend. Whilst problematic in its nature as a compilation of earlier works, which varies in content from one edition to another, Nennius did seem to recognize the value in recording history for his countrymen. Amongst the most important primary sources for pre-Conquest Welsh history, surviving versions are Welsh translations of the original annalistic chronicle, the *Cronica Principium Wallie*, which was written in Latin. Patterned after monastic and church *Annales*, this chronicle includes numerous references to happenings at Strata Florida in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶⁸ For similar reasons, it is thought that the original *Brut y*

⁶⁸ D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas, and S. I. Tucker, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1961); J. A. Giles, *The Works of Gildas and Nennius* (London: James Bohn, 1841); T. Jones, ed., *Brut y Tywysogion, Peniarth MS 20 Version* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952); T. Jones, ed., *Brut y Tywysogion, Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955).

Tywysogion, or *Chronicle of Princes*, may have been partially written or compiled at Strata Florida.⁶⁹ There has also been some speculation that the Breviate Chronicle, or B-text of *Annales Cambriae*, may have been either influenced by writings which came out of Strata Florida, or partially composed at Strata Florida, by a scribe based at the abbey of Cwmhir.⁷⁰ Post-Conquest chronicles emanating from monasteries in Wales are not numerous, but those that have survived offer a glimpse into Wales of the late Middle Ages. The Welsh Chronicles Research Group is dedicated to further study of these Welsh chronicles and provide a site with articles and links to editions of the chronicles as well as secondary sources for that purpose.⁷¹

Relevant contemporary literary sources not only corroborate other evidence, they also provide details that are omitted in sources created for the sole purpose of recordkeeping. These sources for this research include the ancient Welsh mythologies of the *Mabinogi*, as well as the personal accounts of Gerald of Wales and Adam of Usk. Gerald of Wales, or Giraldus Cambrensis, was partly Welsh, as his mother was the daughter of Nest and the granddaughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr. His twelfth-century writings, *Itinerary Through Wales* and *Description of Wales*, are lively and opinionated yet offer insights unavailable through governmental or monastic records.⁷² Adam of Usk was a lawyer from Monmouthshire who led a

⁶⁹ Thomas Jones, 'Historical Writing in Medieval Welsh', *Scottish Studies* 12 (1968), 15–27 (pp. 25–6).

⁷⁰ Kathleen Hughes, 'The Welsh Latin Chronicles: *Annales Cambriae* and Related Texts', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 59 (1973), 233–58, repr. in David Dumville, ed., *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources*, Studies in Celtic History 2 (Woodbridge: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980), pp. 67–85. See David Stephenson, 'The Chronicler of Cwm-hir Abbey, 1257–63: The Construction of a Welsh Chronicle', in R. A. Griffiths and P. R. Schofield, ed., *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp. 29–45, for David Stephenson's reasoned argument against the suggestion by Kathleen Hughes that the B-text was written at Strata Florida.

⁷¹ *Bangor University Welsh Chronicles Research Group* <http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/index.php/en>.

⁷² Patrick K. Ford, ed. and trans. *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales/ The Description of Wales*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

colourful life in prestigious spheres of influence in Wales, England, and abroad. His chronicle provides significant contemporary detail, especially during the time of the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr at the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁷³ The *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, or Poets of the Gentry, is a significant source of important information about relationships between the *uchelwyr* and the monasteries of Wales, as well as *uchelwyr* genealogies.⁷⁴

Individual family estate records, such as wills, deeds, and leases, are the most important, and the most elusive, resources in tracking specific parcels of land, such as the tenancies within Blaenaeron grange, which is the case study site for this thesis. The estate records for former Strata Florida lands are primarily the Crosswood Estate records, which are numerous and well-catalogued in the National Library of Wales.⁷⁵ These records were maintained by the Vaughan family, who occupied *Trawscoed*, or Crosswood, in Cardiganshire for more than six hundred years. The Vaughan family took possession of land formerly possessed by Strata Florida through a purchase and loan brokered by Robert Devereux, third earl of Essex (1591–1646), who held the land following the monastery's dissolution. These estate records include such material as property deeds, rent rolls, tithe documents, wills, and other legal papers related to landownership.

Two valuations of monastic properties of significance to this study are the 1291 *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, and the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*. The *Taxatio* was a

⁷³ Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. and trans. by C. Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁷⁴ Dafydd Johnston, 'Monastic Patronage of Welsh Poetry', in Burton and Stöber. ed., *Monastic Wales*, pp.177-190 (pp. 178, 183-184); for the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Aberystwyth) project on the *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, see the website at <https://www.wales.ac.uk/en/CentreforAdvancedWelshCelticStudies/ResearchProjects/CompletedProjects/PoetsoftheNobility/IntroductiontotheProject.aspx>. For the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Aberystwyth) project on the poetry of Guto'r Glyn, see <http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/index/#>.

valuation of church assets for the purposes of taxation. It was produced under orders from Pope Nicholas IV in 1291–1292. This document records significant monastic properties and includes some place names within the case study grange of Blaenaeron.⁷⁶ The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was the survey of church properties and revenues ordered by Henry VIII for the purpose of imposing new taxes on the clergy.⁷⁷ Values recorded in the *Valor* were instrumental in determining which religious houses were suppressed during the first wave of monastic closures beginning in 1536.

Also significant to this study as the best evidence for the agrarian economy of early Wales are the Laws of Hywel Dda.⁷⁸ These laws are a codification of early Welsh laws, attributed to Hywel Dda (d. 950), ruler of Deheubarth who eventually controlled much of Wales.⁷⁹ This was the system of law observed in Wales prior to being conquered by England during the thirteenth century. It is likely that these laws were perpetuated orally by lawmakers until Hywel Dda codified them, perhaps in an effort to establish some standardisation throughout the newly merged kingdoms of Wales that he controlled. The Welsh law manuscripts which have survived are all dated later, to twelfth and thirteenth century, though they contain what has been determined by scholars to be much earlier material.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ NLW, GB 0210 CROOD ‘Crosswood Estate Records’.

⁷⁶ Thomas Astle, Samuel Ayscough, John Caley, ed., *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicolai IV, circa A.D. 1291* (London: Record Commission, 1802).

⁷⁷ TNA, E 344, E 346, and PRO 31/16/66; John Caley and J. Hunter, ed., *Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII. Auctoritate regia institutus*, 6 vols (London: Record Commission, 1810–34), reprint 1976.

⁷⁸ Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, p. 284.

⁷⁹ NLW, Peniarth 28; Melville Richards, ed., *The Laws of Hywel Dda* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954); Dafydd Jenkins, *The Law of Hywel Dda: Law Texts from Medieval Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2000). The Laws of Hywel Dda are also available via the Cyfraith Hywel website <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/llawysgrifau-disgrifiadau.php>.

⁸⁰ Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, p. 284.

Landscape sources, primarily maps, are used to identify change, or lack thereof, in a geographical location. Few maps of the Strata Florida lands survive from before the 1800s, though there are a small number of earlier estate maps within the Crosswood Estate records which were drawn for the use of the Vaughan family.⁸¹ Tithe maps of the mid-nineteenth century include schedules, which record the amount of tithe each person had to pay, thereby providing the names of residents of each region, the land they owned, including field names, size, and location, and their required tithe payments. While not all Cistercian land was exempt, the tithe-free nature of much of Strata Florida's holdings aids in identifying boundaries as by the nineteenth century, some of those formerly Cistercian lands remained tithe-free.⁸² The information found within these maps and records, alongside the traditional historical narrative, helps to combine a variety of types and qualities of evidence in a mapped format to aid in identifying patterns or trends.

In addition to the maps of landscapes, early medieval stone monuments and other early features such as ancient mounds which were placed within the landscape provide focal points from whence to understand the landscapes which surround them, and also provide clues to social identities and social memories. The chosen locations and settings of monuments offer clues to human behaviour in the context of a specific landscape. Relationships between monuments, monuments and their context, and other contemporary elements of religious and ritual importance, settlement patterns and field systems, roadways and land use, all contributed to the determination of the placing of a monument. As important as the location and setting of these stones, are the inscriptions upon them. Whilst there is very little

⁸¹ NLW, GB 0210 CROOOD 'Crosswood Estate Records'.

⁸² See Williams, *Atlas of Cistercian Lands*, p. 21 for elaboration on this point.

archaeological evidence or excavated ecclesiastical sites to provide insight into early medieval churches in Wales, monuments also help via their inscriptions to offer evidence of Christian centres of activity. Some monument stones have also given us clues about the influence of the Romans and the Irish, as well as the names of ancient kings and their lines of descent.⁸³ Chadwick and Gibson have noted that considerable attention has been given to such continuity of use, or in their terms, the role of memory in re-use or appropriation of earlier monuments, for example Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual monuments finding new life in the Iron Age, Roman, and Saxon periods. What has not had much research, however, are ‘long-term links evident in settlements, fields, and other more prosaic landscape features’.⁸⁴ These landscape features, when considered alongside the available documentary and narrative sources, as well as literary ones, provide physical markers on which to help establish that continuity. ‘Early medieval people occupied a landscape populated by these early inherited fortified sites and mounds, even if it remains unclear how many were reused in the period.’⁸⁵ The landscape also provided a wealth of natural assets, such as waterways and fertile land for planting. There was much to attract Cistercians to the region of Strata Florida Abbey, and likely it was the same assets which attracted the earlier people who constructed the mounds, erected the monuments, and established the region as one worthy of continued use, either ritually or for settlement and agriculture.

Place-names as evidence has been found useful where documentary evidence is lacking. Place-names can offer information about the culture and nature of an area

⁸³ Miranda Aldhouse-Green and Ray Howell, *Celtic Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), pp. 119–20.

⁸⁴ Adrian Chadwick and C.D. Gibson, ed., *Memory, Myth, and Long-term Landscape Inhabitation* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), p.1.

⁸⁵ Patricia Murrieta-Flores and Howard Williams, ‘Placing the Pillar of Eliseg: Movement, Visibility,

earlier in history. Although the name of a place may be either older than the settlement located there, such as in cases where there is a topographical element which dictated the name, a place-name can also be younger than the settlement, as farms and houses do change names over time, perhaps due to a change in ownership or regional affiliation.⁸⁶ The survival of documentation from the past is a matter of chance, and therefore the disappearance of a place-name from historical record cannot always be taken as evidence that a settlement or a place-name did not exist in that time. Names of common kinds of places, such as fields affiliated with a church or a house, mills, and villages, can suggest what might have been there in the past, even when there is no remaining physical evidence of it. A place-name with the Welsh word *tythyn*, for example, suggest that it was a dwelling of low status associated with a larger estate of higher status.⁸⁷ In some cases the quality of the place may have changed, but the previous name retained, offering clues to the past nature or purpose of the place. While it is true that there is less solid evidence gained from a study of place-names as there might be in other fields such as archaeology, geology, or geography, a study of place-names can be used to fill in some gaps in the historical record. ‘Place-names are resistant to external change and they can often supplement sparse historical source material.’⁸⁸

In a study such as this one, however, place names can be problematic. Spellings change or are recorded inaccurately, especially in circumstances in which the scribe doing the recording was not a native Welsh speaker. In some cases, place

and Memory in the Early Medieval Landscape’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 61(1) (2017), 69–103 (p. 3).

⁸⁶ Jemma Bezzant, ‘Revising the monastic “Grange”: Problems at the edge of the Cistercian world’, *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies*, 3 (2014), 51–70 (pp. 62–63).

⁸⁷ Iwan Wmffre, *The Place Names of Cardiganshire* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), p. xiv; Bezzant, ‘Revising’, p. 63.

⁸⁸ John Kousgård Sørensen, ‘Place-Names and Settlement History’, in Peter Sawyer, ed., *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1978), pp. 1–33 (pp. 1,

names are changed entirely over time, such as Esker Berfedd Ganol, which appears on the nineteenth-century maps as Pont-ar-Gamddwr.⁸⁹ In others the spelling of the place name is highly fluid and requires a close eye to acreage and tenant names to assure they are the same property. This proved to be the case with Llwyngwinau Farm, recorded variously as Llwyn y Gwyn, Lloyn Gwynecam, and even Lloiglbene. Still other place names are highly descriptive, and therefore highly similar and easily confused, as has happened with two properties called Bron y Cappel and Bryn y Cippill. Within this study the modern versions of the place names are used except when they are directly transcribed from the original source.

Methodology

The following chapters will illustrate how this study of the Strata Florida grange of Blaenaeron fits into these broader contexts, and how these varied subjects of the dissolution of the monasteries, Welsh monasticism, continuity, manorial patterns, Cistercian studies, monastic economics, and medieval archaeology come together to tell one story. Since a fundamental argument of this thesis is one of continuity, Chapter 2 discusses aspects of continuity in physical and cultural terms, as well as ritual. It is designed to demonstrate how landscape can ‘encompass a people’s material, spiritual, and emotional existence’ (p. 38 below). It thus provides something of a theoretical underpinning for the thesis. Chapter 3 turns to the history of an institution, the Cistercian monastery of Strata Florida in Ceredigion, which for something less than four hundred years not only occupied a significant place in

4, 13, 31).

Welsh culture and politics but was the dominant economic agent for the estates under consideration. Providing a necessary context for the discussion of continuity in land tenure and use, the chapter discusses the foundation, patronage, and changing fortunes of the abbey and its abbots. Chapter 4 discusses the acquisition, growth, and consolidation of the abbey estate in the context of current studies of the Cistercian grange before focusing on the case study of Blaenaeron. Chapter 5 analyses the evidence for the development of the Blaenaeron estate after the dissolution and argues that it was fundamental to the maintenance of the economic basis and hence to the continued and increasing political and social influence of the Vaughan family of Trawscoed through to the twentieth century. The thesis now turns to the idea of continuity as it developed from a Welsh sense of place.

⁸⁹ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps https://places.library.wales/search/52.257/-3.931/14?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_98=on (Accessed 12 February 2020).

Chapter 2

Continuity: Cultural, Ritual, and Physical

It is the argument of this thesis that the dissolution of the monasteries impacted notably less on the lives of the tenants of monastic lands in Wales than it did on those in England. The Strata Florida grange of Blaenaeron demonstrates this point well. Blaenaeron grange tenants seem to have maintained their (possibly pre-monastic) established roles within their communities despite the land on which they lived changing hands. The premier factor in this continuity is the importance of land in many aspects of the lives of Welsh people. Landscapes and their identifiable features such as stone monuments were prominent elements of early Welsh myth, legend, and historical record. The landscape of Blaenaeron grange is arranged in a pattern of territorial organisation which predates monastic possession of the land, and the same pattern continued to dictate land use into the nineteenth century. The same artefacts of a sense of place remain just as they were, serving in many cases the same purposes as they did long ago. This chapter explores how this continuity within the landscape caused the dissolution in Wales to unfold in a manner so different from what took place in England.

People live where they do because of seemingly external, yet critical influences – climate, soil, a sufficient water supply, available food sources, protection, transhumance opportunities, and trade centre proximity.¹ This choice of place leads, eventually, to the development of concepts such as tribal lands, national borders, and the inheritance of land as property. The landscape becomes an important element in the development of culture and asserts itself as a primary

¹ Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), pp. 1–4.

character in a people's oral history, literature, and identity.² For these reasons, places and the people in them are not just associated, but deeply interrelated. The Welsh landscape has inspired its people throughout the ages. Welsh legends are connected to the land through the actual locations within them. Castles, lakes, mountains, rivers, and stones almost always have a link to legend in Wales.³ This same landscape not only plays a part in Welsh history, but often influences how it unfolds.

People and Place

Landscape archaeology, in its broadest sense, encompasses a people's material, spiritual, and emotional existence: 'Buildings, towns and cities, trackways and roads, animals and plants – all of these form part of the human experience of landscapes, as do memories, myths, and stories'.⁴ In other words, peoples are as defined by their environment just as an environment is by its inhabitants. More than a mere location or point on a map, places have importance for the people living in them. Cultural identity is linked to geographical experience. For example, land and people are closely linked in pre-Columbian North America. The pre-Columbian tribes of that continent lived in their environments, defined by and defining their space.⁵

Woodland dwellers made use of their heavily forested environment, trapping animals

² A discussion on this as it pertains specifically to Wales can be found in Bronagh Ni Chonail, 'The Welsh, you know, are Welsh: the Individual, the Alien, and a legal tradition', in Hirokazu Tsurushima, ed., *Nations in Medieval Britain* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), pp. 71–85.

³ See John Bollard, 'Landscapes of the Mabinogi', *Landscapes*, 10.2 (2009), 37–60.

⁴ A. M. Chadwick, ed., *Stories from the Landscape: Archaeologies of Inhabitation*, BAR (International Series) S1238 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), p. 1.

⁵ For Native Americans and their landscape, see William Deneven, 'The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82, no. 3 *The Americas before and after 1492: Current Geographical Research* (Sept. 1992), pp. 369–85 (376–378); Thomas R. Vale, ed. *Fire, Native Peoples, and the Natural Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002).

and constructing permanent homes with available materials such as logs and bark. In contrast, plains dwellers travelled extensively, following the herds of large land mammals they used to provide nearly everything: food, movable shelter, tools, weapons, clothing. Desert people built complex structures into cliff sides, for protection and practicality.⁶ When a tribe was removed from their homelands and sent to a new environment, the flora and fauna that populated their stories no longer made sense to the younger tribe members who had no memories of the animals and plants of their old lands. The tribe's gods might change, as their stories would, too, with the change in weather patterns and terrain. A desert people has no need for a forest deity, for example. The same stories cannot be told in new landscapes; while the displaced tribe of people retains their history and bloodline and habits, their mythology must adapt to the new environs, and therefore the people begin the process of learning to dwell in a new land.⁷ This sense of place is so strong for Navajo people, even in the modern era, that some of them experience a sense of imbalance only corrected by returning to their traditional homeland and its sacred geography.⁸ As European groups colonised the New World, occupying places they perceived to be free for the taking, the native inhabitants were pushed off their lands, and forced to live in new places with different environments, to begin to dwell again in different ways. These relocations had great impact on the cultures of the displaced people.

In contrast to that displacement is a continuity of focus on a specific landscape

⁶ V.B. Price and Baker H. Morrow, ed., *Canyon Gardens: The Ancient Pueblo Landscapes of the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006).

⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss discussed the importance of geography in relation to mythology and language in many of his structural anthropology works, including *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), and *Structural Anthropology* (Chicago: Basic Books, 1963).

⁸ Hilary Weaver, 'Indigenous Identity: What is it, and Who Really Has it?', *American Indian Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (Spring, 2001), 240–55 (p. 245).

feature or location. This is illustrated in the example of Leskernick hill, in the northern part of Bodmin Moor in Cornwall. Archaeological work begun by Christopher Tilley was expanded to become the *Stone Worlds Project*, a landscape study of the site. There, as in other similar places in Britain, occupation and use of the space continued for millennia in gradually developing but similar ways, as the sacred nature of the hill was continually recognised by the people occupying it. People in the latter half of the second millennium BC built their homes on the slope, and acknowledged the stones there as being sacred, and associated them with their ancestral beings. As time went on and the people in the area developed from seasonal hunter-gatherers to nomadic herdsmen to settled agrarian societies, the reverence for the stones and the growing history of ancestral/spiritual attachment to the stones and the hill continued. Ceremonial places were nurtured and treated with reverence. In cases such as this, ‘the land is regarded as an ancestral creation’, and identifiable natural features such as unusual rocks, bogs, caves, and lakes become sacred places.⁹

The importance of place is, for traditional societies, an anthropological constant. An individual is defined in part by one’s belonging to a specific place. Wales has kept hold of this sense of place despite modernisation and industrialisation, perhaps due to its rural nature.¹⁰ Connection to and longevity on the land are notably the focus of the Welsh national anthem, entitled *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, or *Old Land of My Fathers*.¹¹ How did an aggregation of territories under multiple princes with fluctuating borders then develop a sense of Welshness? It

⁹ Barbara Bender, Sue Hamilton, and Chris Tilley, *Stone Worlds: Narrative and Reflexivity in Landscape Archaeology* (London: University College Institute of Archaeology, 2008), pp. 80–82.

¹⁰ Dorian Llywelyn, *Sacred Place, Chosen People: Land and National Identity in Welsh Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), p. 15.

¹¹ NLW Misc. Records 293. - ARCH/MSS (GB0210): List of material relating to Evan James and

would appear that Wales lacked the expected conditions for developing a national identity. Yet Huw Pryce notes that regional and national identities were strong in Wales throughout the medieval period, and some Welsh rulers even used the concept of national identity in order to gain control over what was still a fragmented political landscape.¹² The divisive nature of partible inheritance exacerbated that fragmentation. Loyalties tended to be localised and personal. Whilst Wales was indeed fragmented politically from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, there was cultural and social cohesion. Contrary to patterns seen elsewhere, notably Scotland, where the idea of a singular kingly leader emerged to fuse internal and external influences and interests in pursuit of a national identity, Wales took a different route.¹³ Medieval Wales did not achieve complete political unification. Rather than moving toward establishing a single king, Welsh princes established territories within Wales and created separate and simultaneous dynasties. Yet, R. R. Davies contends, the expectation that national identity can only be accomplished via the kingly route is a limitation based on English centralist bias, and there is no reason to assume nationalism could not develop in Wales alongside regional loyalties. The sense of national identity is not born only out of policy and common governance, but can come from shared ideas, mythologies, and a recognition of shared geography, language, or genealogy.¹⁴ Important to note, however, is that there was a recognition of a greater Wales to be unified or won. Concepts of ‘Wales’ and the ‘Welsh’ were

James James (‘Hen Wlad fy Nhadau’) in Pontypridd Library.

¹² Huw Pryce, ‘British or Welsh? National Identity in Twelfth-Century Wales’, *The English Historical Review*, 116, no. 468 (Sept. 2001), 775–801 (p. 776).

¹³ See Dauvit Braun, ‘Becoming a Nation: Scotland in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries’, in Hirokazu Tsurushima, ed., *Nations in Medieval Britain* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), pp. 86–103.

¹⁴ R. R. Davies, ‘Law and National Identity in Thirteenth-Century Wales’, in R. R. Davies, Ralph A. Griffiths, Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, and Kenneth O. Morgan, ed., *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical Essays Presented to Glanmor Williams* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), pp 51–69 (pp. 51–53).

firmly established in writing within Wales, both in Welsh and in Latin, by the eleventh century.¹⁵ A geographical boundary separating Wales from England was acknowledged during the Middle Ages in Offa's Dyke, which is likely to have been constructed to deter Welsh invasions of Mercia in the eighth century. This recognised border added a physical element in establishing a national identity.¹⁶ Huw Pryce notes that not only was the eastern border of Wales historically a fluctuating one dependent on politics, but also that early medieval Welsh and English concepts of where that border was may have differed somewhat. Offa's Dyke was likely constructed as a defensive wall by Mercia to protect their kingdom from the aggressions of Powys during the late eighth century. The Pillar of Eliseg may hold the only record of Powys's expansion under Eliseg (d. c.755) at the expense of Mercia.¹⁷ As a physical barrier, its visual impact and, therefore, its power as a symbol of divisiveness between two distinct peoples remained impressive, even as the years passed and the walls softened.¹⁸

The dynastic rule of regions of Wales had its roots as far back as the Roman period. These dynasties were, by the medieval period, well enough established to be jostling amongst themselves for control of more territory. As the smaller Welsh dynasties were absorbed into the greater ones, or developed cooperative relationships among them, the idea of otherness as it applied to those who were not Welsh became more prevalent. This was even more firmly settled with the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267, in which the English king recognised the prince of Gwynedd as holding the

¹⁵ Pryce, 'British or Welsh', p. 776.

¹⁶ Bronagh Ní Chonail, 'The Welsh, You Know, are Welsh', in Hirokazu Tsurushima, ed., *Nations in Medieval Britain*, (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), pp. 71–85 (pp. 72–73).

¹⁷ D.J. Tyler, 'Offa's Dyke: A Historiographical Appraisal', *Journal of Medieval History*, 37 (2011), 145–61 (pp. 156–57).

¹⁸ Tyler, 'Offa's Dyke', pp. 156–57.

title of ‘Prince of Wales’ and acknowledged his control over the lesser dynasties of Wales. This established the foundation of a politically unified Wales, and whilst it came from an external source, it fed the growing awareness of a national identity based on language, culture, and geography.¹⁹ The earliest surviving formal agreement between an English king and a Welsh prince dates to the year 1201, and it is significant in that it made a very clear distinction between Welsh and English law, thereby recognising a national, Welsh legal system.²⁰

The Welsh have therefore been *dwellers*, in the Heideggerian sense, on and of their own lands, which have shaped the lives of the Welsh for many generations. ‘Man’s relation to locations, and through locations to spaces, inheres in his dwelling.’²¹ Martin Heidegger wrote about a farmhouse in the Black Forest which existed where it did because of the combined influences of *the fourfold*, which he identified as humanity, deities, the sky, and the earth. None of these four exists apart from the others, Heidegger claims, and the influence of all is what brings a house to be constructed in a particular place. *The fourfold* cooperate to dictate the placement of a house to make the most of the sun for warmth, a hillside for shelter and protection, and proximity to necessities such as streams for water.²² In Wales, the understanding of the impact of *place* through the strata of history and narrative is vast: ‘History is visible throughout the country, and many places retain a significance even if their original meaning might be lost.’²³

¹⁹ Davies, ‘Law and National Identity’, pp. 51–53.

²⁰ Davies, ‘Law and National Identity’, p. 58. Davies further examines the complexities of acknowledgment of Welsh law in Magna Carta and later thirteenth-century documents.

²¹ Martin Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking,’ in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971), p. 155.

²² Heidegger, ‘Building’, pp. 141–61.

²³ John Bollard, ‘Landscapes of the Mabinogi’, *Landscapes*, 10.2 (2009), 37–60 (p. 47).

Hearth and Home

The literal and figurative centre of the early Welsh home was its *aelwyd*, or hearth. For a tribal people of a nomadic culture, the *aelwyd* provided a focal point through the use of a fireback stone, or *pentaenfan* (albeit a very portable one), and a physical manifestation of their kindred-based social system. This stone was placed vertically at the back of the hearth.²⁴ The *aelwyd* was located in the centre of the home, both to spread warmth and to allow for many to gather around it. This same term was also used metaphorically in reference to the general household. Each night the hearth was swept out, and the *seed of fire*, the last remaining ember, was kept alive, replaced in the hearth, and covered over with ash, to wait for morning. When dawn arrived, the ember was uncovered and revived to burn anew.²⁵

The hearth has long been a focal point of the home and family in Welsh culture as well as many others. Greek and Roman mythology assigned the goddesses Hestia and Vesta to hearth and home, with an equivalent seen in Norse mythology as the goddess Frigg. In Ireland, Brigidh was the goddess of the hearth and the keeper of the sacred flame, and her stories closely resemble those of her Anglo-Saxon counterpart Habondia.²⁶ Giraldus Cambrensis wrote of nuns and holy women of Kildare who tended an eternal flame in Brigidh's honour, without generating any ashes whatsoever.²⁷ Jacob Grimm observed that in Teutonic mythology the hearth

²⁴ Iorwerth Peate, *The Welsh House* (Liverpool: The Brython Press, 1946), p. 123; Iorwerth Peate, 'The Double-ended Fire-dog', *Antiquity*, 16(61) (1942), 64–70.

²⁵ Seebohm, *Tribal System*, pp. 82–83.

²⁶ Mika Kajava, 'Hestia: Hearth, Goddess, and Cult', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 102 (2004), 1–20 (pp. 1–3); Ian McElroy, 'The Eternal Fire of Vesta: Roman Cultural Identity and the Legitimacy of Augustus', unpublished MA thesis, Rutgers University (2016), pp. 5–6, 44–47; James MacKillop, *Myths and Legends of the Celts* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 89–92.

²⁷ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. by John O'Meara (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 81–82.

seems to be a portal to the subterranean realms occupied by the fae folk and the gods.²⁸ Grimm also noted a story of an earth-wife pushing her head up through the floor near the hearth to offer Hadingus, the Danish king of legend, some green vegetables.²⁹ Saxo Grammaticus (d. ca. 1204), the twelfth-century Danish historian, wrote of the earth-wife taking Hadingus with her to an underground world, which is covered in grass, much like a version of the Greek Elysium.³⁰

The cauldron was located within the hearth at the centre of the home, and cauldrons seeming to possess magical abilities feature prominently in Welsh mythology. Cauldron lore is widespread through Welsh and Irish mythology, and probably featured in Celtic mythology in general. The Gundestrup Cauldron, which was discovered in Denmark, provides what James MacKillop refers to as a Rosetta Stone of early religion in its artistic renderings of ancient gods and other symbols, suggesting that cauldron lore held a significant place in a broader spectrum of European beliefs. Cauldrons are probably the ancestors of the Grail lore of Arthurian legend.³¹ In Welsh legend, the shape-shifting sorceress Ceridwen was believed to be the keeper of the cauldron. Ceridwen's particular cauldron bestowed inspiration on Gwion Bach, the boy who became, through mishap and later rebirth via Ceridwen, the legendary poet Taliesin. The earliest mention of Ceridwen and her cauldron is in a c.1217 poem found in the *Book of Taliesin*, or *Llyfr Taliesin*.³² While some poetry within *Llyfr Taliesin* is suggested to date to the ninth century or possibly earlier, the

²⁸ Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. 2, trans. James Stallybrass (London: George Bell & Sons, 1883), p. 500.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 465 n.

³⁰ Oliver Elton, ed., *The Nine Books of The Danish History of Saxus Grammaticus*, vol. 1 (London: Norroena Society, 1905), pp. 118–19.

³¹ See MacKillop, *Myths*, pp. xvii–xviii, 75.

³² Marged Haycock, *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2007), pp. 13–14; see also Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, pp. 312–27.

book was compiled during the early fourteenth century.³³ The centrality and significance of the hearth is carried into modern literature by the Welsh author Diana Wynne Jones (d. 2011), in whose fictional work *Howl's Moving Castle* a hearth demon called Calcifer resides in the hearth and powers the castle with his magic. By contract, Calcifer has the wizard Howl's heart in exchange for eternal life as the flame in the castle's hearth. Therefore, Jones's work reflects the familiar idea of the hearth as the heart of the home.³⁴

By the sixteenth century in some parts of Britain and across Europe, the hearth became a common location for the placing of protective charms and talismans, and marking against evil, in apotropaic efforts to keep the dwellers of the home safe from harm done by witches or magic. This was shortly before the publication of *Dæmonologie, in forme of a dialogue, divided into three Bookes*, a compendium on witchcraft written in 1597 by King James VI of Scotland (and later James I of England, d. 1625), who was a believer and contributor to the widespread anti-witchcraft craze of the era, and was known for his anti-witchcraft legislation.³⁵

The 1542 Second Act of Union established the Court of Great Sessions, thus bringing English law to Wales.³⁶ The Court was comprised of four circuits, with three counties to each circuit.³⁷ The diligent recordkeeping that followed created an unusual situation wherein the pre-trial documentation of witchcraft prosecutions in

³³ NLW, Peniarth MS 2; Marged Haycock, 'Llyfr Taliesin', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 25 (1987–8), 357–86. For greater details on the dates of origin for the materials in the Taliesin, also see Haycock, *Legendary Poems* pp. 9–21.

³⁴ Diana Wynne Jones, *Howl's Moving Castle* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1986).

³⁵ William Shakespeare's *MacBeth*, written a few years later may have been influenced by this publication as well. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/king-james-vi-and-is-demonology-1597>

³⁶ TNA, Laws in Wales Act 1542 c. 26 (Regnal. 34 and 35 Henry VIII).

³⁷ William Retlaw Williams, *The History of the Great Sessions in Wales, 1542–1830, Together with the Lives of the Welsh Judges, and Annotated Lists of the Chamberlains and Chancellors, Attorney Generals, and Prothonotaries of the Four Circuits of Chester and Wales; the Lord Presidents of*

Wales in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was preserved, while the same in England was generally discarded. As a result, the earliest surviving pre-trial documents relating to witchcraft in Britain came from Wales.³⁸

Among the various methods employed at the time to ward off witches or prevent bewitchment of home and family were: burying a witch-bottle prepared for that purpose underneath the hearth; placing worn out personal items such as shoes in the dead spaces beside the chimney; and placing burn marks on the mantle beam.³⁹ The placement of these charms against evil in and around the hearth was deliberate, and perhaps was also a natural progression from the significance of the earlier carved hearthstones as they related to protecting the claims to property and family.

Recording discoveries of shoes and other items ‘concealed’ in the hearth or chimney of homes in Wales and elsewhere in the UK has developed into a website project created by Dinah Eastop of the Textile Conservation Centre. The study of this folkloric phenomenon was pioneered by June Swann of the Northampton Museum in the 1960s. St Fagan’s National History Museum has a collection of such items, which were found in hearths of Welsh homes, some of them having been placed in their concealed locations as recently as the nineteenth century. This apotropaic practice of placing shoes in the chimney or around the hearth has continued since as early as the thirteenth century.⁴⁰

Wales, and the Attorney Generals and Solicitor Generals of the Marches (Brecknock: Edwin Davies, 1899), pp. 10-13.

³⁸ TNA, Laws in Wales Act 1542 c. 26 (Regnal. 34 and 35 Henry VIII); Richard Suggett, *Welsh Witches: Narratives of Witchcraft and Magic from 16th and 17th Century Wales* (Carmarthen: Atramentous Press, 2018), pp. 10–13.

³⁹ Timothy Easton and Jeremy Hodgkinson, ‘Apotropaic Symbols on Cast-Iron Firebacks’, *Journal of the Antique Metalware Society*, 21 (2013), 14–33 (p. 16).

⁴⁰ Elen Phillips, ‘Keeping Evil at Bay: Concealed Garments’, *National Museum of Wales*, 9 August 2011. <https://museum.wales/articles/2011-08-09/Keeping-evil-at-bay-Concealed-garments/> (Accessed 28 June 2018); June Swann, ‘Shoes Concealed in Buildings’, *Costume Society Journal*, 30 (1996), 56–69; Esther Cameron, June Swann, Marquita Volken, and Fiona Pitt, ‘Hidden shoes and concealed beliefs’, *Archaeological Leather Group Newsletter* (February 1998), 2–6.

The hearth was significant in matters of land and property rights as well. When the tribes of Wales were still largely nomadic, a hearth stone would have been a portable symbol of home. As the Welsh people became more sedentary, their fireback stones became larger and more permanent hearths. Upon the placement of a *pentaenfan*, it was considered an offence to remove it. Even on the occasion that a house was destroyed, the *pentaenfan* remained in place as an indicator that an occupied homestead once stood there.⁴¹ The *pentaenfan* not only became the symbol of inheritance and family ownership, the central fireplace with its *pentaenfan* became a matter of fundamental importance within the Welsh Laws, such that property laws developed around it. The right of *dadenhudd* referred to the right of a son to claim his deceased father's or ancestor's land; on this occasion he was said to have 'uncovered the hearth'. The fireback stone, or *pentaenfan*, was listed within the *Llyfr Iorwerth* as one of three 'indispensables' to a *taeog*.⁴² This indispensable nature is due to it also being one of three testimonies of a man's right to inheritance of landed property. According to the *Llyfr Blegywryd*, when the 'hob-stone is to be seen of the father of the person who shall claim the land, or of his grandfather, or of his great grandfather, or of others of his kindred, or the toft of the message of his parents, upon the land; all these stand in the place of witnesses for him, as to his right'. This same ruling appears in the *Llyfr Cyfnerth*.⁴³ Furthermore, the *Llyfr Blegywryd* lists only three things that serve to preserve a memorial or to bear witness

⁴¹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 164; Peate, *The Welsh House*, p. 123; Peate, 'The Double-ended Fire-dog', pp. 67–70.

⁴² *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Peniarth 32, 18r5-18r11, p. 77. <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=D> (Accessed 17 January 2021)

⁴³ *Llyfr Blegywryd*, Peniarth 38, 57v2-69r7, p. 455. <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=I> (Accessed 17 January 2021); *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, Peniarth 37, 51v3-51v9, p. 773. <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&ms=U> (Accessed 17 January 2021)

as to a person's right to land: the stone of an old kiln, a horse-block or mounting stone, or a fireback stone.⁴⁴ The significance of this *pentaenfan* to a kindred as memorial or witness of homestead or land rights was because the stone held the mark of the kindred upon it.⁴⁵ Use of the term 'hearth' to indicate a settlement of considerable importance is recorded in the *Englynon y Beddau*, or Stanzas of the Graves, in reference to the hearth of Dinorben where a grave belonging to Hennin Hen-ben is located. The precise location is probably a *cromlech*, or stone tomb, the ruins of which still exist near the current farm called Dinorben.⁴⁶

Standing Stones in the Landscape

A development, or related practice, from the use of the fireback stone to lay claim to land is the similar use of monument stones. Inscribed stones were initially used as grave markers in the fifth to seventh centuries. However, Irish settlers moving into southwestern Wales during the same period introduced the practice of using incised stones as boundary markers and as proof of landownership.⁴⁷ In south-west Wales there are two stones in particular that were likely used in this manner. Penbryn 1 and Llanfyrnach 2 are both located on high ground, which, according to Nancy Edwards, is not typical of the stones in the region. These stones, if they were in fact used in

⁴⁴ *Llyfr Blegywryd*, Peniarth 38, 57v2-69r7, p. 455. <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=I> (Accessed 17 January 2021).

⁴⁵ Hubert Lewis, *The Ancient Laws of Wales, Viewed Especially in Regard to the Light they Throw Upon the Origin of Some English Institutions* (London: Elliot Stock, 1889), p. 70.

⁴⁶ T. Jones, 'The Black Book of Carmarthen: "stanzas of the graves"', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 53 (1967), 97–137 (pp. 100, 133); G. Jones, *Post-Roman Wales*, pp. 290–91.

⁴⁷ Nancy Edwards, 'Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales: Context and Function', *Medieval Archaeology*, 45:1 (2001), 15–39 (pp. 17–18); M. Handley, 'The medieval inscriptions of Western Britain: function and sociology', in J. Hill and M. Swan, ed., *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns and Power in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 330–49 (p. 339); T. Charles-Edwards, 'Boundaries in Irish law', in P. H. Sawyer, ed., *Medieval Settlement* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), pp. 83–87.

marking boundaries and claiming land, would have served as ‘quasi-legal documents’, legitimising land rights and advertising the same to passers-by.⁴⁸ This period is characterised by a significant amount of incoming settlement, from Ireland and Scotland in particular, and the Welsh *uchelwyr* were struggling to maintain possession of their land holdings. This was the same period when Christianity was spreading very quickly in Wales, which also posed a threat to previously established land possessions. In probable response to these threats to their rights to land, a new use of newly erected stone monuments, and re-use of those already in place, came into play. The *uchelwyr* made use of sites which held obvious prehistoric features, such as cairns, barrows, or standing stones from the Bronze or Neolithic ages. These sites were frequently located with views of much of the surrounding landscape. In reusing these locations, the early medieval *uchelwyr* were also using the continuity of past claims to the land to reinforce their own.⁴⁹ To underline further their connection with the past, these stones were suggested to have been the graves of mythical heroes. The *uchelwyr* then incorporated these heroes, mythical and historical, into their own ancestry, to add another layer of legitimacy to their control over land and resources. Here the landscape made its way into the folklore and mythology to emphasise a people’s sense of belonging to the land, and their right to continue living on it.⁵⁰

The Pillar of Eliseg is one of only three sculptured cross stones in Wales that can be dated with any certainty. Most of these Group III stones in Wales are

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Corpus*, II, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Edwards, ‘Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones’, p. 22.

⁵⁰ This concept is addressed in Edwards, ‘Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones’, pp. 22–23; Bradley, *Significance*, pp. 87–90; David Petts, ‘De Situ Brecheniauc and Englynion y Beddau: writing about burial in early medieval Wales’, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2007), 163–72 (pp. 163–67).

associated with specific regional or even more localised groups.⁵¹ The Pillar is an assemblage of elements from multiple cultures and eras. The column is currently about 2.4 metres high, standing on a square base, which is on top of an oval burial mound with a stone kerb. The mound is likely, at some point, to have contained the burial of a significant Bronze Age leader, but those remains are now lost. A later interment in a box of blue stones was added during the early medieval period. The column itself may have originally held a cross head at the top. It draws heavily from Mercian cross-shaft design, and like those monuments, it may be deliberately paying homage to Roman traditions in both form and function, as it was intended to convey the secular power of Cyngen, king of Powys (d. 856), over the area, as well as his ecclesiastical patronage. The inscription on the Pillar identifies it as having been commissioned by Cyngen. The inscription also describes a genealogy of the kings of Powys, to include linking them to Vortigern of fifth-century Britain, and Magnus Maximus, fourth-century usurper to the Roman Empire. The Pillar connects these mythical associations with Cyngen's more immediate ancestry, detailing the triumph of Eliseg, Cyngen's grandfather, over the English.⁵²

Reuse of earlier monuments for new burials seems to have been a common practice in the early medieval period, not only in Wales but throughout Britain and parts of Europe. Extant stones were used in the fabrication of the sides of cist graves, and also used as grave markers aboveground. The most well-known literary reference to this act is found in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*. In the poem, Beowulf dies in a battle against a dragon which took place at what appears to be a

⁵¹ Group III stones, of which there are more than 120, are dated from the ninth to eleventh century, and include elaborately sculptured crosses and cross-slabs, some with inscriptions: Edwards, 'Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones', pp. 16, 33.

⁵² Petts, 'De Situ', p. 165; 'Pillar of Eliseg', Coflein, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/165274/details/pillar-of-elisegelisegs-pillar-cross-and-burial-mound-near-llangollen>. Accessed 8 Sept. 2018.

Neolithic chambered tomb. The tomb is described as having been built by ancient people, and within it was a dragon's hoard. Upon his death, Beowulf is cremated, and a mound is erected over the pyre, in proximity to the Neolithic tomb. This description is reflective of behaviour in practice during the early medieval period, as evidenced by archaeological findings across Great Britain and Europe. Within the tale, this monument 'evokes the memory of a distant, mythological past in ancestral homelands on the Continent'.⁵³

Monument reuse in early medieval burials has not drawn much attention until relatively recently, though the phenomenon was recognised long before then.⁵⁴ Termed 'ritual continuity' by R. J. Bradley, this monument reuse is now generally viewed as a source of power for rulers at the time, and a means by which to connect their present with a mythical past. The Anglo-Saxon practice of burying their own dead in or near ancient monuments could also indicate their intentions to construct social identities out of mythical and historical origins.⁵⁵ Bradley suggests that rather than a place maintaining ritual significance over time, a group with elite social status employed association with the past as a means by which to legitimise their status. He offers the example of Sutton Hoo, and its various phases of settlement there from Bronze Age to the Anglo-Saxon era, to illustrate his point. Other examples of ritual continuity include Iron Age hillforts placed in the same location as Neolithic causewayed enclosures; Romano-Celtic temples found inside empty hillforts; and Roman buildings reused as Anglo-Saxon churches. However, Bradley cautions that not all societies make a clear distinction between ritual and ordinary, and amongst

⁵³ Howard Williams, 'Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England,' *World Archaeology*, 30, no. 1 (June 1998), 90–108 (p. 91). Also see Howard Williams' 'Project Eliseg' collaborative archaeological research project <https://projecteliseg.wordpress.com>. Accessed 8 Sept. 2018.

⁵⁴ The connection was first noted by Charles Thomas in 1971. Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 51–58.

those that do, there are often status requirements for the use of these places of ritual significance.⁵⁶ Reuse of ancient monuments for elite burial purposes may have been as significant as were the artefacts placed in the burial alongside the dead. This continuity of use of monuments within the landscape not only links later burials with the ancient past, but also ties the landscape to the perceived identities of those reusing the monuments. Deliberate selection of an existing monument site to bury the elite dead suggests that the people of the region continued to view their specific landscape as having significance within their ritual lives.⁵⁷

As not all the sites identified within Strata Florida's Blaenaeron grange were necessarily for ritual use, but more often for everyday use, in that they were farms and fields and other elements of Welsh agricultural lives, this concept of ritual continuity may seem to lack pertinence here. However, there are also ritual sites, or sites were assigned ritual histories after the fact, amongst these farms and fields, which have played a part in the settlement patterns within Blaenaeron grange.⁵⁸ Furthermore, these sites all were located within a monastic grange, and were therefore church properties. Nancy Edwards suggests that some Group II stones, which were cross-shaped or cross-decorated, did not mark secular land holdings, but were indicators of lands owned by the church.⁵⁹ In some cases these stones were located along roadways. Group III stones, however, were the later cross slabs and upright crosses used by monasteries as well as local churches as indicators of power

⁵⁵ Williams, 'Monuments and the Past', p. 91.

⁵⁶ Williams, 'Monuments and the Past', pp. 91–96; Richard Bradley, 'Time Regained: The Creation of Continuity,' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 140:1 (2013), 1–17 (pp. 1–4).

⁵⁷ Williams, 'Monuments and the Past', p. 91.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 4 below.

⁵⁹ Group II stones are made up of more than 150 cross-decorated stones, some bearing inscriptions, dating primarily from the seventh to the ninth centuries. Group III stones are about 120 more elaborately sculpted stones and cross slabs dated from the ninth to eleventh centuries: Edwards, 'Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones', pp. 15–16.

and protection, in some cases announcing patronage by significant leaders.⁶⁰

The Physicality of Place

Gerald of Wales noted that Welshmen highly valued their freedom and their land, and their insistence on maintaining both of these necessitated their fighting ferociously for them, for centuries.⁶¹ These values are reflected in the Welsh attachment to the physicality of place; street names, house names, building names are frequently references to geographic features nearby, such as proximity to a river or a hill.⁶² In Ceredigion in 2015, the County Council's concern over a growing trend to anglicise the names of houses by their owners led Council members to write letters to those owners and beg them to reconsider.⁶³ People living in villages in Wales are occasionally still referred to, not by surname, but by the name of the town or village in which they reside.⁶⁴

Where a person dwells is considered to be important enough to ensure remembrance of it beyond death. Harold Mytum has examined the role of language on memorials found in Welsh cemeteries and considers them to be valuable tools in analysing cultural identity.⁶⁵ The practicality of gravestones is that there is limited space on one to record information. It follows that the information chosen to

⁶⁰ Edwards, 'Early-Medieval Inscribed Stones', p. 39.

⁶¹ Gerald of Wales, *The Description of Wales*, p. 274.

⁶² Dewi Davies, *Welsh Place Names and their Meanings* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2012).

⁶³ 'Plea for people to keep Welsh house names in Ceredigion', BBC News (3 March 2015) <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-mid-wales-31713597>.

⁶⁴ Stephen Austen-Drennan, pers comm. 23 November 2017.

⁶⁵ Another consideration in terms of cultural identity is the use of local materials. This is of particular interest in more recent centuries when alternatives were available, though it can be argued that local stone may have been an economic choice over a conscious preference to identify with one's locality through using local materials. See Harold Mytum, 'Welsh Cultural Identity in Nineteenth-Century Pembrokeshire', in Sarah Tarlow and Susie West, ed., *The Familiar Past* (London: Routledge, 1999),

represent the life of the person buried below is believed to be the most significant information about that person. The personal connection to the land is so strongly felt in Wales that it is recorded on the grave markers of the deceased. Names and dates are listed in the usual way, but many Welsh gravestones also identify the home address of the individual buried there. Mytum notes that this practice is evident on a variety of stone types and is independent from other manners of cultural identification to do with burial markers. Examples of this tradition are found in Wales spanning hundreds of years, and the tradition continues today.⁶⁶

pp. 215–30 (pp. 215–17).

⁶⁶ Mytum, 'Welsh Cultural Identity,' p. 223; Harold Mytum and G. Kilminster, 'Mariners at Newport, Pembrokeshire: The Evidence from Gravestones,' *Maritime Wales*, 11 (1988), 7–27 (p. 7).



Figure 2.1 : Clockwise from top left: 1795 gravestone identifying a man as being ‘late of the abbey Strata Florida’ (Strata Florida churchyard) ; headstone on local slate of a local resident (Strata Florida churchyard); house name placard in Aberaeron, providing clues to its proximity to the sea; headstone identifying the address of the deceased at the time of her death, as well as her former address, which may have been her family home (churchyard of Eglwys San Pedr in Lampeter). All photos by H. Para.

The myths and legends of a people are likewise involved in shaping the relationships between people and their lands. Language, according to Adrian Chadwick, is a part of identity and a sense of belonging. For many ancient peoples, long winter nights were spent around a fire or hearth, telling tales of bravery, monsters, and voyages. Before the written word, storytelling was a vital tool for

developing and maintaining a cultural history and identity: ‘Many stories would have been based upon features in the landscape, and the associations of places with real or imaginary events and people’.⁶⁷ In this way, the landscape contributes deeply to the lore of a land and people.

Moving from oral to written tradition: landscape and literature

Welsh heroic prose is reliant on earlier oral tradition, so written stories frequently have a much longer history than can be proven. The *Mabinogi* is a series of Welsh tales translated into English in the nineteenth century by Lady Charlotte Guest.⁶⁸ The stories were written or told far earlier, and versions are found in such late medieval assemblages as *The White Book of Rhydderch* (c. 1350)⁶⁹ and the larger, later *The Red Book of Hergest* (c. 1382–1410),⁷⁰ both of which were compilations of Welsh stories, translations of prose from other cultures, and poetry, histories, medical works, and grammar. *The White Book* was likely written in the Strata Florida scriptorium, by five different scribes, and was probably commissioned by Rhydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd of Parcrhydderch, Llangeitho, a great-great-grandson of Maredudd ab Owain (d. 1265), ‘chief lord of Ceredigion’ who was buried at Strata Florida, and a grandson of Lord Rhys.⁷¹ *The Red Book* was written for prominent Welsh patron Hopcyn ap Tomas of Ynysforgan, and is likely to have been influenced by *The White Book*, and it marks the pinnacle of Welsh works in the medieval era, as book

⁶⁷ A.M. Chadwick, ed., *Stories from the Landscape: Archaeologies of Inhabitation*, BAR (International Series) S1238 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), p.10.

⁶⁸ Lady Charlotte Guest, trans., *The Mabinogion* (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1927).

⁶⁹ *NLW*, Peniarth MSS 4–5.

⁷⁰ *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 111.

⁷¹ Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 227–28, 247–52.

production was on the decline following the disastrous rising of Owain Glyn Dŵr.⁷² The earliest surviving Welsh narrative is the c.1100 *Culhwch and Olwen*, which also contains reference to King Arthur and his men. Four of the stories in the nineteenth-century compilation are interconnected and are referred to as the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, or *Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi*. It is these four stories alone which should bear the name *Mabinogi*, according to Celtic scholar James MacKillop.⁷³

Elements within the narrative of the *Mabinogi* suggest, as mentioned above, that these stories are possibly of older, oral traditions. While the *Four Branches* are mythological in nature, instead of the classical myths of gods and origins, these ‘incorporate inherited lore, tales, episodes, and references in order to explore themes that were of importance’. This importance is supported by their inclusion within later medieval manuscripts.⁷⁴ The *Mabinogi* could not have existed in a different physical environment, as the landscape is an important enough aspect of the tales to become a central character. While some of the locations are not readily identifiable, especially place names in Dyfed and Ireland, others are easily recognizable, notably in Gwynedd. The less obvious place names in the *Mabinogi* remain a subject of debate.⁷⁵

John Bollard has written extensively on the use of geography in the *Mabinogi*, and the historical significance of the places named within the tales. Many of these locations also hold monuments or other noteworthy physical elements that predate the assumed time period in which the tales were written. That the writer(s) of these tales makes special reference to these places, as well as the focus on the ancient

⁷² Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, pp. 16, 86–88.

⁷³ James MacKillop, *Myths and Legends of the Celts* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 261–64.

⁷⁴ John Bollard, ‘Landscapes of The Mabinogi’, *Landscapes*, 10.2 (2009), 37–38.

⁷⁵ See Andi Carla Skinner, ‘Courts and Journeys in the Mabinogi: An Investigation into the Toponyms in the Mabinogi’ (unpublished MA thesis, UWTSU, 2014).

meanings of place names throughout the tales, emphasise the importance of place to the telling of these tales in the time that they were told.⁷⁶

Places acquire meaning and resonance as history and narrative accrue around them, and they begin to assume relevance and significance within a landscape, a larger area that evokes response especially through the common cultural experience and understanding of its inhabitants.⁷⁷



Figure 2.2: Place Names in the Mabinogi. John Bollard, 2009, p. 39.

⁷⁶ Bollard, 'Landscapes', pp. 37–60.

⁷⁷ Bollard, 'Landscapes', p. 41.

David Petts has explored the Welsh mythologisation of landscape through the lens of tenth-century poetry. In that early medieval period, the Welsh elite was facing considerable change, such as assaults and incursions on their property by the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings; additionally, the Church gaining power and ecclesiastical rivalries were making demands on available lands as well. In efforts to hang on to their lands, the *uchelwyr* resorted to more creative means: incorporating the mythical and historical past into their ancestry to legitimize their claims.⁷⁸

The Welsh verses *Englynion y Beddau* (Stanzas of the Grave), also known as *Beddau Milwyr ynys Pridein* (The Graves of the Warriors of the Island of Britain), contain a collection of three-line verses. The estimated date of their writing is ninth or tenth century, though the earliest surviving and most intact version of the verses is found in the Black Book of Carmarthen, which holds 73 *englynion*.⁷⁹ Furthermore, within the *Englynion y Beddau* are three groups of heroes. The first group comprises the more historic characters associated with the ‘Old North’; a second group contains the characters associated with the Arthurian stories. Both of these groups are localised in Wales. A third group comprises characters who are likely to have been pre-Christian gods who were later incorporated into the Christian world as heroes. In some cases, these characters are associated with recognisable landscape features; in others, their names appear to be eponyms taken from landscape features. Petts suggests that the atypical three-line construction, along with the geographically specific heroes, to indicate that the *Englynion y Beddau* described not merely a historic, but a mythic past. It is possible that the use of the three-line structure, rather

⁷⁸ David Petts, ‘De Situ Brecheniauc and Englynion y Beddau: writing about burial in early medieval Wales,’ *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2007), pp. 163–72.

⁷⁹ The Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW, Peniarth MS 1) is believed to be the earliest extant complete manuscript written in Welsh. It was associated with the Augustinian priory at Carmarthen, being in the library there in the later middle ages: Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priories*, p. 72; Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 39.

than the more typical four-line one, is a deliberately employed literary tool used to ‘archaicise’ the verses.⁸⁰ The *Englynion y Beddau* were intended to be spoken aloud, likely by a bard, though eventually it was recorded in the written word, seemingly in a call-and-response pattern, with the audience participating in the process. This gave the performer little ability to alter the content of the poems, thereby preserving the ideological or political content. In this capacity the poems are also a bridge between oral and written histories.⁸¹

As the transition from oral tradition to written language developed in Wales, we begin to see land disputes or inheritances noted in the pages of important books. The recording of land possession or transfer in writing, especially within the confines of a book perceived to be of lasting value and significance, was reflective of the great importance of land to the Welsh people. While no general study of the use of sacred books in this manner has yet been undertaken, there are examples of the use of religious books as record repositories elsewhere. It was not unheard of for churches to offer their books for the recording of grants and other land transactions to parishioners, patrons, and those with no association to the church (though some association would undoubtedly mean a far more welcoming offer).⁸² The recording of title to land may appear to be the most obvious use of this manner of record-keeping, but it may not be the most common. Jenkins and Owen suggest the best-known example of secular record-keeping within a sacred book is that of a land dispute in Herefordshire. This dispute plainly notes that the matter was recorded in a gospel book. It remains in place at Hereford Cathedral, so the longevity of these

⁸⁰ David Petts, ‘De Situ’, pp. 163–64.

⁸¹ Petts, ‘De Situ’, pp. 165, 167.

⁸² C. R. Cheney, *Notaries Public in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 7.

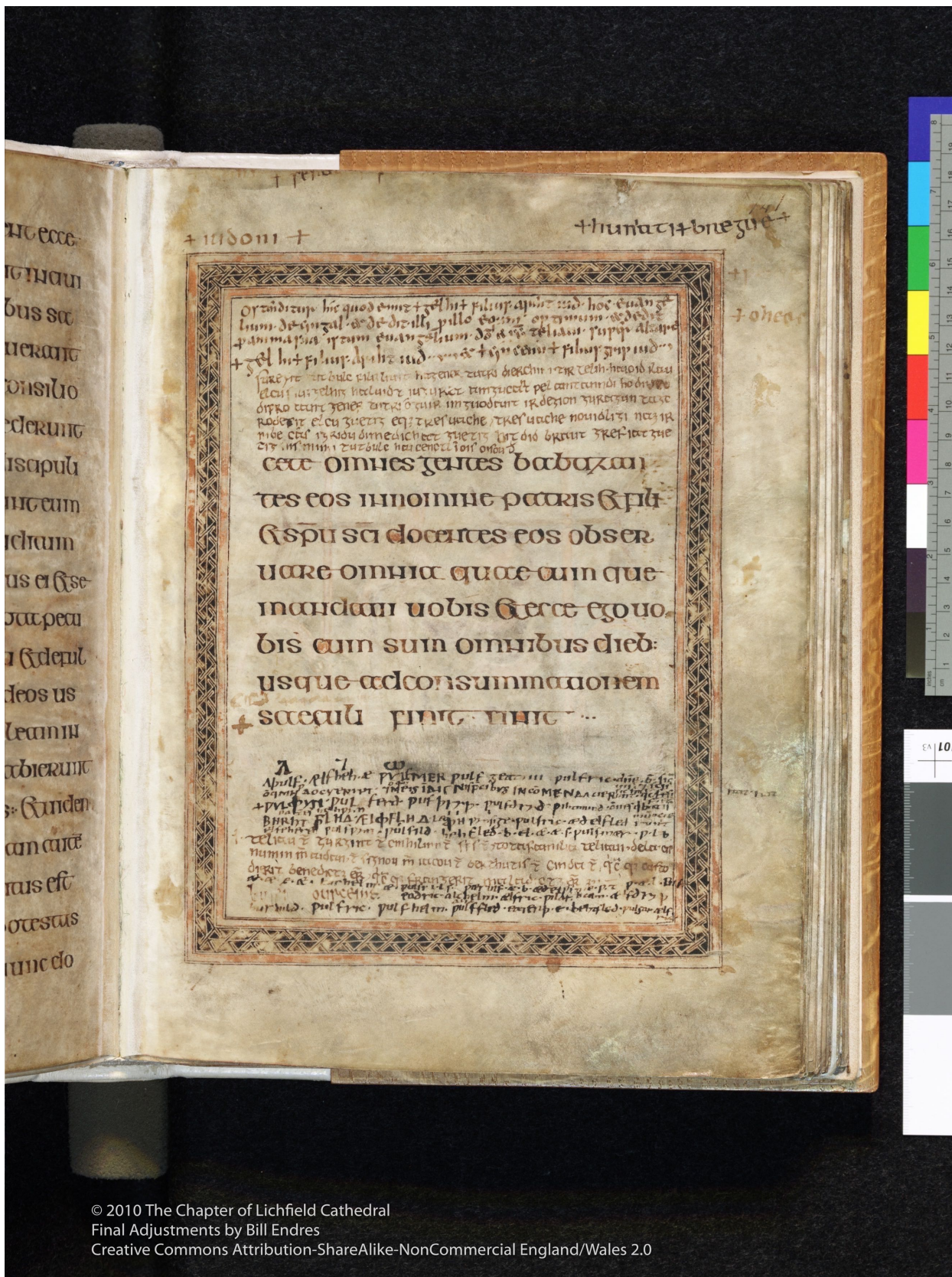
sacred books as records repositories has been proven, at least in this case.⁸³

The *Lichfield Gospels* is also known as the *Book of St Teilo*, or *Book of St Chad*. This particular book is a now incomplete manuscript of the Gospels which has been kept at Lichfield Cathedral for about a thousand years.⁸⁴ The exact date of its arrival at the cathedral remains unknown, but the marginalia on page 4 of the book serves as a record of Godwine, son of Earwig, being cleared at Lichfield of a charge of unlawful marriage placed upon him by the bishop, Leofgar. Leofgar was bishop from 1020 to 1027, so the book was there by the end of the first quarter of the eleventh century.⁸⁵ Its possible whereabouts before that time are discussed later in this chapter. The book has become known as the Gospel of St Chad in homage to the patron saint of the cathedral.

⁸³ Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels Part I', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 5 (Summer 1983), 37–66 (pp. 61–62); Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.i.2, fol. 134.

⁸⁴ Pamela James, 'The Lichfield Gospels: A Question of Provenance', *Pararegon*, 13 (2) (January 1996), 51–61 (p. 51).

⁸⁵ Jenkins and Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia Part I', p. 49; John Hewitt, *Handbook of Lichfield Cathedral* (Lichfield: Alfred Lomax, 1882), p. 103.



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Figure 2.3 Marginalia on page 141 of the Lichfield Gospels. <https://lichfield.ou.edu/content/matt-2819-2820-pg-141>.

The marginalia in the *Gospels* includes Chad 2, also known as the ‘Surexit’ memorandum, which is the oldest surviving example of written Welsh in a book (although it also contains a peppering of Latin). All earlier surviving examples of written Welsh are found on stone monuments. Evidence from early Welsh inscriptions indicate that Welsh scribes were making use of exotic alphabets, to include runes.⁸⁶ It is also not uncommon to find stones bearing inscriptions using Ogam and Latin lettering. Of all the stones found in south-west Wales, 66% bear Roman inscription elements, 8% have some Ogam, and 26% show both. Where both are used, it reflects the gradual integration of Irish settlers with the native Welsh population, and the use of their own spoken language fading out.⁸⁷ The Catacus inscription from Llanfihangel Cwm Du in Breconshire is an example of early geometric letter-forms.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the peculiarities of spelling found in the marginalia are also found on stone monuments of the same period in south Wales.⁸⁹

The ‘Surexit’ memorandum, believed to have been written in the early ninth century, is one of two items of marginalia located on page 141 of the *Gospels*, which is also the final page of the Gospel of St Matthew.⁹⁰ It is the oldest known surviving land record in a sacred manuscript.⁹¹ The content of the memorandum is a legal document regarding a property dispute, the oldest known example of Welsh law in action. This is of particular interest as it appears to provide some evidence of

⁸⁶ Gifford Charles-Edwards and Helen McKee, ‘Lost voices from Anglo-Saxon Lichfield’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 37 (2008), 79–89 (pp. 79–80).

⁸⁷ Edwards, *Corpus*, vol II, pp. 30–31, 41.

⁸⁸ Mark Redknap and John Lewis, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales*, vol I (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 194–96.

⁸⁹ James, ‘Provenance’, p. 60.

⁹⁰ The convention with this manuscript is to use page, rather than folio, numbers. See Roger Powell, ‘The Lichfield St Chad’s *Gospels*: Repair and Rebinding, 1961–1962’, in *The Library*, 20 (1965), 259–65 (p. 259).

⁹¹ Jenkins and Owen, ‘The Welsh Marginalia Part I’, p. 65.

continuity of legal system from the ninth century to the thirteenth, when the laws were recorded in lawbooks. The memorandum records the settlement of a dispute over a property called Tir Telych between Tudfwlch, the son of Llywyd and son-in-law of Tudri, and Elgu, the son of Gelli and the kindred of Idwared. According to the memorandum, after long debate Elgu, who was in possession of the property at the time, was found to be the rightful owner, but in good faith he gave his opponent a horse, three cows, and three newly calved cows, in the interest of retaining peace between them. In exchange, Tudfwlch and his people (*cenetl*) vow to never lay claim to title of the land (*grefiat*). No judge is mentioned in the memorandum, though a list of witnesses followed the judgment.⁹² Glanville Jones finds significance in the use of the terms *cenetl* and *grefiat*, arguing that *grefiat* suggests the title was a written one, and that *cenetl* refers to a larger kinship group than the kindred, which would ostensibly have broader territorial authority and possessions.⁹³ While identifying the location of the property in question in Chad 2 has proven impossible with any certitude, Jones notes that this memoranda provides further support to the evidence found in four other marginalia entries in the Lichfield Gospel, all of which indicate that by the mid-ninth century, there were well-established land rights in place.

The other marginalia on this page is a declaration in Latin by Gelli, son of Arthudd, that he purchased the Gospels from Cingal in exchange for his very fine horse, and subsequently presented the manuscript to God and to the altar of St Teilo, for the sake of his soul. For hundreds of years it was believed that this altar was at Llandaff, but scholars now agree that the altar was located at Llandeilo Fawr.⁹⁴ Llandeilo Fawr, or St Teilo's church, in Carmarthenshire, is located on a site which

⁹² Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia in the Lichfield Gospels Part II: the Surexit Memorandum', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 7 (Summer 1984), 91–120 (pp. 109–12).

⁹³ Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 320.

has been a place of Christian worship since it was established as a mission of St Teilo in the sixth century.⁹⁵ The price that Gelli paid for the book was a recognised value for the time. Seebohm notes that a best horse had a value of four cows, which seems to have represented a standard unit of monetary measure in Wales at the time.⁹⁶ One horse, albeit a best one, was a small price to pay for such a valuable illuminated codex, which has led some scholars to suspect that the purchase was one of dubious legality. While there is no record of the manuscript's travels before this transaction, Henry Savage suggested that Cingal, the seller, came to possess the volume following a late eighth-century border raid on Mercia. Savage comes to this conclusion regarding the date largely due to a witness to the gift transaction to the Church listed as Cincenn filius Gripiud. This witness is, supposed Savage, related to a Griphiud filius Cingen reported in the *Annales Cambriae* to have been 'killed by treachery by his brother Elisedd' in 814.⁹⁷

Another name mentioned in Chads 3, 4 and 5 of the marginalia as a witness alongside Nobis, bishop of Teilo, is *Saturnbiu*, who might be *Saturniu Hail*, or Saturniu the Generous, recorded in the *Annales Cambriae* as having died in 831, who was amongst a list of bishops of Mynyw provided to Giraldus Cambrensis. Furthermore, a fragment of an inscribed stone found on the property of a farmhouse which was built over a cemetery on Ramsey Island (Ynys Dewi), now located at the

⁹⁴ Jenkins and Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia Part I', pp. 38–52.

⁹⁵ Several early Christian monuments in the immediate vicinity as well as a Roman fort indicate it to have been an area of significance. Surviving documentation regarding landholding is sparse, although the Book of Llandaff records a charter likely dating to the ninth century, the same general time period as the Lichfield Gospel, by which King Noë, son of Arthur, gave Llandeilo Fawr with some territories to Dyfrig, who was Teilo's teacher, and from thence it purportedly passed to Teilo. See William A. Strange, 'The Rise and Fall of a Saint's Community' *The Journal of Welsh Religious History*, 2 (2002), 1–18 (pp. 1–5).

⁹⁶ Seebohm, *Tribal System*, p. 21

⁹⁷ John Williams ab Ithel, ed., *Annales Cambriae*, Rolls Series (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860) s.a. 814, p. 12; Henry Savage, 'The Story of the St Chad Gospels', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 41 (1915), 5–21 (p. 10).

National Museum in Cardiff, bears the name *Saturnbiu*, and whilst there is no way to prove they are the same, it is tempting to make the connection.⁹⁸ The other marginalia are suggestive that that the book was at Llandeilo by the early ninth century. These marginalia contain a reference to the episcopate of Nobis, which can be confirmed in the list of bishops at Llandaff as having happened before 840. In other entries he is listed as a witness but not as bishop. Nobis's inclusion therefore moves the possession of the book by Llandeilo to sometime before 840. Whether Savage's conclusion that the book was amongst booty from raids into Mercia is correct remains uncertain, though it is known that there were Welsh raids late in the eighth century, leading to the perceived necessity of Offa's Dyke as a defensive measure.⁹⁹ The *Brut y Tywysogion* records devastation by the men of south Wales 'as far as Offa, king of Mercia' in 776,¹⁰⁰ and in 784 it is noted that

In the summer the Welsh devastated the territory of Offa, and then Offa caused a dike to be made, as a boundary between him and Wales, to enable him the more easily to withstand the attack of his enemies, and that is called Offa's dike from that time to this day.¹⁰¹

As Savage has observed, the Mercian belief in a need for the dike seems conclusive enough that the Welsh were indeed posing a threat during this period, though the acquisition of the book in this manner cannot be proven. Regardless of its origins, this Gospel was not likely meant to be read aloud or used in religious services. Rather, suggests Lemuel Hopkins-James, the book was considered a highly

⁹⁸ Edwards, *Corpus*, vol II, pp. 447–48; Gerald of Wales, *Journey Through Wales*, pp. 161–62.

⁹⁹ Henry Savage, 'The Story of the St Chad Gospels', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 41 (1915), 5–21 (pp. 10–11). For Nobis, see John Williams ab Ithel, *Annales Cambriae*, s.a. 840, p. 13 'Nobis episcopus in Miniu regnavit'.

¹⁰⁰ *BT*, Hergest, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰¹ *BT*, Hergest, p. 5.

important church possession to be venerated and, given its status as a sacred object, would be a likely item on which to take oaths, or record evidence of ‘solemn acts or deeds’ having been done.¹⁰² ‘From its early history in Wales, the manuscript had served as a repository of both documents and names to be remembered...’.¹⁰³ Whilst we cannot know how much marginalia was lost with the missing portions of the Gospels, it seems notable that of the eight surviving examples of marginalia, five of them are recording land transactions.

During the Gospel’s time in Wales, numerous Welsh names, many with crosses beside them, were inscribed within the book, likely to record individuals commemorated at the altar at Llandeilo in the manner of a *liber vitae*.¹⁰⁴ Books of Life were intended to record the names of people, often members of monasteries or lay persons associated with religious houses, with the belief that the names thus recorded would also appear in the heavenly counterpart upon Judgement Day.¹⁰⁵ Often the honour of having one’s name recorded came at a significant cost. The twelfth-century Book of Llandaff contains entries which indicate that names were recorded within for a fee. An example is Ilias, who for his soul and his name inscribed in the book, gave his mansion in Abergavenny and four modii of land.¹⁰⁶ A modius is the equivalent of a Welsh shareland, which was a smaller component of either a bond or free vill.¹⁰⁷ Such inscriptions were, therefore, no small thing, further emphasising the significance of the recording of these land settlements in the

¹⁰² Lemuel Hopkins-James, *The Celtic Gospels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. xvii.

¹⁰³ Charles-Edwards and McKee, ‘Lost Voices’, p. 86.

¹⁰⁴ Jenkins and Owen, ‘The Welsh Marginalia Part I’, pp. 55–56.

¹⁰⁵ Catherine Karkov, ‘Judgement and Salvation in the New Minster Liber Vitae’, in Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg, ed., *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 151–64 (p. 151).

¹⁰⁶ Charles-Edwards and McKee, ‘Lost Voices’, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷ Jones, ‘Multiple Estates’, p. 355; H. Emanuel, ed., *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws* (Cardiff:

marginalia of the St Chad Gospel.

This recognition of the usefulness of written record of land transactions reflects the importance of land to the Welsh people throughout history. This suggests that any study of the Welsh people must also be a study of the land, the places in which the people *dwelled*, in Heidegger's terms.

Physical Continuity

Physical continuity manifests as reflections of cultural associations or identities. These physical clues appear in such places as Strata Florida's monastic architecture, the chosen geographic location of the abbey, and the organisation of the monastic landscape into estates.

It is widely agreed that the Cistercian monasteries located within *Pura Wallia* endeared themselves to the Welsh princes and populace by adopting Welsh customs and involving themselves in Welsh politics and social practices, and Strata Florida Abbey was indeed enmeshed in Welsh affairs and life. Not only, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, was it born out of an endowment from the native Lord Rhys, but Strata Florida was also the final resting place for many Welsh princes, and many, if not all, of its abbots bore (or possibly adopted) Welsh names, which interestingly held true through and following 1282.¹⁰⁸ Likely due to that close relationship the monastery had with the Deheubarth dynasty, King John suspected Strata Florida of harbouring

University of Wales Press, 1963), pp. 135–36; Melville Richards, ed., *The Laws of Hywel Dda* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954), p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ D. Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London, ed., *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, I, 940–1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 316, 358, 360; David M. Smith, and Vera C. M. London, ed., *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, II, 1216–1377* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001), pp. 375, 704; David M. Smith, ed. *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, III, 1377–1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 334–36.

rebel Welsh chieftains in 1212, for which the abbey was later severely punished. During Edward I's campaigns in North Wales in 1276 and 1277, Strata Florida suffered considerable structural damage. The Crown offered some compensation in 1284, however ten years later English troops again destroyed the church.¹⁰⁹ Welsh affiliation was also reflected within the abbey's scriptorium. One of the earliest versions of the *Brut y Tywysogion* and part of the *Annales Cambriae* were written, and it is suspected that the *Llawysgrif Hendregadredd* collection of medieval Welsh court poetry, and a Welsh translation of the Athanasian creed were copied there as well, all of which further illustrates Strata Florida's investment in its local cultural identity.¹¹⁰ Monastic patronage was crucial to the survival of Welsh poets from the fourteenth century onward. Strata Florida may have held a significant role in the survival of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poetry, which in turn has provided information on Lord Rhys and his descendants and peers, as well as descriptive details on the impressive nature of the abbey itself.¹¹¹

It has been argued that the Welsh nature of Strata Florida is even reflected in the stonework of the abbey itself, as the spirals framing the west doorway appear to

¹⁰⁹ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priories*, pp. 187–91.

¹¹⁰ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priories*, p. 191; R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 200–01; Huws, *Medieval Manuscripts*, pp. 14–15.

¹¹¹ Dafydd Johnston, 'Monastic Patronage of Welsh Poetry', in Burton and Stöber. ed., *Monastic Wales*, pp.177–90 (pp. 178, 183–84). The poetry of fourteenth-, fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Welsh poets is the subject of a major research project undertaken at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (Aberystwyth) under the title 'The Poets of the Nobility' (Beirdd yr Uchelwyr). This has resulted in over forty edited volumes published by University of Wales Press under the leadership of Professor Ann Parry Owen. On the project see: <https://www.wales.ac.uk/en/CentreforAdvancedWelshCelticStudies/ResearchProjects/CompletedProjects/PoetsoftheNobility/IntroductiontotheProject.aspx>. Gwynfarch Brycheiniog's praise poetry to Lord Rhys is of particular significance to Strata Florida. See K. A. Bramley, ed. *The Poets of the Princes Volume II: Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed* Ganrif (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1994). For important scholarship in Welsh regarding patronage, see Nerys Ann Jones and Huw Preece, eds., *Yr Arghwydd Rhys* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996).

be regionally ‘Celtic’ influenced details.¹¹² However, this can be questioned, and similar architectural elements are found in mid-twelfth-century architecture outside of Wales. Robinson has suggested that the motifs were influenced by those found on West Country churches.¹¹³ These motifs are, according to Michael Carter, rather generalised forms of ornament, to be found quite widespread during this period.¹¹⁴



Figure 2.4: image of west doorway of Strata Florida illustrating spiral elements. Photo by author.

¹¹² David Austin, ‘Strata Florida: A Former Welsh Cistercian Abbey and its Future’, in Karen Stöber, Julie Kerr, and Emilia Jamroziak, ed., *Monastic Life in the Medieval British Isles: Essays in Honour of Janet Burton* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp. 53–68 (p. 60).

¹¹³ Robinson, *Cistercians in Wales*, p. 95.

¹¹⁴ Michael Carter, pers comm 02 August 2019.



Figure 2.5: detail of similar doorway at Fountains Abbey. Photo by author.

The earliest Cistercian foundations in Wales were the product of the patronage of Anglo-Norman incomers: Walter fitz Richard de Clare (Tintern), Robert, earl of Gloucester (Margam), and Bishop Bernard (Whitland), for instance. However, the second and third generations were firmly linked to native Welsh rulers: from Whitland sprang a family that spread throughout central, west and north Wales.¹¹⁵ Of those houses, several also appear to have been located on sites that previously had a church on them. Material evidence suggesting this includes Strata Florida's cross-carved stone which dates to the eighth or ninth century,¹¹⁶ and Llanllŷr Abbey, a nunnery affiliated with Strata Florida, has on its grounds a stone pillar, known as the *Tesquitus Inscribed Pillar Stone*, which reputedly records a land grant to an earlier church located on the same site.¹¹⁷ Documentary evidence includes the Valle Crucis foundation charter, which refers to Llanegwestl, the village which was cleared to make way for monastery construction. The village name suggests there was an earlier church on the same location.¹¹⁸

Strata Florida belonged to an international order having its own rules and

¹¹⁵ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priories*, pp. 11–13.

¹¹⁶ Edwards, *Corpus* vol. II, pp. 55, 57.

¹¹⁷ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priories*, pp. 123–24.

regulations yet was also located in a regional setting with its own traditions and cultures. Current scholarship is stressing the importance of taking a ‘bottom up’ approach, seeing the White Monks as both accommodating the dictates of the order and local practices and pressures.¹¹⁹ This is well illustrated in the exploitation of estates. Strata Florida was faced with a choice: whether to adopt a grange model that closely fitted the regulations of the General Chapter, or to follow local custom.¹²⁰ It is one of the arguments of this thesis that the monastery made use of pre-existing territorial organisation, leaving people and functions in place as often as possible. This choice would both align the monastery with the local people, and aid in making the best and most lucrative use of the land available.

In order to identify and track the continued use of early territorial organisation such as that at Strata Florida, Glanville Jones developed the multiple estate model.¹²¹ His self-declared intention was to offer a ‘working hypothesis on continuity capable of general application’.¹²² Required features for this model are that it is a territorial entity containing a hierarchy of settlements which were in part functionally differentiated and whose occupants, supervised by a ministerial

¹¹⁸ Petts, *The Early Medieval Church*, p. 193; *AWR*, no. 499, (pp. 698–700).

¹¹⁹ Jamroziak, *Cistercian Order*, pp. 50, 183–189; Isabel Alfonso, ‘Cistercians and Feudalism’, *Past & Present*, No. 133 (Nov. 1991), 3–30 (pp. 3–8).

¹²⁰ See below, Chapter 3, for more on Strata Florida’s estates, and Chapter 4 for Blaenaeron grange in particular.

¹²¹ Jones, ‘Multiple Estates Perceived’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 11 (4) (1985), 352–63 (p. 354).

¹²² Jones, ‘Early Territorial Organization in England and Wales’, in *Geografiska Annaler*, 43 (1), *Morphogenesis of the Agrarian Cultural Landscape: Papers of the Vadstena Symposium at the XIXth International Geographical Congress* (1961), pp. 174–81 (p. 174). This statement in particular has met with criticism, particularly by Seaman. Jones responded to criticism on this point, noting that the hypothesis is not universally applicable, though it does work in some locations. Seaman, ‘Multiple Estate’, pp. 166–167; Jones, ‘Multiple Estates Perceived’, p. 352. See also Chapter 4 below for recent criticism of the Multiple Estate System of Jones, in a discussion of the monastic grange in Wales.

aristocracy, owed rents and services for the support of a lord.¹²³ The template is structured around a main centre, with satellite settlements nearby, some of which may have had specialised purposes, such as the production of barley, or use as upland grazing in summer months. Those closest to the nucleus would have been slaves and other low status workers whose debts to the nucleus were high. Those further out had more freedoms and fewer obligations.

Jones determined that the *Book of Iorwerth*, a medieval Welsh law book, contains the most complete example of a model of territorial organization. While this is a theoretical model from which variations developed, the design remains largely the same, allowing for regional differences. This model is broken down into units of acres. As the Welsh foot was nine inches, an acre contained 1,440 square yards. Four acres made up one *tyddyn*, or homestead. Four *tyddynnod* made one *rhandir*, or shareland. Four *rhandir* made one *gafael* or holding. Four *gafael* made one *tref*, or vill. Four *vills* made one *maenor*, or multiple estate. Twelve *maenor* plus two *vills* (50 *vills* total) made one *cwmwd*, or commote. Two commotes, or 100 *vills*, made one *cantref*, or hundred, which was 25,600 acres.¹²⁴ Within the *Iorwerth* model, two particular *vills*, or plots of land, appear in every commote for use by the king. The first is the *maerdref*, or reeve's vill, which was *tir burdd*, or table land, cultivated under the supervision of the lesser reeve in order to supply the royal court, or *llys*, amongst others. The second is the king's waste and summer pasture, usually found in the uplands. These two *vills* maintained under one officer are indicative of the varied nature of an agrarian economy, as well as the necessity of both upland and lowland

¹²³ Jones, 'Multiple Estates', p. 354.

¹²⁴ Jones, 'Continuity Despite Calamity: The Heritage of Celtic Territorial Organization in England', *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 3 (1981), 1–30 (p. 3); these units are recorded much the same with some variance in terminology in the laws of Hywel Dda. See Dafydd Jenkins, *The Law of Hywel Dda: Law Texts from Medieval Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2000), p. 121.

grazing.¹²⁵

The general pattern was of a large number of vills, usually forty-eight, divided into, usually, twelve estates, with each estate holding four vills in north Wales, or possibly seven or thirteen in south Wales, thereby making it a 'multiple estate'. The entirety fell under the authority of one central lord. The bondmen held their own land, most often by the thirteenth century through hereditary tenure, and in return paid rents and services to this lord. This, argues Jones, is the territorial organization which is most important in terms of continuity: 'The most durable feature of Celtic polity was that territorialisation of power whereby the rents and services of a large number of settlements could be focused on to a lord's court which thus served as a local capital.'¹²⁶ The greater reeve and the royal bailiff held one multiple estate each, and generally six or more multiple estates belonged to free *uchelwyr*,¹²⁷ who paid rents in kind and cash. Part of their obligation to their lord was attendance at the court of justice, and military service. The four remaining multiple estates were held by bondmen, who were subject to the reeve and bailiff. Their responsibilities to their lord were higher, and included construction of buildings, camp-making services for military, and suppling the lord with meat and other foods. The bondsmen were also expected to feed and house the lord's falconers and huntsmen and their dogs. This last provision, Glanville Jones suggests, is indicative of the importance of hunting as a signifier of social standing, much as it has remained since.¹²⁸

Estates granted to *uchelwyr* were, Jones argues, subject to further division into smaller units, which may explain the disparity in the number of vills between south

¹²⁵ Jones, 'Continuity Despite Calamity', p. 4.

¹²⁶ Jones, 'Early Territorial Organization', p. 176.

¹²⁷ See Chapter 3 below.

¹²⁸ Jones, 'Continuity Despite Calamity', p. 7; Aled Wiliam, ed., *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960), pp. 61–64.

and north Wales. The principle of the organization is the same for both, however. These groups of settlements were collectively known as a *maenor*. The earliest reference to a *maenor* is found in, yet again, the Lichfield Gospel marginalia, and dates to the ninth century. The estate size was approximately twelve square miles and contained seven vills.¹²⁹ Very early versions of this model may have predated Anglo-Saxon settlement, then to be adopted by those settlers. Examples of this template existing in antiquity are common in Wales. Some demesne sites adjoin Roman forts or settlements, and others are associated with nearby hillforts. In the case of Dinorben in Denbyshire, the hillfort appears to have been constructed by residents of the hamlets affiliated with the nearby *maenor* of the same name. Some of these hamlets, Jones has found, existed in the same locations in the late Roman era continuing through to the Middle Ages. The associated court, however, had relocated from its original position within the Roman era hillfort.¹³⁰

Glanville Jones's meticulous documentary research has tracked the existence of many of these multiple estates in Wales, one of which, as noted above, returns us to the Lichfield Gospel marginalia. Chads 3 and 4 on pages 18 and 19 of the Lichfield Gospel are both memoranda regarding the gifts of land, and date to the late ninth century. They are both in Latin with some Welsh inclusions, and the lists of witnesses for both are almost identical. Chad 3 specifies the land it concerns as being named *Trefwyddog (tref guidauc)*, which was granted to Llandeilo by Rhys and the kindred of Grethi. Details of the render of this property follow, and include mention of a ram in summer, and forty loaves in both summer and winter, plus a sow, and forty *manuclenn*, the meaning of which is not clear.¹³¹ Jones believes this to be of

¹²⁹ Jones, 'Continuity Despite Calamity', p. 6.

¹³⁰ Jones, 'Early Territorial Organization', p. 176.

¹³¹ 'Lichfield Gospel', *Manuscripts of Lichfield Cathedral* Chads 3 and 4, pp. 18–19.

remarkable similarity to a bondmen's foodgift in south Wales.¹³² These foodgifts were delivered twice yearly, once in summer and again in winter.¹³³ This schedule lends itself to the idea that *Trefwyddog* may well have been a bond township. Jones further suggests that this particular transaction was involving a property jointly held by Rhys and his kinsmen, for whom Rhys was spokesman. Furthermore, this was only part of an estate held by these men, which was comprised of numerous townships with established boundaries, settled and populated by bondmen. This hints of a hierarchical system of society in place by the mid-ninth century, which Jones proposes, is supported in later sources as well as contemporary verse.¹³⁴ Chad 5 also supports this hierarchy of bondmen held by kinsmen, in that it is a record of the four sons of Bledri granting freedom to Bleiddud, son of Sulien, and his heirs in perpetuity, in exchange for a payment.¹³⁵ These marginal entries indicate that during the ninth century in Wales, the *uchelwyr* and their bondmen occupied and used land in an organised, and seemingly long-established manner of territorial management.

Chad 4 does not identify the land it concerns, or possibly the name was cut off during the binding process. The boundaries are provided, however, in Welsh, and later scholars have suggested that the land is located in Llan-y-crwys, at the north-western corner of the commote of Caeo, where it borders with the commote of Mabwynion in Ceredigion. Part of this estate later became Llanycrwys, or Lanecros, grange of the Premonstratensian abbey of Talley, founded by the Lord Rhys.¹³⁶ The

<https://lichfield.ou.edu/st-chad-gospels/features>. Accessed 12 July 2019.

¹³² Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 312.

¹³³ Wiliam, ed., *Llyfr Iorwerth*, p. 64; *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, p. 73.

¹³⁴ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 312.

¹³⁵ Jenkins and Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia Part I', p. 54.

¹³⁶ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 314; *Monasticon*, IV, p. 162.

boundaries of Trefwyddog on the north-west side were marked by two standing stones called *Hirfaen Gwyddog* and *Byrfaen Gwyddog*. Chad 4 also mentions a specific boundary stone, *hirmain guidauc*, or the long stone of Gwyddog, which is a large prehistoric standing stone of about fifteen feet in height that remains in place on the northern boundary of Llan-y-crwys, also the northern boundary of Cantref Mawr, and currently of Carmarthenshire.

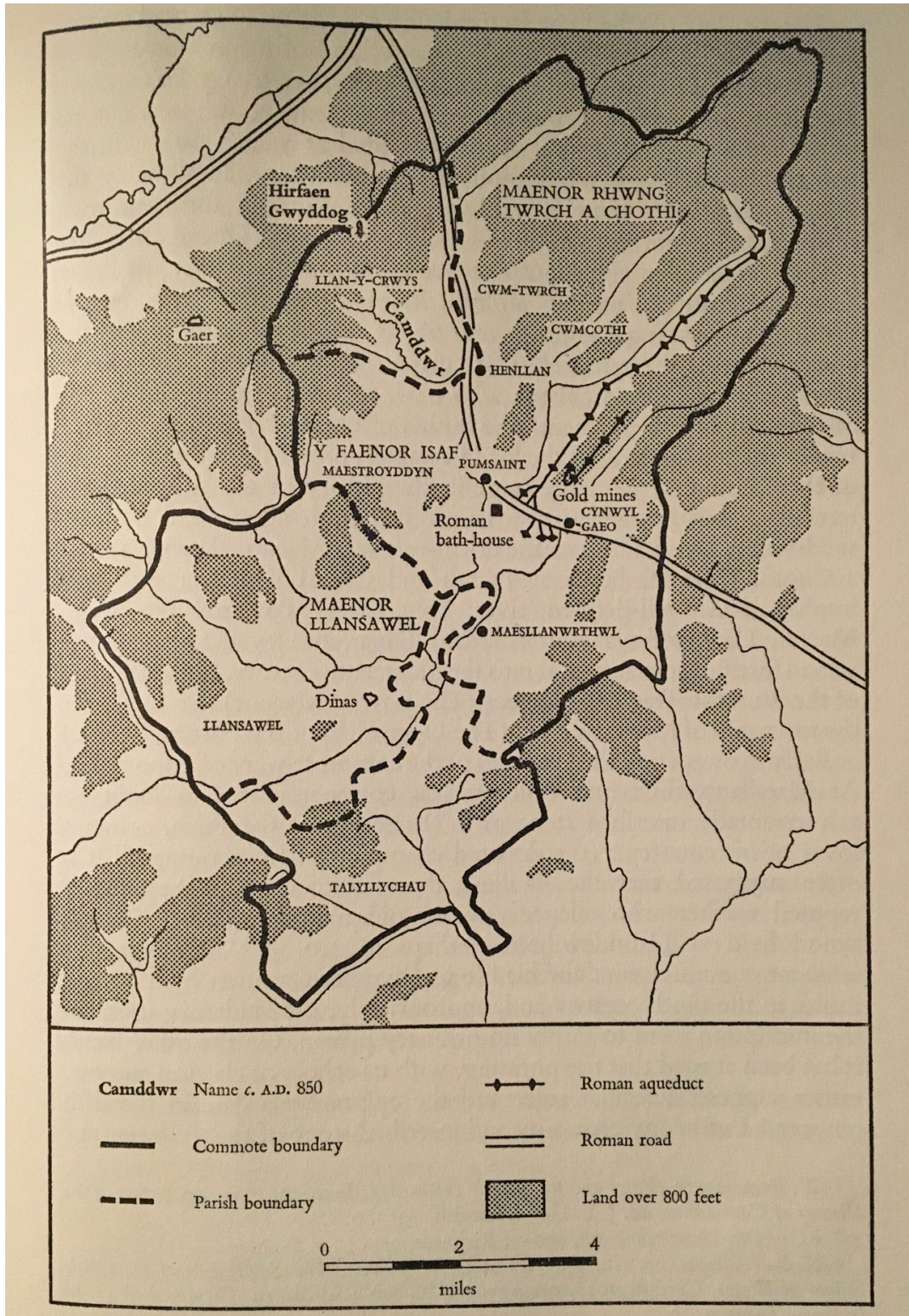


Figure 2.6 Map showing maenorial framework of Trefwyddog, with Hirfaen Gwyddog on the boundary line. G. Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 315.

Whilst the appearance of a boundary stone, cairn, burial mound, or standing stone in early charters was relatively commonplace as a means of detailing the

boundaries of a property, in most cases the ancient landmarks have vanished. This very ancient conspicuous standing stone, however, has considerable documentary evidence spanning roughly thirteen centuries. This same stone appears in a charter and confirmation of 1244 x 1271 mentioned in an inspeximus dated 1324 (presumably of the original charter) and confirming a grant of the grange of Llan-y-crwys to Talley Abbey.¹³⁷ The grange boundaries align closely with those of the parish of the same name, which for a number of miles also follows the county line dividing Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. Hirfaen Gwyddog is along this line, looming over the Teifi valley.¹³⁸ A post-dissolution manorial presentment dated 1633 establishing grange boundaries for Talley Abbey includes details for the grange of Llanyercwys, the boundary of which follows a brook called Gorddogwy to a location called Y Lan Las, ‘and from Lan Las unto a stone called Hirfaen Gwyddog, and from thence unto another stone called Byrfaen’.¹³⁹

Local folklore collected in the late nineteenth century claimed that the two standing stones commemorated an ancient battle that took place on that site, though there is no evidence to support this. However, there are a number of indications that suggest the area to have been a place of some importance. The Roman road is nearby, and maenorial organisation points to it having been a significant early Welsh settlement as well. The *Canu Dewi* describes the bounds of the *noddfa*, or sanctuary, of Llanddewibrefi, and in doing so mentions a stone which is likely *Hirfaen Gwyddog*.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ *AWR*, no. 90, (pp. 228–30).

¹³⁸ Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, p. 314; E. Owen, ‘A Contribution to the History of the Praemonstratensian Abbey of Talley’, *Annales Cambrensis*, 5th series, 10 (1893), 29–47, 120–28, 226–37, 309–25 (pp. 39–40).

¹³⁹ *NLWD*24. - ARCH/MSS (GB0210) Attested Copy Court Roll of the manor of Talley, co. Carm.

¹⁴⁰ Heather James, ‘The Geography of the Cult of St David’, in J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding, ed., *St David of Wales: Cult, Church, and Nation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), pp.

O Garawn gan yawn ehoec,
Hyd ar Dywi, afon uirein a thec,
O'r Llyndu, lle'd vu llid gyhydrec,
Hyd ar Twrch, **teruyn tir a charec**

(From Caron with its fair rule, with its purple hue,
From Llyndu, broader was the roused tumult,
As far as Twrch, where the land is **bounded by a stone.**)
(*Canu Dewi*, lines 144–7)

Jones suggests that these two separate memoranda, Chads 3 and 4, actually relate to lands which together made up a larger estate.¹⁴¹ Perhaps the second memorandum was intended as an elaboration or clarification of the first, but it is far more likely that the grants concerned different parts of the same holding. The focal point of the commote is Y Faenor Isaf, or the Lowest Maenor, also known as the township of Maestroyddyn, or the 'open field of the fortified *tref*'. The location of this manorial court is surrounded by lands over 800 feet in elevation, as indicated by the map below. Some common pastures positioned at over 1,000 feet high close to the boundary were common pastures in use as late as the nineteenth century.¹⁴² Furthermore, Jones argues that due to the mention of render including a ram and butter, typical inclusions of a summer season food gift in south Wales, and the exclusion of a sow, which would be expected in a winter food gift, it is safe to infer that Chad 4 was particularly concerned with summer rights, such as those involving upland grazing, which is representative of the 'functionally differentiated' lands he included in his model for multiple estates.¹⁴³ The list of witnesses being nearly identical suggests that these grants were made close together in time.

41–83 (p. 67).

¹⁴¹ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 316.

¹⁴² Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 314–16.

¹⁴³ Jenkins and Owen, 'The Welsh Marginalia Part I', p. 53; Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 312–13 and fig. 44. For the standing stone see Edwards, *Corpus*, vol II, p. 59.

Administrative continuity for this particular region from the Roman era seems likely as well. At the north-eastern edge of Llan-y-crwys is a burial mound called *Bedd y Milwr* (soldier's grave) nearby a north-south running Roman road, which may well be the location of the battlefield listed in Chad 4.¹⁴⁴ An inscribed stone found in the lowlands extoll the virtues of Paulinus, who was either a local saint of some note in the sixth century, or a secular leader of the fifth century. A second sixth-century stone commemorates one Talorius Adventus, son of Maquerigius. A third stone, found near what was determined to be the main bond settlement of the commote, holds a sixth-century vertical inscription commemorating a Reginus, son of Nudintus. Numerous Roman finds in the area support occupation of the vicinity in that period, and the gold mines at Dolau Cothi were likely used in the pre-Roman period, as the Romans were mining almost upon their arrival in Wales.¹⁴⁵

The marginalia in the Lichfield Gospel provide positive evidence, according to Jones, that the maenorial system was known and in use in Wales centuries prior to the Norman conquest. Chad 6 refers directly to a *maenor*, in a combined Welsh and Latin entry about *mainaur med diminih*, or the maenor of Myddynfych, now a farm of considerable size located in the parish of Llandybïe in Carmarthenshire. The entry provides its boundaries, or measure (*mensuram eius*), by way of a series of geographical features and place-names located near the boundary of Llandybïe parish. Using these identifiers, it has been surmised that Myddynfych and the parish of Llandybïe are likely to correspond quite closely in extent and boundaries.¹⁴⁶

The *maenor* as described contained some twelve square miles, and later records indicate it held seven townships. Each of these townships contain field

¹⁴⁴ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 314, 316–17.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, *Corpus*, vol II, pp. 207–11; Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 314, 316–17.

¹⁴⁶ Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 309–11.

names reflecting the likely presence of both arable and meadow sharelands. There remained in place unfenced quillets of meadow, and in one instance, quillets of arable land, as late as 1839.¹⁴⁷ While the origination of these varied farmlands is unknown, Jones supports the idea that there was some level of communal organisation in Myddynfych by the time of the writing of this marginal entry, as the boundaries as described in Chad 6 include reference to a place called *Gwaun Henllan*. This upland meadow was approximately a mile west of a lowland settlement called *Henllan*, which means old church. Upland meadow land affiliated with the Old Church is suggestive that there was a hamlet community in place before c. 800. The site of Henllan is close to another lowland farm later identified as Maerdy, meaning reeve's house, and just below the fortified upland Dinas. To the east was the holy well and (apparently newer than the old church) church Llandybïe, both dedicated to Tybïe, indicating that this settlement was by c. 800 centuries old already. Regardless, the maenor did have an old *llan* within its borders at that time. The maenor's name has lived on in the name of the large farm within the township called *Fferm Fawr*, or 'Large Farm'. This farm was probably the *llys*, or court, of the maenor.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ *NLW*, Tithe Apportionment and Map, Llandybïe, 1839.

¹⁴⁸ Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 310–11.

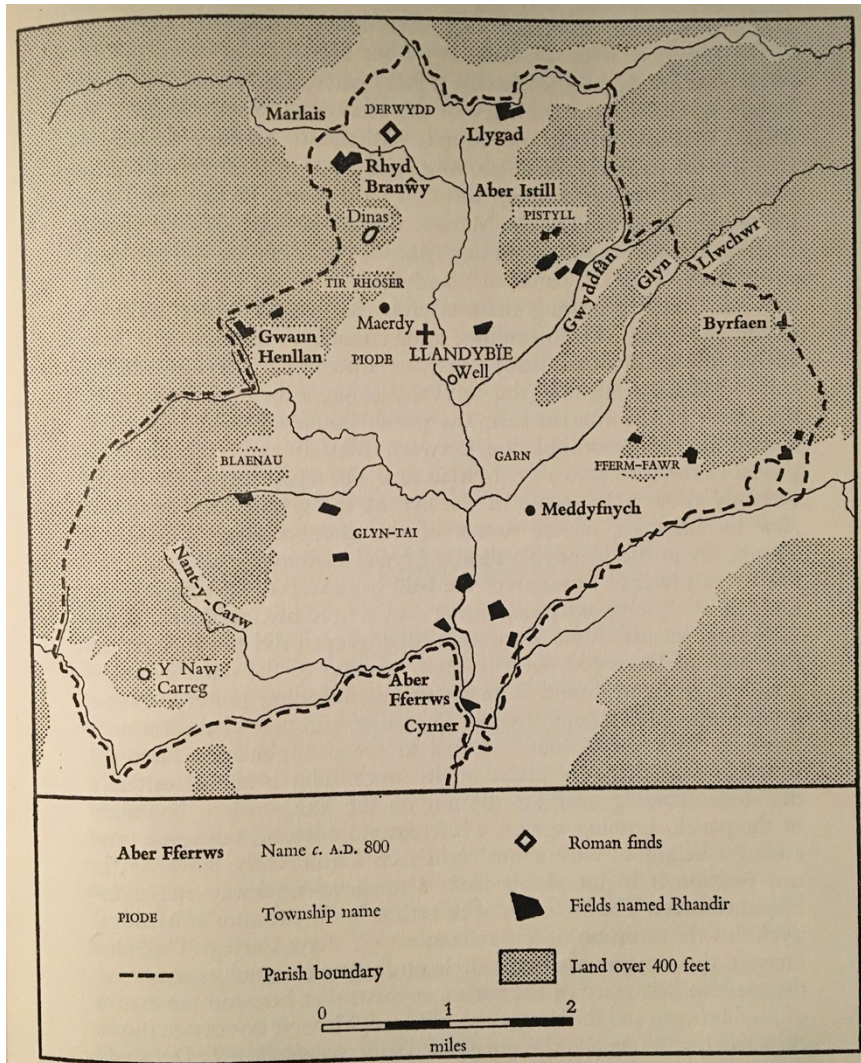


Figure 2.7 Map showing Myddynfych and parish boundaries. Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 309.

Jones suggests that his multiple estate model existed in a variety of regional forms throughout England and Wales.¹⁴⁹ This provides some indication that there were early centres of territorial power for which the occupants of regional settlements provided goods and services, in support of a lord. Such a system already in place for incoming monastic oversight is a convenience not likely overlooked by the Cistercians of Strata Florida when local lands came under their control in the twelfth century. Evidence of this multiple estate template in the grange of Blaenaeron appears to be well-defined and will be examined in chapter four.

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter 4 below regarding criticism of this idea.

CHAPTER 3

STRATA FLORIDA AS A POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC AGENT

This thesis examines the impact of post-dissolution land redistribution on the Welsh social and political spheres, and in particular how it affected the Welsh elite class, or *uchelwyr*. At the same time, the thesis identifies continuity in land use or occupation as these lands changed from monastic to secular hands. The land itself is the focus of this study, as it was the motive for conflict before, during, and after monastic occupation. As Strata Florida's grange of Blaenaeron is the case study for these purposes, it is important to understand the part Strata Florida Abbey played in the history of Wales (and in monastic history at large), as well as the place it held socio-geographically.

Before the Cistercians

In the years following the Roman withdrawal from Wales, yet before the arrival of the Normans, Wales was left to its own native rule and economic structure. Post-Roman Wales saw considerable changes in relationships between the working and ownership of land, and in Welsh rulers' control over property. These relationships are a necessity in developing an understanding of political and social change in a broad sense, and of the connection between political power and property in the centuries that followed.¹ Welsh politics were dominated by princes, or territorial

¹ Wendy Davies, 'Land and Power in Early Medieval Wales', *Past and Present*, 81 (Nov. 1978), 3–23

rulers, from at least the early sixth century. Earlier, these rulers were associated with territorial kingdoms, and some of these may have had their origins in Roman administrative structures. By the fifth and sixth centuries, however, there was evidence of political discord. During this period there developed a trend of reoccupation of Iron-Age hillforts, perhaps out of a need for a defensible position. Armed battle at this time may well have been associated with raiding chieftains taking over and consolidating various small kingdoms for rule over larger areas.²

By the ninth century, Welsh political organisation was determined by the four kingdoms of Wales. While the ninth and tenth centuries saw the influence of leaders such as Rhodri Mawr (d. 878) and Hywel Dda (d. 950), this was also the advent of segmentation, when leadership was split amongst several members of a ruling family, leading to internal conflict and jostling for authority. Viking raids on Wales began in the mid-ninth century, which contributed to the confusion.³ Dynastic instability continued throughout Wales in the tenth century, but by the middle of the eleventh century, two leaders had emerged from the discord. Gruffudd ap Rhydderch, latest head of an aristocratic dynasty on the rise in the southeast, began raiding and expanding across southern Wales. By 1040 he was clashing with Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, son of another elite leader whose efforts to gain control were focused in the south, although Gruffudd had established his power in the north. In 1055, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn killed Gruffudd ap Rhydderch, after which he held control throughout Wales until his death at the hands of his own men in 1063.⁴ This

(p. 4).

² Wendy Davies, *Patterns of Power in Early Wales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 32–34.

³ Davies, *Patterns of Power*, pp. 35–36.

⁴ Davies, *Patterns of Power*, pp. 25–31.

level of rule over Wales was unusual for a Welsh prince, and it made considerable impact. His death left quite a void in leadership and power, which was filled by a return to the chaotic nature of Welsh politics as it was before. Gruffudd's half-brothers Bleddyn and Rhiwallon were appointed as puppet rulers by Edward, king of England, and they were joined in the fray by Welsh political exiles such as Maredudd ab Owain and Gruffudd ap Cynan, as well as adventurers and power seekers, all battling and conspiring to gain stronger footholds in Wales.⁵ Eleventh- and twelfth-century Wales was characterized by raids by one kingdom on another. It was only a few years after their conquest of England that Norman lords began to settle in Wales, in part to aid in King William's determination to subdue the Welsh. By the 1070s those Norman lords were changing the Welsh concept of nobility as Norman customs took root in some areas.⁶ By the middle of the twelfth century, Wales was perceived as divided between *Pura Wallia*, the areas still held by native Welsh lords, and *Marchia Wallia*, the Marches, where Norman lords had established their own lordships (see fig. 3.1).⁷ The *Marchia Wallia* of the eleventh century appears to have been primarily the Welsh border with Shropshire, intended as a line of demarcation in relation to military action. During the tumultuous years before Edwardian Conquest, especially, the March was subject to considerable expansion and contraction as battles were won and lost. The lines became more solidly defined after 1283.⁸ From c. 1300, all of the Marcher lordships, including the frontier

⁵ R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 24–26.

⁶ Davies, *Patterns of Power*, pp. 36–37.

⁷ David Stephenson, *Medieval Wales c. 1050–1332: Centuries of Ambiguity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), p. 10.

⁸ Max Lieberman, *The Medieval March of Wales: The Creation and Perception of a Frontier, 1066–1283* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5.

lordships established in south Wales, were considered to be part of *Marchia Wallia*.⁹ The two centuries following Norman Conquest brought dramatic change not just to the borders, but also to the political geography of Wales.¹⁰ The lords in *Marchia Wallia* exercised a broad range of rights and privileges, amounting to what Davidson terms ‘quasi-regal powers’.¹¹



Figure 3.1 Significant locations in Wales, 1100-1300.
http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/heritage/medieval_exhibition/wales_map.htm

⁹ Lieberman, *Medieval March of Wales*, p. xi.

¹⁰ Lieberman, *Medieval March*, p. 1.

¹¹ Stephenson, *Medieval Wales*, p. 11.

The Cistercians in Wales and the Foundation of Strata Florida

Strata Florida belonged to the second generation of Cistercian abbeys in Wales.

From their arrival at Tintern in 1131, the White Monks found patrons and benefactors from among the Anglo-Norman incomers. This changed in the 1160s, with the rise of a dominant native Welsh lord, Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth, and a shift in political power in central and south Wales. In 1164, the Normans controlled the province of Ceredigion, and the Norman Robert fitz Stephen was the constable of Ceredigion appointed by Roger de Clare, earl of Hertford, who held the region. It was Robert who offered the initial endowment to the group of Cistercian monks from Whitland Abbey who settled at Hen Fynachlog, thus establishing the beginnings of Strata Florida Abbey on its original site.¹² The following year the region was retaken by Rhys ap Gruffudd, lord of Deheubarth (and cousin to Robert fitz Stephen), who also took Strata Florida under his protection, and endowed the monastery with a new, better property just over two kilometres north-east of the original site, on which he built a new abbey.¹³ Construction began sometime prior to 1184, and the building of the church was completed by 1201, when the monks are known to have moved into their new church.¹⁴ Strata Florida was one of only three

¹² *BT Peniarth*, p. 73; *BT Hergest*, p. 169. See David Robinson, *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Men* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1998), p. 176; Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys and Priors*, p. 187; Janet Burton, 'The Cistercians in Marchia Wallia and Pura Wallia: Monasteries, Communities, and Identities' (forthcoming; I am grateful to Professor Burton for allowing me to see this article in advance of publication). See also *AWR*, p. 8.

¹³ *AWR*, no. 25 (pp.16–168).

¹⁴ *BT Hergest*, p. 81.

monasteries that the Lord Rhys directly founded or supported.¹⁵ From that point, Strata Florida enjoyed the patronage of his successors for almost one hundred years.

Strata Florida was one of five houses that descended from Whitland Abbey.¹⁶ Whitland itself counted that most famous of all Cistercian monasteries, Clairvaux, as its mother house, and its own family therefore had no connection with any of the Cistercian houses that were established in the Norman territories within Wales.¹⁷ Whitland's initial founder is believed to have been Bishop Bernard of St Davids, and the house, founded sometime around 1140, was originally located near Haverfordwest. However, the monastery relocated following the bishop's death in 1148 to its final location in Carmarthenshire.¹⁸ Huw Pryce suggests the second founder to have been William fitz Hay, a son of Nest, who was the daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr. William was also the half-brother of Robert fitz Stephen, the original founder of Strata Florida.¹⁹ These local patrons, affiliated as they were to the dynasty of Deheubarth, established connections between the abbeys and the native Welsh people that Cistercian monasteries founded in *Marchia Wallia*, such as Tintern Abbey, did not have. Patrons of the houses in Anglicised Wales were generally

¹⁵ The other two were Talley Abbey and Whitland, plus the nunnery at Llanllŷr. See Robinson, *Cistercians in Wales*, p. 268.

¹⁶ The other four were: Strata Marcella and Cwmhir in Wales, and Comber (Co. Down) and Tracton (Co. Cork) in Ireland. The daughter houses of Strata Florida were Llantarnam and Aberconwy; from Strata Marcella derived Valle Crucis; and out of Cwmhir was Cymer. See Robinson, *Cistercians in Wales*, pp. 267–68.

¹⁷ Janet Burton draws attention to the research of Benoît-Michel Tock on the foundation history of Vaucelles, which challenges this as a later simplification of a more complex foundation involving not just Clairvaux, but also Vaucelles. This may have been a foundation by Vaucelles, populated by monks from Vaucelles with a prior sent from Clairvaux. Burton, 'Cistercians in Marchia Wallia', (forthcoming). For Tock's work, see Foulques de Cambrai, *La Fondation de L'Abbaye de Vaucelles*, ed by Benoît-Michel Tock (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2016).

¹⁸ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys & Priories*, pp. 218–19.

¹⁹ Burton and Stöber, *Abbeys & Priories*, p. 218; Huw Pryce 'Patrons and Patronage among the Cistercians in Wales', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 154 (2007), 81–95 (p. 83).

Anglo-Norman, not native Welsh. ‘This freedom from constitutional ties with houses planted in Norman territory may help to explain the part played by this group in the politics of the century following its creation.’²⁰

As monasteries increased in prominence through their participation in their local economies, their benefactors were increasingly willing to offer land in exchange for the spiritual offerings of the monks.²¹ Land holdings were most frequently gifts from founder or patron, including the site and sometimes the pre-existing buildings, or even villages, as well. Nearly all medieval philanthropy was done with the intention of securing prayers in return, and endowments to Cistercian monasteries were usually in exchange for prayers said by all the brethren of the religious house.²² The foundation of a new house was the occasion that elicited the most concentrated attention by a family or kinship group onto one recipient of their benefaction, though unity of effort such as this was not commonplace.²³

On occasion abbeys also purchased land, and at times would trade parcels of land with another abbey or a lord, in order to acquire a favourable farm site or consolidate holdings within a geographical area.²⁴ Wales was economically underdeveloped in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and monasteries intent on expanding their land holdings were among the few sources of cash. Pryce suggests that inflation in the early thirteenth century may have been a contributing factor in some Welsh landowners selling tracts of land to obtain money for other

²⁰ T. Jones Pierce, ‘Strata Florida Abbey’, *Ceredigion*, 1 (1950–51), 18–33 (p. 20).

²¹ Robert B. Ekelund, *Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 43.

²² Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise: The Social Function of Aristocratic Benevolence, 1307–1485* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 10, 84.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁴ Donkin, *Cistercians*, pp. 59–64.

necessities.²⁵ In some instances the purchase or gift of a parcel of land took place after the abbey had rented the land from its owner for a time.²⁶

Land was also sometimes offered as entry payment for incoming members of the monastic community, especially in the cases of male children who were not heirs, who were offered to the church by families as living sacrifices.²⁷ This act was doubly advantageous, as it protected the first son's claim under the law of primogeniture, and the offering of a child to religious service was considered a highly pious act, sure to gain favour for the family in the afterlife. These were great motivators for the family to pay hefty entry payments, in parcels of land, to the monastery.²⁸ How much this particular process impacted on monasteries in *Pura Wallia* remains uncertain. Native Welsh did not inherit through primogeniture in the same manner as English, but rather employed a process called *cyfran*, or partible inheritance. The benefits of sending younger sons to the Church were not felt in the same manner. *Cyfran*, discussed later in this chapter, was the standard process of inheritance in Wales wherein all able-bodied sons, legitimate or not, inherited equally.²⁹

The Cistercian policies of austerity and seclusion demanded the construction of their abbeys in solitary places, and the Rule forbade the possession of such resources as churches and their revenues, tithes, villages, villeins, land rents, and fees from

²⁵ Pryce, 'Patrons', p. 89.

²⁶ James Donnelly, 'Changes in the Grange Economy of English and Welsh Cistercian Abbeys, 1300–1540', *Traditio*, 10 (1954), 399–458 (p. 408).

²⁷ The Cistercians discontinued the practice of accepting child oblates during the twelfth century; see Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 174.

²⁸ Ekelund, *Sacred Trust*, p. 54.

²⁹ C. H. Compton, 'The Ancient Laws and Statutes of Wales', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 34 (1878), 436–59 (p. 444).

ovens and mills.³⁰ There is, however, little evidence of complete granges being established out of wasteland.³¹ When a Cistercian abbey acquired a populated vill or manor, the abbey had two choices in the management of their newly obtained vill. In some cases, it was reduced to the level of a grange, which meant the expulsion of the residents. In other instances, the inhabitants were permitted to remain in place, and the abbey managed the vill as any secular lord would do with his properties. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the first manner was the most common in England and Wales. Contemporary accounts record the levelling of villages to make way for monastic land use.³² Not surprisingly, this method was not well received by the local populace, and the Cistercian Order faced some resentment from that quarter.³³ Archbishop Peckham argued in a letter to Edward I dated 14 June 1284 against the re-founding of Conwy at Maenan, in the late thirteenth century for this reason.³⁴ Valle Crucis was established on the site of the village Llanegwestl.³⁵ The foundation grant of 1200 or 1201 specifies that Madog ap Gruffudd Maelor (d.1236) granted the township of Llanegwestl for the purpose of the foundation of Valle Crucis, at the request of the abbots of Whitland, Strata Florida, Strata Marcella, and Cwmhir. The proprietors and heirs of Llanegwestl were relocated onto land granted to

³⁰ Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter: Latin text with English notes and commentary* (Brecht, Belgium: Citeaux, Commentarii cistercienses, 2002), p. 539.

³¹ R. A. Donkin, 'The Cistercian Order in Medieval England: Some Conclusions', *Transactions and Papers (Institute of British Geographers)*, no. 33 (Dec. 1963), 181–98 (p. 186).

³² M. R. James, ed., *Walter Map's De Nugis Curialium* (Cymmrodorion Rec. Ser., ix, 1923), pp. 49–50. <https://archive.org/stream/waltermapdenugis00mapwuoft#page/n91/mode/2up> accessed 29 April 2018.

³³ Rhys W. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway*, p. 101.

³⁴ John Peckham, C. T. Martin, eds, *Registrum Epistolarum Johannis Peckham*, Rolls Series (1882–5), vol. ii, (Oxford: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1884), p. 726.; <https://archive.org/stream/registrumepisto00martgoog#page/n442/mode/2up> Accessed 29 April 2018.

³⁵ *AWR*, no. 499 (pp. 698–700).

them by Madog as a ‘voluntary’ exchange.³⁶ Usually there followed some form of re-settlement of the displaced, as happened with Valle Crucis, though in some cases, the former landholders chose to become *conversi*, or lay brothers, and continue working the same land.³⁷ In later years, though it directly violated the rules of the Order, monasteries instead managed their newly obtained villas with the inhabitants intact. This method was employed with greater success.³⁸

Emilia Jamroziak has argued that while foundation grants usually included marginal and abandoned properties, the Cistercian reorganisation of previously developed land was the basis of their success.³⁹ Constance Berman characterises Cistercian land acquisition as aggressive, active pursuit of property, and at times their encroachment caused the destruction of villages or communities: ‘Cistercians and their predecessors successfully rearranged the landscape to create their granges.’⁴⁰

The acquisition and consolidation of the Strata Florida estate

In the case of Strata Florida, the landscape rearrangement preceded the Cistercians, but was at least in part done on their behalf (although there was secular benefit to the situation as well). When Lord Rhys granted the lands to the monastery, their

³⁶ *AWR*, no. 500 (pp. 700–02). The village name suggests there may have been an earlier church there as well, which raises the question of some monasteries intentionally repurposing earlier religious sites that will be discussed later in this chapter.

³⁷ R. A. Donkin, ‘Settlement on Cistercian Estates’, p. 144.

³⁸ Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway*, p. 101.

³⁹ Emilia Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe 1090–1500* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 185.

⁴⁰ Berman, *Cistercian Evolution*, p. 174.

placement established neutral zones between his lands and those of his Norman enemies to the south, and Gwynedd to the north. The land grants also aided him in establishing a spiritual centre for the territories under his control by way of making connections of geographic locality between the new Cistercian houses and the ancient Welsh *clas* centres in Wales and through granting former estates to the Cistercians, to include some former bond estates which were exempt from *gwestfa* payments, thus limiting Rhys's income losses on the land.⁴¹

It has been generally perceived that Strata Florida was founded by Robert fitz Stephen, a Norman lord occupying Cardigan Castle, and Rhys ap Gruffudd's relative through Robert's Welsh mother, Nest. No actual documentation remains to explain the depths of Robert's actual involvement in the foundation of Strata Florida, however.⁴² The *Brut y Tywysogion* makes no mention of Robert's founding of the monastery, though it does note that in the process of reclaiming Ceredigion from the Normans, Rhys took him hostage in 1164, and directly following that records the arrival of the first monks to Strata Florida abbey, also in 1164.⁴³ Rhys likely granted his initial charter at that time.⁴⁴ Bezant speculates that Rhys's first grant is probably very similar to that of Robert fitz Stephen.⁴⁵ The earliest gifts of property to Strata

⁴¹ *Gwestfa* was a form of food render that landholding freemen paid to their lord.: Jemma Bezant, 'The medieval grants to Strata Florida Abbey: mapping the agency of lordship', in Burton and Stober, *Monastic Wales, New Approaches*, pp. 73–88 (p. 74).

⁴² Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', pp. 77–78.

⁴³ *BT, Peniarth*, p. 203.

⁴⁴ Although Pryce dates it to 1165, it is 1164 according to *Brut y Tywysogion*. See *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68); *BT, Peniarth*, p. 203. The grant no longer exists, though Pryce has researched carefully to determine that there was reference made to at least one charter by Rhys before 1184 in a papal bull, and the *inseximus* confirming the charter dated 1285 must refer to a charter earlier than 1184 due to the timing of the appointment of Henry II's witness on the charter, Geoffrey Plantagenet, as chancellor and the travels of Henry II which place him on the continent after 3 March 1182, thereby dating the confirmation two years earlier than Rhys's 1184 charter. *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68).

⁴⁵ Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', p. 80.

Florida by Robert fitz Stephen and Rhys ap Gruffudd were what became the granges of Pennardd, Blaenaeron, and Mefenydd. We have no written evidence of this early grant, and the first charter of Rhys to survive is that issued at St Brigid’s church at Rhyader (Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr) in 1184 in the presence of three of his sons, Gruffudd, Rhys, and Maredudd, and much of his army.⁴⁶ This charter contains Rhys ap Gruffudd’s confirmation of previous gifts of property he made to the monastery. This indicates that the 1184 charter is a confirmation of and expansion upon the 1164 charter by Rhys. That earlier charter was probably Rhys’s original donation of land to the monastery (see fig. 3.2), possibly predating the actual settlement of the Strata Florida Cistercians on the land by a couple of years.

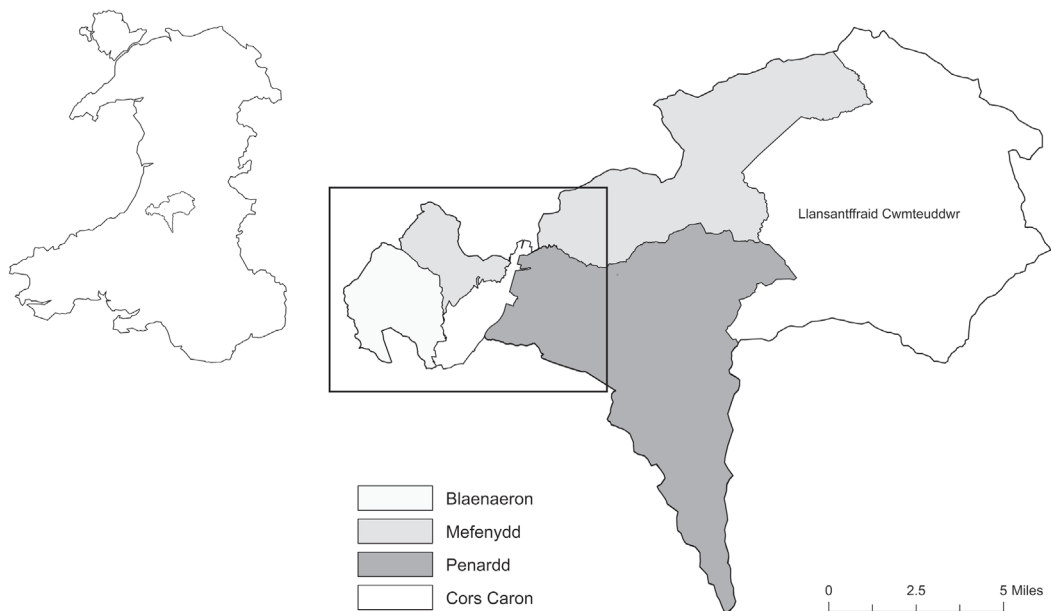


Figure 3.2 The core granges of Strata Florida. *Bezant, 'Revising', p. 54.*

⁴⁶ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–75).

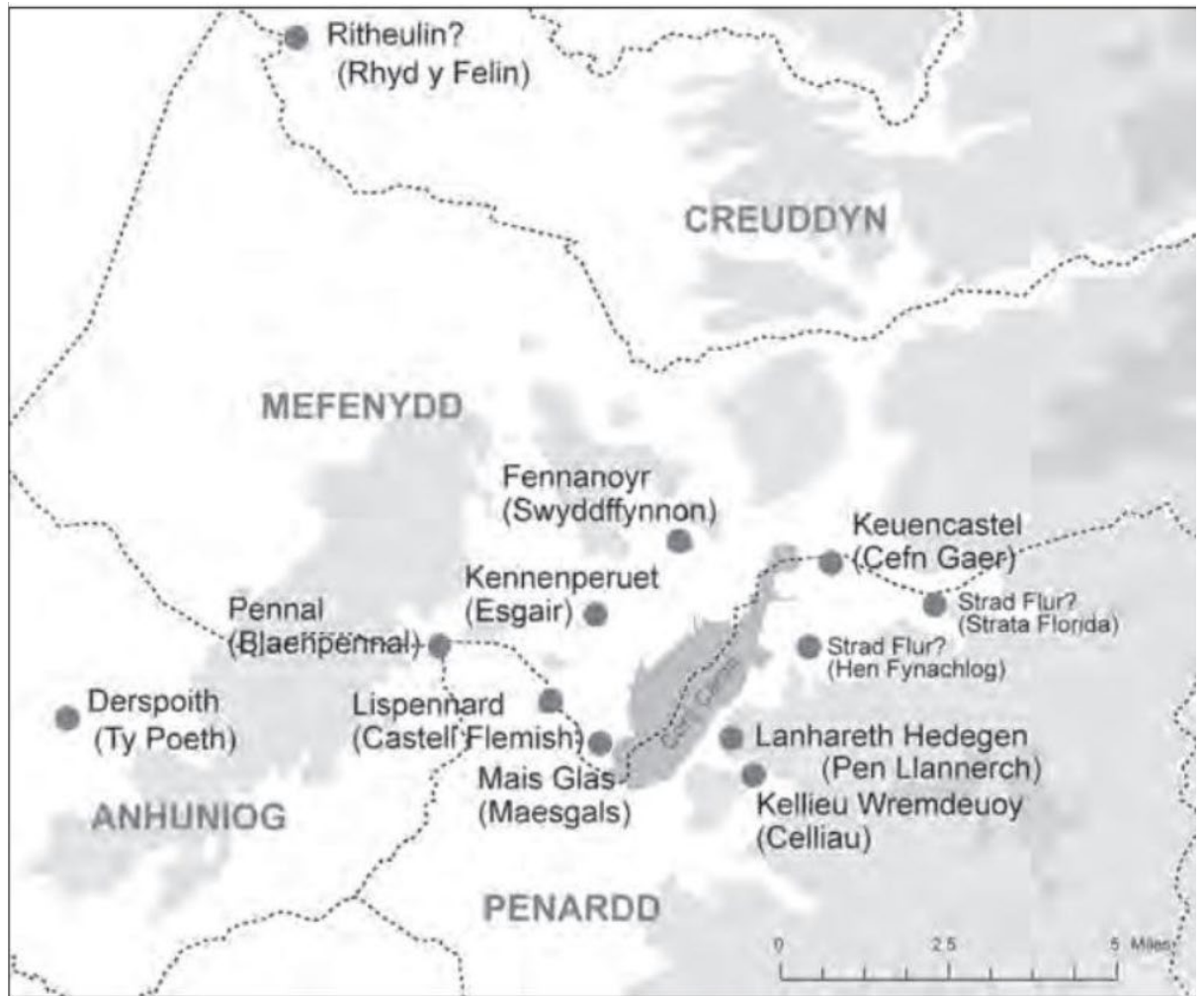


Figure 3.3 Strata Florida's known landholdings between 1164 and 1184. *Bezant, 'Medieval Granges', p. 77.*

The 1164 grant identified the core estate grouped around Cors Caron as illustrated in figure 3.3. Notable inclusions are Castell Flemish and Maes Glas, both locations within Blaenaeron grange. By Bezant's determination, the 1164 original core estate held around 47,669 acres (see fig. 3.2).⁴⁷ In the 1184 charter, the core monastic estate is described in detail, and the estate held over 80,000 acres of land (see figure 3.4).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Bezant, 'Revising', p. 52.

⁴⁸ Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', pp. 73–88.

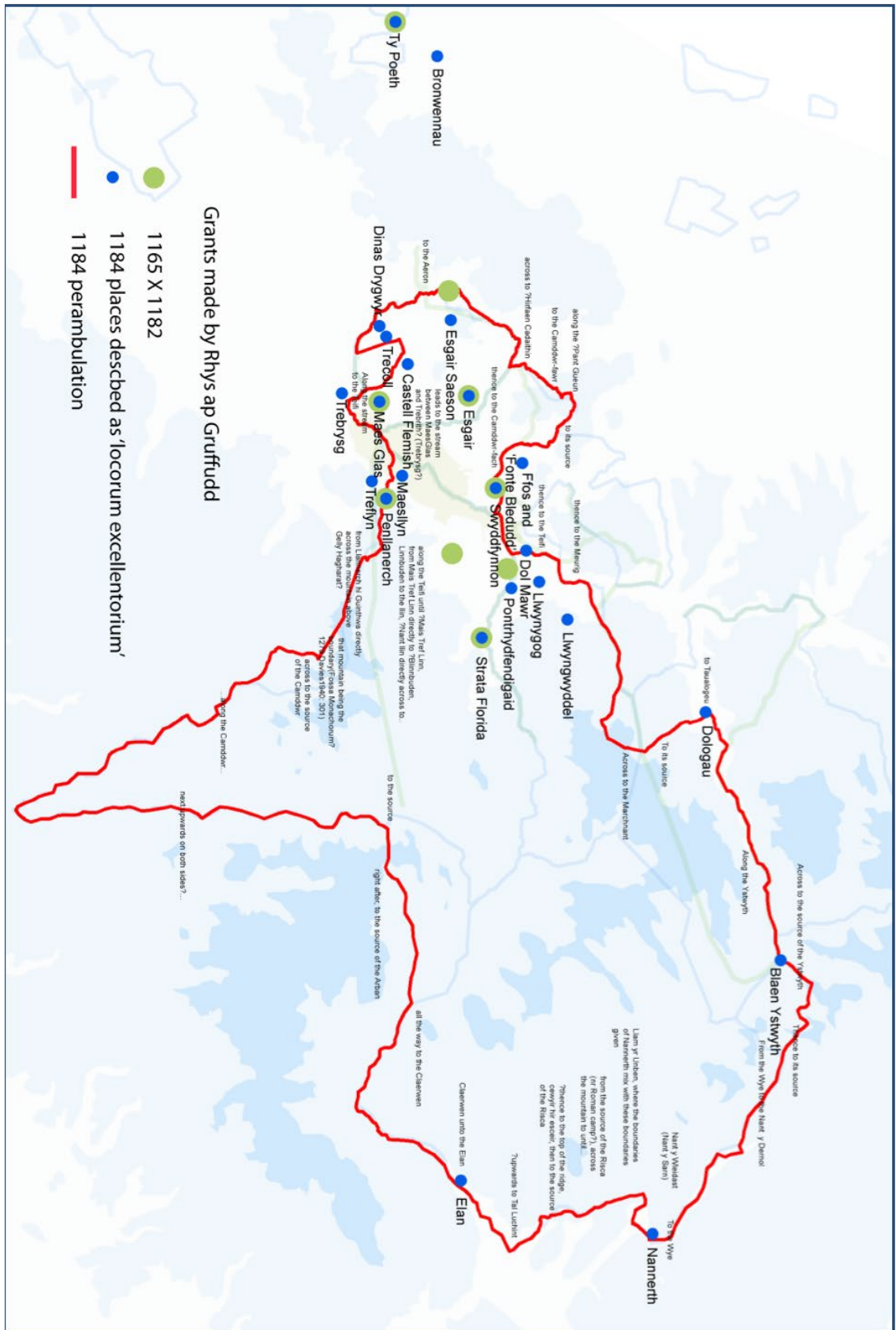


Figure 3.4 The 1184 grant includes more land, some outside of Lord Rhys's kingdom of Deheubarth. Unpublished map courtesy of Jemma Bezant.

The 20-year confirmation of the original charter coincided with the monastery's relocation in 1184, and this 'refoundation' was likely an event of great magnitude for the region, incorporating rituals both ecclesiastical and secular to mark the occasion. The grant was read to an audience at Llansanffraid church in the summer of 1184. The document was also used to record the swearing of Rhys's embattled sons, in an effort toward peacekeeping.⁴⁹ This is an interesting administrative advancement from the use of religious books such as the Lichfield Gospels for keeping secular records.

By the time of its dissolution, Strata Florida's estate was the largest monastic holding in Wales (see fig. 3.5).⁵⁰ These properties were clearly divided into estates, or granges, of varying sizes and unequal value. On each grange were series of tenements used in manners appropriate for, and as dictated by, the terrain and soil available. Individually, each parcel of land would have different worth to the monastery, but taken as a whole, if we 'consider the monastic economy to be but a furtherance and an organized supervision of that already practised by the tenants of the granges when they were taken over',⁵¹ it is evident that the monks could make use of the variety of their granges so as to establish some lowland ones for wintering their voluminous flocks of sheep and growing cereal crops, other upland ones for summer pastures, and coastal granges used for fisheries and possibly shipping.⁵² The

⁴⁹ Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', p. 81.

⁵⁰ Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', p. 80; *AWR*, no. 28 (171–75).

⁵¹ E. G. Bowen, 'The Monastic Economy of the Cistercians at Strata Florida,' *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society*, 1, no. 1 (1950), 34–37 (p. 36).

⁵² For general information on Cistercian grange size and organizations, see Donkin, *The Cistercians*, pp. 62–63.

probability that some of these estates included populations of pre-existing semi-free tenants is quite high, according to David Williams.⁵³

The period between c. 1150 and c. 1250 was climatically conducive to agricultural expansion, which also coincided with population growth necessitating the spread of farming into the uplands.⁵⁴ This was exacerbated in Wales by the impact of the issue of *cyfran*, or partible inheritance, to which reference was made earlier. This had the effect of fracturing larger landholdings, and in many cases made them less viable as functional farm holdings. In turn this might result in the economic necessity to spread onto lands previously not used as permanent farmlands. This happened in the same period that Cistercian religious houses were moving into Wales; and their interest in remote areas and economic potential led them to seek granges in the uplands as well, which they were frequently granted by secular lords.⁵⁵

In *Pura Wallia*, and specifically in the case of Strata Florida, the agricultural expansion and improvements which had begun in the twelfth century were largely associated with the arrival of the Cistercians, but also occurred under the Welsh lords who were interested in modernising. This did not change the landscape to nucleated villages and open fields. Rather, the pre-existing dispersed farms and kin-based land management remained in place, and new elements were added in on smaller scale, such as small market centres, and in that manner the expansions were fitted into the traditional landscape instead of replacing it with an entirely new one.

⁵³ David Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001), p. 222.

⁵⁴ D.K. Leighton and R. J. Silvester, 'Upland Archaeology in the Medieval and Post-Medieval Periods,' in David Browne and Stephen Hughes, ed., *Archaeology of the Welsh Uplands* (Aberystwyth: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 2003), pp. 31–40 (p. 33).

⁵⁵ Leighton and Silvester, 'Upland Archaeology', p. 33.

Again, disregarding technological changes, the landscape was not much different than it had been during the late Iron Age and Roman periods.⁵⁶

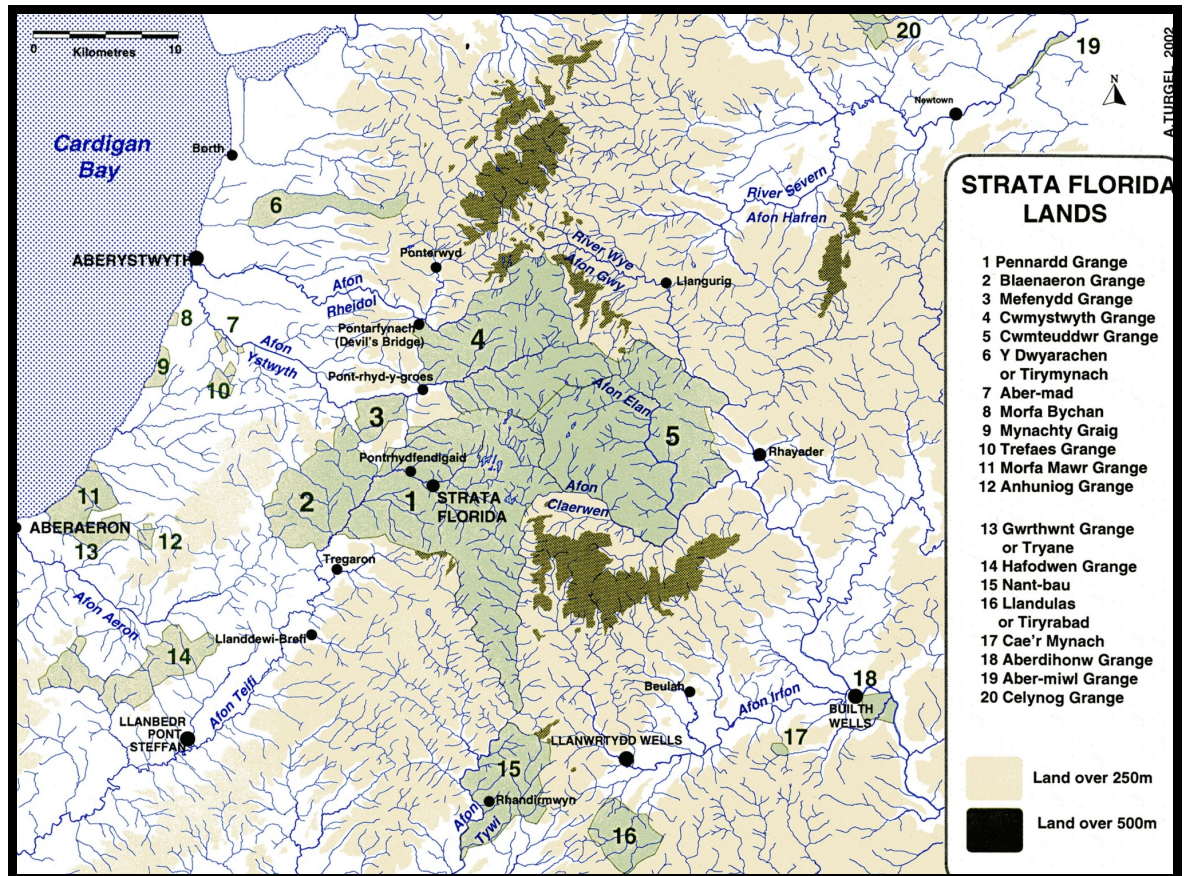


Figure 3.5 Strata Florida granges. Austin, 'A new project at Strata Florida, Ceredigion, Wales', *Monastic Research Bulletin* 13, 2007, pp.13-19 (15).

It seems likely that the monasteries continued the earlier practice of transhumance, and indeed the varied character of the grange properties rendered it necessary to do so. Bowen surmises that the sheep which summered in the highland granges of Cwmystwyth, Doverchen, Pennardd, and Mefenydd would likely have spent winters in the granges located in the Vale of Aeron, or by the coast at Anhuniog, Morfa Mawr, or Morfa Bychan, while the sheep kept beyond the watershed in summers at Cwmdeuddwr, Nantbey, and Ty'r Abad would likely have

⁵⁶ Austin and Bezant, 'The Medieval Landscapes', p. 8.

wintered in the monastery's smaller but richer lowland pastures in the valleys of the Severn and Wye.⁵⁷ While some of the larger Cardiganshire granges appear to have had sufficient amounts of both highland and lowland areas, there is no evidence of larger aggregate flocks. It is more likely that individual farms moved their sheep separately upland in summer and returned them to the farm's own infield in winter. This supposition is supported by the frequency with which the place name 'Hafod' is found within the granges of Pennardd, Cymystwyth, and Mefenydd.⁵⁸ With the twelfth- and thirteenth-century development of the grange system, these land holdings became critical contributions to the monastic economy.

The monasteries were the life centres for their communities. They provided markets for the buying and selling of goods, offered medical care and education, and alms for the poor. Monastic involvement within society, as large-scale landowners, employers, and providers of community support, was an important element of medieval life. Therefore, the troubles faced by the community were the troubles of the religious houses as well.

Strata Florida and the politics of *Pura Wallia*

Wales of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was comprised of two elements: the Anglo-Norman controlled Marcher lordships, and *Pura Wallia*, native Wales, under the rule of Rhys ap Gruffudd, lord of Deheubarth, among others. Lord Rhys also happened to be the patron and, for all intents and purposes, founder of Strata Florida Abbey. Relations between Lord Rhys and the Cistercians of Wales were strong, and

⁵⁷ Bowen, 'Monastic Economy', p. 36.

⁵⁸ Bowen, 'Monastic Economy', p. 36.

many of his family members were buried at Strata Florida, though he himself was not.⁵⁹ For the most part, from 1172 until the death of Henry II in 1189, a delicate alliance held between Lord Rhys and Henry II. Unfortunately, Henry's death brought the peace to an end. Richard I did not continue Henry II's efforts in maintaining a working relationship with Wales, and conflicts arose as Rhys was forced to defend his holdings against ambitious marcher barons.⁶⁰ The monasteries, in that they tended to ally with one element or the other politically and culturally, quickly became pawns in an increasingly tense relationship between the two factions. Strata Florida's final location was under construction, not to be completed until the year 1201, after the death of its great patron Lord Rhys.⁶¹

The thirteenth century in Wales was considerably more discordant. Lord Rhys died in 1197, which initiated internal struggles amongst his heirs for power, combined with outside pressures from marcher lords seeing an opportunity to make a move on Welsh lands.⁶² John, ruling in the absence of Richard, was determined to keep Welsh rulers from regaining their strength, and therefore he encouraged the barons of the march to engage in battle with the Welsh lords.⁶³ The situation worsened after the death of John and the accession of Henry III, a weak and ineffective ruler. War between Wales and England marked the mid-century, until the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267 settled matters for the time being between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd, the recognised supreme Prince of Wales, and Henry III,

⁵⁹ Amongst those relatives buried there were Lord Rhys's son Gruffudd, who had become a monk. Also buried there was another son, Hywel Sais (the Saxon), stabbed to death by his brother, Maelgwn, in 1204 during the unrest that followed their father's death. See *BT*, Peniarth, p. 261.

⁶⁰ *BT*, Peniarth, pp. 235–47; Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 219–25.

⁶¹ *BT*, Peniarth, p. 257.

⁶² *BT*, Peniarth, pp. 245–65.

⁶³ *BT*, Peniarth, pp. 267–73.

although warfare between the native Welsh and the barons of the March continued on.⁶⁴

The Cistercians in Wales were ideal as arbitrators and diplomats as their attachment to an international Order gave them freedom to pass through borders or enemy lines.⁶⁵ Strata Florida's abbot, alongside that of Aberconwy, travelled to London in 1248 to collect the body of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn following his accidental death in the Tower of London. It took considerable convincing by the abbots to retrieve the remains of the deceased prince from Henry III, but eventually the abbots returned the body to Aberconwy for burial.⁶⁶ Abbots from the same two monasteries carried a letter from Llywelyn to an assemblage of bishops and archbishops in London in 1275. The letter was a false testimony from Llywelyn to the convocation of bishops that he would do homage to Edward I.⁶⁷ However because he felt he had not been given the territorial security he expected via the Treaty of Montgomery, Llywelyn ignored multiple summons by the King, and also failed to appear at his coronation, angering King Edward.⁶⁸ The Cistercian houses intervened not only with the Crown on behalf of the Welsh princes, but also with the Church. Following Llywelyn's 1275 censure from Bishop Anian II of St Asaph for taking advantage of monastic hospitality, the abbots of Whitland, Strata Florida, Strata Marcella, Aberconwy, Cwmhir, Cymer, and Valle Crucis penned an epistle at Strata Florida in defence of the prince and declaring him a great defender of the

⁶⁴ For mid-century warfare, see *BT*, pp. 341–57; for the treaty between Llywelyn and Henry III, see *BT*, Peniarth, p. 357; Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 317–23.

⁶⁵ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 38.

⁶⁶ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 40; *BT*, p. 335; *AWR*, no. 395 (pp. 579–80).

⁶⁷ Hays, *History of Aberconway*, p. 53.

⁶⁸ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 328–30.

Order in Wales, which was sent to Pope Gregory X.⁶⁹ Llywelyn used Strata Florida as a kind of centralised native Welsh court wherein he assembled his Welsh lords. In 1238 he summoned the regional princes of *Pura Wallia* to Strata Florida to swear their allegiance to his heir, Dafydd.⁷⁰ Strata Florida, likely for its allegiance to the native Welsh cause, was fined a significant sum in 1248 by Henry III. The *Brut y Tywysogion* notes that the king forgave part of an older debt, but that in 1248 Strata Florida paid three hundred marks, with arrangements to pay an unspecified additional amount later.⁷¹ Stephen Williams surmises that the penalty may have been similar to one imposed by King John, during which time the abbey was accused of harbouring enemies of the Crown. John demanded that Falkes de Breauté destroy the abbey in 1212, but the abbot arranged to pay a large fine instead.⁷² It was an expensive alliance for Strata Florida, but there was a bigger price to be paid later in the century.

After the death of Lord Rhys in 1197, his descendants continued to confirm his patronage of Strata Florida throughout the thirteenth century.⁷³ A charter by Maelgwn ap Rhys in 1198 closely follows Lord Rhys's 1194 charter.⁷⁴ Cynan ap Maredudd, a great-great-grandson of Lord Rhys, appears to have signed the last confirmation of earlier donations to Strata Florida by his father and brothers.⁷⁵ This

⁶⁹ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 42.

⁷⁰ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 245, 247, 249; *BT*, p. 327.

⁷¹ *BT*, Peniarth, p. 335; For both original Latin and an English translation of the 1212 edict, see Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, p. xx.

⁷² Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, p. 144.

⁷³ *AWR*, no. 35 (pp. 180–83); nos. 36–38 (p. 183); no. 39 (pp. 183–84); no. 40 (p. 184); no. 45 (p. 187); no. 48 (p. 189); no. 50 (p. 190); no. 51 (p. 191); no. 55 (pp. 193–95); no. 63 (pp. 197–201).

⁷⁴ *AWR*, no. 35 (pp. 180–83).

⁷⁵ *AWR*, no. 82 (pp. 216–22).

charter is of questionable authenticity, however. Cynan was in dispute with Strata Florida regarding land boundaries, which led to a need for arbitration in 1279.⁷⁶ Cynan did side with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (and Welsh-sympathising Strata Florida) in 1282 against the Crown, however.⁷⁷ Huw Pryce notes that if the charter is authentic, it probably dates to 1280–1282, placing it just before the Edwardian Conquest.⁷⁸ Pryce particularly questions why this charter was not presented to the king for confirmation until 1369, rather than in 1320 when other charters in favour of Strata Florida were brought before him. In Cynan's charter the property then belonging to Strata Florida is described in great detail, and with particular attention given to the monastery's full and complete rights to their lands and all that is on the lands. This may suggest that Cynan was endeavouring to deflect recent or ongoing efforts to encroach upon or seize monastic lands.⁷⁹

Edward I succeeded to the throne in 1272, and tensions soon flared with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd, as Edward believed himself to be on the receiving end of an assortment of offences perpetrated by the Welsh prince, not least of which was Llywelyn's refusal to do homage to Edward as he had done with Henry III in the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267. Relations between Llywelyn and the Crown deteriorated over lands and rights, and by 1276 Llywelyn was on the verge of open conflict with the king.⁸⁰ Edward set off into Wales, initially with the intention of dealing with a recalcitrant vassal, but what unfolded was the eventual conquering

⁷⁶ *AWR*, no. 81 (pp. 215–16).

⁷⁷ *AWR*, p. 13.

⁷⁸ *AWR*, p. 222.

⁷⁹ *AWR*, p. 221; *BT*, Peniarth, pp. 353, 363.

⁸⁰ Kari Maund, *The Welsh Kings: Warriors, Warlords, and Princes* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), pp. 208–19.

of all of Wales in the name of the English Crown. Monasteries siding with the native Welsh were targeted by Crown soldiers and sympathizers. Monastic properties were burned and trampled, crops incurred the same kinds of damage, and stores of food and supplies were ransacked. Strata Florida suffered damage in 1276 or 1277. It was the target for destruction again in 1282 or 1283.⁸¹

Following the Edwardian Conquest, the abbey was embroiled in legal battles to keep control of its properties, as marcher lords and others repeatedly took to the secular courts against Strata Florida. In an interesting reversal of fortune, however, in 1284 Edward I paid Strata Florida £78 in compensation for the extensive damages incurred during the war.⁸² Unfortunately, later in that same year Strata Florida suffered another catastrophe, when lightning struck and the abbey burned to the ground, saving only the presbytery.⁸³ There was a second conflagration a decade later at the hands of the king's men, though against the king's wishes, during the uprising of 1294–95.⁸⁴ The largest revolt following the Edwardian Conquest, it was also the last one for over a century. The rebels, intent on regaining Welsh independence, planned an orchestrated series of attacks that originated in the north, south, and west, but spread across much of Wales before it ended.⁸⁵ While Welsh guerrilla warfare tactics were difficult for the English to counter, and the uprising

⁸¹ David Robinson, *The Cistercians in Wales: Architecture and Archaeology 1130–1540* Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London Book 73 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 2006), p. 269.

⁸² Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, pp. 152 and xlvi–l. *Patent*, 1292–1301 Edward I v.3, p. 499; *Monasticon*, vol. 5, p. 632.

⁸³ Richard Cope Christie, ed. *Annales Cestrienses, or Chronicle of the Abbey of S. Werburg, at Chester*, Record Society for the Publication of Original Documents Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. XIV (1886 reprint London: Forgotten Books, 2015), pp. 114–17.

⁸⁴ *Patent*, 1292–1301 Edward I v.3, p. 499.

⁸⁵ John Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn 1294–5', *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society* 16 (1955), 12–24 (pp. 12–14).

caught Edward by surprise, the Welsh forces did not have the numbers or the stamina to maintain a lengthy war. This established a deep distrust for the Welsh, and after the revolt was crushed, a series of restrictions were imposed, denying Welshmen the right to carry arms in the English boroughs, and forbidding Welshmen to assemble without permission from the king.⁸⁶ Interestingly, although Edward offered a substantial bounty on him dead or alive, Madoc ap Llywelyn, leader of the revolt in north Wales, was dealt with rather mercifully, receiving a life sentence in the Tower of London.⁸⁷ Shortly after the rebellion was quelled, however, Edward I worked to rebuild the relationship with the Welsh people, and reversed many of these restrictions.⁸⁸ An entry in the Patent Rolls of 30 March 1300 granted licence for Strata Florida to rebuild following its destruction ‘against the king’s will in the Welsh war in the 23rd year of his reign’.⁸⁹ By then, Strata Florida Abbey had endured an almost uninterrupted twenty years of destruction due to the monastery’s allegiance with the rebellious Welsh. Edward’s efforts at developing a peaceful, if not equal, coexistence with the Welsh were successful for one hundred years.

At the opening of the fifteenth century, Strata Florida’s close association with native Welsh aspirations brought the monastery to the centre of English acts of repression. In 1400, Owain Glyn Dŵr, who was descended from *uchelwyr*, returned home to Wales after having spent much of his adult life in England studying law and serving as a soldier. He shortly thereafter found himself taken advantage of by the

⁸⁶ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 382–85.

⁸⁷ Madoc ap Llywelyn was descendant from a line of earlier Welsh princes, to include the last native ruler of Gwynedd. He returned to Wales as an ally and protégé of Edward I, anticipating the repatriation of his ancestral lands in exchange for his cooperation. When his compensation proved to be considerably less generous, he responded by leading the northern wave of rebellion against the king. See Griffiths, ‘Revolt’, pp. 14, 22.

⁸⁸ *Patent*, 1292–1301 Edward I v. 3, p. 223.

⁸⁹ *Patent*, 1292–1301 Edward I v. 3, 499.

tyrannical land dealings of powerful marcher lord Reginald Grey. Hundreds of other Welshmen were also suffering the injustices of land seizure by litigation and, sometimes, by English lords merely taking them. Glyn Dŵr started a resistance by burning down Grey's castle at Ruthin. Grey ran for cover, and the resistance gained numbers quickly. Welshmen living abroad heard of the movement and returned home to fight for their lands. Once again, Wales was embroiled in a battle between the native Welsh and the English Crown.⁹⁰

What this meant for Strata Florida, with its deep ties to the Welsh people, was another round of damage and destruction. In 1401–02, the abbey was occupied by Henry IV's army, during which time the monks had to find lodging elsewhere. The church was, purportedly, used as a stable by the king's men. Adam of Usk (d. 1430), a Welsh chronicler of the period from 1377 to 1421 who was involved in Glyn Dŵr's efforts, wrote that the abbey was relieved of its valuables by the troops, and the house was depleted to such a point that there was serious concern of its permanent closure:

Wherefore the English, invading these parts with a strong power, and utterly laying them waste and ravaging them with fire, famine, and sword, left them a desert, not even sparing children or churches, nor the monastery of Strata-Florida, wherein the king himself was being lodged, and the church of which and its choir, even up to the high altar, they used as a stable, and pillaged even the patens...⁹¹

In April 1402, Henry IV ordered that reparations be made to the abbey for the destruction, which he blamed on the Welsh and on his own men. Henry's motives were not necessarily driven by the desire to make an act of contrition and charity: the devastation of the abbey would prevent its usefulness should the king's men have

⁹⁰ R.R. Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr, Prince of Wales*, trans. Gerald Morgan (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2009), pp. 11–32.

⁹¹ Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*.

future need of billeting there. Furthermore, the mistreatment and later neglect of the property could provide further reason for Welsh malcontent, and thereby give more support to the rebel cause.⁹² Then in 1407, the abbey was occupied by 120 men-at-arms and 360 archers for a period of ninety days. During this occupation, the king's men faced the monastic community which was seemingly sympathetic to Glyn Dŵr. The troops looted the abbey as they left, and rebel sympathizer monks were removed from the monastery, which Riley suggests included the new abbot, Richard ap Gruffudd.⁹³ Again damaged and desecrated by the military occupiers, Strata Florida barely had time to recover when it was yet again taken over for nine months in 1415 by 40 men-at-arms and 80 archers.⁹⁴ No evidence survives to indicate if the monastery suffered more devastation during the 1415 occupation, though restoration was not immediately forthcoming. No major reconstruction took place until Rhys ap Dafydd became abbot in 1433. Under his oversight, and that of his successor, Morgan ap Rhys, Strata Florida received about forty years of considerable rebuilding, some of which is identified in professional poet Guto'r Glyn's *Ode in Praise of Abbot Rhys ap Dafydd*.⁹⁵

⁹² Jonathon Riley, 'The Military Garrisons of Henry IV and Henry V at Strata Florida, 1407 and 1415–16', *Welsh History Review* 27/4 (2015), 645–71 (p. 647).

⁹³ Smith, *Heads*, vol. III, pp. 334–36; Riley, 'Military Garrisons', p. 648; Janet Burton, 'Authority and Conflict at the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida', *Welsh History Review* 29/3 (2019), 377–407 (p. 394), questions Riley's suggestion that the English troops themselves made Richard abbot of Strata Florida.

⁹⁴ 'Item pur la sauve garde des parties de Gales durant le susdit viage sil plest au Roy. Soient illoeques ordenez c hommes darmes et cc archers dont serrout en Northgales lx hommes darmes et cxx archers. Et en Suthgales xl hommes darmes et IIII^{XX} archers lesqueux xl hommes darmes et IIII^{XX} archers serront a Stratfleure.' 'Minutes of the Council held at the Friars Preachers in London Feb 2 H. v., 1415,' *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, Volume 2*, 145. See also an English translation by Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, appendix lvi.

⁹⁵ Riley, 'Military', 669–70; Dafydd Johnston, ed., *Ode in Praise of Abbot Rhys ap Dafydd of Strata Florida/Awdl Foliant i'r Abad Rhys ap Dafydd o Ystrad-fflur* (Aberystwyth, 2013), lines 15–18.

At the same time as it struggled to survive through wars and rebellions, Strata Florida suffered environmental difficulties as well. Forty years before the plague arrived on Welsh shores, a series of natural disasters affecting all of Western Europe devastated the nation. In the spring of 1315, heavy rains destroyed the harvests, creating a terrible famine. Weather the following winter was among the most severe recorded during the Middle Ages. These misfortunes continued for seven years. Food prices escalated as demand greatly outweighed supply. The poor were starving; malnutrition was rampant. Epidemic diseases struck sheep and other livestock, and herds were decimated. Heavily dependent upon their livestock and their crops, the monasteries suffered alongside all others in this period.⁹⁶ It was then that further disaster struck.

The impact of the plague in Wales has been given little attention by scholars as yet, and the primary source material is scant and fleeting, consisting primarily of brief mention in some Welsh chronicles and annals. The geography of Wales may have protected its inhabitants from the severity of epidemic suffered in England; the smaller villages and lighter population density probably limited the spread of disease somewhat as well. As a result, Wales was overall less severely afflicted than England.⁹⁷ This is not to say Wales survived unscathed; the plague first arrived in Wales during the spring of 1349.⁹⁸ The areas with strong trade links in Wales were the worst affected, which follows the same pattern of disease spread as in England,

⁹⁶ Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 425; William Chester Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 290.

⁹⁷ Alun Withey, pers. comm. 19 April 2018.

⁹⁸ John Kelly, *The Great Mortality: An Intimate History of the Black Death, The Most Devastating Plague of All Time* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), p. 25.

as well as the whole of Europe.⁹⁹ Because they were already downtrodden from famine and livestock and crop losses, the plague was an economic disaster for the monasteries. As the disease spread across the land, tenants fled in attempt to outrun the sickness; others dropped dead in their homes. Mills, markets, and fairs shut down. Their herds died. Without exception, the religious houses suffered tremendous economic consequences of the plague, known in Welsh as *Y Farwolaeth Fawr*, or the Great Death.¹⁰⁰

The monasteries' loss of large percentages of their labour supply to the pestilence was crippling. Across England and Wales, tenements stood vacant, and there was a desperate shortage of agricultural wage laborers, on which the grange system was dependent.¹⁰¹ The dearth of workers of all kinds was so severe that daily activities went undone. In many cases, the religious houses suffered food shortages, as there were no workers to manage the fields, there were no traders to go to the markets on behalf of the monasteries, and often no markets to attend. For those houses already struggling before the plague arrived, these problems were frequently insurmountable.¹⁰²

Strata Florida and the Dissolution

⁹⁹ Kelly, *The Great Mortality*, pp. 56–57.

¹⁰⁰ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 425–27; Peter George Mode, *The Influence of the Black Death on the English Monasteries* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1916), pp. 37–38; Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr*, p. 25.

¹⁰¹ Norman F Cantor, *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 81.

¹⁰² Donnelly argues that there were indeed still *conversi* after the plague and offers some numbers of monastic inhabitants for various religious houses. However, he does concede that the numbers were dramatically smaller post-plague than they were previously. See Donnelly, 'Changes', pp. 451–57; Cantor, *Wake*, p. 81.

In 1534, Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, ending papal authority in England and establishing the king and all subsequent monarchs as the head of the Church of England.¹⁰³ In that same year, the English Parliament also granted Henry VIII, via his viceregent Cromwell, the right to conduct visitations on all of the religious houses of the kingdom.¹⁰⁴ Perceived to be a complete visitation of the entirety of the English Church, the survey included the cathedral and collegiate churches, and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Houses of friars were not included. This visitation was approved in January 1535, though it took seven months to become an actuality beginning the end of July 1535 and ending late February 1536.¹⁰⁵

The commissioners who conducted the surveys were local men appointed to the task. In Wales that included Adam Becanshaw, a priest, and Dr John Vaughan of Narberth in Pembrokeshire, whose surname is a significant one within this study, though his connection to the Vaughans of Trawscoed remains elusive.¹⁰⁶ A third commissioner, Ellis ap Robert, was dismissed. These commissioners were not paid for their services, but surely they realized the work put them in good position for acquiring some of the spoils after dissolution.¹⁰⁷ Dr Vaughan went so far as to write to Cromwell requesting aid in obtaining one of the abbeys. He initially took

¹⁰³ Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1534/26H8n1, located in Houses of Parliament, London, England SW1A 0PW.

¹⁰⁴ G. W. Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 245.

¹⁰⁵ F. Donald Logan, 'Departure from the Religious Life During the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535–1536,' in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), pp. 213–26 (p. 213); Dom David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. III, *The Tudor Age* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 264.

¹⁰⁶ For the Vaughans of Trawscoed, see Chapter 5 below.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians*, p. 84.

possession of Grace Dieu, but later acquired Whitland. The contents of his survey reports may have been angled toward personal gain.¹⁰⁸

The commissioners surveyed the Welsh houses in 1535, and recorded monasteries' possessions in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*. The reported conditions of the 47 religious houses in Wales was reflective of the same in England, which is to say that the monasteries were in a state of severe decline, never having fully recovered from the ravages of the fourteenth century. Not one of them was rated at over £200 per year, and the collective annual value of their endowments was listed in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* at £3,178. The *Monasticon Anglicanum* cites for Strata Florida an annual value of £118 7s 3d. Tintern Abbey was listed at £192 1s 4d, and Cwmhir at £64 14s 2d.¹⁰⁹ In 1536, a bill was passed in Parliament for the dissolution of all monasteries with incomes less than £200 per year, and as a result 376 religious houses in England and Wales ceased to exist. One exception clause built into the act allowed for the continuation of such houses as the king chose to preserve or refund under new charters, despite their size or income.¹¹⁰ Rather, a monastery's ability to buy its way out of suppression appears to have been the key to survival. Fifty-two religious houses including Strata Florida, Neath, and Whitland, were spared in this first suppression, in exchange for sizable fees paid to the Crown.¹¹¹ By 1540, however, they were all gone.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116; *LP*, vol. 13 no. 1, pp. 561–89.

¹⁰⁹ *Monasticon*, Vol. 1, pp. 90, 91, 98, 106.

¹¹⁰ Gasquet, *Dissolution*, vol. II, 10, 529–30; *Patent*, 28 Henry VIII, part 4, m. 23. Also see Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, Appendix, pp. lxxx–lxxxix.

¹¹¹ In the case of Strata Florida, the sum was £ 66 13s 4d: Gasquet, *Dissolution* vol. II, p. 530.

¹¹² Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 85.

The abbot at Strata Florida in the 1530s, Richard Talley, may have anticipated Strata Florida's end by the early part of the decade. In 1533, Strata Florida paid an annuity to the monastery's attorney, Maurice ap David. In 1537 two more attorneys were also paid annuities, and a fourth attorney was included in 1538.¹¹³ Obtaining legal assistance in the face of the oncoming dissolution was a clever strategy. Strata Florida was, as mentioned, among the monasteries granted a brief reprieve in 1536 from dissolution, but that waiver came at a price.¹¹⁴ Total annuities promised came to almost £20 per annum. The monastery avoided suppression in 1536, in exchange for a fine of 1,000 marks, much of which was not paid before the final dissolution occurred. By Michaelmas 1538, Strata Florida had paid fines to the Crown totalling £66 13s 4d.¹¹⁵ In order to cover the costs of the temporary waiver, Strata Florida, like other monasteries in similar circumstances, employed several methods of generating income to pay the Crown. The first was the practice of demising properties to laypersons, which had been done before, but was at this time done on a considerably greater scale than previously. This provided, potentially, a twofold benefit: it gave the abbot an avenue by which he could 'provide generously for friends and family' and the initial payments were put to use sustaining the endangered economy of the abbey.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *LP*, vol. 12 no. 1, pp. 116–44.

¹¹⁴ 'The possessions confirmed are as follows, viz., the monastery or abbey, the church, steeple, site, churchyard, ground, &c. of the church thereof; the granges of Mevennyth, Pennarth, Commoscowth, Blaynearon, Annynyok, Trevais, Morbabychan, Dywarchyn, Havoodwen, Nauntvaye, Haberde, Honowe, Commoddythur, Habermewill, Morvayraker, and Beallte; and all other manors, granges, &c. belonging to the said abbey; and the lordships, manors, messuages, &c. of Llangarik, Bangor dioc., and Penkarrek, St. David's dioc': *LP*, vol. 12 no. 1, p. 311 item 46.

¹¹⁵ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 79–80.

¹¹⁶ A. Jones, 'The Estates of the Welsh Abbeys at the Dissolution,' *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 92 (1937), 269–86 (p. 272).

This behaviour was not a surprise to the Crown's authorities, and as such, leases granted in the twelve months leading up to the date the First Act of Suppression took effect, 4 February 1536, were determined to be void.¹¹⁷ To circumvent this, many abbeys worked quickly to lease properties in return for money purportedly paid prior to the cut-off date. Strata Florida made four substantial leases of property: Morfa Bychan grange in 1536 for £80, Nant Bau grange in 1538 for £100, the rectorial tithes of Pencarreg in 1538, and Llangurig in 1538 for £40. In each of these cases, the lessee claimed that payment had been made earlier, and in at least one case it was noted plainly to have been done in order to help in the redemption of the monastery. The lease of Nant Bau was eventually determined to have been too late, and therefore void. Records of these transactions, or at least the report of these transactions having happened at some earlier point, remain with the National Archives, primarily in the Records of the Court of Augmentations and the Augmentation Office.¹¹⁸

To defend against these claims, some monasteries, Strata Florida amongst them, resorted to forging the monastery seals, which had in many cases been confiscated during the previous visitation by Crown representatives. Abbot Richard Talley was investigated for using a counterfeit seal in the demising of property to one Hugh Lewis (Lewys). Lewis claimed that the lease was settled before the abbey was in the process of being dissolved. In the course of the investigation into whether Aberdihonw grange belonged to Strata Florida, its yearly value, and whether the 99-year lease to Hugh Lewis was made before or after the dissolution, and to confirm

¹¹⁷ *LC*, p. 258.

¹¹⁸ TNA, *E* 315/103, ff. 110-111; *E* 315/97, ff. 25-26; *LR* 1/228, f. 135; *LR* 1/228, f. 64, 89; *SC* 6/4868; mm. 4d, 5r, 10r, 12r; *Augm.* 29; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 79. See chapter 4 below for details on Strata Florida land leases.

that the rent paid was, in fact, 6s 8d, the rents of eleven tenants of the grange who pay a rent of £5 10s were offered as evidence and seven local residents were interviewed, all of whom agreed that the grange belonged to Strata Florida. The property's worth to let was determined to be £8 or £10, and the lease term was for 99 years, to 'Hugh Lewys', by Richard Talley, former abbot of Strata Florida, at 6s 8d. This agreement was made after Christmas 1538, but whether before or after the dissolution, none of those interviewed could say.¹¹⁹ The validity of another of Strata Florida's leases was questioned in 1580, as the lease was dated 1509, but the seal used on it was made after the restoration of the abbey in 1537.¹²⁰

On 21 February 1538, the last abbot of Strata Florida, Richard Talley, surrendered to the Crown, after restitution, the remaining monastic properties. Upon surrender, the remaining inhabitants of the abbey were granted pensions, scheduled to begin at Lady Day, in March 1539. According to a letter signed by Thomas Cromwell, Abbot Talley was given £40, Thomas Durram £4, William Johns, with his annuity of 53s 4d under convent seal, 53s 4d, Richard Smythe, monk, £3, John Yorke, with his annuity of 26s 8d under convent seal, 53s 4d, Lewis Llanfadder and Morgan ap Johns £3 each, David Morgan alias Talley 40s.¹²¹

John Yorke is listed in the valuation of 1543–44 as the bailiff of the grange at Mefenydd; he may be the same John Yorke who was granted a pension in 1539–40 and then continued as bailiff of Mefenydd Grange, which, as it was in the immediate vicinity of the abbey, he had likely managed prior to dissolution.¹²² In some cases

¹¹⁹ *LP*, vol. 17, pp. 218–28.

¹²⁰ *Augm.* Pp. 29–31. See also *NLW*, Cwrtmawr MS 873D, p. 25.

¹²¹ *LP*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 359–74.

¹²² Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, pp. 179–80.

monastic bailiffs continued in their positions following dissolution, doing their same work but employed by the Crown.¹²³ These positions prior to dissolution were considered full-time officials who were granted part-time residence and meals at the servants table when they were at the abbey.¹²⁴ Furthermore, some bailiffs also served as foresters for the abbey. Nepotism toward tenant-employees such as these was common, and bailiffs and other tenants were at times granted generous lease terms from the monasteries.¹²⁵ David Williams also noted that a former monk of the house called John York served as the clergyman for the region in a chapel on abbey grounds following the abbey's dissolution.¹²⁶ A John Yorke is recorded as having paid 16d in 1546 for 'the Rent of one Tenement outside of the Great Gate together with a small piece of land called Tythen y Pistell Tez' by indenture.¹²⁷ It would be painfully coincidental if they were not the same person. Supposing it is the same John Yorke this may be an example of a situation in which a local man, probably a member of an *uchelwyr* family of the region, dedicated his life to the monastery, and upon the dissolution of the monastery, rather than leave to join a different religious house abroad, he remained in place to serve his community and kinship as best he could in matters spiritual, maintaining an unbroken continuity from local Welsh *clas* to Cistercian monastery, and back again to local religious practice.

¹²³ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 117.

¹²⁴ David Williams, *The Tudor Cistercians* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2014), p. 168.

¹²⁵ Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, pp. 248–49; 262–63.

¹²⁶ Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, p. 316.

¹²⁷ *NLW*, CD I/5. 'Copy of an account of the Receiver of the King's Revenues for Mevenith from Micha's 38th Henry 8th to the following Micha's', p. 8. While this particular rental was not specifically given a term in the document, the rentals listed directly prior to and following were all set at 99 years.

As dissolution approached, many monasteries turned to lay stewards to manage their economic affairs, and in the case of some Cistercian houses, including Strata Florida, the appointment of a receiver-general to take over the administrative needs of all of the monastery's properties. The receiver-general appointed at Strata Florida in 1538 was Richard Devereux, who in 1537 was deputy justice, and was also the second son of Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers, Chief Justice of Wales.¹²⁸ In obtaining control over the administration of monastic assets following Strata Florida's dissolution, Richard Devereux was in a position to effect great things for the landholders of the region, regarding property redistribution. The implications of this are discussed at length in chapter 5.

The Welsh monasteries depended primarily on the income generated by their landed estates. The Church owned about a quarter of the land in Wales, and the thirteen Cistercian houses, in particular, were large-scale landowners, by Welsh standards. The dissolution in Wales involved hundreds of thousands of acres of Welsh land changing hands.¹²⁹ Aside from a small percentage kept aside for the use of the monks, who totalled around 250 for all of Wales on the eve of the dissolution, monastic lands were primarily held by tenants. Most surviving Welsh leases indicate that there was some effort to secure them expediently in 1535 and 1536. While leases earlier in the sixteenth century were usually entered for a term of lives, many of the later leases were for long terms, forty to a hundred years in duration, possibly out of landlords' and tenants' efforts to glean the most benefit from high entry fines and security, respectively. Regardless of the circumstances of the establishment of

¹²⁸ The appointments of the JPs mentioned are listed in Phillips, ed., *The Justices of the Peace in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1514-1689* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), pp. i 6, i 8, 204.

¹²⁹ John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 229; Stephen Friar, *The Companion to Cathedrals and Abbeys* (Stroud: The History Press, 2010), p. 404.

these late leases, nearly all of them were confirmed when the Crown took control of the lands, and it appears that some of the pre-dissolution leases remained valid in the early seventeenth century as well.¹³⁰

During the years immediately following dissolution, the Crown apparently intended to keep the properties confiscated from Welsh monasteries in its own hands. Leasing of these properties began in 1537 and increased in 1538 and 1539. Most of the properties leased were vacant sites, demesne lands, and rectories. The rents were based on the 1535 assessments, and the terms were in all cases for twenty-one years. These leases were undertaken by men with connections to the royal household, and more often than not they were members of local Welsh families.¹³¹

Despite their initial intention to keep the former monastic lands, the Crown was obligated by 1539 to begin selling off the properties. The first to go was that of the priory of Cardigan and its accompanying three rectories, sold to William Cavendish, auditor of the Court of Augmentations, in 1540.¹³² Increased necessity drove the Crown to sell off more and larger monastic holdings, so that by the end of the reign of Henry VIII, the Crown had sold approximately 50–60% of confiscated monastic lands. By the time Elizabeth took the throne, less than 25% remained in the hands of the government.¹³³

¹³⁰ T. I. Jeffreys Jones, ed., *Exchequer Proceedings concerning Wales in Tempore James I: Abstracts of Bills and Answers and Inventory of Further Proceedings*, History and Law Series; No.15 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), pp. 29, 35, 92, 109, 119, 226, 292, 309.

¹³¹ T. Jones Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales,' in *Agrarian History of England and Wales IV 1500-1640*, ed. H. P. R. Finberg and Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 357–95 (pp. 383–85).

¹³² *LP*, vol. 15, pp 82–118. 'The house and site of the late priory, cell, or rectory of Cardigan, S. Wales, which formerly belonged to the late monastery of Chertsey, Surrey, and afterwards to the late abbey of Holy Trinity, Bustlesham *alias* Bisham, Berks; the rectories and churches of Cardigan, Berwyke, and Tremeyn, S. Wales, parcel of the possessions of the said late cell; and the advowsons of the vicarages and churches of those places; and all other possessions of the said late cell.'

¹³³ Pierce, 'Landlords', pp. 384–85.

Very little of the monastic land in Wales was given away by the Crown. With the exception of the 1537 gift of Tintern Abbey and its holdings to the earl of Worcester, monastic lands in Wales were purchased outright. Buyers of these lands were usually local Welsh gentry who applied through the Court of Augmentations on their own behalf.¹³⁴ Those who did make these purchases were, of necessity, those who could come up with the cash in relatively short order, or who already had enough money on hand to make the purchase. This indicates that rather than small landholders aspiring to rise in status, they were by and large already established *uchelwyr* who had acquired means via service to the Crown, or through their law practise, or another trade. In some cases, these men were already leasing the monastic land they had interest in purchasing.¹³⁵ Their pre-existing associations or relationships with the land and the tenants may have been a large part in why these purchasers were not characterised via documents or lawsuits as unreasonable or highly demanding landlords. These land acquisitions were not a stepping-stone to new gentrification, but rather a boost for established clans already on the rise.¹³⁶

It is the argument of this thesis that the dissolution did not bring about the creation of an entirely new class of landowners in Wales. Those native Welsh elites, or *uchelwyr*, were already in place, and often were families with ancient ties to Welsh aristocracy. However, the *uchelwyr* were certainly eager to expand their holdings beyond their inherited family land. At the same time the *uchelwyr* were on the rise, the Marcher Lords were on their way out. In 1531, only eighteen Lords remained,

¹³⁴ Williams, *Renewal*, pp. 290–93.

¹³⁵ Pierce, 'Landlords', pp. 386–87. Some examples of men leasing lands they later purchased include Sir John Williams at Cwmhir, and John Price at Brecon.

¹³⁶ Pierce, 'Landlords', p. 386.

and these were by no means powerful or possessing great swathes of land.¹³⁷ The ‘Laws in Wales Act’ of 1535 abolished the Marcher Lords entirely, leaving the door open for the *uchelwyr* further to develop their monastic estates. This sudden availability of land from the monasteries coincided with the legality of land purchase by the native Welsh elite who were free to expand their possessions in the void left by the Marcher Lords. As a key issue of this thesis is the extent of the societal, political, and governmental effects of this influx of land on the long-established *uchelwyr* in Wales, and in particular the relationship between the native elite and the (re)construction of the post-Dissolution Strata Florida estate, the remainder of this chapter analyses what we mean by the word ‘uchelwyr’.

The Uchelwyr

Kinship

This study depends on an understanding of the meaning behind the word *uchelwr*. The Welsh word *uchelwr* (singular) or *uchelwyr* (plural) is defined as nobleman (–men). What that means, and has meant, to the Welsh is a complex matter. In order to get to the root of it, it must be realized that medieval Welsh society depended on two important factors: *braint*, or status, and *carenydd*, or kinship.¹³⁸ ‘The whole of a man’s rights and privileges, his duties and responsibilities were determined by the status which he occupied in society by virtue of the kinship which was his.’¹³⁹

¹³⁷ W. R. B. Robinson, ‘The Marcher Lords of Wales 1525–1531,’ *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 26 (1974–76), pt. iii, pp. 342–52.

¹³⁸ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 15.

¹³⁹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 15.

Society in Wales looked to blood, birth, and descent, rather than wealth and land, to determine a man's status.¹⁴⁰

The tribal system in Wales before its conquest was based on a patriarchal extended family structure called the *gwely*, or *wele*. This was a four-generational kinship unit consisting of a great-grandfather and his descendants. Land occupation for grazing rights and growing crops was determined on the same lines, under the name of the great-grandfather, whether he was living or dead. This landed chief of the *gwely* was called an *uchelwr*. An extension of greater kinship to the seventh or ninth degrees also existed, by which related *gwelyau* were united under one tribal leader, or king, and it was in his name that such things as the right to occupy or graze an area were claimed.¹⁴¹ The rank of *uchelwr* was second in importance to the tribal leader, or king, and his worth was one-third the value of the king. No *uchelwr* ranked higher than another. Each *uchelwr* had the finest house on the lands of his *gwely*, with his trusted men living in proximity to that house.¹⁴²

When a child was born into the *gwely* it was the responsibility of its father until it came of age at 14 years. At that time, the son was accepted as a full member of his kindred, and received his *da*, which was provided by the chieftain of his *gwely*. This was comprised of his allotment of cattle, rights of grazing lands, and a separate homestead. Each tribesman had the same rights of maintenance, but not possession; the land and the livestock belonged to the *uchelwr*, though in later years

¹⁴⁰ A. D. Carr, *The Gentry of North Wales in the Later Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017).

¹⁴¹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. x.

¹⁴² *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Peniarth 29, 3r3-3r20, pp. 12-13 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=A> (Accessed 18 January 2021); see also Aneurin Owen, ed., *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (Published by Command of His Late Majesty King William IV by The Commissioners on the Public Records of the Kingdom, 1841), p. 13.

(from the tenth century onward) there is some indication that the livestock of a deceased tribesman became inheritable, and the livestock was no longer returned to the common holdings of the *gwely*, except in cases wherein there was no direct heir.¹⁴³

Indicative of the centrality of kinship to early Welsh society is the practice of *galanas*. When a person was killed a fine had to be paid in lieu of blood feud, and that was called *galanas*. If a person was murdered by one of his own wider kindred (descendants to the seventh or possibly ninth generation), there was no payment of *galanas*, as they were too closely related. Instead, the murderer was banished from his kindred.¹⁴⁴ When a person killed someone outside of his kindred, it was considered a blood feud, and *galanas* had to be paid by the kindred of the killer to the kindred of the slain as a judicial matter between the families, to be supervised by their tribal leader. Not all tribesmen were worth the same amounts of *galanas* to be paid. Status of the slain determined a man's worth, and a woman's worth was half that of her brother. The killing of an *uchelwr* would cost a kindred 189 cows. The killing of a *caeth*, or slave, from the same land cost 4 cows; killing a *caeth* from across the sea cost 6 cows.¹⁴⁵ Payment of the *galanas* was the responsibility of all members of the wider kindred group, in varying percentages according to degree of relationship to the person who did the killing. Receipt of payment on the other side was likewise in percentages determined by closeness of relation to the slain. For the

¹⁴³ Frederic Seebohm, *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 22–24.

¹⁴⁴ *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, Peniarth 37, 53r15-59r5, pp. 782-783 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=U> (Accessed 18 January 2021); Frederic Seebohm, *The Tribal System in Wales* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1904), p.104.

¹⁴⁵ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Titus D II, 31r1-31r13, pp. 237-239 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=A> (Accessed 18 January 2021).

purposes of *galanas*, a wife did not take on the responsibilities of her husband's kindred but retained her own. Therefore, should a woman be killed, her *galanas* was not received by her husband and his kindred, but by her own kindred.¹⁴⁶

While the ancient practice of *galanas* was an effective means of managing murder and retribution in Welsh tribal society, it was outlawed in 1284 with the Statute of Wales under Edward I. The English had ended their similar Anglo-Saxon practice of *wergild* well before this time as Norman processes took over post-Conquest, and the English viewed the Welsh *galanas* as barbaric. Yet there is documentary evidence indicating that the practice was maintained in parts of Wales into the fourteenth and even the fifteenth centuries, albeit in limited fashion and integrated into the judicial system which was gradually replacing it.¹⁴⁷

Common characteristics of the *uchelwyr* are well-represented, though perhaps hyperbolically, through contemporary poetry. Much of the poetry written in Wales between the late thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries reflect on the *uchelwyr* patrons of the poets. This included the abbots of religious houses, who were held in the same level of regard and considered to be of similar social standing. The abbot Rhys ap Dafydd of Strata Florida was the subject of several poems written by Guto'r Glyn in the 1430s. The purpose of the poem seems to be encouraging the abbot's

¹⁴⁶ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Peniarth 32, 42v20-46r13, pp. 224-225
<http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=D> (Accessed 18 January 2021).

¹⁴⁷ R. Davies, 'The Survival of the Bloodfeud in Medieval Wales,' *History*, 54, issue 182 (October 1969), 338–57; J. G. Edwards, ed., *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (Cardiff: University Press, 1935), pp. 20–21; 'Calendar of Welsh Rolls', in H. C. Maxwell Lyte, ed., *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls: Supplementary Close rolls, Welsh rolls, Scutage rolls. Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1277–1326* (London: Public Record Office, 1912), p. 199; V. H. Galbraith and J. Tait, ed., *The Herefordshire Domesday*, Pipe Roll Society (PRS), 63 (1947–8; ns 25, 1950), pp. 3–4.

return to good health during a serious illness¹⁴⁸ These *uchelwyr* provided patronage in exchange for eulogy.¹⁴⁹ Hospitality was something of a competition amongst the *uchelwyr*. Poets, therefore, were often effusive in their recognition of their patrons' generosity.¹⁵⁰ These poems provide contemporary insight into the social and economic positions of their patrons, as well as the patrons' genealogies and land holdings.¹⁵¹

Lordship

In the tenth century, Hywel Dda (d. 950), a king of Deheubarth who came to rule over much of Wales, collected the pre-existing laws in Wales, and compiled and revised them in a newer form. These codified laws, with some further revisions in later years (most notably adjustments made with the passage of the Statutes of Rhuddlan of 1284), ruled Wales until it became thoroughly subject to the laws of the English under Henry VIII via the 'Laws in Wales' Acts of 1535 and 1542 (also known as the Acts of Union).¹⁵² These codes are in three parts: *Llyfr Iorwerth* of

¹⁴⁸. For translation and notes, see <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=005&first-line=%23>

¹⁴⁹ Johnston, 'Patronage' pp. 178–80.

¹⁵⁰ Johnston, 'Patronage', p. 181–82. Strata Florida abbot Rhys ap Dafydd died while imprisoned at Carmarthen for debt. Johnston surmises that he may have got into debt via his efforts to refurbish the abbey and provide a high level of hospitality.

¹⁵¹ Praise poetry has survived that was written by Gwynfardd Brycheiniog for Lord Rhys, and by Philip Brydyd for Lord Rhys's son. See 'The Poets of the Nobility' (Beirdd yr Uchelwyr) <https://www.wales.ac.uk/en/CentreforAdvancedWelshCelticStudies/ResearchProjects/CompletedProjects/PoetsoftheNobility/IntroductiontotheProject.aspx>; also see Chapter 2 above.

¹⁵² Laws in Wales Act 1535 (repealed 21.12.1993) (c.26), *The UK Statute Law Database website* (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010) <https://web.archive.org/web/20080102012041/http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=1517920&versionNumber=1> (accessed 23 May 2018); Laws in Wales Act 1542 (repealed), *The UK Statute Law Database website* (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Hen8/34-35/26/contents> (accessed 23 May 2018).

north Wales, *Llyfr Blegywryd* of south Wales, and *Llyfr Cyfnerth* of southeast Wales.

Through these records we have some idea of the construction of medieval Welsh society, although it must be considered that Welsh law was dynamic in nature, so variation and departure from the written record is to be expected.¹⁵³

Medieval Welsh society was deeply hierarchical, and lineage was of utmost importance. Status of people in pre-conquest Wales depended on two elements: natural status by birth, and status by office. The foremost kind of status was that which a person was born into, and it could be given only via descent. Status by office was specific to the officeholder, and the Welsh Laws do not indicate that positions held were inheritable in medieval Wales, with kingship being the exception. All other offices were obtained by appointment or election. However, David Stephenson has noted the office of steward seems to have been an inherited one in southern Powys. In the lordship of Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn, Gwên ap Goronwy served as steward in the 1230s. While there is no surviving record, it is likely his father Goronwy ab Einion filled the same role in earlier years. Gwên was succeeded by his son, Gruffudd ap Gwên.¹⁵⁴ The office of steward in Ceredigion also shows signs of being an inherited position. The Vaughan family associated with Blaenaeron grange held stewardships beginning with Adda Fychan in 1348 and continuing through to Edward and Sir John Vaughan in the sixteenth century under Walter Devereux.¹⁵⁵

Social structure, as determined by birth and blood, was divided between the free and the unfree. Freedom, in this context, does not mean the opposite of

¹⁵³ These manuscripts are available via the Cyfraith Hywel website <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/llawysgrifau-disgrifiadau.php>. See also Compton, 'The Ancient Laws', 437–38; Aneurin Owen, ed., *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales: Comprising Laws Supposed to be Enacted by Howel the Good* (London: G. E. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1841).

¹⁵⁴ David Stephenson, *Medieval Powys: Kingdom, Principality and Lordships, 1132-1293* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), pp. 194-196.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 5 below.

enslavement. Freedom was limited to those of pure Welsh descent, and indicated a societal position wherein privileges existed for persons who were born of that status; unfree status held its own series of duties and privileges, of less value than those held by the free. No one without kindred could be a free tribesman, as a tribe was made up of multiple kindreds.¹⁵⁶

The free classes in Wales consisted of the royal class, who were the kings and regional lords and their families; and the *innate bonheddig*, or freeborn class. These were those tribesmen of the *gwelyau*, and included the *uchelwyr*, who were the heads of their kindreds, the married freemen, and the unmarried freemen. The criterion of freedom for the Welsh was the right to move wherever and whenever he so chose. Gerald of Wales noted in the twelfth century that the Welsh placed great value on nobility.¹⁵⁷ A man's status in medieval Wales determined not only social standing, but also legal and fiscal concerns. The chief of a *gwely* was a landed person (*uchelwr*), and the head of a household. For the purposes of defence and military action, the *uchelwyr* were the knights, and the *innate bonheddig* his footmen.¹⁵⁸

The unfree were men lacking lineage, and their status by law depended upon their lord. These unfree men did not own their land; rather, they belonged to the land, and were bound to that land. They were bought and sold and inherited, and their movement was controlled by their lords. The unfree were divided into three classes: the *ailt*, or *taeog* were the *adscripti glebae*, serfs who had some rights, though not as many as the freemen; the *alltud*, who were those of foreign blood residing within Wales; and the *caeth*, who were those enslaved, considered to be property of their

¹⁵⁶ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 40.

¹⁵⁷ Gerald of Wales, *Journey*, p. 251.

masters. All of the classes of unfree were restricted in their movements: they were bound to the land they worked, and could not relocate at will.¹⁵⁹

The *ailt* were sometimes called *taeog* or *villain*, depending on locality. These people were usually Welsh natives, and differed from the freemen in that they held bond land, and were attached to the land to which they were subject.¹⁶⁰ Within the *ailt* there were unfree men under the king, who were tenants holding property directly from the king, and unfree men under the free, who held property under an individual freeman or a free kindred group.¹⁶¹ The most defining characteristic of the *ailt* was that they lacked a kindred group and all of the rights and protections that came with that. Within the Welsh laws there seems to have been a path to increased standing for the *ailt*. While this was not a change from unfree to free status, after four generations under the same chieftain, descendants of an *ailt* in south Wales, at least, could obtain a recognised kindred. By the ninth generation, this group may have attained free status.¹⁶² Possession of weapons was forbidden to the *ailt* until the third generation.¹⁶³

Unlike the *ailt*, the *alltud* was of foreign origin. No Welsh person, having left his region and relocated to another part of Wales, could ever become an *alltud*.

Welshmen were never foreigners. Like the *ailt*, the *alltud* were either foreign tenants directly subject to the king, or foreign tenants of the free. Furthermore, the *alltud*

¹⁵⁸ See Gerald of Wales, *Description*, p. 234, for a description of the leaders going to battle on horseback whilst the majority fight on foot.

¹⁵⁹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, pp. 18, 175; *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Caligula A III 171ra4-171va9, pp. 178-193 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=C> (Accessed 1 February 2021).

¹⁶⁰ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 158.

¹⁶¹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 159.

¹⁶² Seebohm, *Tribal Custom*, pp. 51–52.

¹⁶³ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Titus D II, 37v12-38r2, pp. 192-193 <http://cyfraith->

could also be tenants of the unfree *ailt*.¹⁶⁴ Interestingly, having been permitted to settle on and work a plot of land, either the same land or perhaps different land held by the same lord or chieftain, until an *alltud* and his descendants were tenants there for four generations, they were permitted to relocate to another region or another lord's holdings if they chose to do so. Upon the completion of four generations of tenancy, the descendants of the *alltud* became *adscripti glebae*, a rise in social standing to the *ailt* class. Then they were bound to that land, with all the restrictions and rights held by a natural *ailt*.¹⁶⁵ This association with and dedication to a specific plot of land, then, was the way to gains in status, kindred association, weapons rights, and eventual freedom. The land was the key.

The *caeth* were the enslaved who were either captured in battle, purchased in trade, or possibly those being punished for criminal acts. Each of these bondmen had a master and a monetary value on his worth, payable to that master. Like the enslaved of most societies, the *caeth* were the property of their masters, and treated as cattle in that they were sold or traded as livestock were.¹⁶⁶ These men were also part of the plunder gathered by raiding noblemen as they moved about Wales, battling each other and taking goods and workers with them. Labourers were in high demand to work the lands.¹⁶⁷ Workers such as these were the building blocks of a lord's landholdings. Without their efforts a lord could not sustain his territory. This is reflected in the organisation of the manorial template, wherein bondmen far

hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=B (Accessed 30 December 2020).

¹⁶⁴ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 160.

¹⁶⁵ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Peniarth 32, 51v13-55v19, pp. 182-183 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=D> (Accessed 24 January 2021).

¹⁶⁶ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 172.

¹⁶⁷ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p. 119.

outnumbered the territorial rulers they served, living in close proximity to their lords, and practising both cultivation and pastoral farming in support of their lords.¹⁶⁸

Status of Land

It has been supposed that during the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, Welsh clansmen were semi-nomadic, almost entirely pastoral, and their relationship with land was not in terms of proprietary rights to particular plots of land, but instead they held rights of occupation to a territory, either as individuals or as kinship units.

Those territories were used to graze their livestock. Within this pastoral system the chief, or king, had the right to maintenance from the holdings of the semi-nomadic tribesmen. Furthermore, it has also been supposed that alongside that pastoral system was a feudal one, wherein some specific plots of land or general areas were identified for agricultural purposes. These plots of land were allocated to a clansman or a kinship unit. Within this system, the tribal chief or king was perceived to be the owner of the land, whose tenants paid rents and services for its use.¹⁶⁹

Glanville Jones suggests that these systems were actually different levels of society and responsibility within the same system for Wales in this period. As there have been no coins identified as Welsh from the late fourth to the mid-ninth centuries, Jones suggests that this would lead one to believe the economy was by necessity one based primarily on a system of barter.¹⁷⁰ In those conditions, settlements would need to become as self-reliant as possible, using both upland and

¹⁶⁸ Glanville Jones, 'Early Territorial Organisation', p. 175.

¹⁶⁹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 203.

¹⁷⁰ Seaman notes that coins were not used widely in Wales until after the Norman conquest, and finds little evidence of economic development in Wales for the eighth through the early eleventh centuries. Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 282; Seaman, 'Multiple Estate', p. 183.

lowland areas for grazing and allowing for the growing of grains for food as well. Austin and Bezant have noted this same self-reliance in their ongoing research within the Strata Florida Project. The abbey demesne, for example, held within a 2-kilometre area surrounding its centre, specialist production units which grew, manufactured, or provided in other ways all the abbey's needs, plus offering mining and wool economies for additional revenue.¹⁷¹ Whilst Jones agrees that the heroic poetry of the era places emphasis on free warriors engaging in warring and cattle-reaving, the poetry also has the warriors returning triumphant to feasts including mead. The significance of this is that mead, made of honey, points to a harvesting population coexisting with these celebrated warriors. That population was likely lower in status than the warriors and was part of an essential foundation for a hierarchical society. This evidence of a hierarchical society 'implies a greater stability of settlement and hence a greater continuity of social organisation than hitherto envisaged for early Wales'.¹⁷²

The free clansmen of Wales gradually abandoned their earlier nomadic, raiding lifestyle to settle on clan lands in the Welsh uplands during the early Middle Ages. They then established a system wherein property rights were based on hereditary succession. While kinship was something of which all native Welsh, free and unfree, were highly conscious, it was of most importance in matters of land inheritance. Land title, in regard to hereditary lands, was dependent on lineage. An individual landholder held no rights to his land; he was holding it in a manner of trust as a leader of his descent group, and as such could not alienate the land.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Austin and Bezant, 'The Medieval Landscapes', p. 28.

¹⁷² Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 282.

¹⁷³ Davies, *Patterns of Power*, pp. 124–25.

Interestingly, a family could not claim to be proprietors of a property, with the right to continue in undisturbed possession through the right of *priodolder*, until the family had occupied the land for four generations of uninterrupted descent. If the land was abandoned at any point before the fourth generation, the family had to start over toward achieving the four generations required to gain their right of *priodolder*. However, upon acquiring it, the land was theirs by that right until it was abandoned for nine generations.¹⁷⁴ This demand for continuity of occupation is another reflection of the importance land held in the tribal systems of early medieval Wales. In essence, this continuity on the land was the basis for social status in Wales.

Inheritance in Wales was through the process of *cyfran*, or gavelkind, under which all able-bodied sons of the deceased received shares of the property, the principal property with the farm on it going to the youngest son. Those not able-bodied would be incapable of working the land as required, and therefore they did not inherit. It seems that in Wales no discernment was made between legitimate and illegitimate heirs. All were equal in terms of inheritance.¹⁷⁵

It has previously been assumed that women were not to take part in the inheritance of land. However, recent scholarship has shed new light on this. In regard to land inheritance, there was a clear legal distinction between women of English status and women of Welsh status. English women held the right to inherit land when there was no male of closer relation. Welsh women, according to most of the lawbooks, could not inherit land, and land could not descend through a female line. The exception to this is *Llyfr Blegywryd*, which allows for the daughter to inherit

¹⁷⁴ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Titus D II, 39v21-42v17, pp. 172-173 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=B> (Accessed 25 January 2021)

¹⁷⁵ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Titus D II, 36r21-37r14, pp. 178-179 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=B> (Accessed 24 January 2021).

when there are no sons.¹⁷⁶ Welsh women could by law receive chattels, which they were then able to take with them as their dowry in marriage.¹⁷⁷ This custom seems to have rendered women of Welsh status effectively without a role in the economic process of land distribution and inheritance. Yet it was a custom sometimes disregarded in pre-Conquest Wales. This was not necessarily a defiance of the native laws, but rather an example of a divergence between written law and common practice.¹⁷⁸ Dowering appears to have been normal practice among Welsh rulers during the thirteenth century, regardless the origins of their spouse.¹⁷⁹ Despite what was reflected in the law books, women of the *uchelwyr* did regularly hold land during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁸⁰

Land also held its own status. Land might be free-land or unfree-land, but the status of the land did not impact the status of the holder of the land. An unfree man could not hold free-land. A freeman could hold unfree-land, but by taking possession of that land it did not make the freeman unfree; it did make the unfree-land free. Therefore, a land's status could only be improved by the status of its holder.¹⁸¹ Also, a freeman might be required to give up his free-land as blood-land in situations wherein the *galanas* could not be paid otherwise; or when the land was the reason

¹⁷⁶ Rees Davies, 'The Status of Women and the Practice of Marriage' in Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen (eds.), *The Welsh Law of Women* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), pp. 93–114 (p. 101); Emma Cavell, 'Widows, native law and the long shadow of England', *English Historical Review* 133 (2018) 1387–1419 (p. 1389); see also G. Richards, *Welsh Noblewomen in the Thirteenth Century: An Historical Study of Medieval Law* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2009), pp. 148–49.

¹⁷⁷ Hubert Lewis, *The Ancient Laws of Wales* (London: Elliot Stock, 1892), pp. 11–12.

¹⁷⁸ Cavell, 'Widows', p. 1390.

¹⁷⁹ This is an idea put forth by J. Beverley Smith and supported by Cavell. 66. J. Beverley Smith, 'Dower in Thirteenth-Century Wales: A Grant of the Commote of Anhuniog, 1273', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, xxx (1983), pp. 348–55 (p. 348); Cavell, 'Widows', p. 1402.

¹⁸⁰ Cavell, 'Widows', p. 1403.

¹⁸¹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 17.

for the murder.¹⁸² When a member of a kinship kills another of his same kinship, there is no *galanas* payment. However, his kinship might relinquish his membership, in which case he is referred to as kin-shattered or kin-wrecked. He then loses all rights granted within the kinship. He has no land. His descendants, however, retain all of the rights therein, to include that of inheritance of their share of the land, for nine generations.¹⁸³

The Dissolution and the Rise of the *Uchelwyr*

External influences responsible for the deterioration of many elements of kindred organization, especially following the Edwardian conquest, had little effect as it related to the Welsh laws regarding land until the fifteenth century.¹⁸⁴ From the mid-fourteenth century onward, Welsh clansmen began to deviate from the pre-existing system of property inheritance, and free clansmen acquired property holdings by means other than inheritance. Following the failed Glyn Dŵr Rebellion early in the fifteenth century, the alienation of small clan holdings played a major part in the future of hereditary tenures in Wales. When a clansman could not maintain his own inherited land, he would yield his properties to more economically stable clansmen who, in adding these acquisitions to their family lands, began to develop their own estates. The common use of the deed of *prid*, or gage, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also had significant impact on the land market in Wales. This was a means by which the purchaser took possession of the land, but the seller

¹⁸² *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Peniarth 32, 51v13-55v19, pp. 178–79 <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=D> (Accessed 21 January 2021).

¹⁸³ Seebohm, *Tribal System*, pp. 57–59.

¹⁸⁴ T. Jones Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales,' in H. P. R. Finberg, ed., *The Agrarian History of England*

maintained the right to reclaim it at preordained points in the future. This was a functional alternative to alienation, which was generally not permitted following the 1282 conquest.¹⁸⁵ The *prid* was a manner of land transfer. It secured a parcel of land as permanently as possible within the legal constraints of the time. These transfers included a lease for a determined number of years, renewable in perpetuity, and a demise for a set period.¹⁸⁶ The *prid* survived as a viable land transfer option in place of alienation until the Acts of Union, when alienation was no longer restricted.¹⁸⁷

By 1500 there existed in Wales numerous large freehold estates, and even more beginnings of smaller estates, which were the centres of the social and economic power of a rising gentry. As mentioned above, alienation of small clan holdings was, following the Glyn Dŵr Rebellion, on the rise, and larger estates were born out of the accumulation and assimilation of small clan lands.¹⁸⁸ These estates were built by the well-established native Welsh *uchelwyr* families with generations of traditional landholding in the area.¹⁸⁹

A second, considerably smaller category of gentry in Wales, were the descendants of the Anglo-Normans who moved into Wales in the late eleventh through twelfth centuries. They were granted land in return for service, especially that of the administrative, diplomatic, and military nature. Through trade and other business, plus well-planned marriages to members of the Welsh landowning families,

and Wales IV 1500–1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 357–81 (p. 363).

¹⁸⁵ Llinos Beverley Smith, 'The Gage and the Land Market in Late Medieval Wales', *The Economic History Review*, 29, no. 4 (Nov. 1976), 537-550 (p. 538).

¹⁸⁶ Smith, 'Gage', p. 543.

¹⁸⁷ Smith, 'Gage', p. 549.

¹⁸⁸ Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales,' p. 357.

¹⁸⁹ J. Gwynfor Jones, *Early Modern Wales, c. 1525–1640* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1994), p. 18.

these descendants prospered.¹⁹⁰ Jones notes that some Anglo-Normans were given such incentives as land or privileges to settle in Wales, in hope that they would strengthen the economy and colonize the towns. These people settled within Welsh communities as early as the twelfth century in the urban centres of Wales and the Marches. These landowners were, by the sixteenth century, integrated English gentry with considerable power and influence throughout Wales.¹⁹¹

The practice of partible succession, or *gavelkind*, was known in Welsh as *cyfran*, meaning sharing. This appears to have been a native tradition dating to the Iron Age, rather than an adaptation to Roman or Irish law, and the practice survived through the medieval period.¹⁹² The results of this fragmentation of land had stronger influence in the more heavily agrarian regions, especially in places where sharelands were common.¹⁹³ The alienation and consolidation of open sharelands in the lowlands, and in some cases uplands as well, characterized the changes in Welsh rural landscape. This happened with increasing frequency during the sixteenth century. Assimilating surrounding wastelands to a homestead's property was a common practice in this era and continued on larger scale as more powerful landowners appropriated large swathes of wasteland to their holdings.¹⁹⁴ There were larger estates in evidence in Wales by the early 1500s, though they were not rapidly taking over the landscape, in part due to the effects of partible inheritance. Some upland estates originated from a single farmstead absorbing surrounding waste,

¹⁹⁰ Gwynfor Jones, 'The Gentry,' in Trevor Herbert and Gareth Elwyn Jones, *Tudor Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988), pp. 10–41 (pp. 10–11); Jones, *Early Modern Wales*, p. 19.

¹⁹¹ Jones, *Early Modern Wales*, p. 20.

¹⁹² Thomas Glyn Watkin, *The Legal History of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 58.

¹⁹³ T. Jones Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales,' p. 360.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

though the majority grew out of clusters of smallholdings in valley sharelands, which were then expanded through adding on isolated hill farms, thereby developing a mixed estate of both upland and lowland.¹⁹⁵

While partible inheritance was still common in the hinterlands of Wales in the sixteenth century, landholders of the Marches had, by and large, abandoned Welsh property laws and were pushing for the adoption of primogeniture, and in 1534 some residents of the Marches produced a petition for the establishment of a Chancery in Wales for the processing of formal documents.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, on the eve of dissolution, there was a pre-existing gentry construct, and it consisted primarily of the descendants of *uchelwyr* of Wales. This native Welsh gentry continued to rise in power throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as economics and social changes made way for their increased prominence.¹⁹⁷ Henry VII set in motion the circumstances allowing the growth and development of the *uchelwyr* via the Charters of Enfranchisement. The Charters strengthened the alliance between the Crown and extant free communities, rather than granting complete freedom to the Welsh people, who were under legal restrictions imposed by Henry IV following the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr. These charters led eventually to the Act of Union in the 1530s, but in the process also aided the efforts of Welsh families with aspirations toward becoming landed gentry in the English fashion, with all the privilege that included. The Act of Union further paved the way for this progress, as landowners gained political hold over their regions and extended their commercial interests. Whilst a great number of the *uchelwyr* had very little in landholdings in the early sixteenth

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 362.

¹⁹⁶ Jones, *Early Modern Wales*, pp. 76–78.

¹⁹⁷ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, p. viii; Jones, *Early Modern Wales*, pp. 1–6.

century, in the latter part of the century status was still measured in terms of honourable descent, which was demonstrated via regional leadership, office holding, land ownership, and conversion to the Protestant faith.¹⁹⁸

At the time of the dissolution, it was likely the intent of the Crown to hold onto most of the monastic properties, although the king and Cromwell apparently anticipated the sale of some of the properties to faithful friends. Directly following the dissolution, vacant sites and demesnes were leased for 21 years at rents determined by the 1535 assessments. Most of these early leases went to people with connections to the Crown. Three men associated with monastic visitations used their status and connections to obtain property leases in Wales: John Price (Brecon Priory), Edward Carne (Ewenni) and John Vaughan (Grace Dieu, Pembroke, and Whitland).¹⁹⁹

Beginning in 1539, the Crown began selling off former monastic land in Wales in earnest. The purchasers were not, however, large-scale speculators, aside from those instances when local men contracted more experienced speculators to make the purchase for them. Eventually almost all the former monastic lands found their way into Welsh hands.²⁰⁰ The purchasers of the largest amounts of these properties were primarily local *uchelwyr* applying directly through the Court of Augmentations. Frequently they were lessees of the demesnes or sites intent on expanding their holdings. This was not a new *uchelwyr* in Wales, with some notable exceptions such as the Barlows of Slebech and the Stedmans of Strata Florida. The bulk of those amassing tracts of former monastic lands were men of deeply rooted, well-

¹⁹⁸ Jones, *Early Modern Wales*, pp. 11–13.

¹⁹⁹ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, pp. 289–91. Also see chapter 5 below.

²⁰⁰ Madeleine Gray, 'Crown Property and the Land Market in South-East Wales in the Sixteenth Century,' *Agricultural History Review*, 35, no. 2 (1987), 133–50 (p. 135).

established Welsh *gwelyau* who had the cash on hand, or the ability to borrow it at short notice, and applied to the Court of Augmentations for the properties they desired. Many of these were lessees of sites and demesnes who wanted larger estates.²⁰¹

There is little evidence to support the idea that the shift from monastic to secular landlords caused much change in the management of these large estates. One reason for this is that the laymen managing these lands before the dissolution were the same ones managing them afterward. Some examples include Sir John Williams of Cwmhir, Rice Mansel at Margam, and Nicholas Arnold at Llanthony Priory.²⁰² Following the catastrophic impact of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, the Church had, by necessity, let more and more of its properties fall into the hands of laypeople as proprietors. Excepting the properties closest to the abbeys, most monastic landholdings in Wales were leased to tenants, as the religious houses no longer had the *conversi* to manage the land themselves. Some of these lay proprietors became superintendents of monastic lands and were thereby in favourable positions to manipulate land distribution when they deemed it beneficial. It also appears that the Crown went to great effort to give precedence to existing tenants, perhaps in large part to provide as seamless a transition as possible with little reason for unrest.²⁰³ Gifted lands, furthermore, were less likely to be resold in Wales, suggesting that these land gifts from the Crown were generally used for estate building rather than profit.²⁰⁴ Investors in Crown lands were known to resell or lease

²⁰¹ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, pp. 290–91.

²⁰² Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, pp. 291–92.

²⁰³ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, p. 292.

²⁰⁴ Gray, 'Crown Property', p. 135.

them in smaller parcels as a means by which to generate revenue. However, in Wales, monastic lands were purchased by Welsh landowners, who were interested in expanding their existing estates. Most of the larger formerly monastic properties were sold by 1565. What remained were fragments and smaller properties, which were purchased initially by courtiers or agents, but later ended up in the hands of minor Welsh *uchelwyr* and some yeomen.²⁰⁵

The rise in gentry estates in England is generally accepted as having coincided with, or even developed out of, the deconstruction of larger estates.²⁰⁶ However, in Wales, the situation was different: out of many smaller estates belonging to minor native landholders whose gentry status came of their *uchelwyr* pedigree rather than their income, grew the development of larger estates created by combining smaller landholdings, elevating these landholders to a status equivalent in terms of wealth and social standing to the English gentry.²⁰⁷ The process of expanding estates may have rolled along at a faster pace after 1542 had there been more availability of cash amongst the average Welsh landowners at the time. Prior to 1536, some opportunities existed for native Welshmen to earn modest incomes and some limited amount of local power via officeholding at commote level, as well as in some few cases lower positions in court or within expansive English households. These opportunities set some families up for good positions in the years to follow. After 1536, opportunities expanded considerably for Welshmen as they were then permitted the same civic and social options as the English. Those younger sons who could not quite make ends meet with income from offices also took on careers in

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 137.

²⁰⁶ Gray, 'Crown Property', p. 147.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 147.

trade, the Church, or the law. This period, therefore, saw numerous Welsh clans with little wealth but having impressive Welsh ancestral lineage quickly rising to lofty positions in Church and State in Wales and abroad. They then put their newfound wealth toward the building up of Welsh estates which led to power and influence within their regions on a par with families of long-established wealth and authority.²⁰⁸



Figure 3.6 Map showing the areas affected by the Statute of Rhuddlan. Map courtesy of *Mapping the Marches of Wales* <https://mappingwelshmarches.ac.uk/context/>

²⁰⁸ T. Jones Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales,' p. 370.

The Statute of Rhuddlan was the basis for Welsh governmental structure from 1284 until 1535 when the ‘Laws in Wales’ Act was passed. The 1284 statute established the Principality of Wales, which was separated into South Wales and North Wales. South Wales was comprised of the counties of Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, formerly part of Lord Rhys’s kingdom of Deheubarth (see fig. 3.6).²⁰⁹ The two most important offices in the Principality of South Wales were those of the justiciar and the chamberlain. Shortly after Henry VII took the throne, he appointed his uncle Jasper Tudor, duke of Bedford, as justiciar, and Sir Rhys ap Thomas, head of the predominant local family of Dinefwr, as chamberlain. After the death of Jasper Tudor in 1495, Sir Rhys held both offices until his death in 1525. At that point, Henry VIII granted the office of justiciar to Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, by letters patent of 22 August 1525. The following year Lord Ferrers was also granted the office of chamberlain. He remained in the office of justiciar until his death in 1558.²¹⁰ The long tenures of both Sir Rhys ap Thomas and Walter Devereux in the two most important Principality offices impeded representatives of other prominent families of southwestern Wales from gaining such footholds in government during the early Tudor period. Therefore, most of the *uchelwyr* of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire were forced to take subordinate positions in the government of the Principality.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ R. A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales in the Later Middle Ages: the Structure and Personnel of Government in South Wales 1277–1536* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp. xxi–xxiv.

²¹⁰ G. E. Cokayne, *Complete Baronetage*, vol. V (New York; St Martin's Press, 1984), p. 326. See also Howell A. Lloyd, ‘Devereux, Walter, first Viscount Hereford’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online version <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7567> (accessed 3 October 2018); as well as William Retlaw Williams, *The History of the Great Sessions*, p. 7.

²¹¹ W. R. B. Robinson, ‘The Tudor Revolution in Welsh Government 1536–1543: its effects on gentry participation’, *English Historical Review*, no. CCCCVI (January 1988), 1–20 (p. 4).

Henry VIII's legislation for Wales provided extensive increased opportunity for *uchelwyr* participation in government via the establishment of the offices of sheriffs and justices of the peace. Whilst there were sheriffs in the Marcher lordships and the Principality in the past, those positions held different power than the sheriffs of England, the policies of which were considerably uniform in nature by the Tudor period. Of particular note is the limitation of tenure of office to a single year. The local *uchelwyr*, as a result, rotated the office amongst themselves.²¹² Further occasions for Welsh *uchelwyr* to participate in their government arose with the appointment of county subsidy commissioners, beginning in 1543. Subsidy commissioners, while important, had limited power as compared to justices of the peace. However, the *uchelwyr*'s opportunities in local government were most significantly increased with the introduction of justices of the peace in Wales. The earliest references to there being justices of the peace in Wales are in October 1541, and by late 1542 it appears evident that justices of the peace were in place for all Welsh counties, though complete listings do not exist for anything earlier than March 1543.²¹³

According to Robinson, the lists of justices of the peace, along with the records of sheriff officeholders, provide some understanding of the impact Henrician reform had on Welsh gentry participation, and more to the point, the stranglehold that some families, such as that of Walter Devereux, had on the politics of their localities. The Devereux family's predominance over other local gentry in the counties of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire was decreased in June 1541 with the appointment of the first judge of the Courts of Great Sessions for southwest Wales.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²¹³ J. R. S. Phillips, ed., *The Justices of the Peace*, pp. x–xi; A. S. Bevan, 'Justices of the Peace, 1509–47: an additional source', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, lviii (1985), 248.

However, that the Devereux family remained powerful is evidenced by the March 1543 inclusion of Lord Ferrers as *custos rotulorum* in the commission of peace for Cardiganshire.²¹⁴

The introduction of justices of the peace set in motion an immense change in *uchelwyr* participation in local government in Wales, because it enabled a sizeable percentage of the more prominent *uchelwyr* thereafter to share administrative and judicial responsibilities which were previously limited to a select few. As all justices of the peace were on equal footing, the appointment of more justices of the peace inside of a county did not dilute the rights or duties of the pre-existing justices.²¹⁵

It was apparently the practice of the Crown, in its management of the properties of the dissolved monasteries, to initially grant leases for the length of 21 years, and ‘later to convey the reversions of these properties to certain persons for the purpose of mortgaging or selling such reversions outright’.²¹⁶ This was the case with Strata Florida Abbey. A lease dated 21 March 1548 granted, for 21 years, the house and the site of the former monastery of Strata Florida, including its demesne lands as well as the granges of Doverchen, Hafodwen, Blaenaeron, Pennarth, Mefenydd, Cwmystwyth, and Anhuniog in county Cardigan, and further lands in the counties of Radnor and Montgomery, at the yearly rate of £101 8s 8d to Richard Devereux, Strata Florida’s receiver-general.²¹⁷ Receivers-general were in charge of

²¹⁴ Robinson, ‘Tudor Revolution’, p. 15; The appointments of the JPs mentioned are listed in Phillips, ed., *The Justices of the Peace*, pp. i 6, i 8, 204, and those of sheriffs in J. R Phillips, *A list of the sheriffs of Cardiganshire, from A.D. 1539 to A.D. 1868 with genealogical and historical notes* (Carmarthen, 1868).

²¹⁵ Robinson, ‘Tudor Revolution’, p. 17.

²¹⁶ Francis Green, ed. *West Wales Historical Records: The Annual Magazine of the Historical Society of West Wales*, vol 8 (1919–20), p. 92.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*; lease printed in totality in Edward Owen, ‘Archaeological Notes and Queries,’ *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, series V, VI, no. xxi (January 1889), 93–95.

the receipts and expenses of all the properties of an abbey. Devereux was appointed receiver-general for Strata Florida in May 1538, and it is likely that he was heavily involved in the late demises undertaken by the abbey.²¹⁸

The bulk of Strata Florida's lands, including the grange of Blaenaeron, made its way into the hands of a very small number of prominent families. These families – Stedman, Vaughan, Powell, and Herbert – through land deals and marriages, determined the future of these lands and the people and economies upon them. Each family approached the properties made available in the dissolution era in a different manner. The Vaughans and Powells, who were the oldest Welsh families involved, with deep attachment to the land, through clever land deals and advantageous marriages, eventually consumed the holdings of the Stedmans and Herberts, who were both relative newcomers to the area. These issues will be examined further in Chapter 5.

²¹⁸ Williams, *The Tudor Cistercians*, p. 229.

Chapter 4

Blaenaeron: from Grange to Estate

This chapter begins with a discussion of the various shades of meaning that can be, and have been, attached to the ‘Cistercian grange’. It continues with a specific study of Strata Florida’s Blaenaeron grange, beginning with the sites within the grange identified in the early grants to the monastery from Lord Rhys, and analysing amongst those sites instances of continuity of function or purpose through the monastic period and beyond.

The Cistercian Grange

The medieval Latin term *grangia*, in English ‘grange’, initially meant a barn or other form of grain storage.¹ While the use of granges was not an exclusively Cistercian practice, it was the Cistercian Order that is most widely associated with their innovative application of the system in Britain and on the Continent.² As the Cistercian Order spread and gained larger properties, the word came to mean monastic land holdings separate from the abbey, which were largely self-contained farms, usually maintained by the *conversi* for agricultural or pastoral uses. The Cistercian economy depended on its granges in order to succeed. These granges were not uniform in size, shape, or feature, nor were they all used in the same manner. Monastic communities made the best use of their assets specific to each locality.³ The grange, or in the case of some

¹ Donnelly, ‘Changes’, p. 405.

² Colin Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England: A Reassessment* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1969), p. 12; R. A. Donkin, ‘The Cistercian Grange in the 12th and 13th centuries, with special reference to Yorkshire’, *Studia Monastica*, 6 (1964), 95–144.

³ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp.160–62.

larger communities, granges, that lay closest to the abbey were called the home grange. The purpose of this home grange was to support the monastic community directly.⁴

It was the duty of each Cistercian abbot to increase monastic holdings and diversify interests in order to support the monastic community as it grew.⁵ While in principle, monastic property, including land, was communally owned, it was the abbots who held the property rights and were the managers of monastic land holdings, and also their sole residual claimants.⁶ This gave abbots some incentive to approach their land holdings with an eye towards business rather than spiritual salvation. The grange, to the Cistercians, was the cornerstone of their economies.

The Cistercian use of *conversi*, or lay brothers, in the maintenance and management of monastic granges was necessary as the monasteries' land holdings grew ever larger and more distant from the abbey itself. Spiritual obligations – their required presence at divine office – and a desire to prevent them leaving the cloister for long periods kept the monks from working the land, so the inclusion of an army of laypersons whose purpose was focused solely on the handling of the monastery's secular business freed the choir monks to meet those obligations.⁷ As the Cistercian *Exordium Parvum* articulated it:

It was then that they enacted a definition to receive, with their bishop's permission, bearded lay brothers ... and also hired hands; for without the assistance of these they did not understand how they could fully observe the precepts of the Rule day and night; likewise to receive landed properties far from the haunts of men ... And since they had set up farmsteads for

⁴ Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, p. 185. For description of the home granges of Rievaulx and Fountains Abbey, see Glyn Coppack, *The White Monks*, pp. 96–111.

⁵ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, p. 162.

⁶ Ekelund, et al, *Sacred Trust*, pp. 46, 51, 53, 55. While monastic granges often employed a foreman called a reeve of the single manor, these reeves did not have residual claimant status. See David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 42. It should be noted that Knowles's remarks relate specifically to Benedictine houses.

⁷ Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 150–53.

agricultural development in a number of different places, they decreed that the aforesaid laybrothers and not monks should be in charge of those dwellings, because, according to the Rule, monks should reside in their own cloister.⁸

Lay brothers were skilled in many areas, and they filled widely varied roles in the monastic economy. Amongst them were skilled artisans, smiths, masons, carpenters, fishermen, farmers, brewers, and medical experts. Granges were managed by these *conversi* under the direct supervision of a grange master (*magister grangiae*), a granger (*grangiaris*), or a warden (*custos*). These supervisors answered in turn to higher authorities at the abbey, such as the *magister conversorum* and the cellarer.⁹ Over time the typical Cistercian grange developed into a more independent community, and Colin Platt observed that fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Cistercian granges were nearly indistinguishable from the granges and manors of secular landowners. As well, Platt suggests that it would be ‘unlikely that they were substantially different in earlier generations’.¹⁰

It has been found that Welsh Cistercian houses frequently contained monks from local families of the *uchelwyr* class, local people of high birth and having free clan status.¹¹ In some instances, locals may have granted some of their land to the monastery, with the idea that the working conditions would be improved as *conversi*, and the grant of land (or taking up of the habit, as some *uchelwyr* did) included the

⁸ Chrysogonus Waddell, ed. *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses, Studia et Documenta, IX, 1999), p. 435.

⁹ Donnelly, ‘Changes’, pp. 413–14. For a deeper examination of the work done by lay brothers within Cistercian houses, see James France, *Separate but Equal: Cistercian Lay Brothers 1120–1350* (Trappist: Cistercian Publications, 2012), pp. 36–56, 88–150. Cistercian legislation relating to *conversi* see Chrysogonus Waddell, ed. *Cistercian Lay Brothers: Twelfth-Century Usages with Related Texts. Latin Text with Concordance of Latin Terms, English Translations and Notes* (Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses, Studia et Documenta, X, 2000).

¹⁰ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 40.

¹¹ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 152–53.

benefit of salvation.¹² The *conversi* at Strata Florida were likely also members of local families, primarily more common folk.¹³

The manner in which monasteries expanded their landholdings varied widely. Constance Berman noted that Cistercian monasteries in southern France during the twelfth century faced a dearth of uncultivated land, and a shortage of patrons who were unable to make large gifts to help the new monastic communities get established. In order to establish granges that they could work themselves, they had to remove the previous tenants. In doing so, ‘Cistercians and their predecessors successfully rearranged the landscape to create their granges’.¹⁴ Although this practice was seemingly contrary to the regulations of their order,¹⁵ many Cistercian monasteries absorbed pre-existing manors in their vicinity and took on their responsibilities and assets as well. Jamroziak argues that this Cistercian manner of estate building, which often included the absorption of tenanted land and the management of the peasants upon that land, made up an essential part of the monastic economy.¹⁶ While this shift to manorialisation was found in other places, notably in Wales at Tintern Abbey,¹⁷ the Strata Florida lands do not appear to have followed that pattern at all. Rather, scholars have speculated that Strata Florida’s landholdings may have maintained continuity of older territorial systems which were based on the *tref*.¹⁸ The *tref* refers to the medieval unit of Welsh administrative geography by which taxes and rents were determined.

¹² Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians*, pp. 154–55.

¹³ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 156.

¹⁴ Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution*, pp. 173–74.

¹⁵ Waddell, ed. *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, pp. 364, 492–93.

¹⁶ Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order*, pp. 186–89.

¹⁷ Edward Procter, ‘The Topographical Legacy of the Medieval Monastery: Evolving Perceptions and Realities of Monastic Landscapes in the Southern Welsh Marches’, vol. 1, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter (2018), pp. 237–39; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 225.

¹⁸ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 209; Bezant, ‘Revising’, p. 57.

While this appears to be clearly understood, what is less easily definable, according to Bezant, is: ‘the complex framework inside which the *tref* sat: the *cantref*, the *commote*, and the *maenor*.’¹⁹

Isabel Alfonso has argued that the traditional view of Cistercian land management is based heavily on nineteenth-century historiography which misrepresents the situation. This historiography reflects the values of the age and denies Cistercian involvement in the feudal aspects of manorial land management. The conventional assumption has been, according to Alfonso, that the Cistercians handled their affairs outside the manorial pattern.²⁰ More modern approaches to Cistercian land management rely heavily on the idea of regional differentiation. Whereas previously historians have asserted that Cistercians made use of waste land – that they were, in effect, pioneers of uncharted territories – local and regional research on Cistercian land holdings indicate that monastic settlements were, almost entirely, planted on previously inhabited locations.²¹ What remains in question is whether Cistercians were in fact recasting agricultural organisation into newly shaped granges without implementing previously established systems of territorial organisation. Traditionally it has been argued that the Cistercians rejected manorial structures,²² but in the face of Cistercian efficiency and aims toward optimising economic opportunity, this seems unreasonable. In the case of Strata Florida, there does not appear to be the wholesale rejection of manorial structure that may be expected in light of traditional historiography. Rather, its granges were

¹⁹ Bezant notes that G. D. Owen was the first to suggest that the core estate at Strata Florida may have much earlier origins as smaller estates, each with its own administration centre. See Bezant, *Revising*, pp. 57–58; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 222; G. D. Owen, ‘Agrarian Conditions and Changes in West Wales During the Sixteenth Century, with Special Reference to Monastic and Chantry Lands’ (University of Wales PhD thesis, 1935).

²⁰ Alfonso, ‘Cistercians and Feudalism’, pp. 3, 5–6.

²¹ Alfonso, ‘Cistercians and Feudalism’, p. 8; Berman, *Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 5–10.

²² Alfonso, ‘Cistercians and Feudalism,’ p. 2.

administered upon a ‘quasi-manorial Celtic pattern with attendant dues and customs and had only slight traces of demesne cultivation’.²³

Influences on the Cistercian grange in Wales

As discussed in Chapter 3, Glanville Jones has provided the models for this pattern, based on his own analysis of the details presented by jurists in thirteenth-century lawbooks, as well as Jones’s own studies of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century territorial organisation. Jones’s concepts have been met with some criticism, notably by Andrew Seaman.²⁴ Seaman examined Jones’s template as it applies to medieval Welsh settlement in particular and noted that one of the more compelling aspects of the template was that Jones believed the multiple estate system to have originated in the Iron Age. This longevity of organisation is where Seaman hesitates. In order fully to accept the model, Seaman suggests the assumption must be made that the early medieval rulers in Wales held territories with defined boundaries, which were subdivided into smaller units. The smaller units were managed through a system of administrative centres, which allowed the rulers a considerable amount of direct control over their territories.²⁵ This is an assumption not easily made without the support of historical evidence. Jones’s ability to sustain his theory with early sources is limited. Sources just have not survived in many places.

In a response to another critic of his theory, Jones acknowledged that the template

²³ Pierce, ‘Strata Florida Abbey’, pp. 28–29. See also David Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 222; Alfonso, ‘Cistercians and Feudalism’, p. 14.

²⁴ Seaman, ‘Multiple Estate’, pp. 163–81.

²⁵ Seaman, ‘Multiple Estate’, p. 166.

as he presents it is not universally applicable.²⁶ Rather, it is a generalised structure subject to regional variances, which is found throughout Wales and elsewhere. For the purposes of Blaenaeron grange, the model works well, although broad application of the model elsewhere may not generate the same rate of success.

Seaman also finds Jones's use of the Welsh lawbooks to support the existence of a model from the fifth to the eleventh centuries to be problematic. Seaman suggests that the lawbooks were based on ideals of a society, rather than realities.²⁷ However, Jones determines that the most detailed descriptions of the organisation of the pattern are found in the *Book of Iorwerth*.²⁸ The multiple estate, or *maenor*, with its component settlements, all of which perform different functions to share in support of the estate, seems to have been the scaffolding on which settlement developed in post-Roman Wales. Furthermore, Jones suggests, three of the customary tenures recorded in the Welsh lawbooks seem to have ancient origins: *tir gwelyog*, *tir cyfrif*, and *tir corddlan*.²⁹

Tir gwelyog, according to the lawbooks, was the usual kind of tenure, that of hereditary land. Rights to this land were passed to descendants in equal shares, and the rights of the owner were limited to his lifetime, to avoid any possibility of his denying his own descendants of their rights to inherit. As discussed in chapter 3, following four generations of continuous occupation, the possession of the land passed into legal right of *priodolder*, or proprietorship.³⁰ The estate of the fourth man was considered to be of

²⁶ Glanville Jones, 'Multiple Estates Perceived', *Journal of Historical Geography* 11, 4 (1985) 352-363; p. 352.

²⁷ Seaman, 'Multiple Estate', p. 167.

²⁸ Jones, *Multiple Estates*, p. 353; A. R. Williams, ed., *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960).

²⁹ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 320.

³⁰ See above, chapter 3.

a higher status than the estates of his predecessors. Thirteenth-century land laws dictated that a proprietor's share would include a personal holding of appropriated land, usually containing a *tyddyn* or homestead, some other scattered parcels of land within arable sharelands, and some parcels of meadowland. He would also have an undivided share of joint land, which might include woodland, pasture, and waste. The joint lands were under joint control but with each partner having rights in proportion to the acreage of his appropriated land. Each proprietor had the right to divide his appropriated land amongst his sons as per *cyfran*, or partible succession. The joint land rights would be reduced according to the reduced size of personal land holdings due to the appropriated land having been partitioned. Over time the size of the inherited land of a typical clansman grew smaller, due to this method of inheritance. In order to ensure that all heirs received equally useful or valuable land, land was later inherited not in blocks but in long and narrow strips across numerous sharelands. As kinship and family lands became further dispersed in order to ensure all had access to quality lands, later law books made clear the necessity that all homesteads were to have access to footpaths leading to its church, water source, and the common waste of the township. Glanville Jones argues that this kind of tenure dated back at least to the seventh century.³¹

The second customary tenure was that of *tir cyfrif* or reckoned land. Also known in early years as *tir cyllidus*, this was the tenure of villeins, and perhaps the most important of the ancient tenures. A villein, or *taeog*, was a man with no pedigree. Whilst he was bound to the land, he had no hereditary rights to it whatsoever. This tenure was also, and possibly originally, called *tir cyllidus*, a designation that underlines the bondmen's liability for rendering dues.³² The lawbooks suggest that the bond township

³¹ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 320–334.

³² Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 335–37.

was, much like the free township, a portion of a larger unit. On the occasion that a bondman in a township died or came of age at fourteen years, the land of the township was reallocated after a new assessment of the number of men in the township. Some limited rights to a specific plot of land appears to have existed.³³ What is most significant about this kind of tenure is that the right to share in the township land was not dependent on inheritance. Therefore, whilst hereditary land could revert to the lord in the case of escheat, the same could not hold true for reckoned land. If reckoned land was tenantless in the manner of escheat, it was transferred to common land share by the township. Obligations and renders were shared amongst reckoned township tenants. Reckoned townships were not the most common of tenures; most bondmen held townships under similar conditions to those of hereditary free townships. The laws of Hywel Dda, though recorded much later, may be the key to understanding this, according to Glanville Jones. In his laws, Hywel Dda allowed for each *uchelwr* to hold his land according to its status, and to rule his bondmen under conditional bondage in south Wales, and perpetual bondage in the north. The villeins were to be managed according to the regulations of the township in which they dwelt. Again, although this ruling is recorded considerably later, it is reasonable to believe they might have been established in an earlier time.³⁴ The render demanded at Trefwyddog, the subject of Chads 3 and 4 in the Lichfield Gospels, is much like the foodgift required of bondmen, which was a shared liability amongst the township tenants.³⁵ This requirement as recorded in Chads 3 and 4 confirm the existence of the *tref gyfrif*, or *tir cyfrif*, tenure by the mid-ninth century. Some indirect references to the reckoned township exist to

³³ Seebohm, *Tribal Custom*, pp. 22–23.

³⁴ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 335–37; *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws*, pp. 36, 124, 204, 216; *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, p. 50; *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales, II*, pp. 364–65.

³⁵ See above, Chapter 2.

suggest that this kind of tenure was in use in Wales prior to the seventh century. Communal obligations such as those the reckoned townships were subject to are much like those of the villein hamlets of twelfth-century Northumbria. Overland links between Wales and Northumbria were gradually cut off during the seventh century, indicating that this maenorial organisation was established before that time.³⁶ A possible example of *tir cyfrif* within the grange of Blaenaeron is near Ty yn y Swydd, where a small parcel of tithe-free common land is located. That common land may have been associated with some strips or quilletts to the north (see fig. 4.1).³⁷ This Ty yn y Swydd place name was included in a rental of Llwyngwinau dated 1767. The tenants listed were Morgan Rees and David Thomas.³⁸ In 1762 and 1767 a farm by the same place name, Ty yn y Swydd, was rented on its own to Mary Jenkin (see fig. 4.3 for estate map of that era).³⁹ No previous mention of this tenement is found in the surviving rent rolls, but it does appear on the nineteenth-century tithe maps, although by that time it was split into Ty yn y Swydd fawr and Ty yn y Swydd fach, meaning large and small respectively (see fig. 4.2). A modern farm by the Ty yn y Swydd name remains in place.⁴⁰

³⁶ Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 338–39.

³⁷ Bezant, 'Revising', p. 63.

³⁸ NLW, CD II/348.

³⁹ NLW, CD I/967, CD II/348. See chapter 5 and Appendix 12 below for further detail on Llwyngwinau.

⁴⁰ [https://places.library.wales/search/52.249/-3.961/15?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&query=&sort=score&order=desc&rows=100&county%5B%5D=Cardigan&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&landowner_facet%5B%5D=Lisburne+Right+Honble+Augustus+Earl+Vaughan+\(continued\)](https://places.library.wales/search/52.249/-3.961/15?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&query=&sort=score&order=desc&rows=100&county%5B%5D=Cardigan&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&landowner_facet%5B%5D=Lisburne+Right+Honble+Augustus+Earl+Vaughan+(continued))

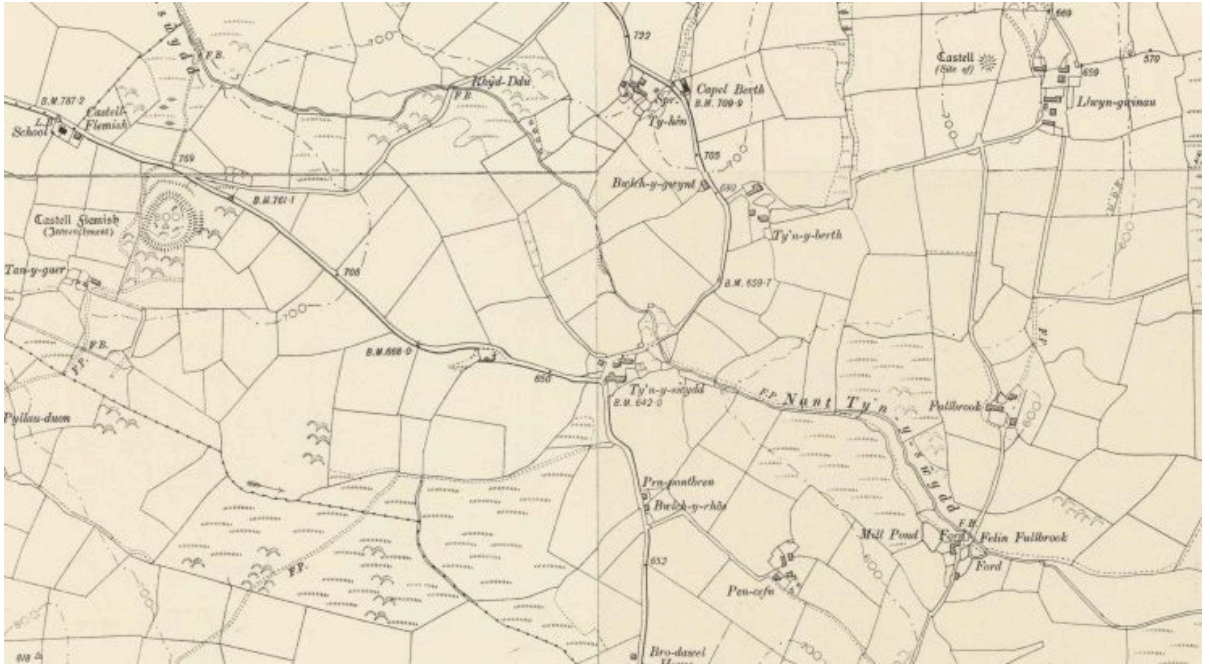


Figure 4.1 Tithe map showing Ty'n-y-swydd in the centre, Llwyn-gwinau at the upper right, and Castle Flemish in the upper left. Fullbrook Mill is lower right. [https://places.library.wales/search/52.249/-3.961/15?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&query=&sort=score&order=desc&rows=100&county%5B%5D=Cardigan&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&landowner_facet%5B%5D=Lisburne+Right+Honble+Augustus+Earl+Vaughan+\(continued\)](https://places.library.wales/search/52.249/-3.961/15?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&query=&sort=score&order=desc&rows=100&county%5B%5D=Cardigan&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&landowner_facet%5B%5D=Lisburne+Right+Honble+Augustus+Earl+Vaughan+(continued))

The parish of Caron in the County of Cardigan [in 5 parts]

James Grant	1846	Cae fawr	3	0			
	1847	Cae fawr	1	3	3		
	1848	Cae fawr	4	3	20		
	1849	Cae fawr	0				
	1850	Cae fawr	11	3			
	1851	Cae fawr	43	2	31		1 0 - A
James Griffith	1852	Harvest	2	2			
	1853	Cae fawr	2	16			
	1854	Cae fawr	1	10			
	1855	Cae fawr	1	22			
	1856	Cae fawr	2	2	14		
	1857	Cae fawr	1	3	2		
		Cae fawr	11		24		

Figure 4.2 Apportionment showing the two separate parts of Ty yn y Swydd, taken from the nineteenth-century title map apportionments.
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4541956#?cv=32&h=1350&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=953%2C2719%2C3599%2C1511>

the thirteenth century. This, alongside the nature of the tenure and the evidence that remains for its typical settings all seem to point to this being an ancient tenure that was rather obscure by the time the lawbooks were written. The Book of Iorwerth records that *tir corddlan* tenures were not to be used as shared homesteads, but as shared ‘gardens’, likely meaning quilllets or strips of cropland. If buildings existed on these lands, they were also to be shared as cells or rooms. Unlike the other two kinds of ancient tenure, in this kind, the youngest sons had no privilege over the others. The lawbooks contain what Glanville Jones has interpreted to be leases for the rent of these tenures in the form of cultivation and manuring. It appears that medieval Wales already understood that various kinds of land served different purposes and required differing management to use the land to its greatest potential.⁴¹

Tir corddlan, lands which were cultivated continuously, were the most regularly manured of the lands, and likely to have been nearest the settlement. This nucleal land was likely occupied by cottagers or under-tenants, possibly those descended from what later law books called ‘voluntary slaves’.⁴² These cottagers had no peasant holding but were provided a bit of garden from the lord, in exchange for service to the lord. *Tir corddlan* tended to be located at the most significant ancient settlements, frequently near important *clas* lands, upon which the surrounding community was focused.⁴³

⁴¹ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, p. 58; Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, p. 340.

⁴² Jones, ‘Post-Roman Wales’, p. 341.

⁴³ Jones, Post-Roman Wales, pp. 340–43; Owen, *Ancient Laws Vol. II*, pp. 82–83.

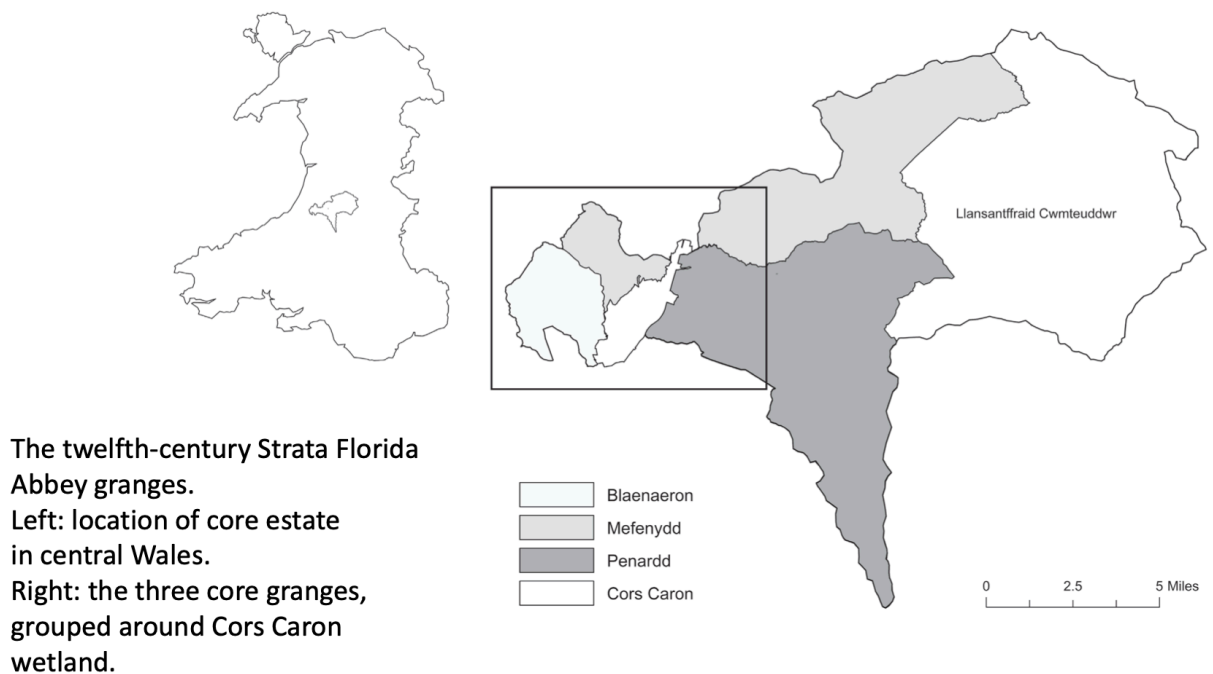


Figure 4.4 Maps showing the location of the three core granges of Strata Florida. Bezzant, 'Revising', p. 54.

Blaenaeron Grange

This chapter will next examine Strata Florida's grange of Blaenaeron, looking at indicators of continuity for various sites within the grange. The core estate at Strata Florida was quite large at nearly 50,000 acres.⁴⁴ (See fig. 4.4) Blaenaeron grange, the case study for this research, is located to the west of Cors Caron, on a series of ridges along the old Roman road Sarn Helen.⁴⁵ It was part of the original grant to Strata Florida, and also appears to have all the elements necessary to indicate that rather than evolving into the typical monastic grange plan, the grange followed Jones's template for an older manorial system, which may have been maintained, at least in part, through the

⁴⁴ Bezzant, 'Revising', p. 57.

monastic era as well. This specific grange included, and was possibly centred on, an early property called Castle Flemish. In keeping with the manorial template, this would have likely been the main centre of settlement. Also located in this grange was Maesglas, identified by Bezant as the likely pre-Cistercian administrative centre, and the Fullbrook water mill and fulling mill (see fig. 4.5).⁴⁶ These are examples of satellite settlements serving special purposes. Other inclusions such as common lands indicate that the grange was self-sufficient with diverse land uses.

The 1184 grant confirmation by Lord Rhys provides clues to the grange boundaries by mention of natural landscape features, primarily watercourses, but also via named properties within the grange which remain today and/or are identifiable through documentary sources.⁴⁷ The grant identifies three specific properties of Blaenaeron as locations of excellence (*Et hec [sunt] nomina locorum in eisdem terminis excellentorium...Esceir Perweith, Castell Flemis, Mays Glas*),⁴⁸ The three include Esceir Perweith (now known as Esgair Berfedd), Mays Glas (Maesglas), and Castell Flemis (Castle Flemish).⁴⁹ It appears that some of the other pre-monastic farms of Blaenaeron are still in place, such as Llwyngwinau Farm, Trecoll, and Esgair Saeson, also noted in the 1184 grant. These ancient farms appear to have been established using the natural topography of the grange, and each contains lands of a range of qualities. Some of these farms were later subdivided, as can be determined from place names listed in documents from the sixteenth century onward.⁵⁰ This chapter will next discuss

⁴⁵ Bezant, 'Revising', pp. 62–63.

⁴⁶ Bezant, 'Revising', p. 62; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 56.

⁴⁷ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–73).

⁴⁸ *AWR*, no. 28 (p. 173).

⁴⁹ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–73).

⁵⁰ Austin and Bezant, 'The Medieval Landscapes', p. 30.

these special purpose areas, as to their significance to the manorial system, and their continued purposes during and following the monastic period.

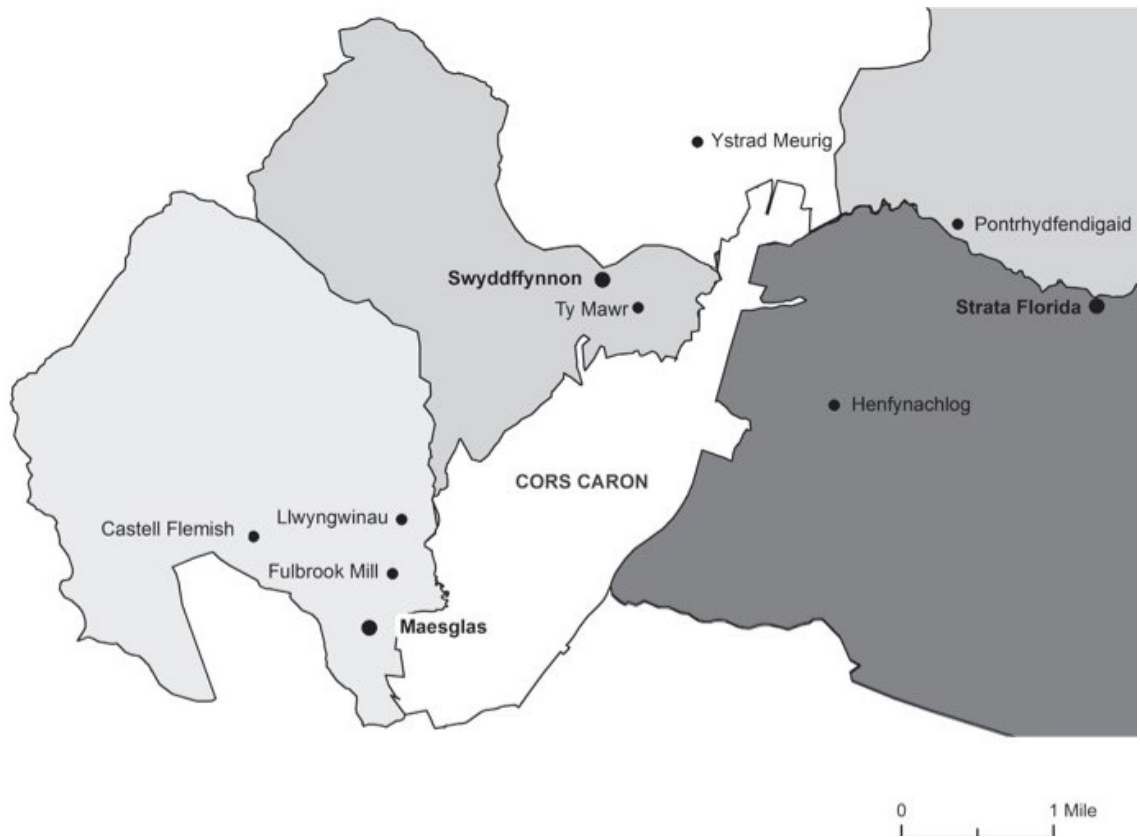


Figure 4.5 Blaenaeron grange is shown on the left side of Cors Caron, with the significant locations of Castle Flemish, Llwyngwinau, Fullbrook Mill, and Maesglas identified within. Bezant, 'Revising the Monastic Grange', p. 54.

The Welsh countryside is studded with small houses, which are called *tyddyn* (plural *tyddynod*). These are small holdings, usually occupied by small farmers, or by labourers or craftsmen who supplemented their earnings with small scale farming. These *tyddynnod* have served as the building blocks of Welsh territorial management since at least the early medieval period. They are described in the Welsh Laws as homesteads being comprised of four *erwau*, and the youngest son, as per the Demetian Code, was to inherit the principal *tyddyn* and eight *erwau* of land. However, outside of

the legal use of the term, a *tyddyn* is quite simply a small, humble holding.⁵¹ These *tyddynnod* are another required element of the manorial system as defined by Glanville Jones, who emphasises the point that whilst these homesteads were scattered, that does not mean they were isolated organisationally. It would be quite unlikely that small holdings such as these could afford to have their own plough to work the land individually. Furthermore, these *tyddynnod* would have been obligated to provide labour services on the demesne lands of the lord and at his court.⁵² The relationship between a religious house and the local population would have been particularly strong on the arable lowlands of monastic granges. It was typically the higher status members of the local peasantry who took over management of the granges.⁵³

In the post-dissolution rent rolls kept for the Vaughan family's Crosswood Estate, the property records were maintained according to the grange on which the holdings were located, except for in one instance. In the rent roll book dated 1762, entitled 'A Rental of the Chief and Ffee Farm Rents 1762', included are properties listed under the three parishes of Spytty Ystradmeirick, Lledrod, and Gwnnws, as well as properties under the granges of Blaenayron, Penarth, Cwmystwith, Hafodwen, and Haminiog. This likely reflects the expansion of the Vaughan family's land holdings rather than any concession to a change in land organisation, however, and the properties listed under parishes were those not previously associated with the formerly monastic granges.⁵⁴

Post-dissolution estate management was far less fractured than one might suppose. The former monastic tenants were permitted to retain their leases, provided the

⁵¹ Peate, *Welsh House*, p. 85; Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, I, pp. 229–30.

⁵² Jones, 'Early Territorial Organisation', p. 176.

⁵³ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 49.

⁵⁴ NLW, CD I/967.

lease was formalised in writing and thereby proven.⁵⁵ This did not always apparently go as planned, as there is a note dated 1672 for a rental for ‘Griffith John for a little tenement never even on the book, but concealed by Wat Thomas, by Llnwchy Wallis’. The rent was set at 001.00.⁵⁶ How long the tenement existed without being noticed, or where the rental income was going is a mystery, but it may have been discovered during a review of properties upon a change in estate managers.

There also appears to have been considerable unrest and jostling for land between dissolution and the 1630s when Blaenaeron became part of the Vaughan family’s Trawscoed Estate.⁵⁷ Despite the supposed security of 99-year leases, the tenants of these lands were still in danger of losing their homes through the underhanded efforts of the less scrupulous, who appear to have been primarily already landed men of the region on the prowl for ways in which to expand their holdings. In 1588, for example, a suit arose wherein Lewis David Gwyn, Morgan ap Rees, Rhydderch ap Rees, John ap Rhydderch, Dythgy verch Ievan, his wife, Dythgy verch Thomas, wife of Rhydderch ap Rees, and others were listed as defendants against one complainant, Rees Lloyd, gentleman of the parish of Caron.⁵⁸ The dispute was regarding a tenement and 364 acres of land called Estgur Berveth Ganell, discussed later in this chapter as being a portion of the former monastic grange of Blaenaeron, in the parish of Caron (see Appendix 2). The charge was that of ‘Riotous Assembly’ and related to events that happened the previous August, when the defendants allegedly entered the property belonging to Mr Lloyd and set fire to ten loads of dry hay and threw a further ten loads of hay into the River Camthwr. The intruders also tossed sixty loads of dry turves into a deep pit of water, as

⁵⁵ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, pp. 132–33.

⁵⁶ NLW, CD I/401.

⁵⁷ See chapter 5 for the Vaughan family’s Trawscoed estate.

well as depasturing the horses and cattle, which damaged the rest of Mr Lloyd's hay and pastureland.⁵⁹ This seems to be a deliberate effort to force him off the land. A number of similar cases exist for this period, indicating a relatively high state of instability for tenants on these lands which continued until the grange was purchased by the Vaughan family in 1630 and order was returned.

Properties were identified within lease agreements kept by the Vaughan family's estate managers by the grange in which they were located. This continued until sometime in the 1740s. The latest surviving lease for a property within the boundaries of the former monastic grange of Blaenaeron for which the written record included the grange name is dated 10 August 1744; this is a lease to Evan Hughes for the tenements called Kefen-y-banal and part of Trecole in the grange of Blaen Ayrion, co. Cardigan.⁶⁰ Rents for tenancies from the sixteenth century up through the eighteenth century followed medieval feudal patterns. Suit of mill was almost always a required component of the lease. The practice of demanding suit of mill appears to have come to England and Wales with the Norman invasion. Furthermore, suit of mill was not a legal matter, but rather was an expected custom. This was established, generally, by means of a simple lordly proclamation. Such a proclamation is evidenced in the charters of Ramsey Abbey.⁶¹

Heriot also appears in nearly every rental agreement. A heriot was a form of death tax levied on the landholdings of manorial tenants, payable only by heads of households. These duties were considered a form of estate tax, and not a personal tax.⁶²

⁵⁸ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, p. 89

⁵⁹ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, p. 89.

⁶⁰ NLW, CD II/193.

⁶¹ Adam Lucas, 'Suit of Mill and Customary Law in Medieval England', IMC Leeds 2015, pp. 13–15.

⁶² Postan, *Essays*, pp. 151–52.

Payment for this varied, and in some cases was a monetary amount, whilst in others it demanded payment made in animals, frequently the ‘second best beast’, which surely was a hardship on the family of the deceased. There does not appear to be a chronological explanation for money heriots over animal heriots, as both appear into the late eighteenth century, though money heriots are far more common across the rent rolls for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶³ In many cases the amount of the heriot was not specified, though it was listed as part of the rent to be paid.

Payments in kind at specific times of year, primarily in the surviving leases at Michaelmas, Candlemas, and Shrovetide were part of the rents paid. It is reasonable to suppose that the regional variations of some observances applied, such as in the Welsh practices involving the shrove hen. A hen and eggs were considered to be a customary offering at Shrovetide. Many of the former Strata Florida land rentals include this in the yearly due. In 1690, for example, David Rees paid part of his rent for Llwyn y Gwynne in one shrove hen.⁶⁴ There appear to have been a number of variations on the reasons behind this tradition. In rural Welsh areas, a hen was buried in a hole with only the head exposed, and blindfolded youths took turns attempting to hit it with a stick. If one succeeded, the hen was prepared as part of the next day’s meal. In another version of this same tradition, it required a hen who had not yet produced eggs that spring. The hen was strapped to a man’s back, along with some bells. Other men were blindfolded, and presumably navigating using the sound of the bells, attempted to hit the man and his hen with sticks (see fig. 4.6). Later, the hen is added to the Shrove Tuesday feast. It remains unclear whether it was considered an honour or a burden to be the man tasked with the

⁶³ Animal heriots appear in rentals dated 1690, 1722, 1742, 1768, and 1778: NLW CD I/563; CD I/664; CD I/816; CD I/1014; CD I/1089.

⁶⁴ NLW, CD I/401.

wearing of this hen.⁶⁵

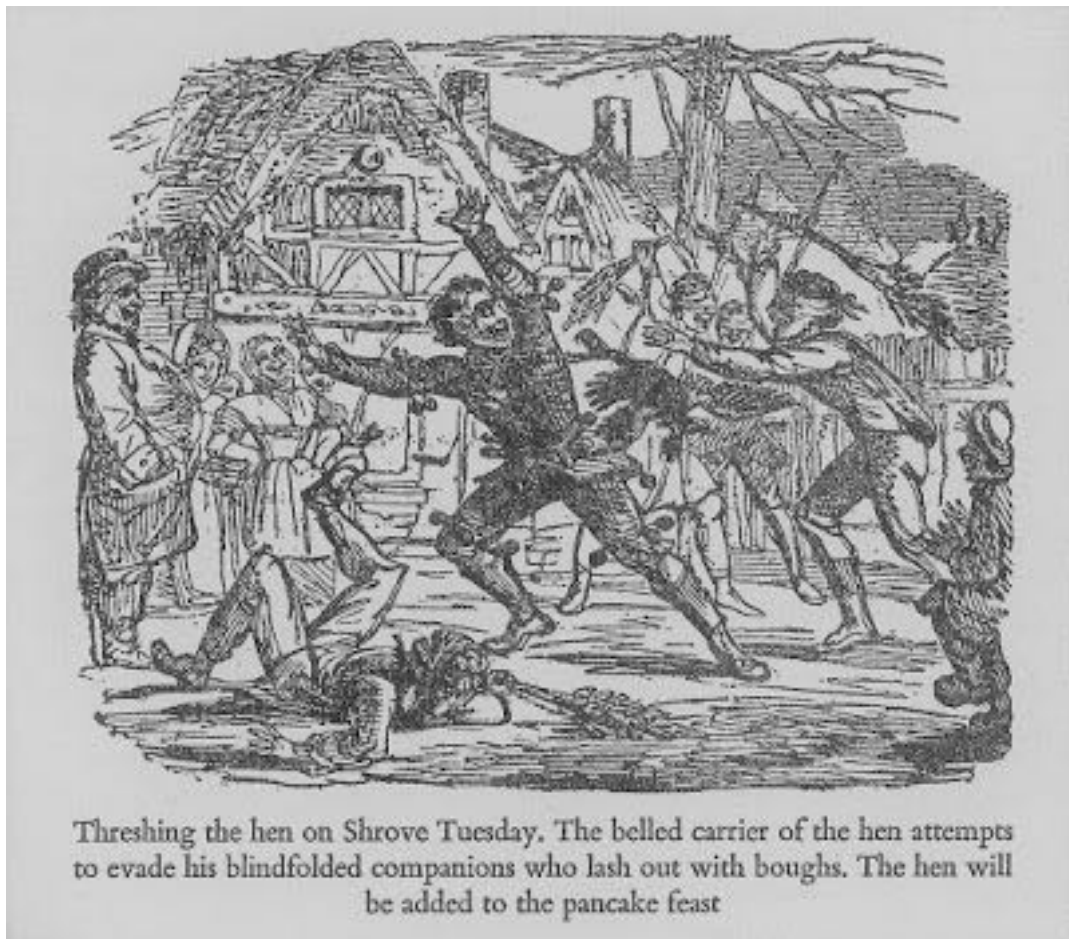


Figure 4.6 Illustration of the threshing of the Shrove hen in William Hone, *The Every Day Book*, p. 124.

Castle Flemish

Primary amongst the elements of the manorial pattern is, as noted above, the *maenor*, which as mentioned in Chapter 2, was a territorial unit comprised of four vills.⁶⁶ The maenor or capital for Blaenaeron was Castle Flemish which is within the grange of Blaenaeron on the southeastern edge of Cors Caron. Castle Flemish was one of the three

⁶⁵ John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions*, vol. 1 (London: Charles Knight and Company, 1841), pp. 49–50; William Hone, *The Every Day Book, Or, A Guide to the Year: Describing the Popular Amusements Sports, Ceremonies, Manners Customs & Events Incident to the Three Hundred & Sixty-five Days, in Past & Present Times*, vol.1 (London: W. Tegg, 1826), p. 124.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 2 above for more on territorial units; Jenkins, *Hywel Dda*, p. 121.

locations of significance noted in the 1184 grant confirmation.⁶⁷ This is also the name of the Iron Age hill-fort located there, for which there remains no clear evidence of use during the medieval period.⁶⁸

Defended hilltop settlements began to emerge throughout Wales around 1000 BC. These hill-forts have been found to exhibit regional variations in Bronze Age goods associated with the sites which appear to approximate known tribal areas later in the Iron Age.⁶⁹ These sites varied in size from small farmsteads to large, well-defended hill-forts. The original purpose of these sites is unclear and may have been variable as well. Whilst the first assumption may be that they were all a means of protection or a military construction, it is also possible they were temporary upland agricultural sites, or defended crop storage areas, marketplaces, production centres, protected housing for elites, or ritual centres of some kind. What does seem clear is that the people of Iron Age Wales were agricultural people with the sophisticated farming techniques required to produce surplus crops, and who possessed fortified hilltop settlements. These same people later adopted some elements of Roman civilisation. Following the exodus of the Romans, reoccupation of these hill-forts by high status people or groups in the early middle ages may have aided in an assertion of power over a region.⁷⁰ Gildas, writing in the sixth century, observed that the hills were fortified. Yet, it was not until more recently that archaeologists were prepared to suggest that pre-Roman hill-forts were re-used in the post-Roman period. It now seems reasonable to argue that some pre-Roman

⁶⁷ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–75).

⁶⁸ Bezant, 'Teifi Valley', p. 20.

⁶⁹ Miranda Aldhouse-Green and Ray Howell, *Celtic Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press), pp. 23–25.

⁷⁰ Aldhouse-Green and Howell, *Celtic Wales*, pp. 30–32, 112–13.

hill-forts remained in use into the sixth century.⁷¹ Furthermore, the reuse of hill-forts as defences during times of battle or other stressors appears to indicate that the organisation and purpose of the main settlements inside a manorial framework may have continued to serve those same functions from the early Iron Age on. Later adjustments made during the Roman era or afterward were incorporated into the pre-existing territorial pattern. It is common to find a maenorial *llys* is located directly below (in terms of elevation) a hill-fort, or otherwise in close proximity, thereby affording the court some means of protection in the event of an attack.⁷²

While hill-forts are found generally on the tops of hills, Castle Flemish is nonetheless on a rather flat spot, at the eastern end of a long ridge, surrounded by a bank. Likely dating to the Iron Age, the visible remains of this monument include the ditch and counterscarp, which are largely visible on all sides but the south. There appears to be an entrance on the northeast of the monument, facing toward Cors Caron. Toby Driver suggests that, as the most impressive face of the hill-fort was oriented toward the northwest, the intention may have been to awe those approaching the hill-fort from that direction. The side facing toward the Cors Caron landscape seems to have been a less imposing facade.⁷³

One of the clues to the antiquity of the maenorial pattern of settlement is the occupation of sites which adjoin Roman settlements or fortifications, or sites bearing the names of nearby hill-forts.⁷⁴ On the Blaenaeron grange we have a maenor associated

⁷¹ Glanville Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', p. 288; J. A. Giles, *The Works of Gildas and Nennius* (London: James Bohn, 1841), pp. 58–61.

⁷² Jones, 'Post-Roman Wales', pp. 380–81.

⁷³ Toby Driver, *The Hillforts of North Ceredigion: Architecture, Landscape Setting and Cultural Contexts*. Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Wales, Lampeter, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2005.

⁷⁴ Jones, 'Early Territorial Organisation', p. 176.

with a hill-fort, and the major Roman road Sarn Helen running along the western edge of the bog. Roman artefacts were reportedly found on the Castle Flemish site in the nineteenth century, which was believed to support the theories set forth by Wheeler's 1922 excavation, that the site was a Roman military base.⁷⁵ However, more recent scholarship suggests that the finds may be those of a Romanised farmstead, occupied during the second century, though its connection to earlier Iron Age settlement in the region remains unclear.⁷⁶ In his excavations, Wheeler identified multiple hearths on site, as well as evidence of a more sophisticated furnace with flue and hypocaust.⁷⁷ Wheeler also recorded some local lore that there may have been inscribed stones or monuments associated with the site, though evidence thereof has not been identified.⁷⁸

The name for this site is likely to have derived from its occupancy by Flemish settlers. Henry I (d. 1135) encouraged Norman and Flemish settlement of south-west Wales during the early twelfth century. These fortified locations tended to be along the coast at river mouths, with few exceptions. A powerful *princeps* called Wizo the Fleming appears to have arrived in west Wales sometime prior to 1112, and he alongside his son, Walter fitz Wizo, were benefactors of the cathedrals at Worcester and Gloucester, as well as of the Knights Hospitaller at Slebech, near Strata Florida.⁷⁹ As they were in Wales by the invitation of the king, theoretically it was the king to whom they owed their loyalties, rather than the local people of their new areas. This was not

⁷⁵ R. E. M. Wheeler, 'Excavations at Castle Flemish' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 7th series, 3 (1923), 211–24 (220–222).

⁷⁶ Barry Burnham and Jeffrey Davies, ed., *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches* (RCAHMW, 2010), p. 310; R. Fenton, *Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Co., 1811), pp. 333–34; Wheeler, 'Excavations', 211–24.

⁷⁷ Wheeler, 'Excavations', 219–20.

⁷⁸ Wheeler, 'Excavations', 215.

⁷⁹ L. Toorians, 'Wizo Flandrensis and the Flemish Settlement in Pembrokeshire', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 20 (1990), 99–118 (pp. 100–01).

necessarily the case for all of them, however. Gerald of Wales, whilst admiring their strong work ethic and expertise in the woollen industry also noted that the Flemish settlers in Wales were frequently warring with the Welsh, though he did not specify which Welsh they fought.⁸⁰

In the earliest surviving grant for Strata Florida, made sometime between 1165 and 1182, Lispennard seemed to be, in extrapolating from the place-name, the ancient focal point of the secular leadership there.⁸¹ *Llys* means *court*, of Pennardd, the ancient commote-turned-monastic grange. Huw Pryce suggests that Lispennard is the same as the grange listed as Pennarth in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, and if so, it is likely the location of the second (and final) abbey of Strata Florida, the construction of which was noted to have begun in the 1184 charter: *monasterium vocabulo Stratflur edificare cepi et edificatum dilexi et fovi*, (I began to build the monastery called Strata Florida, and when it had been built (lit: ‘it having been built) I have loved and cherished it).⁸² Construction of the abbey was likely to have been completed before 1201.⁸³ Lispennard is not included in the 1184 charter at all, perhaps because its location was taken over by the abbey construction.

However, there is some dispute about this. Bezant argues Lispennard was the original name for the location of Castle Flemish (see fig. 4.7). In that same earliest surviving grant in which Lispennard was identified by name, Castle Flemish was not listed.⁸⁴ A short time later, in Lord Rhys’s 1184 charter, Castle Flemish is identified as *grangia que vocatur Castell hi Flemis*, and, as noted earlier in this chapter, it is included

⁸⁰ *GW Journey* Book 1, Ch 2, pp. 141–42.

⁸¹ *AWR*, p. 99; no. 25 (p. 167).

⁸² *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–75). Thanks to Janet Burton for discussing the Latin translation.

⁸³ *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68); no. 28 (pp. 171–75); *BT*, Hergest, p. 81.

⁸⁴ Bezant, ‘Revising,’ p. 78; *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68).

in a short list of properties: *Et hec [sunt] nomina locorum in eisdem terminis excellentorium*.⁸⁵ This could be interpreted to mean that by 1184 Castle Flemish was regarded as an important location, as a *grange*, in this context, was a term used to identify holdings of some significance,⁸⁶ or perhaps it meant locations in the hands of excellent men, possibly indicating which properties were held by *uchelwyr*. As this is a somewhat ambiguous phrase, there is also the possibility that the *excellentorium* could even refer to elevation of the land, which, in the case of Castle Flemish, could be in reference to the earthworks located there. LISPENNARD is not seen in any later extant documents. In the case of Castle Flemish, the grange likely consisted of the larger area focused around or near the hill-fort bearing the same name, mentioned above, and this was probably a well-settled area with some form of organised administration of people and economics. This was the centre of what later became Strata Florida's Blaenaeron grange.

⁸⁵ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 173–75).

⁸⁶ Stephen W. Williams, *The Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida*, Appendix, Charter of Rhys ap Gruffydd, xi.

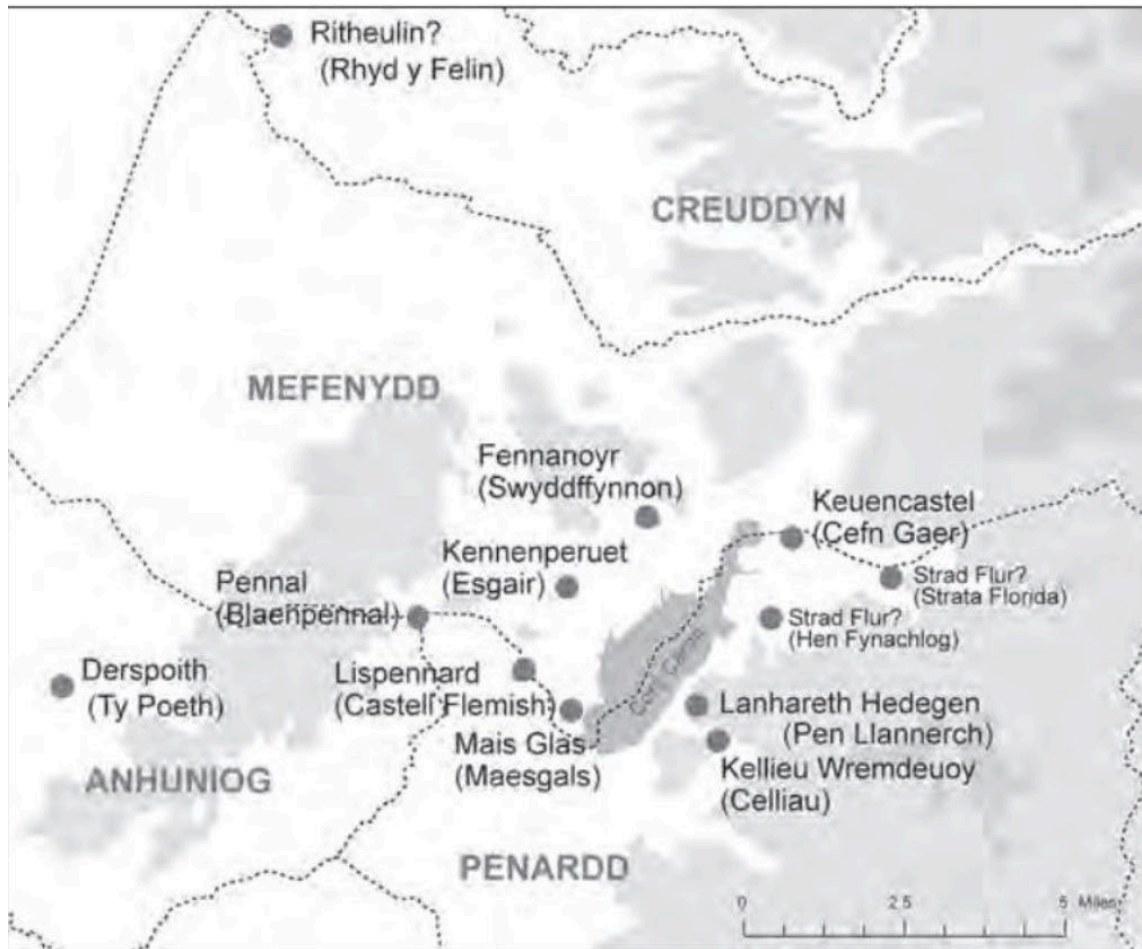


Figure 4.7 LISPENNARD as a part of Strata Florida's known holdings between 1164-1184. Bezant, 'Medieval Grants', p. 130.

Fortifications are expensive to build and maintain, so whilst Cistercian granges in England and Wales were not initially fortified, as they gained value and importance to the economy of their houses, concerns rose for the security of the assets held on the outlying granges.⁸⁷ Through a sort of spiritual arrogance, religious houses expected to be exempt from raids or attacks, even those positioned close to ongoing border wars. Holm Cultram Abbey, mere miles from the fractious border with Scotland, noted in the monastic register that they were granted freedom from attacks by papal mandates.⁸⁸ By

⁸⁷ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, pp. 29–32.

⁸⁸ Francis Grainger and W G Collingwood, ed., 'The Register: Bassenthwaite, Papal (continued)', in *Register and Records of Holm Cultram* (Kendal: T Wilson & Son, 1929), pp. 96–102 (pp. 98–99); Emilia Jamroziak, *Survival and Success on Medieval Borders: Cistercian Houses in Medieval Scotland and Pomerania from the twelfth to the late fourteenth century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 169–201.

the mid-thirteenth century, however, defensive measures were sought by some monasteries after raids or attacks caused significant losses. In some locations, continued unrest led religious houses to add extensive protective elements such as towers, ramparts, and walls.⁸⁹

The situation at Blaenaeron developed in a different manner. Because of the reuse of pre-existing manorial settlements, Castle Flemish the settlement was located near the extant hill-fort of the same name. This deliberate choice made by early medieval Welsh secular lords was likely due to their seizing the opportunity for protective measures against attacks during a volatile time when Welsh princes were battling for territorial control. When Strata Florida took over the grange during the late twelfth century, the pre-existing fortification was an additional asset, providing a means by which to defend the newly acquired and potentially lucrative grange from raids or other molestation. The Flemings are likely to have selected the location for the same pre-existing fortification. This speaks to a continued use of the hill-fort and its surrounding area for purposes of protection.

To the immediate east of the hill-fort is a possible medieval motte, though a recent survey suggests it might instead be a ring fort, on the western edge of Cors Caron itself, toward which the hill-fort's entrance faces directly.⁹⁰ Just south of the motte, also along the wetland edge, is Llwyngwinau Farm, which has remained in place to the present day (see fig. 4.8). There is a likely chapel site for the grange called Bron y Cappel located about 1.5 miles north (see discussion of Bron y Cappel and Bryn y Cippill later in this chapter), bond holdings serving various purposes scattered nearby,

⁸⁹ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, pp. 29–32; Jamroziak, *Survival*, pp. 183–185.

⁹⁰ Philip Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', *Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2009/56, Project Record No. 96704*, CADW (March 2010), p. 62.

and just south of the hill-fort and motte were a mill (Fullbrook) and a possible administrative centre (Maesglas).⁹¹ These elements, which are each discussed at length later in this chapter, satisfy the maenor system by providing lands for specialised purposes.

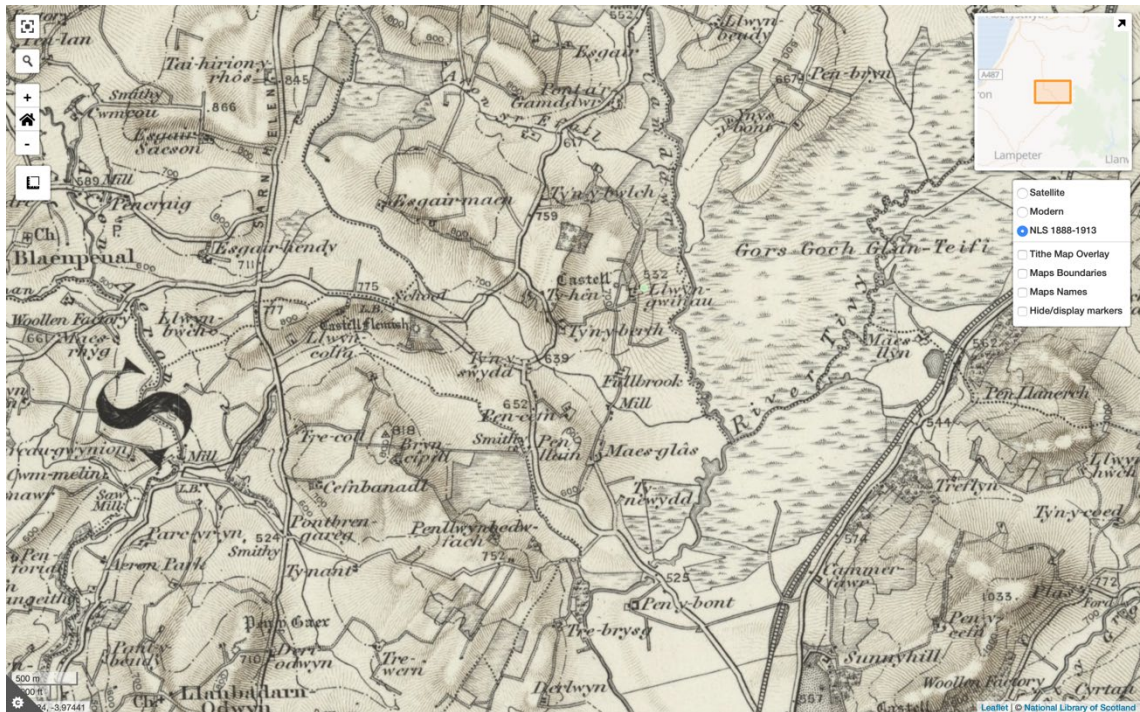


Figure 4.8 Nineteenth-century map showing Castle Flemish (just left of centre), as well as Llwyngwinau (upper centre, indicated by green dot), Fullbrook Mill, and Maesglas (all just right of centre). NLW, Tithe Maps of County Caron, https://places.library.wales/search/52.248/-3.956/14?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_94=on

At least some hill-forts were constructed by the people of the hamlets in the area, who were subjects of their regional *llys*, or *court*. Such was the case at Dinorben, an example discussed by Glanville Jones. Evidence indicates that the *llys* at Dinorben was at one point within the hill-fort itself, before moving to its later location.⁹² Whether this was also true at Castle Flemish remains unknown. Huw Pryce suggests that the court of Castle Flemish may have been located at Ty Hen, located approximately half a mile to

⁹¹ Bezant, 'Revising', p. 79.

⁹² Jones, 'Early Territorial Organization', p. 176.

the northeast of the actual hill-fort.⁹³

In a pre-dissolution entry in the rent rolls for Strata Florida dated 1504, which was subsequently preserved in a property rental record from the Trawscoed estate, there is mention of ‘the tenement called Castell Fflamys and Lloyne y colva and the parcel called Cluttie Gasseg’ being leased for 99 years, without permission to plough, to four men who appear to have been related: Iwan ap Llewelin ap Iwan ap Madog, Jenkin ap Richard, David ap Iwan, Jenkin David ap Iwan ap Lewellin ap Iwan ap Madog, David ap Iwan ap David ap Iwan ap Lewellin ap Iwan ap Madog.⁹⁴ Whether this 1504 item was a falsified entry prepared at a later date in anticipation of the dissolution of Strata Florida is unknown, though a few other entries in the same document are noted in the marginalia by some later hand to be of questionable validity, and this entry has no such note. If it is accurate, this is the earliest identified documentation of tenancy for a specific site called Castle Flemish, probably the parcel of land on which the hill-fort is located, rather than the entire former maenorial area. As noted above, no evidence has been yet identified which places the *llys* in the same exact location as the hill-fort. More likely this was at Maesglas. However, record of tenancy continues for properties named Castle Flemish for centuries, as noted in Appendix 1. This includes one of the earliest post-dissolution leases which have survived, dated 1632, just a few short years after the grange was purchased by the Vaughan family, wherein John Vaughan rented two parts of Castle Flemish to Jenkin Price.⁹⁵

Interestingly, a farm or site called Castle Flemish is not noted in the rents and tenancies listed for Blaenaeron grange in the settlement of Lord Lisburne’s estate dated

⁹³ *AWR*, no. 28 (p. 175).

⁹⁴ NLW, CD IV/1. See also Appendix 1.

⁹⁵ NLW, CD II/33.

19 June 1767. Other sites within the grange, such as Fullbrook Mill and Bron y Cappel and Maesglas and Llwyngwinau are listed, as are some farms that were associated with Castle Flemish in sixteenth-century rent rolls. Ty n y bwlch was rented by Edward David, and Llwyn y Colva and Lluty Gasseg are identified as having Jenkin David as tenant.⁹⁶ The eighteenth-century map in figure 4.3 locates the hill-fort of Castle Flemish within the site of Llwyn y Colva. This may indicate a change in use of the name Castle Flemish. It is possible that by the eighteenth century it was no longer also associated with the farm or tenancy on which the hill-fort is located, but was a term used only in reference to the ancient area of manorial organisation. Glanville Jones suggests that, as hill-forts were often too elevated for permanent occupation, they were perhaps used only in summer months and in times of stress. It is those kinds of suggestions which might explain the distance between actual hill-forts and their associated manorial courts in some examples.⁹⁷ Again, this is not proven to be the case for Castle Flemish. In several entries in eighteenth-century rent rolls, farms belonging to Blaenaeron grange are identified as being part of ‘an ancient tenement called Castle Flemish’, further supporting the idea that Castle Flemish was indeed the precursor to the monastic grange Blaenaeron.⁹⁸

The usefulness of field names cannot be overstated. Specific to their locality, field names are by nature descriptive of the contents therein, unusual features, or the manner in which they were established. Iwan Wmffre notes that field names are singularly helpful in collecting information on rural localities and their pasts.⁹⁹ These field names can be found recorded on tithe maps. Tithe maps of Wales were created between 1838

⁹⁶ NLW, CD II/348.

⁹⁷ Jones, ‘Early Territorial Organization’, p. 177.

⁹⁸ NLW, CD I/401; CD I/296.

and 1850 to ensure land payments were made in cash rather than in kind. These maps were digitised by the National Library of Wales's *Cynefin: Mapping Wales' Sense of Place* project, which was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund Wales and ran from 2013 to 2017. The actual intrenchment of Castle Flemish is recorded on the tithe map as being located within *Banc* (meaning mound) field, numbered 1370, belonging to the farm Tynygaer. There are eight fields under this farm, occupied by Enoch Davies: 1365 Cae Newydd, 1366 Cae'r Ffynnon, 1367 Cae Cnappog, 1368 Cae'r Fron, 1369 Homestead, 1370 Banc, 1371 Tynygaer, and 1372 Dan y Castell. The field names indicate uses, features, and locations: *Cae Newydd*, new field; *Cae'r Ffynnon*, field of the well or spring; *Cae Cnappog*, (meaning is unclear), *Cae'r Fron*, field of the hillside; *Banc*, mound; *Tynygaer*, farm of the fort; *Dan y Castell*, below the castle. The landowner is listed as Right Honorable Augustus Earl Vaughan Lisburne. Adjacent to this farm is the farm Pantygroes, occupied by John Jones, also owned by Lord Lisburne. There are two unnamed fields under this farm recorded on the tithe map, numbered 1373 and 1374. The farm site is also labelled with the name Castle Flemish and is located northwest of the actual hill-fort.¹⁰⁰ This suggests the title was still used as a regional identifier in the nineteenth century as it was in the twelfth century. Tynygaer, or Tan-y-Gaer, remains in place as a modern farm of the same name, and may be the modern incarnation of the farm that was once called Castle Flemish. The place-name is our first hint at that, and the tithe map dated 1842 (shown below in Figure 4.9) records this name for the site in which the actual hill-fort is located.

Interestingly, this seems to be almost the same farm boundaries as the one listed

⁹⁹ Wmffre, *Place Names*, pp. xxviii–xxvii.

¹⁰⁰ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, <https://places.library.wales/search/52.248/-3.974/19?alt=&page=1&refine=&query=tynygaer&sort=score&order=desc&rows=100>

as Llwyn y Colva in Figure 4.3. Llwyn y Colva appears in an entry dated 1504,¹⁰¹ where it is listed as a tenement alongside another tenement called Castell Fflamys and a parcel called Lluty Gasseg (see Appendix 1). It would seem that whilst there was some shifting of the names of these locations, the general shapes of them remained much the same.

Therefore, it appears that the farm site within which the actual Castle Flemish hill-fort resides has been identified at various times by several different names. While there are not sufficient maps or boundary descriptions surviving to determine the property boundaries for all of these named properties, it is likely they remained much the same, as the hill-fort is an unmistakable landmark (see fig. 10).



Figure 4.9 Tithe map showing Tyn y Gaer with Castle Flemish within its boundaries.

¹⁰¹ NLW, CD IV/1.



Figure 4.10 Later tithe map showing the segmentation of farm Tyn y Gaer.
https://places.library.wales/search/52.251/-3.975/15?alt=&page=1&refine=&query=caron%20AND%20ty%20yny%20gaer&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&leaflet-base-layers_94=on



Figure 4.11 Satellite view of Tyn y Gaer, in which farm boundaries are much as they were in earlier centuries. Welsh Tithe Maps: Places of Wales
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4612140#?cv=1&h=1369&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=1908%2C7412%2C2136%2C5087&r=270>

Esker Berfedd Ganol

One of the farms listed in the early grants to Strata Florida is Esker Berfedd.¹⁰² It appears to have been associated with the site of Fullbrook Mill, and that of Bron y Capell, both of which are discussed later in this chapter. This seems to be a property that was partitioned, possibly through partible inheritance, or *cyfran*. Regarding the original, larger land holding of Esker Berfedd Ganol, there is sufficient documentation of its acreage to determine that there were some interesting fluctuations in its boundaries (see Appendix 2). No acreage is recorded in the 1519 lease from the monastery.¹⁰³ However, in a 1588 dispute it is listed as containing one tenement and 364 acres of land.¹⁰⁴ By 1597 the size was one messuage and 600 acres.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that this acreage includes other landholdings in the area leased from the monastery by Ievan ap Gytto Hir and his descendants in the flurry of late leases preceding the dissolution of Strata Florida. By 1625 Esker Berfedd Ganol was listed as containing 223 acres, which remained the case until at least 1800, although the 1800 rental listings appear to be replications of the 1670 listings, which is the case for all the Blaenaeron farms on the 1800 rent roll. This therefore brings the 1800 numbers into question for every property in the record for that date.¹⁰⁶

The descendants of the original leaseholder appear to have occupied the Esker Berfedd Ganol property at least until the late seventeenth century, despite the efforts of opportunists in the late sixteenth century (see Appendix 2). This farm is located north of

¹⁰² AWR, no. 25 (pp. 167–68); no. 28 (pp. 171–75).

¹⁰³ NLW, CD IV/1.

¹⁰⁴ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales in Tempore James I*, pp. 89, 93.

¹⁰⁵ NLW, CD I/230.

¹⁰⁶ NLW, CD II/39; CD II/40; CD II/77; CD I/402; CD II/348; CD I/1200.

Llwyngwinau Farm, with the original holding positioned along the west bank of the river Camddwr, and the presumed partitioned holdings located to the west of that, and directly south of Bronycapel (see fig. 4.12). The nineteenth-century tithe map identifies the farm of Esker Bervedd Ganol as Pont-ar-Gamddwr (see fig. 4.13).



Figure 4.12 Tithe map showing proximity of Esker Bervedd Ganol to Bron y Capel and Llwyngwinau. NLW, Tithe Map of Caron County. https://places.library.wales/search/52.259/-3.952/15?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_98=on



Figure 4.13 Nineteenth-century map showing Esker Bervedd Ganol identified as Pont-ar-Gamddwr. NLW, Tithe Map of Caron County. https://places.library.wales/search/52.259/-3.952/15?alt=%03A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%03A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_98=on

Associated with this ancient holding are what appear to be two different segments of the original farm, perhaps partitioned through cyfran or via other means. The size of each holding remained stable from 1625, which is the earliest surviving record of acreage, through to the in-question numbers of 1800. The early large acreage of Esker Bervedd Ganol is recorded as 364 acres in 1588 and 600 in 1597. The larger acreage may reflect all three properties together.¹⁰⁷ Mary Williams, widow, is the recorded occupant of Esgair berfedd issa in the apportionments for the tithe maps. No apportionments are listed for the other two holdings. This property is of particular interest because the family who occupied it pre-dissolution remained on the land from at least 1519 through the dissolution, continuing through the 1630s when the Vaughans

¹⁰⁷ NLW, CD IV/1; CD I/230; CD II/39; CD I/402; CD I/532; CD I/563; CD I/586; CD I/622; CD I/830; CD I/809; CD I/967; CD II/348; CD I/1200.

purchased the land, and were still there at least until the late seventeenth century. It appears that the land, having been partitioned by *cyfran* during the sixteenth century, associates this site with two others within the grange as well (see Bron y Cappel below, and appendices 2, 3, and 8).

Fullbrook Mill

The inclusion of this place name among the significant place names within the grange of Blaenaeron demands a discussion of a number of things: the legal aspects in Welsh law of the holding of mills, the attitude toward the possession of mills, practices of the ‘traditional’ monastic orders, and then the practices of the Cistercians. This particular mill site is significant in terms of continuity of purpose, as it may be that there was milling happening in the same location dating from the pre-monastic period, continued by the Cistercians after they took possession of it in the twelfth century. After the dissolution, not only did milling continue in the same location, but suit of mill was carried over until as late as the eighteenth century. It has been a site of continued occupation for a longer period, as there is evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation on the site, as well as early medieval.¹⁰⁸

Pre-Norman Wales was not characterised by manorial monopolisation of mills. Rather, there are references to mills being collectively owned and run by a *gwely* or family. According to the *Llyfr Iorwerth*, ‘A mill and a wear and an orchard are called the three ornaments of a kindred’.¹⁰⁹ There are only a few brief mentions of mills in Wales during this period, including an item in the Anomalous Laws allowing a landowner to

¹⁰⁸ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, p. 34.

¹⁰⁹ *Llyfr Iorwerth*, BL Cotton Titus D II, 35v4-35v7, pp. 178-181. <http://cyfraith-hywel.cymru.ac.uk/en/mynegai.php?func=filter&orderby=&ms=B> (Accessed 17 January 2021)

stop a mill stream that crosses his land if the mill owner was disagreeable or would not come to an arrangement with the landowner.¹¹⁰ ‘A very extensive freedom to mill is characteristic of Welsh custom, and any variation from that rule was probably a recent innovation.’¹¹¹

Across early Wales, mill upkeep appears to have been a shared concern among those who made use of the mill, regardless their status. *The Black Book of St David’s* makes many references to the care and maintenance of mills, and it seems the responsibility was not uniformly that of the unfree or the free. It varied from place to place.¹¹² The Welsh laws, also, record that the building, repairing, and care of mills, dams, and waterways associated with them was a shared burden, regardless of free or unfree status. At Marford, the mill was thatched, and the pond cared for by message holders nearby; the mill premises were maintained by both free and unfree of the region.¹¹³

In contrast, the monasteries appear to have been proprietary about their corn mills and the income they provided.¹¹⁴ Tenants on monastic lands generally had to pay suit of mill, meaning they paid to have their corn ground at the abbey-owned mill, which provided considerable income for the religious houses. The idea of suit of mill appears to have come to England and Wales via the Normans.¹¹⁵ The General Chapter of the Cistercian Order banned its abbeys from accepting mills as gifts, as of 1157, due to

¹¹⁰ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, pp. 27–28.

¹¹¹ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 330.

¹¹² NLW, MS 1383C.

¹¹³ Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law*, p. 324-326.

¹¹⁴ See Adam Lucas, *Ecclesiastical Lordship, Seignorial Power, and the Commercialisation of Milling in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 92-93.

¹¹⁵ Adam Lucas, ‘Suit of Mill and Customary Law in Medieval England’, IMC Leeds 2015, p. 15.

‘danger of chatter and other abuses’,¹¹⁶ though it seems that houses already in possession of mills were permitted to keep them.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, it also appears that many Cistercian houses overlooked the ordinances restricting mill acquisition, as most were granted mills during their foundations in the late twelfth century. These mills were not for their own use (which would have been acceptable under the statutes), but were held by the monasteries, and revenue was drawn from them.¹¹⁸ Many monastic mills were leased out to tenants, so the tenant miller would pay an annual rent to the monastery which covered the mill, land holdings, often a small house, and the fishing of the mill pond. The miller’s job was to grind the corn brought to him by other monastic tenants, for which he charged a fee, which was sometimes paid in kind.¹¹⁹

The first documentary evidence of a monastic mill in Britain is dated 762. A charter of King Aethelbert II of Kent acknowledged a rental receipt for an extant mill at Chart, near Dover, from the minster community of St Peter and St Paul in Canterbury.¹²⁰ By the tenth century, water mills for grinding corn were common on monastic as well as secular estates. Fulling mills developed a bit later, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with the first confirmed evidence of their existence in Britain appearing in a survey of Knights Templar properties dated 1185. Cistercian and Benedictine properties

¹¹⁶ C. Waddell, ed., *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter*, Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses, *Studia et Documenta*, XII (2002), pp. 603–04; C. J. Bond, ‘Water Management in the Rural Monastery’, in R. Gilchrist and H. Mytum (eds.), *The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries* (BAR Brit. Ser. 203), Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 83–111 (103).

¹¹⁷ Donkin, *The Cistercians: Studies in the Geography of Medieval England and Wales*, p. 138; *Statuta*, 1: 67.

¹¹⁸ Adam Lucas, *Ecclesiastical Lordship*, p. 191.

¹¹⁹ Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, pp. 236–37.

¹²⁰ P. H. Sawyer, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (Royal Historical Society, Guides and Handbooks no 8, 1968) pp. 77–78.; James Bond ‘Monastic Water Management in Britain’, in Graham Keevill, Mick Aston, Teresa Hall, ed., *Monastic Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 88–136 (p. 111).

boasted fulling mills within the next five years.¹²¹

Before the end of the twelfth century, the new technology helped wool production gain prominence amongst the Cistercian houses of England and Wales. By early in the thirteenth century, wool was the primary export for England and Wales, with annual totals around 40,000 sacks of wool from about 10 million sheep going mostly to Flemish and Italian merchants.¹²² Some monasteries obtained licences to export wool to Flanders in their own ships. Shortly thereafter, however, foreign wool merchants made their rounds in person to these monasteries to make their purchases. Strata Florida held a licence to arrange for shipments from 1213 to 1216.¹²³ Donkin suggests the monastery's relative isolation may have provided cause to seek more direct means of export due to inadequate coverage by itinerant merchants.¹²⁴ Cistercian wool was recognised to be of higher quality than other available options. Sheep numbers were on the decline by the middle of the fourteenth century, however, due to deprivations from famine and murrain. Cistercian successes in the European market in earlier years were not repeated in the home cloth industry. Monasteries were leasing more of their landholdings, and livestock and mills were increasingly in the hands of tenants.¹²⁵

Corn and fulling mills frequently shared locations, as it was possible to use the same water wheel to power mills for both purposes, as there is no evidence to indicate that the waterfeed mechanisms or waterwheels differed in any way. The only difference between the two kinds of mills seems to be that the drive shafts had cams on them for

¹²¹ E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'An Industrial Revolution of the thirteenth century', *Economic History Review*, 11 (1941), 39–60.

¹²² Rubin, *Hollow Crown*, p. 1.

¹²³ Thomas D. Hardy, ed. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi Asservati* (London: Record Commission, 1835), p. 92.

¹²⁴ Donkin, *The Cistercians*, p. 144. Thomas D. Hardy, ed. *Rotuli litterarum patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati* (London: Record Commission, 1835), p. 92.

each fulling stock, instead of a cog wheel or lantern gear to move the millstone.¹²⁶

In some places during the fourteenth and fifteenth century in England and Wales, milling shifted completely away from grinding grain to fulling wool, as crops were less plentiful and demand for grinding corn plummeted. Conversion from grain mill to fulling mill was not overly expensive, and fulling mills cost less to build than grain mills, as there are no millstones or gears needed.¹²⁷ This may have been a factor in monasteries moving away from grain crops and leaning more heavily on their wool industries. Monasteries in the fifteenth century with large flocks of sheep held an advantage, as they frequently sold directly to wool merchants.¹²⁸

Wool, sheep, and cereals were the most frequently recorded industries at Strata Florida, in descending order of importance.¹²⁹ Some of the wool from the monastery was used to establish the local woollen industry, but most of it was exported, primarily to Flanders.¹³⁰ This industry was of such importance to Strata Florida that the abbey was granted special permission by King John to export their wool for three years without having to answer to the bailiff at the port.¹³¹

In 1353 the Ordinance of the Staple was passed with the intent of regulating foreign trade. The Ordinance established staple ports in England, Wales, and Ireland. The staple port in Wales was Carmarthen.¹³² Prior to this, the Staple was in Bruges, and

¹²⁵ Donkin, 'The Cistercian Order', pp. 191–94.

¹²⁶ Adam Lucas, 'Fulling Mills in Medieval Europe Comparing the Manuscript and Archaeological Evidence,' *Archéologie des Moulins Hydrauliques, à traction animale et à vent, des origines à l'époque médiévale Actes du colloque international*, Lons-le-Saunier du 2 au 5 Novembre 2011, pp. 554–56.

¹²⁷ Lucas, 'Fulling Mills', p. 554.

¹²⁸ Rubin, *Hollow Crown*, p. 249.

¹²⁹ Bowe, 'Monastic Economy', 36; Williams, *Atlas*, p. 104.

¹³⁰ Donkin, *The Cistercians*, p. 144.

¹³¹ Bowen, 'Monastic Economy', 36–37; Donkin, *The Cistercians*, pp. 139–41, 144–45, 190.

¹³² *Patent*, 6 Edward II, part II. M. 5. See also Donkin, *The Cistercians*, p. 147.

there was elected a Mayor of the Staple, whose purpose was to represent the large merchants, and ensure correct payment of the Royal customs. After 1353, there were instead fifteen local men appointed, who represented the smaller merchants in their own local communities.¹³³ The advantage, following the 1353 changes, fell to the foreign merchants, who then travelled directly to the Staple towns to purchase their goods, and had the sole rights to export.¹³⁴ Large-scale English exporters thereby lost business to smaller English merchants who sold to the foreign exporters who, after 1353, had the monopoly until 1359, when English merchants were again permitted to export.¹³⁵

The construction of new mills was common amongst Cistercian monasteries during the Tudor era. At Cymer, Dore, and Strata Florida, land was rented to laypersons for new mill construction.¹³⁶ It is likely there were pre-existing mills on these monastic sites, as milling went hand-in-hand with arable farming as well as the wool industry. Once a mill site has been selected and a stream diverted or dammed, it is likely to remain in use as a mill, although the original structures may be replaced.¹³⁷ An entry in a Strata Florida rent roll dated 2 May 1523 sealed with the Convent seal, presumably not forged, grants Jenkin ap John a plot of land designated for the erection of both a grain mill and a fulling mill. (See Appendix 4.) The rent is listed at 6s 8d, and the lease is for 99 years.¹³⁸ Another entry dated exactly ten years later, which may have been a confirmation of the previous rental agreement gives the same tenant, Jenkin ap John,

¹³³ E. E. Rich, 'The Mayors of the Staples', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4 no 2 (1933), 120–42 (p. 123).

¹³⁴ Rich, 'Mayors', pp. 127–28.

¹³⁵ By 1359, English merchants paid as much in customs as foreign merchants did, so the Crown allowed English merchants to export wool again, and English merchants regained their previous privileges in Flanders as well. Rich, 'Mayors', p. 135.

¹³⁶ David Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, p. 237.

¹³⁷ Michael Ings, 'Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Mills: A Threat-Related Assessment 2012-14', Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2014/7, Cadw Project No. DAT 105, p. 7.

and his heirs, a 99 year lease for a holding listed as ‘The Mill’ at the same rate. The conditions of the lease indicate that Richard Talley, abbot, and the convent, granted Jenkin ap John and his heirs a licence to erect two mills in the territory of ‘Blaynayron’; ‘one mill for all kinds of corn and another for the fulling art’. The lease included the right to erect a small living chamber for the miller.¹³⁹ This may not have been the first mill construction at Fullbrook.¹⁴⁰ Other examples of mills being rebuilt on the same properties include that of Felin-Hafodwen, another possession of Strata Florida, and possibly Tirnewydd, a property of Whitland Abbey.¹⁴¹ Many others are suspected sites of earlier mills but lack documentary or archaeological evidence.¹⁴² Woollen mills on their own are difficult to identify in the landscape, but corn mills were important to farming economies and were consequently recorded on surveys more frequently. Often corn mills are parts of groups of farm buildings in cases where the milling was supplemented by farming. At Fullbrook Mill there can be found corn-drying sheds, and it has a double Pelton wheel, which was installed in place of the waterwheel in the 1920s during conversion for generating electricity.¹⁴³

The 1523 rental mentions both a corn mill and a fulling mill, which is the earliest surviving lease for the mill, though the erection of these mills likely supplanted or upgraded earlier mills on the same site. Suit of mill for Fullbrook was charged to

¹³⁸ NLW, CD I/5.

¹³⁹ NLW, CD IV/1.

¹⁴⁰ In Ings, ‘Medieval Mills’, he notes in the gazetteer entry for Fullbrook Mill that the current (as of 2013) mill owner indicated there was a mill on the site at least as early as 1130, though no documentary evidence has been made available.

¹⁴¹ See Ings, ‘Medieval Mills’, gazetteer.

¹⁴² Michael Ings, ‘Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Mills: A Threat-Related Assessment 2012-14’, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2014/7, Cadw Project No. DAT 105.

¹⁴³ Richard Hayman, *The Cambrian Mountains Initiative Historic Buildings Pilot Project for the Prince’s Regeneration Trust* (2009), p. 37.

tenants of other Blaenaeron properties as late as 1792.¹⁴⁴ The mill is listed as a part of Llwyngwinau in 1638 and 1670, a situation which is addressed at length later in this chapter. Wool custom for the granges of Mevenyth, Cwmystwyth, Pennarth, Blaynayron, and Anhuniog was granted by the abbot for £30 to William David ap William 11 Sept 28th Henry VIII for 40 years.¹⁴⁵

There appears to be another place name associated with the mill site in the early sixteenth century, and it may have been the place name prior to it becoming known both colloquially and officially by the name of the mill constructed there. Talken Eskerberveth Issa does not appear on the tithe maps of the nineteenth century, nor is it listed in any of the Crosswood materials after 1526 (see Appendix 5). The place name suggests some association with the ancient location called Esker Berfedd, discussed above, which was one of the sites of significance listed in the early grants to the monastery, and what seems to be a partition of that ancient farm by the name of Esgair Berfedd Icha (or Issa), which bears a name very similar to Talken Eskerberveth Issa, but appears to be a larger holding (see Appendix 3).

Early in the seventeenth century, Robert, third earl of Essex, brought suit against a number of tenants of former grange properties, including the tenant of Fullbrook Mill, for failure to pay rents. The dispute recognised these tenants' rights to the properties as they were demised by the abbot in 1523 for 99 years. Although the defendants were not identified with their specific properties, Fullbrook Mill was occupied at the time of the complaint, in 1617, by either Richard Lewis, Morgan Glyn, or John Glyn.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ NLW, CD I/5; CD I/1152.

¹⁴⁵ NLW, CD I/5.

¹⁴⁶ T. I. Jeffries Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales in Tempore James I*, Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Series, no. XV (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), pp. 105–06.

Another mill, called Maen Arthur Mill, or Melin Maen Arthyr, which is located on the north bank of the Nant Cell, slightly northeast of Ysbyty Ystwyth, warrants mentioning as it has relevance to some of the Blaenaeron properties. This mill was not a part of the former Strata Florida landholdings, and little is known about it, though it was considered an ancient demesne by the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁷ It would seem that this mill was in the possession of the Vaughan family long before Blaenaeron and its Fullbrook Mill passed to them in 1630. It was identified as being a grist mill and a tucking, or fulling, mill in 1566, when it was sold to Moris ap Richard from Moris ap Thomas ap Moris, along with a tucking mill located at Abermagoyr, and an assortment of other properties, primarily smallholdings.¹⁴⁸ Suit of mill is recorded there as early as 1568.¹⁴⁹ Two Blaenaeron properties are identified as having paid suit to Maen Arthur instead of Fullbrook: Tynybwllch, a Castle Flemish tenement, in 1731 and 1756; and Esgir Maen, in 1678 and 1756. Both properties paid suit to Fullbrook in intervening years, which is curious.¹⁵⁰ In 1740 Maen Arthur Mill was demised for three years from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to John Meredith, miner, and Rees Meredith, carpenter for a yearly rent of nine and a half teals of rye and pilcorn, a fat hog, a hen and twenty eggs at Shrovetide.¹⁵¹ This same mill was one of three mills mentioned in a large acquisition of land provided as dowry in the marriage of Edward Vaughan to Lettis Stedman in 1601.¹⁵² The following year Maen Arthur mill was granted by Edward Vaughan to Ethliw verch Howell, the widow of Moris ap Richard, esq., plus £4 yearly

¹⁴⁷ J. Macve, 'Mills of the upper Ystwyth valley', *Melin: the Journal of the Welsh Mills Society*, 14 (1998), 51–69 (p. 62).

¹⁴⁸ NLW, CD I/47.

¹⁴⁹ 10 October 1568, Lewies ap Gruffith Goch is required as the tenant of Erw-y-maen-lloid to grind his corn at 'Manarthur'. NLW, CD I/57.

¹⁵⁰ NLW, CD I/743; CD I/911; CDI/476; CD I/893; CD I/814; CD I/783.

¹⁵¹ NLW, CD I/804.

and the little house adjoining the mill for the remainder of her life¹⁵³ A smelting mill was added by 1608. By 1760 the Crosswood estate closed most of its smaller mills and focused its milling at Wenallt, after which there were no further mention of the mills at Maen Arthur.¹⁵⁴



Figure 4.14 Fullbrook Mill, with Mary Hughes and her family. Tregaron: *Delweddau o dref wledig: images of a country town* (Ashbourne: Horizon Press, 2006).

Bron y Cappel and Bryn y Kippill

Bezant and Austin propose that the tithe-free nature of a block of land near the edge of the bog at Clawdd Ddu suggests the existence of a medieval chapel at Bron y Cappel.¹⁵⁵ Another site located west of Maesglas called Bryn y Kippill may also have

¹⁵² NLW, CD I/147. See chapter 5 for Vaughan-Stedman connections.

¹⁵³ NLW, CD I/148.

¹⁵⁴ Macve, 'Mills', pp. 62–65.

¹⁵⁵ Austin and Bezant, 'Medieval Landscapes', p. 32.

at one point been the site of a chapel. Reuse of religious sites has been recorded elsewhere, such as the foundation charter dated *ca.* 1200 or 1201, by which Madog ap Gruffudd Maelor granted to Strata Marcella Abbey the township of Llanegwestl as the construction site for Valle Crucis Abbey.¹⁵⁶ A *llan* is usually referring to a church in modern parlance, however, it originally indicated a circular enclosure around a church. This place-name strongly suggests the existence of an earlier church on this site. The name of the abbey is likely taken from the Pillar of Eliseg, which was a prominent ancient feature in the monastic landscape. Unlike these suggestive elements at Valle Crucis for a pre-existing religious site, nothing remains regarding the possible chapel at Blaenaeron. This is a potential grange chapel (or possibly two) as compared to the establishment of a monastery on the site of a previous church. As such, the scope and significance are considerably less. Documentation of the transition may never have existed at all, if the shift from pre-monastic maenor to monastic grange was as seamless here as it appears to have been in other locations within the grange. In probability, it was quite a bit smaller than the early church that predated Valle Crucis.¹⁵⁷

Colin Platt suggests that none of the identified grange chapels or remains thereof in England and Wales are earlier than thirteenth century in origin. However, this does not preclude the possibility (or even likelihood) of there having been earlier churches on the grange that did not survive.¹⁵⁸ As each monastic grange contained a population of its own, it would have also needed a place of worship for its residents. The Cistercian chapter, however, officially condemned the practice of grange chapels throughout the twelfth century. In 1180, the chapter issued a decree forbidding the consecration of any

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁷ *AWR*, no. 500, pp. 700–02; Edwards, ‘Rethinking’, pp.143–45.

¹⁵⁸ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 25.

new altars in chapels on the granges;¹⁵⁹ in 1204 it was determined that any chapels or altars already in existence on granges must be destroyed immediately.¹⁶⁰ Burials on the granges were likewise forbidden. An 1157 statute limited the establishment of granges any further than a day's journey from the monastery.¹⁶¹ This was intended to maintain a sense of monastic community and ensure dependence on the monastic house, as well as guarantee full attendance at the major masses throughout the year.¹⁶²

However, as monasteries acquired grange land and the monastic estates expanded outward, it became less reasonable for grange tenants to journey to the abbey for services. It was becoming more common by the thirteenth century for monks and canons to make their homes on the granges, and Platt notes two significant changes in grange amenities were happening during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to accommodate that. First, grange chapels became standard equipage; and second, many granges became fortified or established a system of defence.¹⁶³ Religious houses negotiated private agreements with their bishops to circumvent these regulations when they were determined to be impractical due to distance or other reasons. Furthermore, the statutes were designed for ideal situations, and there is the possibility that what worked in theory did not work so well in practise, especially in places far from Cîteaux.¹⁶⁴ More remote religious houses such as Strata Florida may have gone their

¹⁵⁹ Waddell, ed., *Twelfth-Century Statutes*, p. 88. As Waddell points out, this indicates that grange chapels originally had consecrated altars.

¹⁶⁰ *Statuta*, I, 299.

¹⁶¹ Waddell, ed., *Twelfth-Century Statutes from Early Cîteaux*, pp. 67, 573–74,

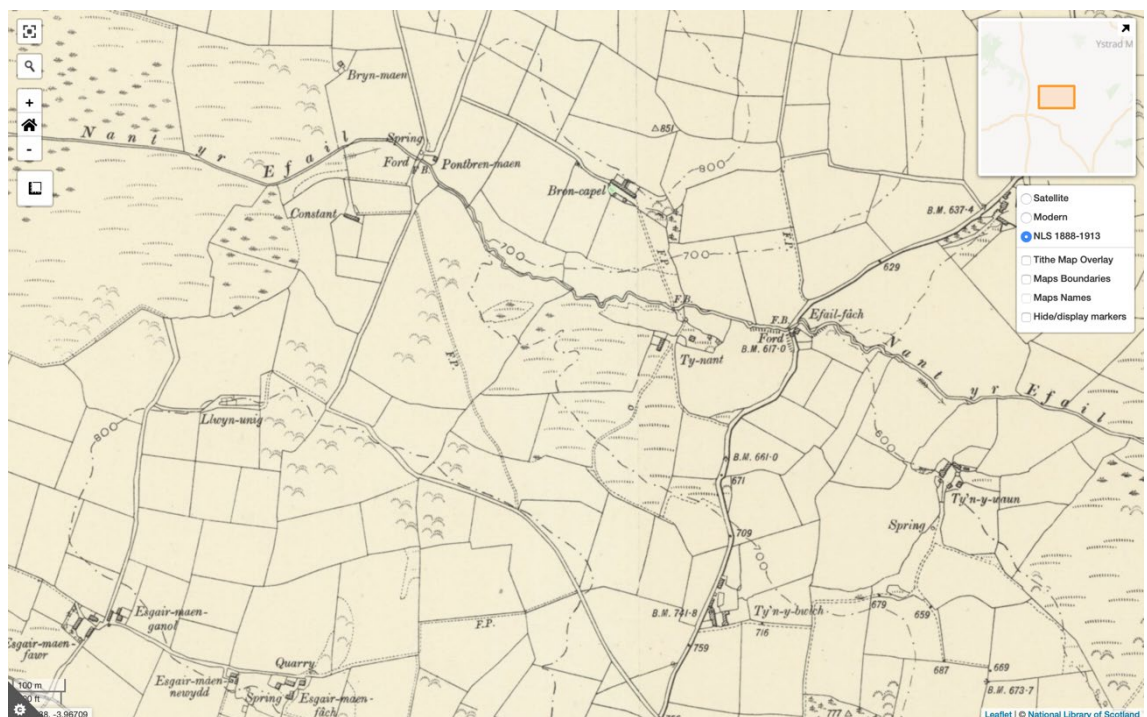
¹⁶² Chrysogonus Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, Cîteaux: Commentarii Cisterciensis, *Studia et Documenta*, 9 (Cîteaux, 1999), p. 459; Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 26.

¹⁶³ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, pp. 27-32.

¹⁶⁴ See Jamroziak, *Cistercian Order*, p. 50, for a suggestion that uniformity in economics or property arrangement were not considered to be as important as shared monastic observance and liturgy.

own way in loosely interpreting or outright ignoring some of the statutes that were not reasonable for their particular situations. By the middle of the thirteenth century, the monasteries had full papal support for the establishment of grange chapels.¹⁶⁵

These reflect general changes amongst Cistercian monasteries throughout Britain, but Strata Florida's Blaenaeron grange came into monastic hands already possessed of at least one fortified location. Blaenaeron also likely never housed *conversi*, as it was given to the monastery as a pre-existing maenorial settlement with tenants already in place. This leads to the supposition that the chapel or chapels on the grange were also pre-existing, to serve the pre-monastic secular lord whose maenorial court was located there. The name *Bryn-y-capel* suggests that the chapel there did possess some land and was possibly a *clas* site with inherited lands attached. This more closely follows the Welsh maenorial pattern than it does the Cistercian standard. As always, allowances must be made for local variations amongst the Cistercian houses.¹⁶⁶



¹⁶⁵ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, pp. 27–28.

¹⁶⁶ Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 25.

Figure 4.15 Tithe map showing Bron y Cappel in upper centre of map. NLW, Tithe map of county Caron. https://places.library.wales/search/52.219/-3.893/13?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_98=on

Bron y Cappel was originally a section of a larger and ancient farm called Esker Berveth Ganol, discussed earlier in this chapter. It was partitioned during the practice of *cyfran* in the late sixteenth century. In 1597 a labourer of Blaenaeron, Rees David Wynn, raised a complaint against John Stedman the elder, esq., Ievan ap Phillip Thomas, Morgan Jankin, Ievan ap Ievan Lloyd, David ap David, and David ap Gwilym.¹⁶⁷ The complaint was regarding Eskyr Berveth Ganol, a messuage and 600 acres of land, located in Blayn Ayron in the parish of Caron, formerly a possession of Strata Florida Abbey. The 600-acre Eskyr Berveth Ganol was granted for 99 years by the late abbot to Ievan ap Gytto Hir, grandfather of Rees David Wynn. The lease was conveyed to the son, David Wynn ap Ievan, who later conveyed it in thirds to his sons, David ap David Wynn, Lewis David Wynn, and Rees David Wynn, who registered the complaint. The third of the partible inheritance, or *cyfran*, given to Rees David Wynn was a messuage and 200 acres of land, called Bron y Cappel. The nature of the complaint was that, whilst Rees David Wynn was pressed into military service in Portugal, the defendants listed somehow obtained the lease and other conveyances of the property and took advantage of Wynn's absence to forcibly enter the Bron y Cappel property and claim the inheritance as their own, refusing to vacate the messuage upon Mr. Wynn's return from Portugal.¹⁶⁸

Whether that location previously held a chapel, as part of the larger and ancient landholding that preceded its partitioning is unknown. No archaeological evidence has

¹⁶⁷ Emyr Gwynne Jones, ed., *Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales: Henry VIII-Elizabeth*, Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales, No. IV (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1939), p. 93.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

yet been identified as being the remains of an early chapel. However, such evidence is not expected to have survived. The post-dissolution holding appears to have been relatively stable and is included on the nineteenth-century tithe maps with seemingly little change (See fig. 4.15).



Figure 4.16 Map showing Bryn y Cippill in the lower centre of map. NLW, Tithe Map of County Caron. https://places.library.wales/search/52.219/-3.893/13?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&parish_facet%5B%5D=Caron&leaflet-base-layers_98=on

Bryn y Cippill, whilst very similar in name, is an entirely different property which is associated in 1670 with Tref y Coll, an ancient farm to its west (see fig. 4.16). Tref y Coll, or Trecoll, is included in grants and confirmations dated as early as 1184.¹⁶⁹ The location of Bryn y Cippill is directly south of the intrenchment at Castle Flemish, and directly west of Maesglas. The proximity to the locations of significance within the grange makes it a likely candidate for a grange chapel. More so than Bron y Cappel, which is located to the north of the rest of the grange sites. As there have been no

¹⁶⁹ *AWR*, no. 28, pp. 171–75; no. 35, pp. 180–83; no. 63, pp. 197–201; no. 82, pp. 216–22.

archaeological studies of either of these sites, their early purposes can only be speculated at, though there is possibility that one predated the monastic era, and the other was created during Strata Florida's era as a grange chapel.

Maesglas

The farm of Maesglas is the sole Blaenaeron site mentioned in the confirmation by Edward I in 1285 of an earlier inspeximus of Henry II dated sometime between 1165 and 1182.¹⁷⁰ It is also one of only four properties listed on both the earliest surviving grant and the 1184 grant, and according to Bezant, was likely to have been the early centre of administration, or *llys*, for the Castle Flemish grange before the monastic era.¹⁷¹ At least as early as the early middle ages in Wales, a *llys* was an important unit of central administration for a *maenor*. An administrative centre would have managed the complex systems of rents and services paid to the manorial lord by his tenants. Sensibly, the monastery appears to have taken over the pre-existing *llys*, which would have eased the monastic takeover with the local community and provided continuity of management for the system that had been in place there for generations. The *llys* was likely replaced by a grange centre staffed by *conversi*, who enabled the grange to function in much the same way it had done in the past. Notable surrounding elements of demesne management include nearby common land in two places, and a scattered array of small dwellings bearing *tyddyn* place names, indicating earlier manorial tenancy. Nearby farms of specific purpose would grow crops such as grains or cereals, and theoretically the administration centre would contain storage facilities and perhaps a clerk to manage the accounts. So little archaeological evidence exists at Blaenaeron to

¹⁷⁰ *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68).

¹⁷¹ *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68); Bezant, 'Revising', p. 67.

indicate significance shifts in land use that, according to Bezant, ‘one wonders whether farmers elsewhere on the grange noticed the change from secular to monastic lordship at all’.¹⁷²

The Wetland Margins Survey of Cors Caron and vicinity compiled by Dyfed Archaeological Trust for CADW identified a series of earthworks right at the edge of the bog that suggest the possibility of arable cultivation and ponds, associated either with the monastic grange or with a later estate site.¹⁷³ Excavations at Maesglas have shown that peat was extracted in areas that are now improved pastureland. In the medieval period this area would have been considerably more boggy, and waterways extended further on to what now is dry land.¹⁷⁴

Swyddffynnon has been identified as the administrative centre for the Mefenydd grange, where also was located a medieval mill and possible chapel.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Maesglas is in close proximity to its own medieval mill site at Fullbrook, some possible settlement, and again a possible chapel at either or both Bron-y-Cappell or Bryn y Kippill.¹⁷⁶ Bezant has argued that at some point the administrative centre was moved from Maesglas to Monachty Blaenaeron.¹⁷⁷ The name alone suggests that the latter site was established during the monastic period, though it could have been, and perhaps likely was, a new name attached to a pre-existing farm site within the maenorial template of the grange (see appendix 11).

The large post-dissolution estates that developed in the area, notably the Nanteos

¹⁷² Bezant, ‘Revising’, p. 67; Bezant, ‘Medieval Grants’, p. 79.

¹⁷³ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, p.22.

¹⁷⁴ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, p. 26.

¹⁷⁵ Bezant, ‘Revising’, pp. 63-64.

¹⁷⁶ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, pp. 15–16.

¹⁷⁷ Bezant, ‘Revising’, p. 63. See Appendix 11 for tenancy table for Monachty Blaenaeron.

and Crosswood/Trawscoed estates, continued to farm the Cors Caron area using the previously established farmsteads. It is therefore likely that most of the farmsteads in the Cors Caron region have unusually early medieval origins.¹⁷⁸ A mansion house appears to have been built at Maesglas at some point before the eighteenth century to the east of the current farmhouse. It was associated with a formal garden, which suggests the residence was one of relatively high status. By 1843, when the tithe map was drawn, Maesglas was again subdivided and a smaller farmstead called Tan-y-graig was in the place of the former mansion (see fig. 4.17).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 16.

¹⁷⁹ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 76.

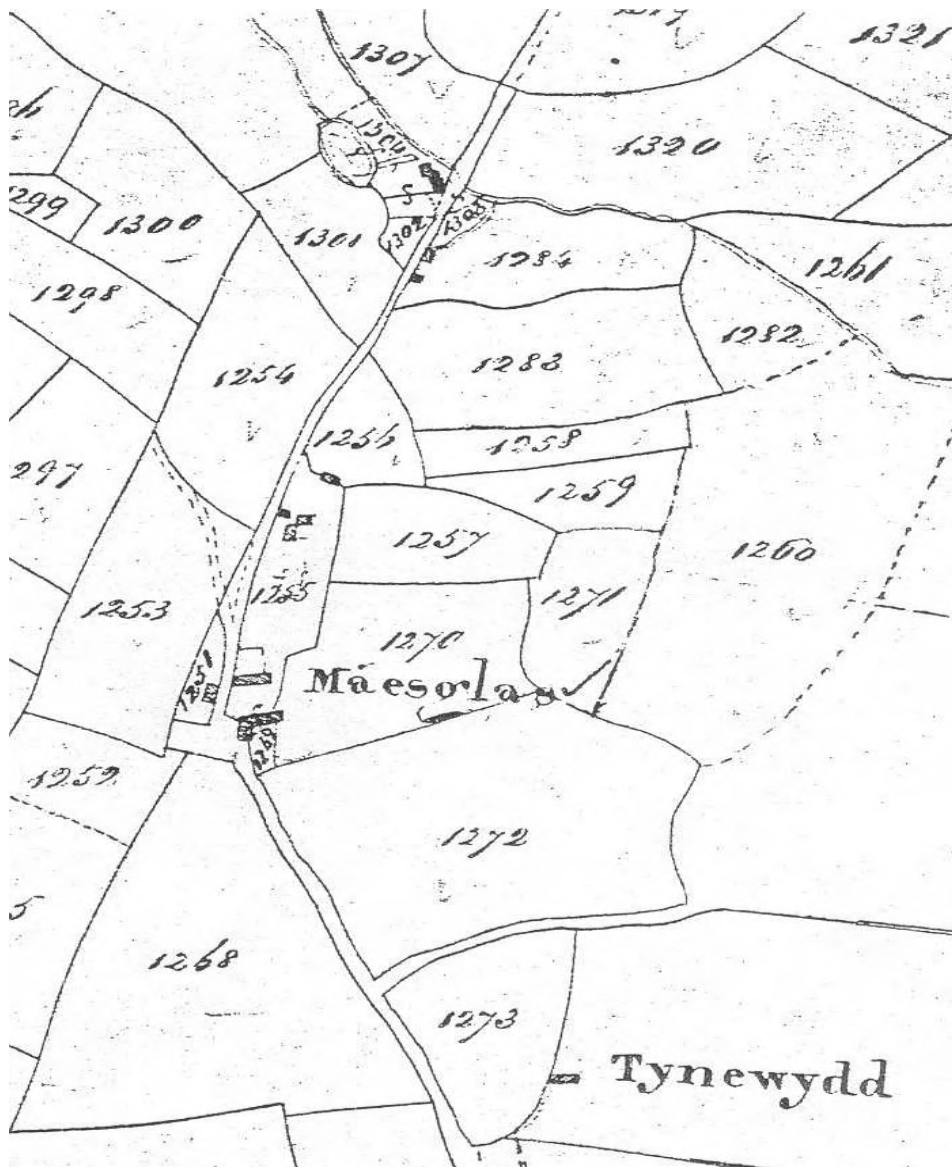


Figure 4.17 A section of the 1843 parish tithe map showing Maesglas farm. Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 97.



Figure 4.18 Eighteenth-century map of Ty yn y Cornel and Maesglas. NLW, Crosswood Estate Map collection.

*A PLAN of TYN Y CORNEL and MAES GLÂS in the
Parish of Carron and County of Cardigan. Belonging to the
RIGHT HONOURABLE the LORD VISCOUNT LISBURN*

<i>A Tyn y Cornel Tenement</i>			<i>B Maes Glâs Tenement</i>		
<i>N^o</i>	<i>Names of the Fields</i>	<i>Acres Rofs A.R.P. A.R.P.</i>	<i>N^o</i>	<i>Names of the fields</i>	<i>Acres Rofs A.R.P. A.1</i>
1	Yâlam	1.0.3	1	Cae Crwn	1.3.14
2	Yr Ardd Yawr	0.2.3	2	Cae Coch	6.0.6
3	Cae Garw	0.2.7	3	Cae Main Iŷa	1.0.3
4	Cae Dan's Ardd	1.1.19	4	Cae Adle M ^o Cae Adlodd	1.0.20 0.1.36
5	Wâen Gofach uchâ	1.2.23	5	Cae Main uchâ	0.3.1
6	Wâen Gofach Iŷa	0.1.29 0.2.22	6	Bank	3.2.5
7	Cae Fent yr Iâr	6.1.22	7	Pant	9.3.5
8	Clwst Du	20.2.19 0.2.30	8	Cae Cam	3.1.1
9	Wâen	7.0.14	9	Clwst Du	10.2.38
10	Cae Calch	3.1.0	10	Wâen Islaw' y Bont	5 5.2.35
11	Bank	14.3.7	11	Cae Du	2.3.13
12	Corse Tyn y Cornel	37.2.16	12	Ddôl Tas	12.1.6
	Gardens	1.2.17	13	Tarran Llwyd	1.2.13
		42.2.30 49.2.16	14	Corse Maes Glâs	39.1.24
			15	Werglodd Wen	2.1.27
				Gardens	0.2.28
					34.3.18 73.2.27

*The Lands Comprised in the numbers 12-15 & 14
are undivided one moiety thereof belonging to M^o David Evans*

Figure 4.19 Schedule for the map of Ty yn y Cornel and Maesglas. NLW, Crosswood Estate Map collection.

Llwyngwinau

After locating the ancient farm holdings at Castle Flemish, Maesglas, and Esgair Berfedd, a north-south oriented strip of land remains, focused upon what may be a medieval motte, or perhaps a ring-fort, called Llwyngwinau. Llwyngwinau farm is another ancient farm which appears to have been included in early grants to Strata

Florida, though it was not always identified by the same name. Llwyngwinau farm comprises both Llwyngwinau Ucha and Llwyngwinau Isaf situated adjacent to one another, a pattern seen in reduced medieval settlements elsewhere in southwest Wales.¹⁸⁰ Possible alternative names for this site according to Pryce include several variations of the spelling of Dinas Drygwr. The 1184 confirmation of Lord Rhys's grant mentions as a boundary, a stream that passes between Buarthcaron and Dinas Dritwir and from that point the stream leads onward to the grange of Castle Flemish.¹⁸¹ The same boundaries are listed in the 1198 confirmation.¹⁸² In Maelgwn ap Rhys's grant confirming his father's gift to Strata Florida dated sometime between 1198 and 1227, 'Dinas Drygwr to the Aeron' is listed alongside Castell Fflemish, Maesglas, Trecoll ('with its bounds and appurtenances'), and so forth.¹⁸³ Cynan ap Maredudd ab Owain's grant dated between 1280 and 1282 also included 'Dinas Drygwr to the Aeron'.¹⁸⁴ However, Austin and Bezant have identified Dinas Dritwir as 'a fairly large complex of defensive earthworks' of indeterminate age located at the end of a ridge in the grange's southwest corner (SN 6414 6222).¹⁸⁵

Due to this farm's association with an earthwork of disputed age and purpose, Austin and Bezant surmise that it may be the remnant of a nearby early *llys*.¹⁸⁶ The motte is located on the highest point midway between the common land areas of Cors Llwyngwinau and Tyn Waun in the north and Fullbrook Mill in the south. This leads to a possibility that this motte could have been a boundary marker for an enclosed

¹⁸⁰ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 58.

¹⁸¹ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–75).

¹⁸² *AWR*, no. 35 (pp. 180–83).

¹⁸³ *AWR*, no. 63 (pp. 197–201).

¹⁸⁴ *AWR*, no. 82 (pp. 216–22).

¹⁸⁵ Austin and Bezant, 'Medieval Landscapes', p. 31.

medieval settlement offering a wide range of resources to include a mill and common lands. In short, the maenorial template.¹⁸⁷ The tenement listed as Ty yn y swydd includes the ‘swydd’ element that may indicate an administrative centre, as in Swyddfynnon to the north.¹⁸⁸

The site of Castell Llwyngwinau is recorded officially as a medieval motte, although some doubt has been raised as to this being accurate.¹⁸⁹ No archaeology has been done there, and there is no known history for the site. Mottes were frequently ‘hastily erected military structures differing entirely from an administrative llys site, which may have been only lightly defended’.¹⁹⁰ In 2009 Dyfed Archaeological Trust surveyed the site with a magnetometer and found that there is some evidence of the structure remaining below ground.¹⁹¹ The site description is of a wide exterior ditch with perhaps internal and external banks, and an entrance on the north-east side, to include possibly an entranceway structure. This castle is sited on a prominent ridge approximately 220 metres above sea level with a considerable slope to the east, with broad views across Cors Caron. Within, the structure was sub-circular and could have been stone built, with evidence of heating activity on the south side. It has been analysed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust to be the site of a medieval ringwork castle.¹⁹² The approach to the site appears to have been along the ridge from the northeast. Evidence to the northwest of what might be a square sided enclosure, and a bank

¹⁸⁶ Austin and Bezant, ‘Medieval Landscapes’, p. 31.

¹⁸⁷ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, p. 58.

¹⁸⁸ Bezant, ‘Revising’, p. 63.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Davis, *A Company of Forts: A Guide to the Medieval Castles of West Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2000), p. 43.

¹⁹⁰ Bezant, ‘Teifi Valley’, p. 20.

¹⁹¹ Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, pp. 59–61.

¹⁹² Poucher, ‘Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron’, p. 21.

extending to the west may be contemporary with the castle site. Further archaeological features appear to continue to the south, but all of these suppositions require further archaeological study.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust identified, just west of Llwyngwinau farmstead, and north of the aforementioned Castell Llwyngwinau, the remains of an unscheduled castle site, plus pits and ditches and another enclosed site on lower terrain.¹⁹³ Sites such as this were sometimes associated with a small settlement, though evidence thereof has not been found for this one. It is likely to have been abandoned by the end of the twelfth century.¹⁹⁴ Bronze Age burial mounds in the vicinity have been recorded at Cruglas farm to the north and between Fullbrook Mill and Maesglas to the south of this site.¹⁹⁵

In 1638 and 1670 Fullbrook Mill is listed as part of this farm, though in no other records is this the case.¹⁹⁶ Perhaps at that point they were held by the same tenant. Walter Jones held the lease for Fullbrook in 1638; Thomas Jones occupied Fullbrook Mill in 1659 and again in 1670. Thomas Rees and John Thos. are listed as occupying the fifth part of Llwyn y gwine called Ty yn y Berth in 1670, whereas that same year Ievan Thos. Goughe and John Thos. Goughe held the larger portion of the farm, which is listed as Llwyn y Gwyn, consisting of 482 acres. It is possible that Thomas Jones and John Thos. are the same person, and in one case the name was recorded improperly. Regardless, both the mill and Llwyngwinau were held on 99-year leases by the Gough family (see Appendix 16), so it may be that the properties occupied by this prominent family for such long periods of time were considered as one unit, if not officially then perhaps in a colloquial manner. Of further interest, archaeology indicates that there are

¹⁹³ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', pp. 1–2.

¹⁹⁴ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 13.

subterranean remnants of early field boundaries associating Llwyngwinau with Fullbrook Mill, lending some credence to the possibility of these sites comprising an enclosed early medieval settlement.¹⁹⁷

Appendix 16 illustrates a relatively solid line of occupation for Llwyngwinau by what appears to be the same family, listed variably as Goz, Goche, and Goughe from 1532 to 1800. This family has early association with the Vaughan family, which is addressed at length later in chapter 5.

Esgaer Maen

There has been some question over the possibility that some of the ancient farms were subdivided at some point, possibly due to the nature of partible inheritance.¹⁹⁸ Esgaer Maen, located directly north of Castle Flemish in Blaenaeron, is an example made of this, in that it was later split to become smaller holdings called Esgaer Fawr, Esgaer Ganol, and Esgaer Fach. T. Jones Pierce notes that *cyfran* did by its very nature lead to smaller landholdings over time, but this process was winding down by the time of the dissolution, and after 1500 Wales was also seeing a rise in the number of estates, some of which grew out of a single farmstead which expanded outward, either by way of taking into its holdings some of the surrounding wasteland, or by acquiring other upland farms in the vicinity. This coincided with the official abolition of *cyfran* in the 1530s.¹⁹⁹

It remains unclear whether monastic farms were impacted by *cyfran*. Esgaer Maen was within the grange of Blaenaeron and does not appear to have been segmented for purposes of tenancy until perhaps the mid-seventeenth century. While there is no

¹⁹⁶ NLW, CD II/69, CD I/402. Also see Appendix 4.

¹⁹⁷ Poucher, 'Wetland Margins Survey: Cors Caron', p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ See above, Chapter 3, for discussion of partible inheritance.

question that Esgaer Maen was indeed divided no later than 1662, it is not entirely clear why it happened. Two possibilities are that it was partitioned due to *cyfran*, or that it was broken down into smaller farms for rental purposes. After the 99-year leases granted just before dissolution expired, estate management may have led to extensive reorganisation or reallocation of land. As this land became part of the Vaughan family's Trawscoed Estate in 1630, it is possible that the mid-seventeenth century partitioning had nothing to do with inheritance, but with establishing better manners of land leasing under new oversight.

Ellis notes that in some cases, in early medieval Wales clan members held their land allotments as one unit in a shared manner, rather than subdividing the lands. In effect, they were stronger together, likely due to the varying nature of the parcels of land. Ellis furthermore observes that when at some point the interests of the members of the clan began to diverge, the land was separated accordingly.²⁰⁰ Again, whether this process can be attributed to Esgaer Maen, which was for so long a monastic property, and perhaps long out of the hands of its original possessors, (although perhaps not), may be impossible to determine. The tenants listed in the 1530 rent roll appear to be related, which suggests the possibility of a later split to satisfy either the needs of each family member to identify their portion separately, or a time when the family members did not all want to retain their portion, so it was segmented to allow for tenants outside the family to occupy the parts no longer desired by the family in place.

While there is no evidence that monasteries permitted the continued application of the early practices of *cyfran* within their land tenancies, there is also no evidence to the contrary. Monastic involvement in management and oversight of the grange land had

¹⁹⁹ Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales', pp. 360–63.

²⁰⁰ Ellis, *Welsh Laws*, pp. 233–34.

declined by the fifteenth century, so that long leases to tenants became common, and could certainly have allowed for tenant families to inherit tenancies in the traditional manner until partible inheritance was outlawed, and possibly later if it was not detected by enforcers of the law. Post-dissolution, the same tenants would have answered to the lord of the estate. For Esgaer Maen, that was the Vaughan family after 1630, and any partitioning of land would likely have been closely monitored by Sir John Vaughan or at the very least his estate manager.

However, it is still not impossible that there was some element of the tradition of *cyfran* in place here, and that Esgaer Maen followed the traditions of *tir gwelyog*, or hereditary land. There is record between 1547 and 1551 of a legal dispute amongst brothers that took place in Cardiganshire over the partition of ‘gavelkind lands’ belonging to their deceased father.²⁰¹ An entry in the Exchequer proceedings dated 1597 includes reference to the partitioning of another holding within Blaenaeron, that of Esker Berveth Ganol, among three sons. One of the newly partitioned smaller holdings was the farm called Bron y Cappell.²⁰² As *cyfran* was happening on former monastic lands post-dissolution, it seems likely that it was happening during the monastic period as well. Perhaps the only difference was that there was no actual promise of *priodolder* after the requisite four generations of earlier times. The land remained the possession of the monastery, and tenants retained the status with which they arrived, regardless the number of generations which occupied the site. T. Jones Pierce observed that some traditional Welsh land practices continued well into the seventeenth century, despite having been made illegal, as those laws and regulations were recorded by a foreign

²⁰¹ E. A. Lewis, *An Inventory of the Early Chancery Proceedings Concerning Wales*. Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Series, No. III, (Cardiff: University Press Board, 1937), p. 39.

²⁰² Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales: Henry VIII-Elizabeth. Emyr Gwynne Jones Board

people in a foreign language, and the average Welsh freeholder would have paid no notice to it and continued in the usual way until the legalities caught up with him.²⁰³

Ellis noted that in the Welsh laws, the sons had no rights to interfere in the management of the land during the father's lifetime. Also, the father had no rights to impact the management of his land beyond his death, such as via a death-bed determination to alienate.²⁰⁴ This meant there was almost no possibility of permanent alienation, with few exceptions, such as required payment for a blood-fine.²⁰⁵ Periodically the Crosswood deeds include a notation that the tenant does not have right to alienate, which also may be associated with the old laws. Whilst this is not specifically a Welsh phenomenon,²⁰⁶ the continuation of an older tenancy clause might suggest that fragments of the same clan land regulations remained into the seventeenth century.²⁰⁷

In Appendix 13 are two rentals for 18 June 1756 to Richard Hughes for the tenement of Esgir Maen. The first is unsigned and appears to have been redrawn under slightly amended terms. Service at Crosswood has been removed from the terms of the lease, the heriot decreased by 5s., and the consideration increased by 9s. On both leases the suit is at Maen Arthur Mill rather than Fullbrook. This was a few short years before the closing of that mill, but explanation for the shift away from Fullbrook in this case is elusive. The first, unsigned lease did not record how long the lease was meant to last, though it would likely have also been for 21 years which seems to have been standard.

of Celtic Studies, University of Wales, No. IV (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1939), p. 93.

²⁰³ Pierce, 'Landlords in Wales', pp. 368–69.

²⁰⁴ Ellis, *Welsh Laws*, p. 251.

²⁰⁵ See chapter 3 above for detail on blood-fines.

²⁰⁶ Seebohm compares this system with Caesar's description of the Gallic tribes. Seebohm, *Tribal System*, pp. 109–110.

²⁰⁷ Ellis, *Welsh Laws*, pp. 250–53.

Each of these significant sites present evidence of continuity at some level. Several of them, such as Castle Flemish and Llwyngwinau, offer evidence of ongoing occupation and use from at least the Bronze Age. Both of these appear in early grants to Strata Florida, as do Maesglas and Eskerbervedd Ganol. Fullbrook Mill and Bron-y-Capell both seem to have been reused early sites of specific purpose. On each of these individual sites, life may have just continued on, regardless whether oversight was early manorial, monastic, or post-dissolution secular. For the ongoing purposes these locations served, the dissolution was not as disruptive as might be expected.

Taken as a whole, these locations within the former Strata Florida grange of Blaenaeron reflect earlier patterns of territorial organisation. The elements of an early manorial template are present: Castle Flemish as the focus of a manor system, Maesglas as its likely administrative centre, plus locations of specific purpose such as Fullbrook Mill and Bron y Capell. Two of the sites identified in the 1184 grant,²⁰⁸ Eskerbervedd Ganol and Llwyngwinau, are likely examples of *tir gwelyog*, or hereditary land. Under that designation, occupants acquired rights of *priodolder*, which led to the possibility of land division by *cyfran*. These locations each experienced centuries of uninterrupted occupation by the same family (see appendices 2, 3, and 12).

These examples of continuity suggest that when the monks of Strata Florida acquired this land, its management continued in a nearly uninterrupted manner, with little disruption to the tenants or the services exchanged or provided. Post-dissolution, the shift back to secular management appears to have also been a smooth transition, with the sites continuing to operate as they did under monastic oversight. On many sites, the occupants remained in place, in some cases for generations. And, as will be discussed further in chapter 5, the tenants of some prominent sites within the former

monastic grange were ideally situated to effect seventeenth-century land purchases, ensuring the family remained in control of their land.

²⁰⁸ *AWR*, no. 28 (pp. 171–73).

Chapter 5

Estate Building after the Dissolution

This chapter discusses the significance of political, social, and most especially family connections in establishing the hundreds of years of continuous land occupation distinctive to the Vaughan estate, as well as the dramatic expansion of the family's power and influence made possible through acquisition of former monastic lands. Although the general assumption has been that the dissolution and its resulting generation of available land led to the creation of a new Welsh gentry and offered its members increased political opportunities, this has not proven to be the situation in this particular case study. Whilst in some instances the purchase of monastic land aided in establishing new families within their counties, by and large the families which saw the most benefit in purchasing monastic lands in Wales were already well-established clans on the rise. The Acts of Union (1535–1542) which were passed around the same time as the dissolution established primogeniture as the system of inheritance in Wales, replacing the traditional Welsh system of *cyfran*; primogeniture enabled the consolidation and expansion of family estates which had formerly been divided for each succeeding generation. Status in Wales was dependent on kinship rather than assets, and in the post-dissolution era the pre-existence of the former enabled the growth of the latter under the new laws.

The Vaughan family and estate were certainly not new gentry in the sixteenth century. The family claimed direct descent from the ruling family of Gwynedd, and, indirectly, from Hywel Dda in the eighth century. (See Appendix 14.) This provided the Vaughan line with a respectable antiquity. It was the pre-existing Vaughan reputation and likely their political and social contacts in London which led to the

acquisition of the formerly monastic Strata Florida grange properties. This expanded the Vaughan family's holdings several times over in one transaction.¹

This chapter is structured into three sections. The first looks at the Strata Florida lands in general after the dissolution of the abbey, and in particular the role of the powerful families of Devereux and Stedman, and the significance of their relationship with the Vaughans. This takes the story from the 1530s well into the seventeenth century. The second focuses on the Blaenaeron estates and its landlords and tenants and draws heavily on the Crosswood Estate records at the National Library of Wales. The third analyses the significance of the Strata Florida lands in the rise of the Vaughan family.

The Strata Florida Lands after the Dissolution: the Devereux and Stedman families and their political associates

After the dissolution of the abbey, the Strata Florida lands went first to the Crown, and were managed by a local overseer, Richard Devereux. The Devereux family descended from Normans who settled in Wales soon after the Conquest of 1066. Robert Devereux was the younger of two brothers who had accompanied William the Conqueror, and later settled in the Marches.² By the middle of the sixteenth century, Sir Richard Devereux was Deputy Justice and Chamberlain of South Wales, justice of peace for Cardiff and Pembrokeshire (1543), as well as for Gloucester and Monmouthshire (1547). He was elected to Parliament in 1545 and 1547 and was

¹ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 24, 45–46.

² Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex* (London: J. Murray, 1853), p. 2.

Custos Rotulorum of Carmarthenshire from 1543 until 1547.³ Sir Richard was also the appointed Receiver-General for Strata Florida prior to its dissolution. In many situations the Crown saw fit to leave trusted local administrators in place, occasionally even establishing their preferred administrators before the house was officially dissolved.⁴ In any case, Devereux was managing the monastery's lands and properties at the time of dissolution. A valuation of Strata Florida properties included in the house's suppression papers produced by the Crown and dated 1543–44 was signed by Sir Richard Devereux.⁵ A few years later, in 1547, the first year of the reign of Edward VI, the Crown signed a lease over to Sir Richard. This is likely to have been the first lease granted of Strata Florida's lands following their seizure by the Crown.⁶ The lease was for a duration of 21 years, for an annual rent of £101 8s 8d, plus a *commorth* of £38 due every third year. The properties included all of the Cardiganshire granges listed in the valuation of 1543, as well as the granges of Cwmteuddwr, Abermiwl, and Doverchen which were not included in the valuation.⁷ Sir Richard died in 1547 and Walter Devereux, his son, inherited his property and assumed many of the titles and offices previously occupied by his father.

Through the political machinations of Walter Devereux, first Viscount Hereford, Baron Ferrers of Chartley, *Custos Rotulorum* of Cardiganshire (d. 1558),⁸

³ P. S. Edwards, 'Richard Devereux' *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1509–1558*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/devereux-richard-1513-47#biography> Accessed 6 Feb 2020.

⁴ Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, pp. 115–17; Williams, *Tudor Cistercians*, pp. 229–30; Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, pp. 285–86.

⁵ Williams, *Strata Florida*, Appendix, Q. R. Suppression Papers, Public Record Office, pp. xciii–c; TNA: SC 6/HENVIII/4869.

⁶ Williams, *Strata Florida*, Appendix, Lease to Richard Devereux, pp. ci–ciii; TNA: SC 6/HENVIII/7337.

⁷ Williams, *Strata Florida*, p. 180, Appendix, Lease to Richard Devereux, pp. ci–ciii; TNA: SC 6/HENVIII/7337.

⁸ Howell A. Lloyd, 'Devereux, Walter, first Viscount Hereford (c. 1489–1558), administrator and nobleman.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 23 Sep. 2004. Accessed 9 Feb. 2020.

the Devereux family's influence in mid-Wales gained significant strength during the sixteenth century. Much of that increase in Devereux influence resulted from an altercation between Walter Devereux and his adversary Rhys ap Gruffudd. Devereux is reputed to have harboured considerable resentment against Rhys for his popularity and influence in south Wales. Their contentious relationship led to a series of escalating incidents between them during the late 1520s, ending in the arrest of Rhys in 1530. Likely a victim of the machinations of his enemies, Rhys was executed for treason in 1531.⁹ His lands, which were valued at 10,000 per year at that time, went to the Crown. A great deal of this property made its way into the hands of his primary enemy, Walter Devereux, for his loyal service to the Crown as Chief Justice of South Wales. It was on this Welsh land that the Devereux family built their fortune.¹⁰

It is unclear whether part of Devereux's lease was surrendered, but on 14 July 1564, the monastic site of Strata Florida and its demesne lands and tenements were granted by Queen Elizabeth I to Thomas Reve, William Ryvet, and William Hechins, for the purchase price of £3967 15s 7d, which they paid to Thomas Gardner, teller of the Exchequer. On the following day, Reve and Ryvet conveyed the property to Walter, Viscount Hereford, who subsequently sold it on 20 February 1571, to John Stedman.¹¹ Unfortunately it is not made evident what specific tenements were included in the purchase, though presumably they were located in the immediate vicinity of the former abbey. Stedman also purchased the wool

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7567>.

⁹ This is examined in detail in Ralph A. Griffiths, *Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his Family: A Study in the Wars of the Roses and Early Tudor Politics* (1993; repr. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp.91–111.

¹⁰ Philip Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales, 1536–1990* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 46.

¹¹ NLW, CD IV/1.

custom for the granges of Mefenydd, Cwmystwyth, Pennardd, Blaenaeron, and Anhuniog as recorded in a deed dated 1567 from John Tomworth and William Dodington.¹²

The Stedman family is singular in that it, amongst the great landholding families associated with the lands previously belonging to Strata Florida, did not claim ancient association with Wales. There is documentary evidence of a David Stedman holding a prebendary stall at St Davids Cathedral in 1502,¹³ however, and the rent rolls listed above indicate that the Stedmans were holding property in the vicinity by the 1530s and residing at Strata Florida as early as 1571.¹⁴ The Stedmans married well into the Welsh gentry and owned not only the demesne lands of the late monastery of Strata Florida, but also lands in the counties of Radnor and Montgomery. One assessment is that although ‘they were important landowners they were content to play second fiddle to their more powerful neighbours’.¹⁵ While the Stedmans served as high sheriffs and magistrates for several generations to follow, they did not figure much in the political life of the county of Cardigan. However, the land, wealth, and influence that the Stedman family infused into local estates were significant, especially for the Vaughan family. John Stedman died at Strata Florida on 1 December 1607, and amongst his Strata Florida landholdings were 19 messuages and some tithes called Treyaney Mynych (*traianau mynech*, or the

¹² Williams, *Strata Florida*, Appendix, Conveyance of Custom of Wool to John Stedman, 1567, pp. ciii–cv.

¹³ B. Jones, ed., ‘Unidentified Prebendaries’, in *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300–1541: Volume 11, the Welsh Dioceses* (Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph, St Davids) (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1965), pp. 79–83, accessed March 15, 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/fasti-ecclesiae/1300-1541/vol11/pp79-83>

¹⁴ NLW, Cwrtmawr MS 873D.

¹⁵ Herbert Lloyd-Johnes, ‘The Lesser Country Houses of Cardiganshire part 2’, *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society*, 2 (3) (1954), 170–73 (p. 172).

monks' third) in the grange of Blaenaeron.¹⁶ Walter Devereux died in 1576 and was succeeded by his son, Robert, second earl of Essex (d. 1601).¹⁷ Sir Robert's life and misfortunes are discussed at length later in this chapter. (See Appendix 15 for an abbreviated Devereux ancestry.)

On 28 November 1605, a Letter Patent recorded a lease for the term of 40 years to Owen Sheppard and Henry Gerrard, gentlemen, on trust for Robert Devereux, third earl of Essex (d. 1646), who was approximately fifteen years of age at the time and in the process of establishing himself in an apprenticeship at court.¹⁸ Included in the lease were the granges of 'Havodwyn, Blanarian, Pennarth, Comustwith, Meveneth, Morva Mawre, Haminnock, and Doverchen, and the commortha there'.¹⁹ The rents were £112 yearly, and commorth every third year of £38 13s 8d. The lease also included considerable land formerly possessed by Whitland Abbey. In 1628 a letter patent recorded a grant from the Crown to Edward Ditchfield, John Heighlord, Humphrey Clark, and Francis Mosse, citizens of London, of the perpetual fee farm of the reversion of (*inter alia*) the granges of 'Havodwen, Blanarian alias Blamarian, Pennarth, Comustwith, Mevenith, Morva Mawr, Haniniocke, and Doverchen, co. Cardigan', and the commorth usually amounting to £38 14s 8d every third year.²⁰ The said property was demised on 10

¹⁶ Francis Green, 'Stedman of Strata Florida', *West Wales Historical Society Transactions*, 8 (1919–1920), 89–102 (p. 94).

¹⁷ Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565–1601), soldier and politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004). Accessed 9 Feb. 2020. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7565>.

¹⁸ John Morrill, 'Devereux, Robert, third earl of Essex (1591–1646), parliamentarian army officer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004). Accessed 9 Feb. 2020. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7566>.

¹⁹ NLW, CD I/152.

²⁰ See Figure 3.5. The correlative modern grange names used are: Hafodwen, Blaenaeron, Pennardd, Cwmystwyth, Mefenydd, Morfa Mawr, Anhuniog, and Y Dwyarachen.

January 1616–17 by the Crown for 99 years to Sir Francis Bacon, John Dacombe, Thomas Murray, Sir James Fullerton, Sir John Walter, and Sir Thomas Trevor, and assigned by Walter, Fullerton, and Trevor to William Williams, Robert Mitchell, Walter Markes, and Robert Marsh on 20 June 1628 for the remainder of the 99-year term. This grant did not include mineral rights but did include heriots and commorths.²¹ Subsequent indentures followed in 1629 and 1630 for the leasing of the granges or confirmations thereof, generally involving the same trustees for Lord Essex and the same lessors, and separately for the leasing of the mineral rights on a yearly basis for £25 to Matthew and Josse de Quester.²²

On 30 November 1630, the Right Hon. Robert, third earl of Essex, agreed to pay the trustees of the citizens of the city of London £3000, and John Vaughan of Trawscoed agreed to pay the said trustees £1300 toward the purchase of the granges of ‘Havodwen, Blaynayron, Pennarth, Comystwith, Mevenith, Murva Maure, Henyniocke, and Dowarchen’ (parcel of the possessions of the late dissolved monastery of Strata Florida, co. Cardigan). The properties ‘were to be passed to the said earl or his appointees in as ample a manner as the same had been granted to the said trustees’. A rent charge of £300 for the earl was to be charged on the premises by John Vaughan, and the £3000 loan to be repaid to the earl by John Vaughan in instalments.²³ With that, the grange of Blaenaeron (along with the other Strata Florida granges listed above) passed through the hands of several generations of the Devereux family as well as the management of Sir Francis Bacon to become part of the Crosswood Estate belonging to the Vaughan family.

The 1628 and 1630 property exchanges are particularly interesting for their

²¹ NLW, CD I/235.

²² NLW, CD II/13; CD I/240; CD II/15.

²³ NLW, CD II/12.

involvement of three specific people: Robert Devereux, third earl of Essex (d. 1646); Sir Francis Bacon (d. 1626); and Sir John Vaughan of Golden Grove (d. 1634). How these relationships may have impacted the large land purchase made by Sir John Vaughan of Trawscoed is not entirely clear. However, it seems unlikely that these intersections amongst them had no bearing on events to follow. Furthermore, this is reflective of the suggestion that it was the social and political position in Wales and England that the Vaughan family already possessed, and the connections previously established, which led to the possibility of making the land purchase.

This other Sir John Vaughan, of Golden Grove, is significant here as his early career was deeply indebted to the second earl of Essex, Robert Devereux. The two had very strong political and social connections, which were consolidated by Sir John's marriage in 1598 to the daughter of Sir Gelly Meyrick, who was steward of Essex's land in Wales and was executed for treason in 1601 for conspiring revolution with Essex.²⁴ A year after his marriage, Sir John accompanied the earl to Ireland, where he was also knighted. Suspected of conspiring with Essex and Meyrick in the 1601 rebellion, Sir John was arrested briefly, but no charges were brought against him. He regained some of his status later in the year when he was elected to Parliament for Carmarthenshire, and in 1602 he was reinstated to the Carmarthenshire bench. Sir John was High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1605.²⁵ In 1615 he was discovered to have interfered with records to conceal his extortion of tenants of Crown lands in Wales under his management. Having secured the favour

²⁴ N. M. Fuidge, 'Meyrick (Merrick), Gelly (c.1556–1601), of Gellyswick, Hascard, Pemb.; Wigmore Castle, Herefs.; Gladestry, Rad. and Essex House, London', <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/meyrick-%28merrick%29-gelly-1556-1601> (Accessed 16 December 2019); William Retlaw Williams, *The Parliamentary History of the Principality of Wales, from the earlier times to the present day, 1541–1895, comprising lists of the representatives, chronologically arranged under counties, with biographical and genealogical notices of the members, together with particulars of the various contested elections, double returns and petitions* (Brecknock: privately published, 1895), p. 44.

of the earl of Somerset, who intervened on his behalf, Sir John re-established himself in politics and was elected to Parliament for Cardiganshire again in 1620. Following a scandal in 1621, Francis Bacon was housed in Sir John's London home, in return for which Sir John was elevated to Irish Barony.²⁶ In the mid-seventeenth century this Sir John's nephew, Sir Edward Vaughan, married Jemima Bacon, the grand-niece of Francis Bacon.²⁷ Sir John of Golden Grove's political career went into a rapid decline after King Charles I came to the throne in March 1625, and he fell out of favour in political and social circles in London. Despite his claims of financial strain, Sir John nonetheless purchased his manor at Emlyn, and assumed the lordships of Kidwelly, Carnwallon, and Iscennen. He also purchased an Irish earldom in 1628. Sir John died in 1634, and was buried in the churchyard of St Teilo, Llandeilo, where, as it happens, the Lichfield Gospels were once kept.²⁸ Whilst any family relationship that may have existed between Sir John of Golden Grove and the Vaughan family of Trawscoed was not direct, the two families were undoubtedly well-known to each other, due in large part to their involvement in local and Crown politics as well as the relative proximity of their large estates, which stood approximately 45 miles apart.

Sir Francis Bacon also had deep connections to the second earl of Essex, Robert Devereux (d. 1601). Bacon's uncle was Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Master of the Court of Wards, who oversaw the education of a number of young

²⁵ Williams, *The Parliamentary History*, pp. 43–44.

²⁶ An Irish barony was a customary title of nobility, in which the title holder was referred to as a Baron, but it did not include a peerage, nor a seat in the Irish House of Lords. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, ed., 'Vaughan, Sir John (c. 1575–1634), of Golden Grove, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Carm., and Elm House, Parson's Green, Mdx', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
<http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1604-1629/member/vaughan-sir-john-1575-1634>

²⁷ Henry F. J. Vaughan, 'Private Papers of Richard Vaughan, Earl of Carbery', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, fourth series, XII (1880), 220–37, 273–88 (pp. 275–77).

²⁸ Thrush and Ferris, 'Vaughan, Sir John'.

boys of the aristocracy whose fathers died before they attained maturity. One of the boys he housed and educated was Robert Devereux, and it is likely to have been here that the friendship between Bacon and Devereux began.²⁹ After Bacon's return to London from France upon the death of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, in 1579, this friendship was rekindled, and they spent considerable time together. Building on the boyhood relationships they developed in the home of Lord Burghley, Essex had much to gain from the Bacon brothers' social connections from their family's long legal tenancy at Gray's Inn.³⁰ This was aided in large part by Francis and Anthony managing an intelligence service by contract for their patrons. By the early 1590s, the scope of their intelligence programme had narrowed to serve only Essex. Anthony Bacon moved into Essex's house in London in 1595 better to fulfil this duty.³¹ Bacon and the earl endeavoured to support and help one another, which ultimately did Bacon no favours whatsoever.³² In 1592 Bacon received an appointment to a position created solely for him as the Queen's Counsel Learned, Extraordinary.³³ This appears to have been a far-reaching position with a great deal of latitude for undertaking legal matters on behalf of Queen Elizabeth I and generally looking after her interests. Bacon fell into disfavour with the Queen in early 1593 when he argued against a heavy taxation on the common people, suggesting a less imposing system of taxation instead.³⁴ So began a series of ups and downs in his

²⁹ Joel Hurtsfeld, *Queens Wards: Wardship and Marriage Under Elizabeth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 164–68; Daphne du Maurier, *Golden Lads: A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis, and their Friends*, (London: Virago Press, 2007), pp. 5–8, 28.

³⁰ William Tosh, 'Testimonies of affection and dispatches of intelligence: The letters of Anthony Bacon, 1558–1602', PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2013), p. 198.

³¹ Tosh, 'Testimonies', pp. 198–202.

³² Du Maurier, *Golden Lads*, pp. 93–95.

³³ W. S. Holdsworth, *History of English Law, vol. VI* (London: Methuen & CO., Ltd, 1938), pp. 473–74.

³⁴ Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, pp. 283–84.

relationship with the Queen. In 1593 Devereux, second earl of Essex, recommended his friend Bacon to the vacant position of Attorney-General, but the Queen was unconvinced. She did concede to appoint Bacon to the position of Deputy Chief Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster, and continued employing him in various ways.³⁵ In the next couple of years, Francis and his elder brother Anthony Bacon moved into apartments in Essex House to be nearer their friend Essex.³⁶ Therein, Francis took up the position as the earl's unofficial Secretary of State. A month later the Queen snubbed Essex's recommendation of Bacon for the position of Solicitor General, instead appointing Thomas Fleming, her Serjeant-at-Law, to the post. Essex was displeased, viewing this as his personal failure to help his friend. In compensation, he gave Bacon a gift of land, to aid Bacon in his ongoing financial difficulties.³⁷

Relations between Essex and the Queen intensified in 1599 when Essex, disregarding Bacon's recommendations, sought a military position and then took the English army to Ireland to end a rebellion led by the earl of Tyrone.³⁸ In 1601 Essex attempted to raise an insurrection against the Queen and her government, which led to his trial for treason and quick execution. Misled by Essex for a number of years, Bacon mistakenly fought for Essex's innocence, threatening Bacon's relationship with the Queen in the process. In the end, it was Bacon who served as the Queen's counsel, sadly having to argue his old friend Essex's guilt.³⁹

Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, and Bacon's circumstances under King James

³⁵ Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, pp. 284–88; Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, ed., 'Bacon, Sir Francis (1561–1626) of Gray's Inn, London, and Gorhamsbury, nr. St Albans, Herts.; later of York House, the Strand, Westminster', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1558–1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) <http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1604-1629/member/bacon-sir-francis-1561-1626>; Daphne du Maurier, *The Winding Stair: Francis Bacon, His Rise and Fall* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1976), pp. 1-10.

³⁶ Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, p. 307.

³⁷ Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, pp. 313–14.

³⁸ Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, pp. 422–95.

I began to change for the better. In July of 1603 Francis was knighted. One year later he was made the King's Counsel Learned Ordinary. That same year Bacon wrote a letter of apology for his part under orders from the queen in the execution of Essex. This appears to have happened during a period in which efforts were made by the Crown to restore the reputation of Essex, which included reinstating Essex's son and heir, the third earl of Essex, to his lands and titles.⁴⁰ In 1607 Bacon was appointed Solicitor-General. In 1613 he became Attorney-General and Chief Advisor to the Crown. In 1616 he was made a Privy Councillor; in 1617 he was appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal; in 1618 he was made Lord High Chancellor.⁴¹ That same year the king raised Bacon to the peerage, as Baron Verulam of Verulam, and then he was made Viscount St Alban.⁴² He had reached his pinnacle. This is also the point at which Sir Francis was involved in the Crown's land interests in Wales, and his name appears in legal documents granting tenancy of the eight Strata Florida granges that fell under the purview of the earl of Essex.⁴³

Bacon's rapid rise under the king's favour had not gone unnoticed, and upon his becoming Viscount St Alban,⁴⁴ his opposers accused him of receiving bribes. Bacon was asked by the King to submit without defence, and Parliament impeached him for corruption. This was contrived in part to protect the reputations of the king,

³⁹ Thrush and Ferris, 'Bacon, Sir Francis'.

⁴⁰ Francis Bacon, *The Apology of Francis Bacon, Kt., in certain Imputations concerning the late Earl of Essex, written to the Right Honourable his very good Lord, the Earl of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland* (London: William Lee, 1670), pp. 1–14; Hammer, 'Devereux'.

⁴¹ Thrush and Ferris, 'Bacon, Sir Francis'.

⁴² His first title, Baron Verulam of Verulam, means 'spear shaker of Verulamium', which contributes mightily to the rumours of his having penned at least some of William Shakespeare's works; *The Francis Bacon Research Trust* <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/pages/bacon.html>

⁴³ NLW, CD I/235.

⁴⁴ His second title, Viscount St Alban, is the name of the Romano-British saint Alban, was a martyr beheaded for having aided a priest in escaping Roman soldiers. See David Farmer, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 10–11.

as well as his favourite, Buckingham. In May of 1621 Bacon was stripped of his titles, fined £40,000 and sent to the Tower of London,⁴⁵ where he spent but a few days before the King banished him from London. In September of the same year the king relented, and Bacon was permitted to return to London for six weeks, but during that time he was ordered to reside at the London house belonging to Sir John Vaughan of Golden Grove. A few weeks later the king signed a pardon for Bacon, although he was never permitted to return to Parliament.⁴⁶ Having devoted the remainder of his life primarily to his writing, Francis Bacon died in April 1626.⁴⁷

Whilst all three of these men led heavily entwined lives, personally and politically, the overlap with Sir John Vaughan of Trawscoed was seemingly small: the second earl of Essex was executed before Sir John was born, and Sir John of Golden Grove narrowly escaped being hanged at the same time for his alleged complicity in the earl's treachery. Sir Francis spoke in favour of the beheading of Essex in return for the Crown sparing the life of his brother, Anthony Bacon.⁴⁸ Yet these men appear to have all contributed to the possibility of Sir John of Trawscoed succeeding in London to such a degree that the purchase of the Strata Florida granges was a possibility. Sir John of Golden Grove was heavily influential in London as well as in Wales, and the proximity of their estates would have ensured the two families had overlapping social and political circles. Sir Francis was

⁴⁵ James Spedding, ed. *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon, Vol. VII* (London: Longman, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874), Pp. 269–70.

⁴⁶ Spedding, *Letters*, pp. 300–01.

⁴⁷ Du Maurier, *The Winding Stair*, pp. 195–220, 260–65.

⁴⁸ Lloyd Bowen and Simon Healy, 'Vaughan, Sir John (c.1575–1634), of Golden Grove, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Carm. and Elm House, Parson's Green, Mdx.', <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/vaughan-sir-john-1575-1634> (Accessed 21 December, 2019); "Cecil Papers: March 1601, 1-10," in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 11, 1601*, ed. R A Roberts (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1906), 100–19. *British History Online*, accessed 15 December, 2019, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol11/pp100-19>.

responsible for Crown interests in Wales in the years just before Sir John purchased the land. The Devereux family also would have known Sir John of Trawscoed from interests in Wales, as the Devereux family had long been associated with Strata Florida's lands, and Sir John and his father Edward before him served as stewards of some of the Devereux land in Wales. Whilst these three men did predate the 1630 purchase of land from Essex's son and heir, the third earl of Essex, the family connections amongst all four families were old ones.

Blaenaeron Grange and its Tenants and Landlords

As dissolution loomed, many abbots anticipated the closure of their monasteries and settled numerous 99-year leases to assure their tenants would not be easily dislodged from their homes.⁴⁹ As a result, around 1625 there arose considerable estate building opportunities that had not previously existed. This coincided roughly with the Vaughan large-scale purchase of former monastic grange land, as well as Vaughan purchasing a considerable amount of land from the prominent Lewis family of Abernant Bychan.⁵⁰ All of this activity may well have resulted in a fair amount of reorganisation of land for ease of estate management. Some tenants whose families had long occupied land in the region took advantage of these events and expanded their holdings in the 1620s and 1630s. Chief among these appears to have been the Thomas family, who are also related to the Gôch family, to whom the Vaughans also shared close relations via three marriages.

A number of tenants appear to have acquired numerous holdings in proximity

⁴⁹ For pre-Dissolution long monastic leases in Wales, see Pierce, 'Landlords', pp. 382–83.

⁵⁰ In 1637 John Vaughan purchased from Sir John Lewis and his son James Lewis a large number of parcels of land, all within co. Cardigan: NLW, CD I/266

to one another post-Dissolution. One such was Jenkin ap John, who is listed as the tenant of Fulbrook Mill with a 99-year lease beginning 1533 (or 1523, though it is possible that one of these dates was misrecorded or a forgery).⁵¹ He also is listed as occupying Talken Esberberveth Issa with a lease dated 1523 for 99 years.⁵² These may be the same location. In 1524 he acquired a 99-year lease for Monachty Blaynayron.⁵³ The latter holding went to Morgan and Rice Thomas in 1625,⁵⁴ and it remained with the Thomas family at least to the start of the nineteenth century. The first property listing the Thomases as tenants is a 99-year lease of Llwygwinau in 1532, claimed as nephews and heirs of Iwan ap Griffith Goz.⁵⁵ The Goz/Gough family appears in other property leases as well, such as Castle Fleming/Clutty Gasseg beginning in 1625.⁵⁶ Iwan ap Griffith ap Goz also held a 99-year lease for Esker Bervedd Icha beginning 1 September 1530.⁵⁷ The Thomas and Gough family may even have maintained their tenancy of Llwyngwinau up to the nineteenth century, but certainly to the late eighteenth century.⁵⁸ That 1532 lease was quickly followed by another 99-year lease of Tithen Bwlch/Castell Fflamys in 1534.⁵⁹ The Thomas family also took Esgair Saison in 1625,⁶⁰ and Maes Glas in 1625 as well,⁶¹ though the Gough family appears on the 1538 99-year lease for this property,⁶² so

⁵¹ NLW, CD I/5, CD IV/I.

⁵² NLW, CD I/5.

⁵³ NLW, CD IV/I.

⁵⁴ NLW, CD I/230; CD I/287; CD I/699; CD I/788; CD I/1030.

⁵⁵ NLW, CD IV/I.

⁵⁶ NLW, CD I/230.

⁵⁷ NLW, CD IV/I.

⁵⁸ NLW, CD IV/I; CD I/5; CD I/215; CD I/230; CD I/401; CD I/480; CD I/653; CD I/825; CD II/348; CD I/1028; CD I/1089; CD I/1200.

⁵⁹ NLW, CD IV/I.

⁶⁰ NLW, CD I/230.

⁶¹ NLW, CD I/230.

⁶² NLW, CD IV/I.

the extended family had involvement at Maes Glas early on, it seems, which is of particular interest as there is some suggestion that the administrative centre of Blaenaeron grange at some point during the monastic period may have shifted from Maes Glas to Monachty Blaenaeron.⁶³ Other holdings naming Thomases as tenants include Ty yn yr Eskir, Blaen yr Eskir, Ty yn y Berth, and Bron y Cappel, all during the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ The Thomas family's influence in the region was significant, as Ievan ap Phillip Thomas was listed as the second defendant, after John Stedman, a man of immense influence in the area, in a dispute over land seizure at Bron y Cappel, noted in that instance as a part of Eskyr Berveth Ganol.⁶⁵ The Gough family also had interest in Llwyn y Bwlch at least as early as 1609,⁶⁶ and the family appears to be included on the 1533 99-year lease of Fullbrook Mill,⁶⁷ alongside Jenkin ap John although no further mention of the family on that site exists.

What this seems to illustrate is that the Gough/Thomas family held leases of lands of varying purposes or uses, some upland, some valley, and several properties of significance from an early date. Amongst their 1530s 99-year leases were Llwyngwinau, Esker Bervedd Icha, Tithen Bwlch/Castell Fflamys, Maes Glas, and Fullbrook Mill.⁶⁸ That includes all three of the places of importance, as listed in the original grant to the monastery, plus the mill property as well as the ancient farm of Llwyngwinau. In short, they had possession of everything listed in the first grants to the monastery from Lord Rhys. This suggests considerable continuity of the integrity

⁶³ Austin and Bezant, 'The Medieval Landscapes', p. 32.

⁶⁴ NLW, CD II/348.

⁶⁵ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, p. 93.

⁶⁶ NLW, CD I/159.

⁶⁷ NLW, Cwrtmawr MS 873D

⁶⁸ NLW, CD IV/1

of Blaenaeron's landscape organisation as it changed hands in the twelfth century and then again in the sixteenth century. It also contributes to the sense of place discussed in chapter 2, as the people living on and working on or near those properties saw perhaps very little change or disruption despite the changes in ownership as well as the shift from secular to monastic, and then back to secular possession. Many Cistercian monasteries, however, were known to possess land occupied and farmed by tenants. These tenants were part and parcel of the land granted to the monasteries at the time of foundation or later land acquisition.⁶⁹

There is no way to determine whether the same family occupied these areas during monastic occupation, unfortunately, but it does raise some questions. In order to acquire so much land – somewhere in the vicinity of 1500 acres – before the dissolution of the abbey, the Goch family must have been one of considerable regional significance. There may also be some relation to the thirteenth abbot of Strata Florida, Phillip Gôch (d. 1280).⁷⁰ If he was a member of this family, it is impossible to know if his position as abbot influenced the family's ability to occupy so much valuable property, or if the family's importance in the region influenced his attaining the position of abbot. In a later connection between the Gôch family and Strata Florida, William ap Thomas Gôch was married to a daughter of the abbot, Richard, in the 1530s.⁷¹ This adds a second, and more immediate, kinship association to the Strata Florida lands. Although the surname Gôch was likely a reference to the hair colour of the patriarch, there being such continuous occupation of landholdings in close proximity suggests that these are of the same family using a fixed surname, and not coincidentally descendants of multiple unrelated red-haired

⁶⁹ Alfonso, 'Cistercians and Feudalism', p. 25; Williams, *Welsh Cistercians*, p. 243.

⁷⁰ *Brut Hergest*, pp. 268–9.

⁷¹ Griffiths, *Sir Rhys*, p. 98; P.C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies, 1400-1500*, 18 vols (Aberystwyth:

patriarchs. The Gôch family connects to the Vaughan family very early on, and there were at least three marriages between the two families before the mid-seventeenth century.⁷² It was indeed through the first Vaughan-Gôch marriage, Adda Vychan to Dido, daughter of Ievan Gôch, that the Vaughans came to reside at Trawscoed in the fourteenth century.⁷³ Whilst genealogy and kinship were once a guarantee of rights to land in Wales, that was no longer true, theoretically at least, in early modern Wales. Yet, as the Thomas/Gôch family occupied these sites of significance a full century before the Vaughan family purchased the grange in its entirety in 1630, here is evidence that in this case, family relationships were indeed the key to landholding, and perhaps to some extent continued to be true to the nineteenth century.

A late sixteenth-century proceeding from the Court of Exchequer (Equity) identifies David ap Phillip ap Llewelyn Gôch as a gentleman.⁷⁴ What is meant by the descriptor in the sixteenth century is no simple matter. Whilst nobleman and gentleman had similar if not synonymous meanings in earlier centuries, by the sixteenth century, class lines were beginning to blur as land availability improved opportunities for lower classes. Until the middle of the century, ‘nobility’ was the term used to signify a person of higher status, possessing special rights and privileges. Later in the century, however, to be noble was to be of the rank of baron or higher, and thus nobility was associated with title rather than pedigree or personal traits. Gentry replaced nobility as a general term identifying higher status, non-titled persons.⁷⁵ ‘Nobility native’ was the most commonly found type of nobility and

National Library of Wales, 1983), X, p. 1615.

⁷² See Appendix 14 for ancestry chart.

⁷³ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Emyr Gwynne Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales: Henry VIII–Elizabeth*, Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales, no. IV (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1939), p. 86.

⁷⁵ Ruth Kelso, ‘Sixteenth-Century Definitions of the Gentleman in England’, *The Journal of English*

indicated descent from noble ancestry: ‘Among the common people the name of an old house coupled with a lordly air and a velvet cloak constitutes the chief claim to the title of gentleman’.⁷⁶ Welsh concepts of *uchelwyr* or nobility were likewise based in kinship, which in turn was tied heavily to their land.⁷⁷ It comes as no surprise that the Gôch line is considered to be of higher status, as the marriage of a Gôch daughter to Adda Vychan, including a transfer of property of considerable value, joined the Gôch family to the Vaughan family, high status *uchelwyr* with family connections to earlier Welsh aristocracy.

In 1605, a legal dispute arose regarding the Crown demise of Blaenaeron grange to the third earl of Essex. A complaint was raised against a number of defendants in the case, including Ievan Thomas Gough, John Thomas, Roger David, Angharad vz Griffith, Thomas David Gough, David Thomas, and Jevan Thomas ap Jevan Dd. Hir.⁷⁸ These defendants were accused of document seizure, wrongful intrusion, claim of leases for years, and refusal to pay the ancient rents on their properties, which included the farm Llwyngwinau, at that time already in the hands of the Thomas/Gough family. No explanation provides insight into why these tenants were refusing to pay their rents, but they did continue to occupy their lands,⁷⁹ so presumably there was some perception of unfair treatment at the hands of the third earl of Essex or his property manager. This was merely a few years following the execution of the second earl of Essex, and there may have been some disorder in the transferring of responsibility to his heir, who regained his title and properties in 1605. Presumably any bad feelings between the Thomas and Gough kinsmen of the

and German Philology, 24 (2), (1925), 370–82 (pp. 370–71).

⁷⁶ Kelso, ‘Sixteenth-Century Definitions’, p. 373.

⁷⁷ For more on defining Welsh gentry, see Carr, *The Gentry of North Wales*, pp. 1–27.

⁷⁸ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, p. 99.

Vaughan family and Essex were insufficient to interfere with the large land deal 25 years later, nor with the continuing stewardship of other Devereux lands in Wales by the Vaughans. It could be related, however, to a 1608 document releasing from John Vaughan ap Mores (Morris) Thomas to Edward Vaughan of Trawscoed, all his interest in Trawscoed as well as a large number of other named tenements not included in the focus of this study, to include three mills.⁸⁰

Another complaint arose in 1606 between Robert, third earl of Essex, and a large number of tenants, including Dd. Gough ap Ivan, Evan Dd. Thomas, Owen Thomas ap Rythergh, Henry Thomas, Morris Thomas, Dd. Ap Ivan Thos., Ivan Rothergh, and many others.⁸¹ The defendants were all tenants of properties in the former monastic granges of Pennardd, Mefenydd, Cwmystwyth, and Blaenaeron. Owen Sheppard and Henry Gerrard had previously been demised the granges by the Crown for use by the earl of Essex. This appears to be an effort to seize land which had been granted to the tenants in 99-year leases by the former abbot of Strata Florida. The answer to the bill in the exchequer proceedings for this dispute claim that the defendants 'are poor men and almost "undone" by this suit.' However, it goes on to say that in the case of the tenant of Esker Berveth, who paid one fat calf and one fat bullock or heifer in rents, that despite this tenant always paying his rents, the bailiff killed one of the tenant's cows with his sword.⁸² That particular tenant had inherited the property from his grandfather, who held the lease from 1519. It is not recorded what further decisions were made in this case.

Nineteenth-century tithe maps indicate considerable landholdings owned by

⁷⁹ See Appendix 16.

⁸⁰ NLW, CD I/159.

⁸¹ Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, pp. 104–05. See also above, chapter 4.

⁸² Jones, *Exchequer Proceedings of James I*, p. 105.

Richards Thomas within the borders of the former grange of Blaenaeron, notably the land directly between Esgair Saison and Ty yn y Bwlch (see figure 5.1).⁸³ Richards Thomas was in possession of two farms within the borders of Blaenaeron grange. The larger farm, Esgaermaengawr, formerly recorded as Esgair Maen Fawr, comprised 34 fields, and included some upland areas. The smaller farm, called Constant Farm, is located just to the west of Bron y Capel. It has twelve fields and appears to be considerably more compact a farm than the other. Richards Thomas had a large number of properties elsewhere, including a homestead farm called Abergwni at Pontrhydfendigaid close to Strata Florida Abbey. Within the possessions held by Richards Thomas on the Esgaermaengawr Farm is a field location possibly named for the Vaughan family, noted in the Apportionment as *Graig Fychan*, or Vaughan Rock, the significance of place-names thus underlining the influence this family had on the region for centuries. Although there is no proven direct link between this landowner and the former Thomas/Gôch tenants of the post-dissolution Crosswood estate, however, it poses an interesting thing to consider.

⁸³ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, The parish of Caron in the county of Cardigan.
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4541956#?cv=71&h=1448&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=1766%2C2206%2C1800%2C755>

LANDOWNER	OCCUPIER	In Poss.	LANDS AND PREMISES	CULTIVATION	STATE MEASURE			PAYABLE TO			REMARKS	
					A.	B.	C.	1832	1835	1838		1841
Richard Thomas Men. (continued)	Wm. Lloyd Cemeteries	1833 1835 1836	Wm. Lloyd Wm. Lloyd Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1837	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1838	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1839	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1840	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1841	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1842	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1843	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1844	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1845	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1846	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1847	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1848	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1849	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1850	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1851	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1852	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1853	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1854	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1855	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1856	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1857	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1858	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1859	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1860	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1861	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1862	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1863	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1864	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1865	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1866	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1867	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1868	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1869	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1870	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1871	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1872	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1873	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1874	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1875	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1876	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1877	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1878	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1879	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1880	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1881	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1882	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1883	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1884	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1885	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1886	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1887	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1888	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1889	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1890	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1891	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1892	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1893	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1894	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1895	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1896	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1897	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1898	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1899	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
		1900	Wm. Lloyd	Wm. Lloyd	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	

Figure 5.1 Apportionment for Richards Thomas land. NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, The parish of Caron in the county of Cardigan.
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4541956#?cv=71&h=1448&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=1766%2C2206%2C1800%2C755>

Also found in the tithe maps is the farm of Llwyngwine Ucha, a portion of the ancient farm of Llwyngwinau farm, which remained in the possession of the Lord Lisburne as part of his Crosswood Estate in the mid-nineteenth century. The occupant of the farm and its fields, as well as a parcel of woodland, was a Davies Thomas.⁸⁴ The same man was the owner of a large number of properties elsewhere on former Strata Florida lands, primarily in the Pontrhydfendigaid and Tregaron areas.⁸⁵ A Lloyd Thomas was listed as occupant of another Crosswood Estate farm slightly southeast of Strata Florida Abbey called Tycanol, also not within the area of this research.⁸⁶

The 1530s occupation of the most important grange properties by the Gôch family with 99-year leases indicate the potential for a pre-dissolution control over Blaenaeron grange lands by the same family. Those long leases led right into the 1630 large-scale land purchase made by Sir John Vaughan, himself related to the Gôch family, wherein he took ownership of the entirety of Blaenaeron grange. The mid-seventeenth century also shows considerable segmentation of grange properties and some reorganisation that is likely to have been connected to the land coming under new management, and the Vaughan estate working to develop a cohesive estate management plan so as to handle such a vast increase in their holdings. This illustrates an impressive, documented, continuity of occupation of these properties

⁸⁴ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, 'The parish of Caron in the County of Cardigan'.
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4541956#?cv=36&h=1620&c=&m=&s=&manifest=https%3A%2F%2Fdamssl.llgc.org.uk%2Fiiif%2F2.0%2F4541956%2Fmanifest.json&xywh=1056%2C2561%2C3110%2C1575>

⁸⁵ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, The Parish of Caron in the County of Cardigan,
https://places.library.wales/search/52.252/-3.885/12?alt=%3A*&page=1&refine=&alt=%3A*&order=desc&sort=score&rows=100&county%5B%5D=Cardigan&occupier_facet%5B%5D=Davies%20Thomas&leaflet-base-layers_98=on

⁸⁶ NLW, Welsh Tithe Maps, The parish of Caron in the County of Cardigan,
<https://places.library.wales/viewer/4541956#?cv=43&h=2173&c=&m=&s=&manifest=https%3A%2F%2Fdamssl.llgc.org.uk%2Fiiif%2F2.0%2F4541956%2Fmanifest.json&xywh=1584%2C2536%2C3599%2C1822>

by the same family line for over 400 years.⁸⁷

The large purchase in 1630 may have overburdened the Trawscoed finances, as there is record of litigation in Chancery the following year.⁸⁸ Morgan and William Herbert complained that earlier agreement was made regarding the lease of a part of the estate, to discover it was absorbed in the 1630 purchase. It was determined that earlier leases granted to the Herberts by either Robert, the late earl of Essex, or the late abbots of Strata Florida, would be honoured. Morgan Herbert and his heirs were re-granted their property and were to pay to Sir John Vaughan a yearly rent of £22, plus an additional one-time sum of £301.⁸⁹ In 1635 a more serious concern was raised when the tenants of grange properties, an estimated 10,000 total population at the time, claimed they had intentions to purchase the lands on which they lived, and Sir John's father, then the steward of Essex's lands in Cardiganshire, advised the tenants to allow Sir John to serve as an intermediary between themselves and the earl. The allegation was that Vaughan undervalued the estate, advised the earl that the tenants no longer wished to purchase, and then purchased them himself at a reduced rate.⁹⁰ The ruling on this is not in evidence, but it does raise some questions regarding the relationship between the Vaughans and Essex. Of particular related interest is that Sir John Vaughan continued in what had been his father's role as steward of some other Essex properties in 1637. In a deputation dated 31 May 1637, Robert, earl of Essex and Ewe, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, appointed John Vaughan to be his steward or deputy in the manors of Mefenydd and Creuddyn, co. Cardigan, and appointed Morris Vaughan to fill the office in the absence of the said John

⁸⁷ See Appendix 16.

⁸⁸ TNA, C 3/417/18.

⁸⁹ NLW, CD I/251

⁹⁰ TNA, C2/Chas.I/L53/36.

Vaughan.⁹¹ It would seem that the allegations raised by the tenants were not sufficient to sour the relationship between Essex and Sir John.

Under the Vaughan family's management, the grange of Blaenaeron retained much of the same manorial structure used before and during the monastic period for purposes of administration. The estate rentals were organized and maintained by the old monastic grange boundaries until the end of the eighteenth century. The medieval practice of rents paid in goods and services survived on some properties until the late nineteenth century. One rental agreement dated 1778 included yearly rent of £16, plus one hen, 20 eggs, 6 chickens, heriot of the second-best beast, and suit of mill at Fullbrook.⁹² The Honourable John Vaughan, writing in 1996 about his family's interactions with the land and the people, their tenants, who lived and worked upon it, notes that the business and personal documents which survive reflect his family's genuine concern for their tenants and employees. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the Vaughan estate helped support their tenants who suffered during an agricultural depression. When the family sold most of the estate in 1947, they offered reasonable terms for all of their tenants to purchase their farms, in an effort toward ongoing continuity for the region. The Vaughan family, suggests the current Lord Lisburne, 'never lost touch with and consideration of their Cardiganshire roots'.⁹³

⁹¹ NLW, CD II/60.

⁹² NLW, CD I/1089.

⁹³ Hon. John Vaughan, 'Afterword', in Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 244–46 (p. 244).

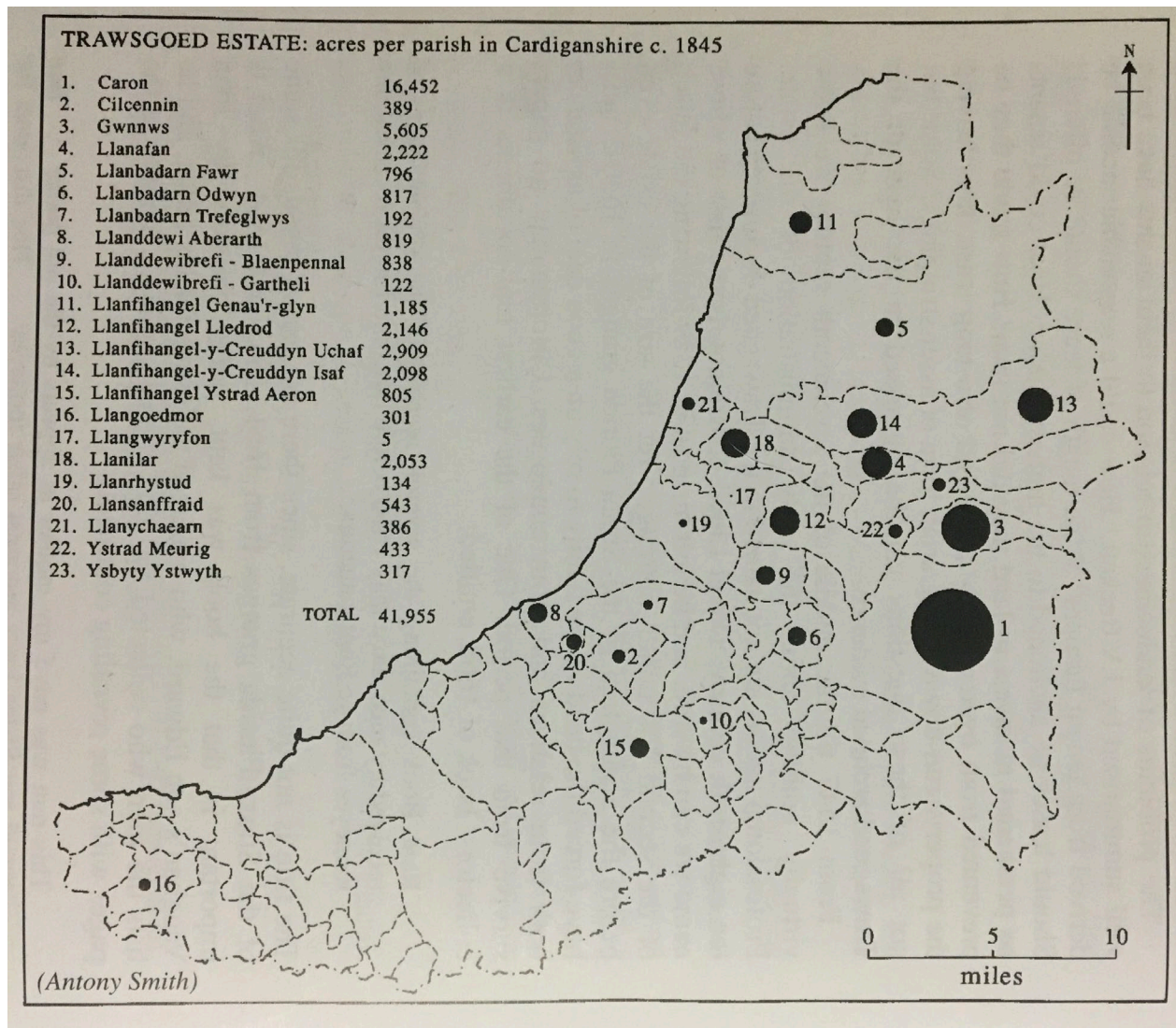


Figure 5.2 Map indicating importance of Caron parish to Vaughan rentals in Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 182.

The Vaughans' Trawsgoed estate was funded primarily by farm rentals. As illustrated in Figure 5.2, the bulk of the rentals came from properties in Caron parish, which includes Blaenaeron grange. 16,452 of the estate's 41,955 acres are located in Caron. The second largest concentration of land holdings for the family was in Gwnnws, at 5,605 acres. In the words of the Hon. John Vaughan, 'The appearance of much of the Ystwyth valley is essentially their creation'.⁹⁴ The region developed as it did under the care and management of the Vaughan estate.

Was the large purchase of monastic land in the 1630s a major game changer for Vaughan politics and social standing? Not singularly, it would seem. Sir John purchased the land early in his career, but his family had been well established beforehand. Although the Vaughan land holdings did expand dramatically during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the roots of this began much earlier. The dowry brought into the family by Moris Vaughan's marriage to Elliw in 1547 set this expansion in motion, which was aided by the changing property and inheritance laws that developed in the mid-sixteenth century.⁹⁵ From the sixteenth century onward, intermarriage between Welsh and English landed families was common, and many Welsh estates found their way into English hands in that manner. However, the Vaughans managed to do the opposite, drawing English properties into their own Welsh hands instead. Through the marriage of four eldest sons to English heiresses, the Vaughan holdings acquired estates in Somerset, Northumberland, Devon, and Middlesex. The Vaughans managed their estate well (generally), acquired titles, and built a legacy that may otherwise have been impossible for what had been a small landholding Welsh family.

The Vaughan Family and the Strata Florida Estate

As one of the oldest Welsh families, the Vaughan family claim deep ancestral ties to the land. It has been suggested that the family was living in the vicinity of Strata Florida as early as the mid-1200s, and that some were even buried on the abbey

⁹⁴ Hon. John Vaughan, 'Afterword', in Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 244.

⁹⁵ NLW CD II/4. See chapter 3 above for the shift away from *cyfran* to primogeniture during the sixteenth century, and for changes in law regarding land possession.

grounds in that period.⁹⁶ There is no documentary evidence for these statements or indeed for any involvement of the family with the abbey itself for the years before 1547. However, the Vaughan family appears to have had considerable interaction with Strata Florida lands before the dissolution. Despite the scarcity of material, a trend that does become evident is that the Vaughans ‘in their conscious policy towards the estate’⁹⁷ recognised the connection between land ownership and the assurance of local power and control. Perhaps they also acknowledged some power in an association with Strata Florida, although the institution remained only in the social memory of the region. Land ownership carried with it wealth and social status, and political influence as well.

The Vaughan connection to their core estate at Trawscoed began in the fourteenth century when the site was farmed by Ieuan Gôch. His daughter and heir Tудо married Adda Vychan, who was a great grandson of Collwyn ap Tangno of Gwynedd, a mysterious historical figure with a connection to Meirionnydd, and direct ancestor of the current Vaughan heir, the earl of Lisburne. Adda’s father, Llywelyn Fychan, served as a juror in Ultra Aeron, or northern Cardiganshire, in 1292. Adda ap Llewelyn Fychan, or Adda Vychan was therefore the first Vaughan to reside at Trawsgoed.⁹⁸

Adda ap Llywelyn Fychan was an administration officer or beadle of Creuddyn in 1331, which appears to be the start of his career.⁹⁹ He was escheator of

⁹⁶ This is suggested in Thomas Nicholas, *Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales: Containing a Record of All Ranks of the Gentry ... with Many Ancient Pedigrees and Memorials of Families, Volume 1* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, 1872), p. 131. However, this is not confirmed in P.C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300-1400* <https://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/handle/2160/4026/discover> (accessed 29 December 2020).

⁹⁷ Howells, ‘The Crosswood Estate’, p. 70.

⁹⁸ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 21–24.

⁹⁹ R. A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales in the Later Middle Ages: The Structure and Personnel of Government in South Wales, 1277–1536* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), p. 678.

South Wales by 1344,¹⁰⁰ which led to his being deputy steward of the county by 1348.¹⁰¹ Although Edward I outlawed Welshmen from holding office, the order did not have much effect locally, and Adda remained at his post in spite of it. He survived the Black Death and was in royal service in France when appointed constable of Cardigan Castle in 1355. He appears to have been amongst the Welsh dignitaries working to find a place for himself under royal patronage, and his efforts likely had a great impact on the future of his family.¹⁰² This was the start of the Vaughan family's significant contributions to local politics and service to the Crown, and the family's influence in those interests increased over the following three centuries.

Adda ap Llywelyn's son Maredudd had a son, also called Adda, who married Gwerfyl, daughter and heir of Llewelyn Gôch, and had a son, Llewelyn ap Adda, of Trawscoed, who married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Fychan ap Thomas David Gruffydd, of Llangathen. The son from this marriage, Ieuan ap Llewelyn, of Trawscoed, married Gwenllian, daughter of Gruffydd ap Ieuan Meredydd, of Geneu'r-glyn. Their son, Morus Fychan ap Ieuan, married Angharad, the daughter of David ap Llewelyn ap Ievan Blaen, and their son Richard Fychan, of Trawscoed, married Maud, daughter and heir of Rhys ap David ap Llewelyn ap Gwilym Lloyd, of Ffoeshelig (of the Castell Howel Lloyds), and they had a son called Morus, or Moris, Fychan.¹⁰³

During this same period there is a Llewelyn Vaughan (Fychan) listed as abbot

¹⁰⁰ Griffiths, *Principality*, p. 157.

¹⁰¹ Griffiths, *Principality*, p. 192.

¹⁰² Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 25; R. A. Griffiths, *The Principality of Wales in the Later Middle Ages, I* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972), pp. 211–12, 482.

¹⁰³ Nicholas, *Annals and Antiquities*, p. 201.

of Strata Florida from 1344 to at least 1380,¹⁰⁴ which raises some questions about the possibility that, as the abbot would have been the land manager as well, some of the Vaughan family's land holdings may have been acquired during his abbacy. Even more intriguing is that the late fourteenth century was a time of great change for monastic land management, with the aforementioned loss of the *conversi* and, post-plague, the increased need for lessors. It is possible that the Vaughans benefited from the timing of their kinsman's position and the sudden increase in available land, to expand their own landholdings and thus were quite well positioned for the permanent acquisition of these lands and more following dissolution.

Further officeholding amongst the Fychan family members of the fifteenth century is vaguely represented in documentary evidence, though there seems to be considerable family involvement in the politics of the region, indicating a family of notable regional importance that also had the means to bid for office, and the trust of the Crown to bear the responsibilities. Maredudd ab Adda was constable of Genau'r-glyn from 1357 to 1359, and of Mefenydd in 1360–1361. His son Adda ap Maredudd ab Adda was constable of Mefenydd from 1389 to 1390, beadle of Creuddyn from 1391 to 1394, escheator of Cardiganshire in 1395, and reeve of Creuddyn in 1397–98. Adda ap Meredith's son Llywelyn was beadle of Creuddyn in 1434–35 and of Mefenydd in 1457–58. It may be Llywelyn's son Ieuan who was the Ieuan ap Llywelyn that served as beadle of Creuddyn in 1518 to 1520. Ieuan's son Morris Fychan may have been steward of Cardiganshire under Walter Devereux in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *Patent*: 1441–1446, 341; 1377–81, p. 551. His election followed the apparently dramatic ousting of the former abbot, Clement ap Rhysiart, for alleged theft of Strata Florida property. There is reason to suspect that this was a power grab to remove Clement and install Vaughan. For more on this dispute see Burton, 'Authority', pp. 378, 384–91.

¹⁰⁵ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 25–26, 46–47.

The Trawscoed estate before 1630 was small and compact, comprised of property in the parishes of Llanafan and Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn, with its southern edge bleeding into Llanbadarn Fawr along the southern edge, and there was also a plot in the town of Aberystwyth. The family would have farmed the land nearest their mansion, and the rest was rented as small farms, divided into patches and strips. The holdings would have been scattered, so no farmer held a block of land in one area. Each farm was made up of eight separate and independent fields or strips. Rents were collected at least partially in kind.¹⁰⁶ Although no maps survive from the early period, the land patterns remain in evidence in the estate maps from the late eighteenth century now located in the National Library of Wales.¹⁰⁷ An example is the map of Llwyn Tivy Ucha and Llwyn Tivy Issa shown in figure 5.3.

¹⁰⁶ This is reflected in the surviving land patterns shown in eighteenth-century estate maps such as the one in Figure 5.3. Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ NLW, Crosswood Estate maps.



Figure 5.3 Map showing evidence of earlier land patterns. NLW, Crosswood Estate Map collection.

Evidence that the Vaughan family occupied monastic properties early in the sixteenth century is widespread. Half of a tenement called Penbrine in the grange of Hafodwen was leased on 30 April 1511 to Ievan ap Dio ap David Vichan.¹⁰⁸ Also of Havodwen, the tenements called Eskermantenell and Kelly Henvywe were in the possession of Hugh ap Ris ap Owen ap Ris Vaughan ap Madoc, who claimed them as heir to Owen ap R. Vaughan ap Madoc to whom they were leased for 99 years on 2 February 1520.¹⁰⁹ In this case it would appear that the son was assuming the lease of his father. Later that same year, Kelly Henviw, brin gweth pen y coed, Eskermantenell, and Tithin y Gors were leased to David Lloid ap Jenkin ap Ievan Lloid Vichan on 6 September 1520.¹¹⁰ Trebeneth, also located at Havodwen, was leased to Owen ap Gitto Moyle on 23 May 1532 for 99 years, later claimed by Vichan Ievan ap Gwillim ap Gitto Moyle, and then William David Vichan.¹¹¹ Hugh ap Richard ap Moris Vichan had possession of a parcel of land including a tenement called Havod yre, or Garreg Lloid, and another called Nant y Gawod, or Kaybalcoke, or Kalabog, both in the grange of Cwmystwyth, which he gained by hereditary right as it was originally leased to his father Richard ap Moris Vichan, the great-great-great-great grandson of Adda Fychan, first Vaughan at Trawscoed, on 10 April 1530.¹¹² Walter Vaughan was listed as being in possession of Manerdilo by 21 February 1539.¹¹³

In 1547, on the occasion of the marriage of his son Moris, to Elliw verch Howell, daughter of Howell ap Jankyn ap Ievan ap Rees, the same Richard ap Moris

¹⁰⁸ NLW, CD IV/1.

¹⁰⁹ NLW, CD I/V.

¹¹⁰ NLW, CD I/V.

¹¹¹ NLW, CD I/V.

¹¹² NLW, CD I/V.

¹¹³ NLW, CD I/V.

Vaughan mentioned above bestowed a parcel of land on the couple, listed as the ‘place at Trausgoed,’ and the ‘messuage of David Benlloid’.¹¹⁴ This, combined with a larger tract of land near Crosswood, which came along with Elliw as her dowry, became the seed for the further development of the later estate. The agreement drawn up to negotiate the lands of the two families upon their marriage is the earliest document remaining directly related to the Vaughan estate. The lands brought into the estate by Elliw, combined with those contributed by Richard, made up nine farms total, and the negotiation must have at least doubled the size of the Vaughans’ holdings.¹¹⁵ Moris quickly set about accumulating additional land, notably a large number of tenements between 1560 and 1585 in the parishes of Llanfihangel y Creuddyn, Llanafan, and Llanfihangel Gelynnod.¹¹⁶ Moris then endeavoured to purchase the neighboring properties to expand his estate. This enthusiastic estate building contributed to improving social status as well. In 1547, Richard and Moris were self-described ‘gentlemen’. By 1565 Moris is using ‘esquire’, which, although not an official title, indicates a rising in the social ranks. By 1566 Moris and Richard owned 26 individual landholdings and three mills.¹¹⁷ This was probably the largest single estate in the Ystwyth valley at the time. Most of the family’s income by then was from rents, and likely did considerably less farming of their own land. Moris continued to add to the estate throughout his lifetime, leaving it considerably increased.

Although it can be argued that these were in part former monastic properties contributing to the estate and the family’s status, it appears that the family’s status

¹¹⁴ NLW, CD II/4.

¹¹⁵ NLW, CD II/4.

¹¹⁶ NLW, CD I/24; CD I/29; CD I/30; CD I/36.

¹¹⁷ NLW, CD I/47.

was well established with Adda ap Llywelyn's efforts in the thirteenth century, and furthermore, the land acquisition momentum was established with the 1547 dowry brought into the family via an advantageous marriage. The Vaughan family were already notable enough in the region to attract a marriage that brought a rare land dowry, signifying their having reached considerable social standing by that time. Tradition in Wales regarding the *cynhysgaeth*, or dowry, demanded that it was comprised of three elements: livestock, cash, and the chamber array (trousseau and furnishings). The dowry exchanged hands over several instalments. Custom decreed that Welsh dowries did not include land, as land was not to be alienated from the kinship group which held it. Even after Welsh kinship structures were dissolving and their lands shifting into freeholds, land dowries were exceptional. Most sixteenth-century dowries were primarily livestock, and later in the century were a combination of livestock and cash. These agreements generally involved multiple members of a kinship group, as the expense of a dowry was difficult for one nuclear family to fulfil.¹¹⁸

Moris was survived by his son and heir Ieuan, or Evan, Fychan, of Trawscoed, who married Margaret, daughter of David Lloyd (Llwyd) of Berth-lwyd, Montgomeryshire. Both Moris and Ieuan were dead by 1601, leaving Ieuan's eldest son and heir, Edward, as head of the family. He was the first family member to officially adopt the anglicised Vaughan surname.¹¹⁹ He married Lettice, daughter of John Stedman, of the family newly established in the area which had purchased the abbey site of Strata Florida Abbey in hopes of gaining a foothold amongst the powerful Welsh landowners. More significant than the £300 dowry that accompanied her was the bond established between the Vaughan and Stedman families and,

¹¹⁸ NLW, Brogyntyn PBA 2/2/3; *NLW*, Maesneuadd 205.

accordingly, the two estates. The Stedmans had possession of the Strata Florida site and demesne lands, but not the granges. Edward married a second time in 1624, to Anne Stedman, widow of John Stedman of Cilcennin. Acquisitions of property via dowry aside, these two marriages also linked the Vaughans with the old Phillips clan as well as the Abermarlais family, both families of considerable influence in the region at the time. Edward's son from his first marriage, John Vaughan, married Jane Stedman, daughter and co-heir of John Stedman, of Cilcennin; his second son Henry married Jane's sister Mary; and Edward's daughter Jane married John Stedman, nephew of Lettice Stedman. This complex series of intermarriages was orchestrated to be advantageous for political connections and in estate building.¹²⁰

Much like his grandfather Moris, Edward proved to be an ardent estate builder. His holdings, by 1601, included 46 properties, as well as several mills. This is a growth of more than twenty holdings.¹²¹ Between 1611 and 1626 Edward acquired an additional 51 properties or shares in properties.¹²² Most of these properties were in proximity to Trawscoed, thereby continuing his grandfather's policy of estate consolidation in the Ystwyth valley. Aside from his rapid estate building and advantageous marriage arrangements with the extremely well-connected Stedman family, Edward also had an active political career. Three years following his first marriage, he appeared on the county bench for the first time. Edward became the first Vaughan to hold the office of High Sheriff of Cardiganshire, in 1618.¹²³ From 1604 until his death in 1635, Edward was on the rolls as a Justice of the Peace. He

¹¹⁹ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 37.

¹²⁰ Howells, 'The Crosswood Estate', p. 72.

¹²¹ NLW, CD I/147.

¹²² Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 39.

¹²³ Phillips, *A List of the Sheriffs of Cardiganshire*, p. 12.

also sat on the Court of Great Sessions in 1627.¹²⁴

Edward's eldest son and heir, Sir John Vaughan, was a successful lawyer and represented both the borough and county of Cardigan in Parliament. He was managing estate affairs even prior to Edward's death in 1635, and soon became the most influential member of the Vaughan family. John brokered the largest purchase of land ever made by the Vaughan family in late November of 1630. A holding company based in London acting on the behalf of Robert Devereux, third earl of Essex, and descendant of Sir Richard Devereux, the former exchequer for Strata Florida Abbey, whose family held the land following dissolution, sold to John Vaughan 13,000 acres, including the eight former Strata Florida granges of Hafodwen, Blaenaeron, Cwmystwyth, Morfa Mawr, Mefenydd, Pennardd, Anhuniog, and Doverchen. This did not include the monastery's demesne lands, which in 1630 still remained in the hands of the Stedman family, and would do so until 1747 when it was folded into the Nanteos estate belonging to the Powell family.¹²⁵ The properties were purchased for £4,300.¹²⁶ John paid £1,300 of the purchase price to the seller, and Robert, earl of Essex, lent him the outstanding £3,000. John then agreed to pay off the loan in instalments, and John charged a rent of £300 on the property for the earl. It was a fortuitous time to buy the land, as John's income from his successful legal career sustained the family as he paid off the purchase. Also, the 99-year leases granted to the tenants of these farms were on the verge of coming due.¹²⁷ This purchase increased the rental income for the Vaughans by about 58%. John continued adding land to the estate, to leave the family at the

¹²⁴ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 40.

¹²⁵ NLW, CD II/59.

¹²⁶ NLW, CD II/12.

¹²⁷ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 41; NLW, CD II/ 126.

time of his death in 1674, holding almost 30,000 acres generating an annual income around £1,200.¹²⁸ Following this purchase, John Vaughan sold a number of tenements on his new land to John Stedman for £1,000, further intermingling the two families' lives and interests.¹²⁹

As well as contributing to the family's accumulation of land and wealth, John's involvement in politics increased as well. The more influential and wealthy Pryse family of Gogerddan dominated local politics in the county. However, John Vaughan landed the Cardigan boroughs seat in 1628 instead of a Pryse, which was two years before he was called to the bar and made the purchase of the grange properties. Quickly rising in his field, he practised law primarily in the Star Chamber, which proved to be financially advantageous. In 1624 Sir John married Jane Stedman. Through the Stedman family, the Vaughans were connected to the Jones family of Abermarlais and Llanbadarn Fawr. All of these new associations were helpful in furthering Sir John's career in law and politics. Politics and war shortly after the 1630 land purchase placed Sir John in a precarious position amongst his peers in London, a situation not smoothed over until the 1660s. He was elected to Parliament, representing the boroughs of Cardigan, in 1640. This Parliament was dissolved within a month, and he retired from public life in 1641. During the following twenty years Sir John spent his time at home in Wales, managing estate affairs. Following the Restoration, he sat in the Cavalier Parliament, and was then knighted, and rose to chief justice in 1668. In following years, he sat on various committees. His status continued to rise, and he was knighted in 1668, was appointed Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, acted as Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, and in 1669 he

¹²⁸ Howells, 'The Crosswood Estate', p. 72.

¹²⁹ NLW, CD II/59.

became a Privy Councillor.¹³⁰ Morgan notes that prior to John Vaughan, ‘no Welshman representing either Cardiganshire seat had made any profound impact on the House of Commons’.¹³¹ In spite of his heavy involvement with Parliament and his legal profession in the middle part of the seventeenth century, John continued his accumulation of property and management of his estate, adding one of his largest land purchases in 1671, the estate of Gwernioge in Montgomeryshire, just three years before his sudden death in 1674.¹³²

John’s son, Edward Vaughan, of Trawscoed, was also a Member of Parliament for Cardigan from 1669 until his death, and also served as a Lord of the Admiralty from 1679 to 1680.¹³³ Edward only outlived his father by ten years. Following his death in 1683, he was succeeded by his son John Vaughan, who was a minor in 1684 and therefore did not replace his father in Parliament. The estate was managed by Edward’s widow Letitia until 1688, when John’s name first appears jointly with hers on estate records. Her name vanishes from the records after 1691. John continued the family’s social advancement in marrying the Lady Malet, daughter of the second earl of Rochester, and in his subsequent elevation to the peerage. He was created a viscount and a baron, carrying the titles of Viscount Lisburne of County Antrim and the Baron of Fethard, County Tipperary. With that, the Vaughan family was ennobled. Lady Malet brought to the estate a considerable

¹³⁰ Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, ed., ‘Vaughan, John (1603–74), of Trawscoed, Llanafan, Card., and the Inner Temple’, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629*, vols 1604–1629 (Cambridge University Press, 2010) <http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1660-1690/member/vaughan-john-1603-74>; *Historical Notes of the Counties of Glamorgan, Carmarthen, and Cardigan: and a List of the Members of Parliament for South Wales from Henry VIII to Charles II* (Cardiff: H. Bird, 1866), p. 108.

¹³¹ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 106.

¹³² Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 62–63; Samuel Meyricke, *A History of Cardiganshire*, 3rd edn (Brecon: Davies & Co., 1910), p. 341; NLW MS 4955; Historic Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde*, New Series, V (ed. F. Elrington Ball), p. 58.

¹³³ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 65.

amount of property in West Somerset.¹³⁴ More importantly, and possibly the driving reason behind the union, was that Malet's brother Charles, third earl of Rochester, died intestate in 1681. This set off a series of disputes amongst his three surviving sisters over the division of the Rochester estates. This was not settled until May of 1698 via an Act of Parliament entitled, 'An Act for the Better Settling of the Several Estates of the Right Honourable John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, in the Kingdom of Ireland, and the Lady Viscountess Lisburne, his Wife'.¹³⁵ This act gave John the legal right to mortgage some of the Rochester lands for a sum of £3,000 for his personal use, and an additional £2,000 to provide for any children he might have.

The estate began a slow and gradual process of estate consolidation. This was due in large part to the reckless spending habits of his eldest son, John. In 1718 the family borrowed £3,672 17s. 3d. from a barrister in London named Thomas Jones, for the purpose of paying off debts accrued by John, the second viscount. The following year the amount owed to Jones was up to £5,750.¹³⁶ The debt continued to rise, and it became necessary for the family to sell the holdings in Somerset and Montgomery for £26,000, to pay off the debts.¹³⁷ John the first Viscount Lisburne died in 1721 and was survived by his eldest son, John, the second Viscount Lisburne. He continued his excessive spending, and under his care the Crosswood estate suffered further and there was a rapid accumulation of debt. Over the next twenty years John's extravagant lifestyle and personal scandals crippled the estate, with small debts alone reaching £1,300, with an additional £800 for the support of various

¹³⁴ NLW, CD I, 612.

¹³⁵ *Journals of the House of Commons*, XI, p. 313.

¹³⁶ NLW, CD I/612.

¹³⁷ NLW, CD I/612.

mistresses, to the noted disgust of his brother.¹³⁸ And so it was that one family member took the estate from its very peak, and nearly ran it into the ground, in about 25 years. Despite marrying twice, John the second Viscount died with no heir, so the estate and title passed to his brother Wilmot, third Viscount, in 1741.¹³⁹

While Wilmot was not the financial drain his brother had been, little growth in terms of land purchase happened under his control, and the development of mineral resources and agriculture was also stagnant. Rather, Wilmot married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Watson of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and through this marriage the Crosswood estate gained substantial holdings in Northumberland and Durham.¹⁴⁰ A marriage was arranged between their eldest son, also a Wilmot, and Elizabeth Gascoigne Nightingale of London. As her dowry she contributed £4,000 invested in joint-stock capital of the Bank of England, and an additional £3,000 invested in a merchant trading company in the southern hemisphere. With that also came property in London and Devon upon the death of her brother.¹⁴¹ It is likely that these marriages were advantageous to the recovery of the Vaughan family's solvency.

In 1776, Wilmot the fourth Viscount was created first earl of Lisburne. This Wilmot was also administratively astute and became an instrument of recovery for the family and their estate. While he increased the Crosswood estate a very small amount comparative to his predecessor, what he did purchase was in close proximity to the Crosswood mansion, perhaps indicative of his recognition of a need to centralize. In line with this idea was a property exchange of 1790 between the Lisburnes and the Johnes family of Hafod, exchanging property in Llanfihangel y

¹³⁸ NLW, CD I/805, CDII/290.

¹³⁹ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 77–99.

¹⁴⁰ NLW, CD I/969.

¹⁴¹ NLW, CD I/881.

Creuddyn and Gwnnws for some in Llanafan and Llanilar, with the intent to keep the holdings of the Crosswood estate closer to home and therefore easier to manage.¹⁴²

Lord Lisburne died in 1800, and was succeeded by his eldest son, who had been declared insane in 1779, although there were trustees acting on his behalf.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, the primary trustee was the second son, John Vaughan, who was acquiring gambling debts even before his father's death. John embarked on a military career, under a commission purchased at his father's expense. While he maintained respectable political positions and could not be imprisoned for debt as he was an MP, upon leaving Parliament he was forced to flee the country and his creditors to live in France for repeated stretches of time. After the death of his elder brother the earl, John inherited the title, estate and the debts that he had accrued. He worked toward shoring up the estate and clearing debts in his remaining years, but the situation had become rather grave.¹⁴⁴

John died in 1831, leaving the title, estate, and burden of debt to his heir, a son called Ernest. Ernest was much like his father in his spending and gambling habits, and his management of the estate got off to an inauspicious start. He was accused of assault in 1825 and jailed for failure to repay debts in 1827. The estate had begun to shrink as lands were sold to pay off creditors. However, income from the lead mines offered some relief. There was a lapse in Vaughan involvement in county politics since the departure of Ernest's father John from Parliament in 1818, until Ernest re-joined Parliament in 1854. He was the last Vaughan to take his county seat uncontested, and remained unopposed until his retirement in 1859, which brought an end to an unbroken run of eight Members of Parliament in seven generations of

¹⁴² NLW, CD II/510.

¹⁴³ NLW, CD I/1107.

¹⁴⁴ NLW, CD II/639; Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 128–32.

Vaughan family history. This is a number only exceeded by the Pryse family of Goggerddan, who supplied twelve M.P.s for Cardiganshire. Ernest died in 1873, to be succeeded by his eldest son, also named Ernest.¹⁴⁵

Ernest, the fifth earl of Lisburne was a Welsh speaker, which was something the family had distanced themselves from in recent generations. His focus during the time he managed the estate was on making improvements to the Trawscoed mansion. He did not involve himself in politics at all. Upon his death in 1888, his son Arthur inherited. Arthur involved himself vigorously in the community, and in 1888 took part in politics as well, representing the Strata Florida ward on the new Cardiganshire County Council. Interestingly, Arthur was also a vocal supporter of the teaching of the Welsh language, for a time chairing the Society for the Utilisation of the Welsh Language. Around the estate, much of Arthur's energies until his sudden death at age 47 in 1899 were, similarly to his father, consumed with expansions of the mansion.¹⁴⁶

Arthur's son and heir, Ernest, was a child when he inherited. The property was managed by trustees until his majority. The mansion served as an infirmary for part of World War I (during which Ernest served in the Welsh Guards). In the Second World War, the mansion housed works of art evacuated from London during the Blitz. In 1947, the earl, recognising that the era of great estates was waning, sold the mansion to the government, and most of the farms which remained in the family's possessions to their tenants. The earl did retain a number of farms and thousands of acres of land, most of which still belongs to the family.¹⁴⁷

This did not put an end to the Vaughan family's tenure in the region. Ernest,

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 138–41.

¹⁴⁶ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 150–53.

¹⁴⁷ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, pp. 157–58.

the seventh earl, died in 1965 and his son John David took over the remaining estate. The family remained involved in the community, making an impact perhaps not readily seen, but aiding where they could behind the scenes with financial assistance or other acts of kindness. In the 1960s and 1970s, John bought back some of the old farm estates, and ensured the mansion was returned to private ownership, this time by a limited company which he directed.¹⁴⁸

The Vaughan family recognized the connection between land ownership and the assurance of local power and control.¹⁴⁹ Through land deals and advantageous marriages, they eventually consumed the holdings of the other families, who were relative newcomers to the area. Whilst monastic lands were out of the reach of Welsh small landowners immediately following the dissolution, in time they did in fact become available and ambitious estates such as the Vaughans' Trawscoed expanded quickly. The grange of Blaenaeron in its entirety was part of the largest land purchase made by the Vaughan family. In November 1630, Sir John Vaughan purchased eight former Strata Florida granges from the Devereux estate totalling about 30,000 acres. As was evident following the dowry land added to the Vaughan landholdings in the marriage of Richard Vaughan and Eiliw nearly a hundred years prior, the growth of the estate served as solid leverage, in combination with the status of the longevity of the Vaughan pedigree in Wales, for improving status and marrying well. The dissolution land was one of several contributing elements to the continued upward progress of the Vaughan family's estate and standing, but it did not set that progress in motion.

¹⁴⁸ Morgan, *A Welsh House*, p. 160.

¹⁴⁹ Howells, 'The Crosswood Estate', p. 70.

Conclusion

This thesis has addressed two questions: was there continuity of land use from the pre-monastic period to post-dissolution, and how did the sudden availability of land for purchase in Wales that coincided with legal changes allowing native Welsh to purchase land affect the Welsh elite class, or *uchelwyr*? Answering these questions required a long look at the history of one specific physical area: Blaenaeron grange of Strata Florida abbey.

Cistercians embraced change, but also held an appreciation for continuity.¹ The pre-monastic land organisation remained in place on Blaenaeron grange through the monastic period, with just a few exceptions: the possibility of an added grange chapel at Bron y Kippill, and the possible shift of the administrative centre from Maesglas to Monachty Blaenaeron. If or why these two changes happened are unknown and will likely not be determined as there are no remaining monastic documents recording the purpose of such changes.

When the monks of Strata Florida came into possession of Blaenaeron grange through a land grant from Lord Rhys,² they retained much of the pre-existing land management template. This was likely a practical measure, as the economic structure in place was working well, and seemed to require no adaptation under monastic oversight. This also meant that the Cistercians of Strata Florida saw no need to make changes in order to bring Blaenaeron in line with what is usually perceived to be the ‘classic’ Cistercian grange. The Institutes of the General Chapter allowed for

¹ Jamroziak, *Cistercian Order*, p. 9.

² *AWR*, no. 25 (pp. 167–68); no. 28 (pp. 171–75).

granges, which were to be less than a day's journey from the abbey, as lay brothers were to manage the cultivation of crops and animal husbandry.³ The monks were not permitted to work with 'seculars' for purposes of land management or farming, particularly regarding the leasing of land and livestock.⁴ It was the practice of the Cistercians to

receive landed properties far from the haunts of men, and vineyards and meadows and woods and streams for operating mills (for their own use only) and for fishing, and horses and various kinds of livestock useful for men's needs. And since they had set up farmsteads (*curtes*) for agricultural development in a number of different places, they decreed that the aforementioned laybrothers, and not monks, should be in charge of those dwellings, because, according to the Rule, monks should reside in their cloister.⁵

The manorial template, which provided a starting point for this research, is reflected in the varied elements supporting a central manor. In this case that focal point was Castle Flemish. This location offered pre-existing fortification, which was of increasing interest for monastic grange sites. It is mentioned in the earliest records which remain for Strata Florida, emphasising its significance. There were supporting sites for the manor at Castle Flemish in the immediate vicinity which combined to form a complete estate. These sites provided an administrative centre, likely at Maesglas, a mill at Fullbrook, a chapel, probably at Bron y Cappel, (but perhaps later another established at Bryn y Kippill), and several ancient farms such as Eskerbervedd Ganol and Llwyngwinau, which provided land of varying elevations serving purposes such as upland and lowland grazing and croplands. These sites, and their functions, remained in place to serve their intended purposes under the Cistercians of Strata Florida.

³ Waddell, ed., *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, p. 459.

⁴ Waddell, ed., *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, p. 466.

⁵ Waddell, ed., *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, p. 435.

There is evidence of continuity of purpose beyond the monastic era, as, for example, Fullbrook remained a mill well into the twentieth century. Nearby sites were paying suit of mill at Fullbrook until nearly 1800. Rents in kind continued even longer, and some medieval payment types, such as heriot, were in place until the nineteenth century as well. Two of the ancient farm sites mentioned in the earliest grants to the monastery, Eskerbvedd Ganol and Llwyngwinau, were occupied by the families who were tenants upon them for centuries. These families maintained their hold on the properties long enough to leave documentary evidence of having continued the early Welsh kinship land practices of *priodolder* and *cyfran* into the post-dissolution era. Two of those sites, Fullbrook and Llwyngwinau, appear connected in the archaeological record by an early medieval enclosure (see chapter 4), and later are connected in estate property records of the sixteenth century as well (see appendices 4 and 12). All of these elements reflect the continuity of tradition. In these places, people were still going about their daily lives much as their ancestors had done before, regardless the religious or secular nature of their overseers.

The Welsh have retained a close connection between locality and identity. Reuse of landscape elements such as monuments and their establishment of a mythic past reinforce this (see chapter 2). This link kept families living and working the lands of their ancestors. The same family owned or occupied the grange farm Llwyngwinau for at least 400 years (see Appendix 12). For the Vaughans, who long had ties to the land that was Blaenaeron grange in the monastic era (as well as direct association with the abbey itself at times),⁶ the long-standing connections with their locality led the tenants to become the landowners when opportunity arose. That opportunity presented itself when a series of changes impacted Wales and Welsh

⁶ See Chapter 5.

land at about the same time. During the 1530s, the monasteries were dissolved as part of Henry VIII's radical restructuring. The religious houses were the premier landowners in Wales at the time, and during this process thousands of acres of land came into the possession of the Crown. Shortly thereafter, the Crown began to sell it off. The recent passage of the Acts of Union made it possible for native Welsh to purchase land, and that is precisely what they did. Welsh and English laws and governments began to merge, and *uchelwyr* held offices both locally and, increasingly, in English government. Those connections, combined with the sudden availability of Welsh land, positioned some *uchelwyr*, including Sir John Vaughan, in such a manner as to allow them to purchase previously monastic landholdings to expand their own estates.

This was the situation with Blaenaeron grange and the Vaughan family. Already long established by the seventeenth century, the Vaughan family expanded their Trawscoed estate through advantageous marriages with other *uchelwyr* families in the sixteenth century, drawing in not only Welsh properties but English as well (see chapter 5 above). Then, in 1630, making use of their pre-existing political connections in London, and local connections established socially or through local political and governmental offices, Sir John Vaughan made the family's largest purchase. In that one purchase the family acquired eight of Strata Florida's former granges, the bulk of the monastic estate, which added 13,000 acres to the Vaughan family's holdings (see chapter 5).

This acquisition would not have been possible without the Vaughan family's having previously established elevated social and political status, and while the larger estate and added income from it certainly offered significant aid in later social aspirations within the family, such as elevation to the peerage later in the century, it

is inaccurate to suggest that the monastic land alone provided the Vaughan family its status and power. Rather, the combined opportunity provided by a change in laws and available land with tenants included offered already established *uchelwyr* a chance to grow their estates, increase their political and social influence both at home and in England. Access to available Welsh land for purchase after the dissolution provided a means by which Welsh *uchelwyr* could increase their landholdings and subsequent socio-political power, emulating their counterparts in England.

Wales had a monastic history all its own, flavoured by Welsh history and custom. The end of monasticism in Wales was of a different character than elsewhere. It has been overlooked previously, presumed to echo the dissolution experience in England. Yet the Welsh relationship with land, along with cultural and legal constraints peculiar to Wales prior to the sixteenth century, impacted the development of Wales in the wake of the monastic suppression. It could not have happened in the same way elsewhere.

Application of this methodology to other former monastic sites in Wales, where there also may be access to different documentary sources, could offer further understanding of the extent of continuity of territorial organisation in Wales, as well as the impact of monastic land on *uchelwyr*. Talley Abbey, for example, shows evidence of continuity from the pre-monastic era, which is touched on briefly in chapter 2 above. Like Strata Florida, Talley had the patronage of Lord Rhys and his descendants and suffered at the hands of the Crown for its native alliances. The role played by the dissolution on Talley Abbey lands is of particular interest, as the bulk

of Talley's lands remained in the hands of the King as a Crown estate.⁷ This offers a wealth of post-dissolution recordkeeping for an intact monastic estate, which may shed light on whether the grange tenants there saw opportunities arise similar to those which developed for tenants of Blaenaeron grange for land purchase and elevation of status.

This study of the Welsh people within the context of their land began with a question: did the land make the people, or were the people and their increased status in the sixteenth century making their impact on the land? The answer appears to be both. Kinship and property were closely linked in early Wales, and did not exist, really, one without the other. The connection between Welsh kinship relationships and the land on which they lived evolved into the pre-monastic maenorial template that is evident in the farm sites of Blaenaeron grange. During the monastic era, the sites and the tenants upon them continued much as they had before, and the land connection remained intact with little upheaval. Post-dissolution, some medieval processes continued on without much disruption. Long leases kept families on their land for hundreds of years in some places. Heriot, rents in kind, and suit of mill persisted well into the eighteenth century, perhaps beyond. *Cyfran*, an element of early Welsh kinship land partitioning, was still happening in the sixteenth century. Most telling, descendants of the tenants in place on the grange at or before dissolution, became the *uchelwyr* who purchased the land from the Crown in the seventeenth century. The continuity of the Welsh connection between its land and people coincided with large-scale changes in law and the land purchase opportunities which arose due to monastic properties becoming available during the sixteenth

⁷ Edward Owen, 'A Contribution to the History of the Praemonstratensian Abbey of Talley,' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5th series, 11, 34–50 (p. 34).

century. This was a study of both the impact of a land on its people, as well as the impact of a people on its land.

Castle Flemish

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owner	Source
10 May 1504	The tenements called Castell Fflamys and Lloyne y colva and the parcel called Lluty Gasseg.	10s 8s 4d 12d 6d. 1 topstone 1 sheep 5 trucks of meal 1 truck of kilchmarch. 'But that he shall not plough the said parcel of land.'	Iwan ap Llewelin ap Iwan ap Madog, Jenkin ap Richard, David ap Iwan, Jenkin David ap Iwan ap Lewellin ap Iwan ap Madog, David ap Iwan ap David ap Iwan ap Lewellin ap Iwan ap Madog.	CD IV/1
1 Sept. 1534	Tithen Bwlch/Castell Fflamys	Rent and heriot 10s 10s 2s. 1 topstone 1 sheep 3 teals of meal 1 truck kilchmarch. For 99 years.	David Ritherz (Rithergh) ap Thomas (dead), David Thomas Gwilin Iwan Philip David (process)	CD IV/1
1546	Castell Fflamys	10s.by indenture sealed with the convent seal not produced.	Ethlline daughter of David Lloid	CD I/5
1560	Castell Flemingie Clalt y Gasseg		Jenkin ap Rhys, John Williams, Thomas David Gogh	CD IV/2
1560	Castell Flemingie Yche		Thomas David Thomas, Davide ??? Riddz.	CD IV/2
1621	Castle Flemingie Yche		Thomas David Thomas, David Riddz. Thomas, Morris ap David, ??Morgan?? ??James?? Poss David??	CD I/215
1621	Castle Fflamys Cluty Gassig		John Gough, Jenkin ap Rees, and others (illegible)	CD I/215
1625	Castle Flemingie	212 acres 1/2	Thomas Dav. Thomas and David Ruddz Thomas with others	CD I/230

	Yche	whereof 53 at 24d, 53 at 12d, and 106 1/2 at 6d. The acres cometh to £10, 12s, 3 per ann.		
1625	Castle Fleming Clalt y Glasse	263 acres whereof 65 at 24d, 65 at 12d, and 133 at 6d. The acres cometh to £13, 1s, 10 per ann.	Jenkin ap Rice Jno. William and Thos. Gough	CD I/230
1629	Castle Fleming		John ???, Thomas ??? David, David James ap Rhys, ??? ???, John ??? Ap Rhys	CD IV/3
1632	Two-fifths of an ancient tenement called Castell Flemish-troed-y-rhiw	Reserving to the grantor the minerals and rights of fowling and fishing; perpetual yearly rent of 21s. 6d., suit at Fulbrooke Mill, and a proportion of the comortha payable on the said premises and a heriot of 10s. Consideration, £40.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Jenkin Price of London, merchant taylor.	CD II/33
1654	Ty yn y Bwlch	25 years	John Lewis	CD I/296
1665 May	Ty yn y Bwlch	Part of Castell Flemish. For the term of 21 years. 02.10	Morgan Evan	

1670	Castle Fleminge Yche	212 ½ acres, whereof 53 at 3d, 53 at 12d, 106 ½ at 6d. Per annum: £10.12.3	Thos. David Thomas and David Ruddz Thomas with others	CD I/402
1670	Castle Ffleminge Clatt y Gasse	263 acres whereof 65 at 12d, 133 at 6d. Per annum: £13.1.10	Jenkin ap Rise Jno. William, Thos. Gough	CD I/402
1670	Castell Flemish	15 years, 8,40	Jenkin John Williams of Caron in the grange of Blaenayron	CD I/296
1682 Mar. 10	A tenement called Castell Flemish- issa alias Llwyn- clutt-y-gasseg, and the tenement of Castell-Flemish- troedyrhiw and Ty-yn-y-pant (being part of Castell Flemish)	Yearly rent £4 18s. 4d., three hens and 60 eggs at SHrovetide, two teals of dried oats, a heriot of the second best beast for Castell Flemish- issa, a heriot of 20s. For Castell Flemish Troedyrhiw, and a heriot of 20s. For Ty-yn-y-pant. 11 years.	Lease from Edward Vaughan to Morgan Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/514
1684 June 24	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-gair (being part of an ancient tenement called Castle	Yearly rent £5, two hens, 49 eggs, 4 pecks of dried oats, a heriot of 40s., and suit at Fulbrook	Lease from Leticia Vaughan, widow, to Felix Mathias of Carron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/522

	Flemish) and a tenement called Ty-yn-y-swydd	Mill. 21 years.		
1687 April 15	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-bwlch, being part of the tenement called Castell Flemish-troedyrhiw	Yearly rent (payable to John Vaughan, at Crosswood, esq.) £3, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fullbrooke Mill, heriot of 40s. Five years.	Lease from Jon Haberley of Maes Elwad co. Cardigan, gent., to Morgan Evans of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman (under power of attorney from Letitia Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, widow)	CD I/531
1692 Jan. 30	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-swydd (part of Castle Flemish)	Yearly rent £2, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide or 6d., suit at Fullbrook Mill, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, esq., to John Thomas Rees of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/590
1721 Feb. 12	Tenementa called Llwyn-colva and Clwt-y-gasseg	Yearly rent £4, a heriot of the second best beast and 20s. Consideration, 5 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Thomas Evan of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/640
1731 April 28	A tenement called Tynybwlch	Yearly rent £2 10s., a hen and 20 eggs at SHrovetide, 6	Lease from the Right Hon John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Elizabeth Thomas of the parish of Llanvihangell y Croythin, co. Cardigan, spinster.	CD I/743

		chickens at Whitsuntide, a goose at Christmas, suit at Maen Arthur Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. 11 years.		
1742 Sept. 1	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-bwlch	Yearly rent £3 10s., a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of £2.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Morgan Jones of Pwllpyran, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/814
1756 June 18	The said tenement called Tynybwlch in the parish of Llanvyhangel y Croyddin	Yearly rent £2 12s., a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, a goose at Christmas, the usual services at Crosswood, and suit at Maen Arthur Mill. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Evan David of Tynybwlch in the parish of Llanvyhangel y Croyddin, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/911
1762	Ty yn y Berth	£0,13,0	David Thomas	CD I/967
	Ty yn y bwlsh		David Edward	CD 982
1767	Llwynycolfaf & Cluttio Cafsog	Yearly rent 8,10,0		CD 990

1767	Tyny Bwsh (chief or Ffee Farm rents) 13(?)		David Thomas	CD II/348
1767 19 June	Llwyny Colva & Lluty Gasseg (under Castell Fflamys)	5,5	Jenkin David	CD II/348
1767 19 June	Tithen Bwlch/Castell Fflamys	5.5.6	Edward David	CD II/348
1768 Oct. 10	A tenement called Llwyn-colfa alias Cluttie-casseg	Yearly rent £8 10s., 3 hens and 60 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David John of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/1018
1769	Ty yn y bwlch	2, 12, 0 21 years lease	Evan David	CD 1/1021
1800	Castle Flemingie Clatty Gasse	263 acres. 65 at 24d, 65 at 12d, 133 at 6d. Per annum: £13,1,10		CD I/1200
1800	Castle Flemingie Yche	212 1/2 acres. 53 at 24d, 53 at 12d, 106 1/2 at 6d. Per annum: £10, 12, 3.		CD I/1200

Esker Bervedd

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1519 10 May		Rent and heriot 8s 4d 6s 8d 2s. Work: 6d. 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 3 teals of meal, 7 trucks of kilchmarch. Leased for 99 years.	Iwan ap Gitto Hir. Lewis David ap Iwan Gitto, David ap Davis Gwin ap Iw. Gitto. Claim as sons of David, son of Iwan ap Gitto Hir.	CD IV/1
1588	Estgur Berveth Ganell	One tenement and 364 acres of land. Riotous assembly/property destruction/further outrages.	Late seisin of premises by Rees David Gwyn of Caron, yeoman; assignment thereof, 29 Eliz., by him to compl. Rees Lloyd, gent.	Jones, <i>Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales in Tempore James I</i> , p. 89.
1597	Eskyr Berveth Ganol	One messuage and 600 acres of land.	Compl. Rees David Wyn, labourer. (Lease of said premises by late abbot of S.F. to Ievan ap Gytto Hir, grandfather of compl. For 99 years. Conveyed to compl. via inheritance.) Defts. John Steadman the elder, Esq., Ievan ap Phillip Thomas, Morgan Jankin, Ievan ap Ievan Lloyd, David ap David, David ap Gwilym.	Jones, <i>Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales in Tempore James I</i> , p. 93.
	Property not named.	8s 4d. By indenture sealed with convent seal not produced.	David ap Gitto Hire	I/5

1617		One fat calf and one fat bullock or heifer. Claim demise from late abbot.	Robert, 3 rd Earl of Essex	Jones, <i>Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales in Tempore James I</i> , p. 105
1625	Esker Bervard Gannell	223 acres whereof 55 at 18d, 55 at 12d and 113 at 4d. The acres cometh to £8, 15s, 2d.	Rice ap Ievan ap Rice Dow and Lloyd Olive and Dd Dd (??) Gwyn	CD I/230
1633 Sept. 21	One-third part of a tenement called Eskir-bervedd-ganol	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, the right of sporting and fishing, a perpetual rent of 31s., suit at Fulbrooke Mill and heriot of 10s. Consideration, £29.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Evan David David Gwyn of Caron, co. Cardigan.	CD II/39
1633 Sept. 28	One-third part of a tenement called Eskir-bervedd-ganol	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, the right of sporting and fishing, a perpetual rent of 31s., suit at Fulbrooke Mill and heriot of 10s. Consideration, £30 16s. 4d.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Lewis Rees ap Ieuan Rees of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD II/40
1639 Sept. 30	One-third of an ancient tenement called Esker-berveth-canol	Reserving to the grantor a perpetual yearly rent of 11s. 10d., and suit at Fulbrooke Mill. Good consideration.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Evan David ap David Gwyn of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman, and John Morris of the same place, yeoman.	CD II/77
1670	Esker Bervard Ganell	223 acres whereof 55 at 10d, 55 at 12d, and 113 at 4d. Per annum: £8.15.2	Rice (or Richard) ap Ievan ap Ris(or Richard) David (Dowd?) Lloyd Olive(?), Dd Dd Gwyn	CD I/402
1670	2 parts of Esgyr Berveth ganol	02.02.10	Evan David ap David Gwynn	

1767	Eskerbervedd at Tyyny Daid	1,10	David Samuel	CD II/348
1800	Esker Berward Gannell	223 acres. 55 at 18d, 55 at 12d, 113 at 4d. Per annum: £8,15,2.		CD I/1200

Esker Bervedd Ycha

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenant/Owners	Source
1530 1 Sept.	Esker Bervedd Icha	Rent and heriot. Comorth: 8s 4d an ox every 3d year. Duty: a fat calf. Sheep: 1 sheep. Meal: 7 trucks of meal. For 99 years.	Iwan ap Griffith Goz, Iwan Jenkin Lloid, Lewis ap Jenkin Lloid claim by the will of Iwan ap Griffith Goz the grandfather.	CD IV/1
1625	Esker Bervard	180 acres whereof 60 at 18d, 60 at 12d, and 60 at 6d. The acres cometh to £9 per ann.	Mr. James Stidman and Richd. Lewis	CD I/230
1625	Esker Berward Issa	163 acres whereof 10 at 24, 20 at 18d, 25 at 12 and 48 at 4d. The acres cometh to £4, 11 per ann.	Morrice ap Rice David ap Rice ap Morris and Ievan ap Rice ap Morris	CD I/230
1633 Sept. 21	A moiety of a tenement called Eskir-berweddd-ycha	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, a perpetual yearly rent of 17s.8d., suit at Fulbrooke Mill, heriot of 10s. Consideration, £55.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to William Morgan ap Rees of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD II/39
1670	Esker Berward yche	180 acres whereof 60 at 18d, 60 at 12d, and 60 at 6d. Per annum: £9.	Mr. James Stidman and Rich'd Lewis	CD I/402
1670	Esker Bervard ifsa	163 acres whereof 10 at 2d, 20 at 18d, 25 at 12d, 48 at 4d. Per annum: £4.11.	Morris ap Rice Davd ap Rice ap Moris, Ievan ap Rice ap Morris	CD I/402
1687 April 15	A part of an ancient tenement called	Yearly rent £3, 10s., a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide,	Lease from John Haberley of Maes Elwad, co. Cardigan, gent. (Under power of attorney from Letitia Vaughan of	CD I/532

	Esgyr-bervedd-yssa	and a heriot of the second best beast. 5 years.	Crosswood, co. Cardigan) to Thomas ap Evan Rees of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	
1690 Oct. 7	A moiety of an ancient tenement called Esgyr-bervedd	Yearly rent (payable to John Vaughan of Trowscoed, esq.), £5, and a heriot of the second best beast. 21 years.	Lease from Letitia Vaughan of Trowscoed, widow, to Anne Morgan of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, widow.	CD I/563
1692 April 13	A tenement called the fourth part of Esgir-bervedd-ychain	Yearly rent £3, suit at Fulbrook Mill, heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from John Vaughan esq. To Evan Williams of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/586
1721 Aug. 22	A tenement called the Moiety of Esgir-bervedd, Esgir-bervedd-issa, and Berth-goch	Yearly rent £10, three hens and 60 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, heriot of £5. Consideration, 12 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Robert Williams of the parish of Carron, co. Cardigan.	CD I/622
1742 Feb. 10	A moiety of tenements called Escir-berweddd-ucha, Eskir-berweddd-issa, and Borth-coch.	Yearly rent £10 18s., three hens and 60 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, heriot of £5. Consideration, 12 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Robert William of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/830

1742 August 18	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-ddol, being the one-fourth part of a tenement called Eskir-bervedd-ycha	Yearly rent 30s, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Samuel of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/809
1762	A moiety of Eskir Berveddycha, Eskir Bervedd Ifsa & Tycoch (last two are in question)	13	Mary Williams, Widow	CD I/967
1767	A moiety of Esker Bervedd ycha, Esker Bervedd Ifsa and Ty Coch	13	Mary Williams, Widow	CD II/348
1800	Esker Beward yche	180 acres. 60 at 18d, 60 at 12d, 60 at 6d. Per annum: £9.		CD I/1200
1800	Esker Beward ifsa	163 acres. 10 at 24d, 20 at 18d, 25 at 12d, 48 at 4d. Per annum: £4,11.		CD I/1200

Fullbrook Mill

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1523 2 May	Plot of land for the erection of two mills	one thereof for the grinding of all kinds of grain and the other for the ffulling art. 6s 8d 99 years.	Jenkin ap Jene	CD I/5
1533 2 May	The Mill	6s 8d Richard the abbot and the Convent granted to Jenkin ap Jon and his heirs licence and full power to erect 2 mills in the territory of Blaynayron; one mill for all kinds of corn and another for the fulling art with Rivlti(?) in Argwlwidd, to hold with the Multure of tenants and others/with ingress and egress/granted also the place for erecting a small chamber in the confines or boundaries of the mill for the miller for the term of 99 years paying for the corn mill 6s 8d for forfeiture on nonpayment for 15	Jenkin ap John, Matthias Iwan Jenkin Thomas ap David ap iwan Goz [process]	CD IV/1
1560	round mill called Ffulbrooke			CD IV/2
1621	Melyn Fulbrook		John Johns	CD 215
1625	One water corn mill called Fulbrooke	worth 12 pr ann		CD I/230
1638 Sept. 24	A tenement called Fulbrooke (being the fifth part of an ancient tenement called Llwyn-y-gwinne)	Reserving to the grant of a perpetual yearly rent of 10s., and suit at Fulbrooke Mill. Good consideration.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Walter Jones, the son of John Jones of Caron, co. Cardigan, deceased.	CD II/69

1659 May	Fulbrooke Mill	All of mill called Fulbrooke Mill with the customs and suit of tenants heretofore usually grinding. 21 years (10 years unexpired)	Thomas Jonas of Llwyngary	CD I/215
1677 Oct. 4	A water corn mill called Fulbrook Mill	Lease for 30 years. Yearly rent £6, a fat hog at Candlemas, and 6 chickens at Michaelmas	Lease from Edward Vaughan to Walter Lloyd of Krynfryn, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/451
1670	One water corn mill called Ffulbrook	worth 12 pr ann		CD 402
1670	Fulbroke part of Llwyn y gwine	0,10,0	Thomas Jonas	CD 402
1720	Commons at Fulbrook	Rights to the commons at Fulbrook	Rees Evans, Thomas ap Evan Prees, others	CD I/616
1762	Cefen Fullbrook	£ 0,10,0	Morgan Evan	CD I/967
1767	Cefeny Fulbrook	0,10,0	Morgan Evan	CD II/348
1800	One water corn mill called Fulwoke	12,0,0		CD I/1200

Talken Eskerbervedd

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1523 2 May	Talken Eskerbivith ifsa	10s for the rent of Talken Eskerbivith ifsa And of 6s8d for the rent of one tenement plot of land for the erecting of two mills one thereof for the grinding of all kinds of grain and the other for the ffulling art 99 years	David ap Gitto ap Ievan by a certain indenture sealed with the Convent seal not produced Jenkin ap Jene (tenement land for mills)	CD I/5
1523	Talken Eskerbivith issa	10s By indenture sealed with the Convent seal not produced	David ap Gitto ap Iwan	CD I/5
1526 24 November	Talken Iskery Berveth (Eskerberveth) Issa	10s 6s8d 2s 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 3 teals of meal, 7 trucks kilchmarch 99 years Rent as above with other Customs of the Territory	Moris ap Iwan ap Gitto Rice ap Moris Suspected	CD IV/1

Tref y Coll

Another of the ancient farms mentioned in the 1184 grant is Tref y Coll.

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owner	Source
1529 12 Sept.	Tref y Coll (treva y coll)	Rent and heriot 13s 4d 13s 4d 2s 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 5 teals of meal, 7 trucks of kilchmarch 99 years	Philip ap Gitto and David ap Lewellin Gitto Claim by hereditary right Lewis ap Jenkin Philip ap Gitto Thomas ap David, John ap David, David ap Rice Penwen & Elyoy his wife, daughter of Griffith ap Philip Gitto, Howell ap Jenkin, Jenkin ap David, David ap Jenkin	CD IV/1
1529 12 Sept.	Trewe y wlle	13s 4d	Philip ap Gitto by indenture sealed dated	CD I/5
1635 Oct. 13	A 3/8 share of an ancient tenement called Treva-coll, and also a 4/20 th share thereof, all being in the grange of Blaenayron, co. Cardigan, and parcel of the possessions of the late abbey of Strata Florida	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, the sporting and fishing rights, a yearly rent of 23s. 8d., suit at Fulbrook Mill and at the court of the lordship of Penarth, and a heriot of 10s. Consideration.	Indenture being a grant from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan esq., to Howell Lewis of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD II/51
1665 Aug. 23	A tenement called Keven-y-banal and a parcel of land (part of the said tenement) called Porth-towill, all	Yearly rent £2 15s, a heriot of 20s., and suit at Fulbrooke mill in the grange of Blaen Ayron. 21 years.	Indenture, being the counterpart of a lease from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., to David Evan of the parish of Llanavan, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/371

	in the parish of Llanbadarn Odin, co. Cardigan, and being formerly one-eighth part of an ancient tenement called Trefcoll.			
1670 Aug. 10	One-eighth part of Tre-yr-coll	Yearly rent, 50s., a heriot of 30s., an alienation fee of 30s., and half a teal of oats yearly at Shrovetide. 15 years	Lease from Edward Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., (on behalf of Sir John Vaughan, knt., Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster) to Evan Howell of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman, of the tenement in which he lived.	CD I/399
1677 Oct. 23	The tenth part of Tre-yr-coll in the grange of Blaenayron.	Yearly rent 36s., a hen at Shrovetide, a teal of dried oats at Candlemas, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years	Lease from Edward Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., to John Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/456
1722 May 10	A tenement called Keven-y-banal and Part of Trecoll in the grange of Blaenayron, co. Cardigan.	Yearly rent, £6, 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 20s. Consideration, 2 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Evan Hughes of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan.	CD I/659
1722 June 12	Tenements called Ty-yn-y-nant and Part of Trecoll in the grange of Blaen Ayrn, co. Cardigan.	Yearly rent £6 12s., a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, and a heriot of the second best beast. Consideration, 6 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Morgan David of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan.	CD I/664

1724 June 10	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-nant	Yearly rent 25s., a hen and 20 eggs, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Morgan Thomas Lewis of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/686
1742 Sept. 17	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-nant and part of Trecoll	Yearly rent £7, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Evans of Ty-yn-y-nant in the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/816
1744 Aug. 10	A tenement called Kefen-y-banal and Part of Trecole in the grange of Blaen Ayrion, co. Cardigan.	Yearly rent £6 3s., 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Evan Hughes of the parish of Llanbadarn Odin, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD II/193
1768 Oct. 10	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-nant and part of Trecoll farm in the parish of Caron.	Yearly rent £12, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 2 days reaping corn, 2 days carrying corn, 2 days carrying turf or coal, 2 days harrowing, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Evan of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/1014
1769 Aug. 12	Two tenements called Cefen-y-bamal-porth-towyll and part of Trevcoll Farm in the parish of Llanbadarne Odyn.	Yearly rent £18, 2 hens and 40 eggs, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 40s. 21 years	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Benjamin Hughes of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/1031

Esgair Saeson

This farm was also listed in the 1184 grant.

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1524 10 th May	Esker Saison	Rent and heriot. 8s 4d 10s 2s 6d work, 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 36 trucks of oats, 7 trucks kilchmarch. 99 years 'This lease is forged, that is to say 20 th is made 30 th .'	Iwan ap Lewellin ap David ap Iwan ap Bede ao Owen Gr ap Iwan D'd Here. Thomas ap Iwan Here. Richard ap Iwan ap david Here. Claim by will.	CD IV/1
	Esker Sesin	8s 4d	Iwan David Hire by indenture sealed with the convent seal not produced.	CD I/5
1654 Sept. 27	The fifth part of an ancient tenement called Esker-Seyson in the grange of Blaynayron.	Reserving to the grantor a perpetual yearly rent of 6s. 10d., and suit at mill.	Indenture being a grant from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., to Hugh Phillipp of the parish of Llandevy Brevy, co. Cardigan.	CD II/91
1677 Jan. 28	The fourth part of Esgyr-saeson in the grange of Blaen Ayrn.	Yearly rent 40s., a hen at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Michaelmas, a heriot of 40s., and suit at Fulbrooke Mill. 21 years.	Lease from Edward Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., to John Howell of the parish of Llanthewy Brevy, co. Cardigan, smith.	CD I/467

1693 Oct. 14	The fourth part of Esgir-saeson in the parish of Llandewy Brevi.	Yearly rent, £2 1os, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, esq., to Evan Hughes of the parish of Llandewy Brevi, co. Cardigan.	CD I/594
1723 Dec. 20	A one-eighth part and a one-fourth part of Esgir-saeson, called Tuy-hirion-yn-y-rhos, in the grange of Blaen Ayrion.	Yearly rent £3 4s., 2 hens, 40 eggs and 6 chickens, and heriot of 32s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Thomas David Lawrence of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/677
1739 May 23	A tenement called Esgir Saison in the parish of Llandewy Brevy.	Yearly rent £2 10s., a hen and 20 chickens at Shrovetide, 6 chickens and half a teal of dried oats, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 25s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Hugh Hughes of Blaenpennall in the parish of llandewy Brevy, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/791
1769 Aug. 12	Two tenements called Tai-hirion-y-rhos and Ty-dany-mynydd in the parish of Llandewi Brevi.	Yearly rent £12, the usual duties, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 40s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Richard Edward of the parish of Llandewi Brevi, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/1026

Bron y Cappell

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1597 39 Eliz.	Bron y Cappell	One messuage and 600 acres of land, called Eskyr Berveth Ganol. Invasion of and forced possession of property called Bron y Cappell (one messuage and 200 acres of land) during compl.'s military service in Portugal. See p. 93	Compl. Rees David Wyn, labourer. (Lease of said premises by late abbot of S.F. to Ievan ap Gytto Hir, grandfather of compl. For 99 years. Conveyed to compl. via inheritance.) Defts. John Steadman the elder, Esq., Ievan ap Phillip Thomas, Morgan Jankin, Ievan ap Ievan Lloyd, David ap David, David ap Gwilym.	See Jones, <i>Exchequer Proceedings (Equity)</i> , p. 93 59/22.
1658 Sept. 6	Messuages and lands called Llanerch-y-corne, Bryn-y-cappel, and Pant-y-gorclwadd	Consideration, £40.	Grant from Richard John ap Hugh of the parish of Llanavan, co. Cardigan, gent., to Edward Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD II/101
1670	Bron y Cappol	01.11.0	John Lewis, Morgan Williams	CD I/401
1762	Bron y Cappel	1.11.0	Mr. John Pugh	CD I/967
1767	Brony Cappell	1.11.0 (chief or ffee farm rents)	John Pugh	CD II/348

Bryn y Kippill

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenant/Owners	Source
1670	Bryn y Kippill and 3 prts of Tre y Koll	00.14.02	John Llowoll	CD 401
1762	Bryn y Cippil	0.14.2	John Thomas	CD 967
1767	Bron y Cippill	0.14.3 (chief or ffee rents)	David James	CD II/348

Maes Glas

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1538 8 March	Maes Glas	13s4d 13s4d 2s 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 5 teals of meal, 7 trucks of kilchmarch For 99 years Seal suspected	Dwigy (dead) daughter of Gitto and her sons namely Griffith ap iwan ap Dio, Griffith Goz (dead), Iwan ap Iwan ap Dio Thomas ap Iwan ap Iwan ap Dio claim as son and heir of the father	CD IV/1
	Annafsa Glasse	13s4d by indenture sealed with the convent seal not shown	Iwan ap Iwan ap Dio	CD I/5
?1625	Masse Clache	268 acres whereof 86 at 2s, 86 at 12d, and 96 at 6d. The Acres cometh to £15, 6s per ann	Jevan David Thomas, John David Thomas, and Thos. David Thomas	CD I/230
1636 May 11	One-fourth part of the tenement called Maesglasse	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, the right of fishing and fowling, a perpetual yearly rent of £3, suit at Fulbrook Mill, heriot of 10s. Consideration, 5s. The grantor appointed Morris Vaughan of Trowscoed to give livery of seisin of the premises.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Thomas John of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan.	CD I/259
1643 Jul. 1	Keven-y-maesglas (being the fourth part of an ancient	Reserving to the grantor a perpetual rent of 20s., and suit at Fulbrooke Mill.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Thomas Jones, (son and heir of John Jones of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent., deceased).	CD II/84

	tenement called Y maesglas)			
1662 January	4 th part of Maes Glas	Messuage and lands called Ty yn y Gounol, 3 lbs, 13 years unexpired of 21 years rent of 3 lbs 20 shillings heriot, suit of mill to Fullbrook	Walter Thomas the son of Thomas John of Maes Glas	
1662 Oct. 27	Maes Glas, Tythin-y-cornell, Knwck-y-walis, Blaen-gorffen, Tir alias Tythin-y-gaer.	Will of Thomas John of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent. To my son and heir John Thomas and his issue the tenement called Maesglas wherein I live, with remainder to my second son Water; to my said son Water Thomas a tenement called Tithin-y-cornell in the said parish of Caron, subject to the rent and service due to John Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq.; to my third son Jenkin Thomas a tenement called Knwck-y-walis in the parish of Caron, subject as aforesaid; to my sons Water and Morgan Thomas a tenement called Blaen-gorffen subject to a yearly rent of 26s. 8d to the said John Vaughan; to my son Morgan Thomas a tenement called Tir or Tythin-y-gaer in the parish of Caron, subject to a yearly rent and service to the said John Vaughan; to my son Jenkin Thomas a tenement called Maesglas (being one-fourth of an ancient tenement called Maesglas) but subject to a yearly rent	Will of Thomas John, to son and heir John Thomas, second son Water Thomas, third son Jenkin Thomas, fourth son Morgan Thomas.	CD I/351

		due to the said John Vaughan.		
1670 (?)	Masse Glathe	268 acres whereod 86 at 2d, 86 at 12d, 96 at 6d. Per annum: £15.6	Ievan David Thomas, John David Thomas, & Thos. David Thomas	
1670	Pen y Kefen (& a 4 th part of Maes Glase)	01.00.0	Thomas Jones, David Mathi (s?w?)	CD I/401
1681 June 9	A tenement called Tuy-yn-y-cornel and the one-fourth part of Maes-glas.	Yearly rent £3 for Tuy-yn-y-cornel and £1 for the fourth part of Maesglas, four teals of pilcorn at Michaelmas, a heriot of 20s., and suit at Fulbrook Mill. Consideration £9. 21 years.	Lease from Edward Vaughan to John Griffith of the parish of Carron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/488
1701 Mar. 13	A tenement called Ty-yn-y-cornel and the one-fourth part of Maesglas.	Yearly rent £7, four teals of rye and pilcorne of Aberystwyth measure, six chickens at Whitsuntide, two hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fullbrook Mill, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years	Lease from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Lettice Thomas of the parish of Llanvaif, co. Cardigan, spinster	CD I/601
1728 Feb. 21	Two tenements called Maesglasse (formerly parcel of the dissolved abbey of Strata Florida) and Maes-y-felyn		Indenture, being a lease for a year (so that a grant by release might be made) from David Evans of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent., and Walter Evans his son and heir apparent, to Henry Rogers of the parish of Ystrad, co. Cardigan, clerk.	CD I/724

1737 Nov. 22	A tenement called Maesglasse being part of the possessions of the late abbey of Strata Florida, also a tenement called Maes-y-felyn	Consideration, £80 13s. 1d. Paid to the said Henry Rogers.	Said premises had been mortgaged on 22 Feb. 1728 by the said David Evans and his then eldest son Walter Evans, since deceased, to the said Henry Rogers to secure £70.	CD I/779
1743 May 1	Tenements called Ty-yn-y-cornel and the fourth part of Maesglas in the grange of Blaen Ayrion.	Yearly rent, £7, 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, 4 teals of rye or pilcorne, and a heriot of 20s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Thomas Evans of Long Acre St., London, peruke-maker, and David Evans of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/838
1762	Part of Maesglas	3.0.0	Mr. Thomas Evans	CD I/967
1763 May 27	Tenements called Ty-yn-y-cornel and the one-fourth part of Maes-glas in the parish of Caron.	Yearly rent, £8, 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, 4 teals of rye or pilcorne (Aberystwyth measure), and a heriot of £1. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Thomas Evans of Long Acre St., London, gold-beater.	CD I/973
1767	Ty yny Gannel and a part of Maes Glas	8.	John Evans	CD II/348

1800	Mayse Glache	268 acres. 86 at 24d, 86 at 12d, 96 at 6d. Per annum: £15,6.		CD I/1200
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Monachty Blaenaeron

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenant/Owner	Source
1524 June 15	Monachty Blaynayron	8s4d 13s4d 2s 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 4 teals of meal, 4 teals of kylchmarch Leased 15th June 1524 for 99 years	Jenkin ap John Thomas Rice ap William Gitto (dead) Claims by the last will of his father	CD IV/1
1625	One tenement called Monachtye Blanaron	138 acres whereof 30 at 16d, 40 at 6d, and 68 at 4d.	Morgan Thomas and ORice Thomas	CD I/230
1650 July 16	A tenement called Mynachdy-blaenayron in the grange of Blaenayron	Yearly rent £5, and a heriot of 40s. 14 years	Lease by indenture from John Vaughan of Trowscoed, co. Cardigan, esq., to David ap Evan Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/287
1725 Sept. 17	A tenement called Mynachty-blaen-ayron in the said parish of Llanbadarn Odyn	Yearly rent £5, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. Consideration, 5 guineas. 17 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Jane David, widow, and David Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan,	CD I/699

<p>1739 April 19</p>	<p>A tenement called Monachty-blaen-ayron in the said parish of Llanbadarn Odyn.</p>	<p>Yearly rent £5, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. Consideration, 5 guineas.</p> <p>21 years.</p>	<p>Lease from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. Cardigan.</p>	<p>CD I/788</p>
<p>1769 Aug. 12</p>	<p>A tenement called Mynachty-blaen-ayron in the said parish of Llanbadarn Odyn</p>	<p>Yearly rent £8 10s, a hen and 20 eggs at SHrovetide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast.</p> <p>20 years.</p>	<p>Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Thomas of the parish of Llanbadarn Odyn, co. CARDIGAN.</p>	<p>CD I/1030</p>

Llwyn y Gwyn

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1532 1 May	Lloyn Gwynecam	13s4d8s4d 12d 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 9 trucks of mean, 7 trucks of kilchmarch. Leased for 99 years.	Iwan ap Griffith Goz Iwan Thomas ap Iwan David ap Thomas John ap Thomas Jenkin ap Thomas Claim as nephews and heirs of Iwan ap Griffith Goz	CD IV/1
	Lloiglbene	13s 4d	Iwan ap Griffith Goche by indenture sealed with the convent seal not produced.	CD I/5
1621	Lloyn gwynne		(Illeg), John Thomas Goz, John (Illeg) Goz	CD I/215
1625	Llwyn y Gwyn	482 acres whereof 120 at 24d, 120 at 12d, and 242 at 6d. The acres cometh to £24, 1s per ann.	Ievan Thos. Goughe and John Thos. Goughe	CD I/230
1662	The 5 th part of Llwyn y Gwine	13 years unexpired of 15 years, rent 4 lbs plus one teale of oats, two hens, plus suit of mill. 04.00.00	Elen verch Willian and Thomas Roffor (?) both of Caron, was previously in occupation of Evan Roffir.	CD I/401
1670	Llwyn y Gwyn	482 acres whereof 120 at 2, 120 at 12d, 242 at 6d. Per annum: £24.1		CD I/402
1670	The 5 th part of Llwyn y gwine called Ty yn y Berth	00.13.0	Thomas Rees and John Thos.	CD I/401
1678 Oct. 22	One-fifth of an ancient tenement called Llwyn-y-	Yearly rent £4, two hens at Shrovetide, a teal of dried oats at Candlemas, a heriot of 40s., and suit	Lease from Edward Vaughan to Thomas Evan of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/480

	gwynne	at Fulbrook Mill. 21 years.		
1690	Llwyn y Gwynne	07.00.00. One shrove hen, and six chickens, and forty shillings for a herriott. 21 years	David Rees	CD I/401
1690 Oct. 7	A tenement called Llwyn-y-gwynne	Yearly rent £7, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Michaelmas, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 40s. 21 years.	Lease from Letitia Vaughan of Trowscoed, widow, to David Rees of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/564
1721 Jan. 25	A tenement called Llwyn-y-gwynne	Yearly rent £6, a hen, 20 eggs and 6 chickens, and a heriot of 40s. Consideration, 14 guineas. 21 years	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Felix Rees of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan.	CD I/636
1721 Feb. 16	Tenements called Ty-yn-y-swydd and Ty-yn-y-gaer	Yearly rent £6, two hens, 40 eggs, 4 peck of dried oats, and a heriot of 40s. Consideration, 8 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Felix of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan.	CD I/641
1722 April 20	Two tenements called Llwyn-y-gwynne and Ty-yn-y-swydd	Yearly rent £7, 2 hens, 40 eggs, 6 chickens, and a heriot of £3. Consideration, 10 guineas. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Thomas John of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan.	CD I/653

1742 Jan. 6	Tenements called Llwynygwinne and Ty-yn-y-swydd	Yearly rent, £7, 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of £3. 21 years	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Thomas John of the parish of Caron, c. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/825
1756 June 18	A tenement called Llwyn-gwynne-ycha	Yearly rent £8, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of £2. Consideration £14 14s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne to William Roberts of Eskir-pervedd in the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD II/246
1767	Llwyny Gwinne Ycha	8	William Robert	Crosswo od II/348
1767	Llwyn y Gwinne and Tyyny Swydd	11	Morgan Rees and Dd. Thomas	Crosswo od II/348
1769 Aug. 12	Two tenements called Llwyn-gwyne-issa and Ty-yn-y-swydd	Yearly rent £14 10s., 2 hens and 40 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of £3. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne to David Thomas of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/1028
1778 June 13	A tenement called Llwyngwynne	Yearly rent £16, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Thomas of Llwyngwynne in the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, farmer.	CD I/1089

		21 years		
1800	Llwyn y Gwyn	482 acres. 120 at 24d, 120 at 12d, 242 at 6d. Per annum: £24,1	Ievan Thos. Goughe, John Thos. Goughe	CD I/1200

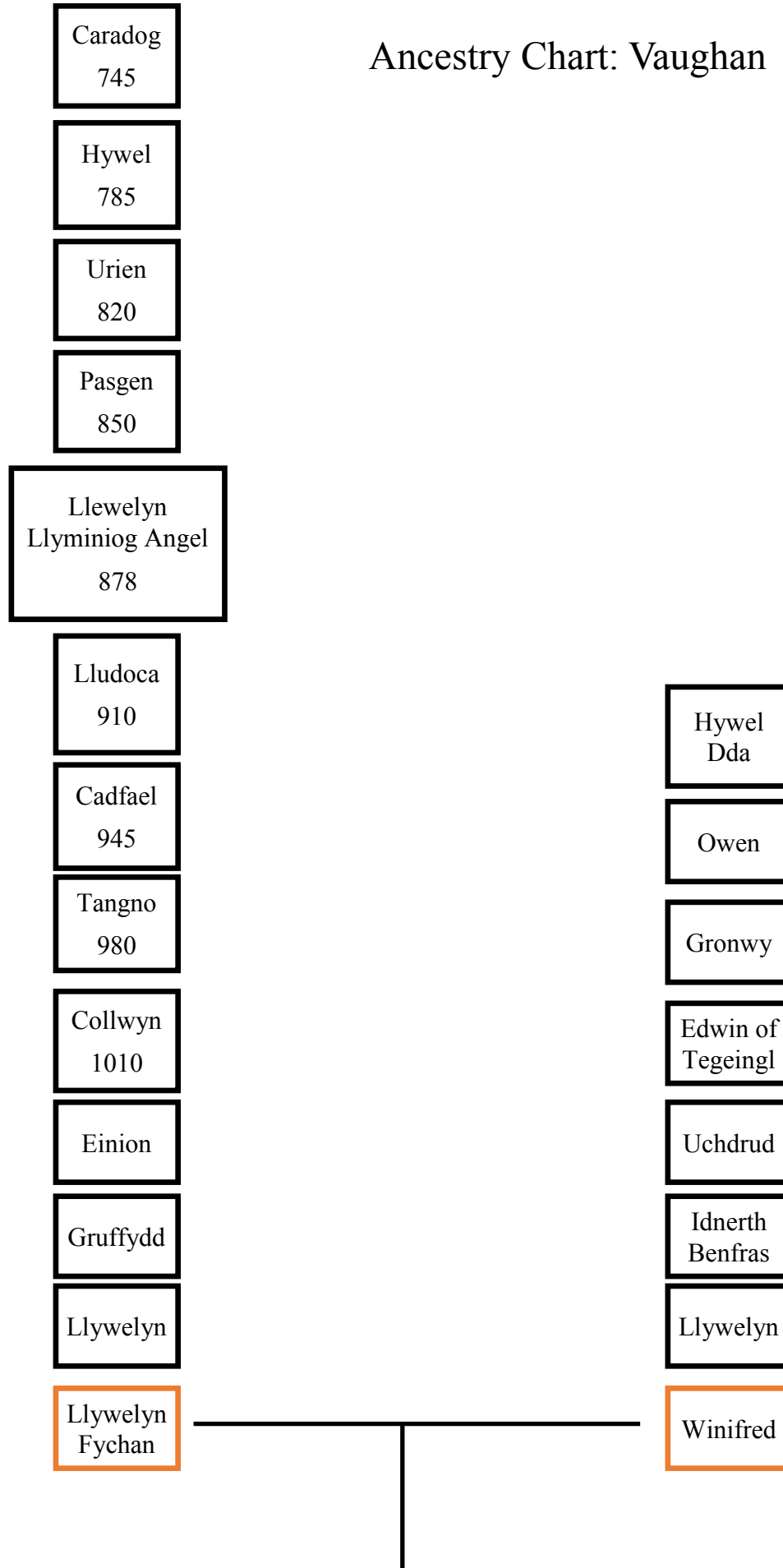
Esgir Maen

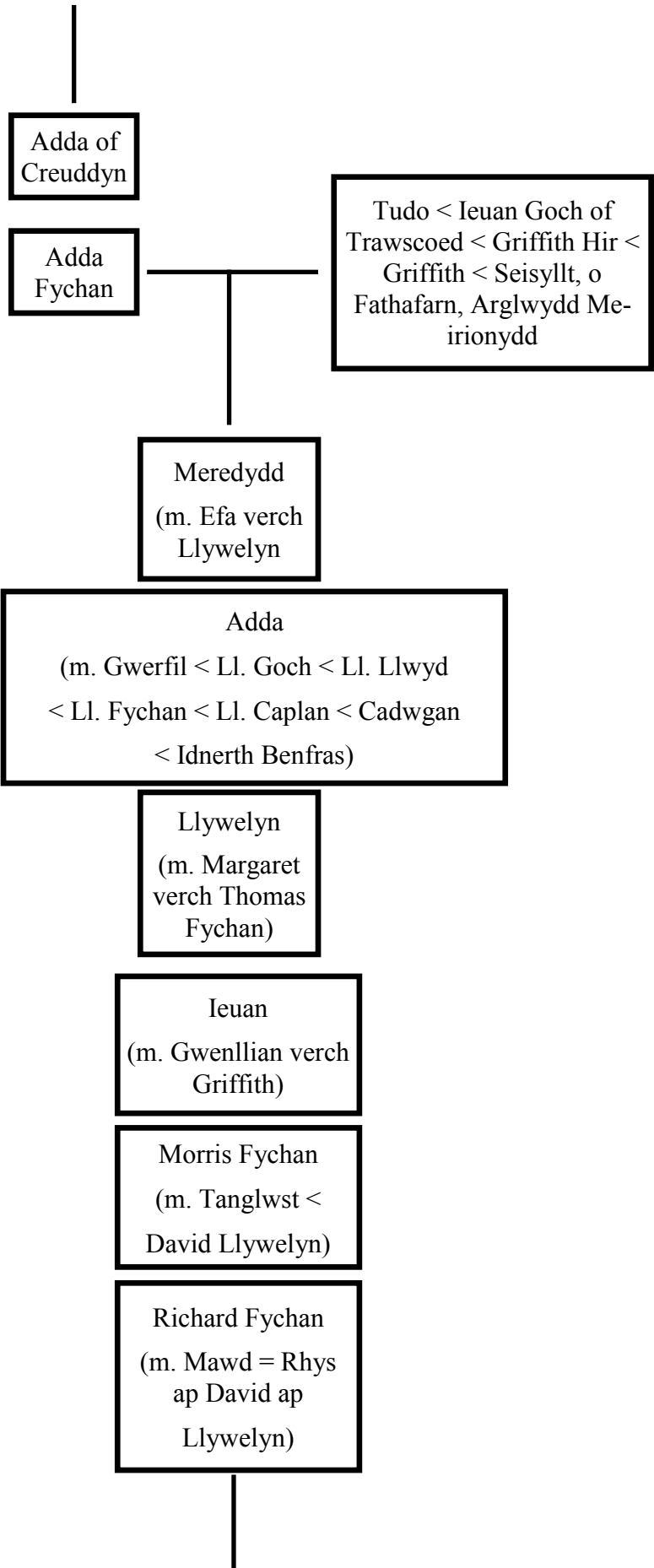
Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants/Owners	Source
1530 3 April	Esker y main (Esker Mayn)	Rent and heriot. 6s 8d 13s 4d 2s. Work 6d. 1 topstone or 12d, 1 sheep or 12s, 3 teals of meal, 7 trucks of kilchmarch. For 99 years.	David ap Gwillin ap Dio ap Rithergh (dead) and David ap Philip ap Dio ap Rithergh (dead). R. David Gwillin Dio ap Rithergh, Iwan ap David Philip (dead). R. mortgaged to Morgan ap Ris.	CD IV/1
	Esker Mayn	By indenture sealed with convent seal not produced. 6s 8d.	David ap Gwylm	CD I/5
?1625	Esgermayne	164 acres ½ whereof 40 at 18, 40 at 12, and 84 ½ at 6. The acres cometh to £7,2,3 per ann.	Ievan David Lloyd and Thoms ap Ievan	CD I/230
1636 May 10	Two parts of a tenement called Esker-y-mayne	Reserving to the grantor all minerals, a perpetual yearly rent of £1 13s., and suit at Fulbrook Mill. Consideration, £81.	Grant from John Vaughan, esq., to Elizabeth Thomas of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, widow.	CD II/54
1662 Dec.	3 rd part of Esgyr Maen	13 years unexpired of 15 years. 03.00.00 rent plus one teale of oats, herriot, plus work , suit of mill	Alswn Thomas the now wife of Morgan John Lease granted David Rishard lately Not to alien without licence	CD I/401
1670(?)	Esgermayne	164 1/2 acres whereof 40 at 10d, 40 at 12d, 84 ½ at 6d. Per annum: £7,2,3	Ievan David Lloyd, Thomas ap Ievan	CD I/402
1670	Two parts of Esgyr Maon	01.13.0	Thomas ap Evan, Da. Lloyd	CD I/401
1677 Aug. 24	One-third share in an ancient tenement called Esgyr-Maen	Yearly rent £3, a teal of dried oats at Candlemas, a hen at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Michaelmas, a heriot of 40s., and suit at Fulbrook Mill.	Lease from Edward Vaughan, esq., to John Thomas of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/448

		21 years.		
1678 Sept. 7	A tenement called Esgir-maen	Yearly rent £3 10s., a goose and six chickens at Michaelmas, a hen at Shrovetide, and suit at Maen Arthur Mill. Five years.	Lease from Edward Vaughan to James Herbert of the parish of Llanvyhangell y Croythin, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/476
1711 Sept. 24	A capital messuage and lands called Keven-y-gwythil and cottages thereon called Court-y-gwythil and Rheed-y-pandy in the grange of Blaenaeron in the parish of Llanbadarn Odin.	Yearly rent £7, 2 hens and 49 eggs at hrovetide, 6 chickens, a teal of dried oats, suit at Fullbrook Mill, and a heriot of the second best beast. Consideration, 21s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Morgan Lloyd of Esgir-Maen in the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/607
1721 Feb. 12	A tenement called Esgir-maen	Yearly rent £4, a hen, 20 eggs, 6 chickens, a teal of dried oats, and a heriot of 30s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John Edward, Lord Viscount Lisburne to Thomas Evan of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/638
1738 April 28	Tenement called Esger-y-maen-fach	Yearly rent £4, a hen and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, a teal of dried oats, suit at Fulbrook Mill, and a heriot of 30s. Consideration, 21s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. John, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to David Davies of the parish of Caron, co. Cardigan, yeoman.	CD I/783
1756 June 18	A tenement called Esgir-maen in the said parish of Llanvyhangel y	Yearly rent £3, a hen, and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, the usual service at Crosswood, suit at Maen Arthur Mill, and a heriot of 35s.	Lease (not signed) from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Richard Hughes of Esgir Maen in the parish of Llanvyhangel y Croyddin, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD I/893

	Croyddin.	Consideration, 21s.		
1756 June 18	The said tenement of Esgir-maen.	Yearly rent £3, a hen, and 20 eggs at Shrovetide, 6 chickens at Whitsuntide, suit at Maen Arthur Mill, and a heriot of 30s. Consideration, 30s. 21 years.	Lease from the Right Hon. Wilmot, Lord Viscount Lisburne, to Richard Hughes of Esgir Maen in the parish of Llanvyhangel y Croyddin, co. Cardigan, gent.	CD II/247
1762	Esgir Maen Vawr	0.13.4	John Rees Oliver	CD I/967
1762	Esgir Maen Ganol	0.16.6	David Evans	CD I/967
1767	Eskir Maen Vach	5	John Davies	CD II/348
1767	Eskir Maen Fawr (chief or ffee farm rents)	0,16,6	John Rees	CD II/348
1767	Eskir Maen Ganol	0,16,6	David Evan	CD II/348
1800	Eskermayne	164 ½ acres. 40 at 18d, 40 at 12d, 84 ½ at 6d. Per annum: £7,2,3.		CD I/1200

Ancestry Chart: Vaughan



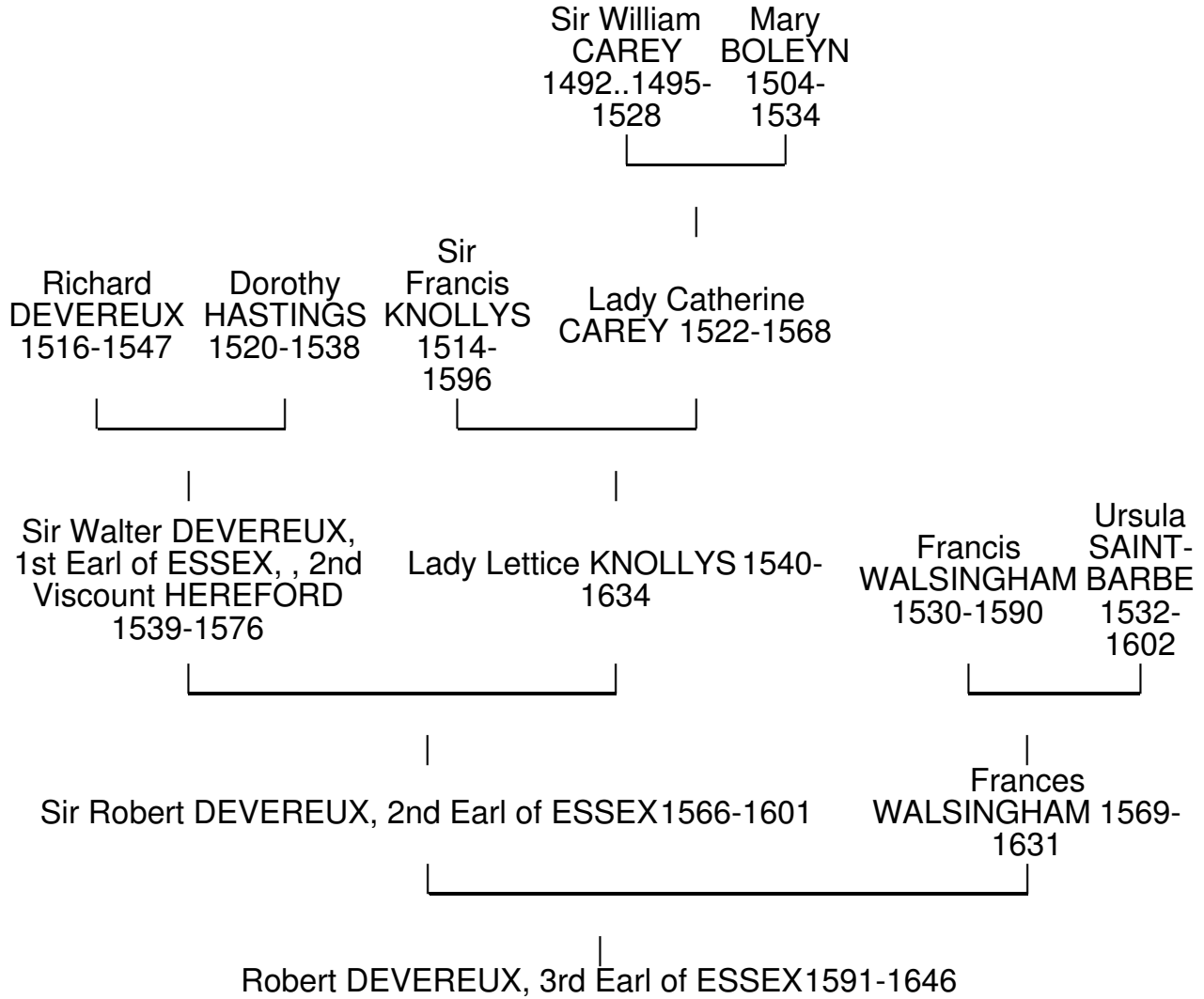


Morris Fychan
(m. Elliw < Howel
Jenkin Evan ap
Rhys Goch)

Edward Vaughan
(m. Lettice Stedman
d. 1635)

Sir John Vaughan 1603-
1674
(m. Jane Stedman)

Ancestry of Robert DEVEREUX, 3rd Earl of ESSEX



Appendix 16: Thomas family land occupancy records

Date	Place Name	Details	Tenants	Source
1625	Monachty Blaenaeron	138 acres whereof 30 at 16d, 40 at 6d, and 68 at 4d, the acres cometh to £4, 16 per ann	Morgan Thomas and Rice Thomas	CD I/230
1670	Monachtye Blainaron	138 acres whereof 30 at 16d, 40 at 10d, and 68 at 4d. Per annum: £4.16	Morgan Thomas and Rice Thomas	CD I/402
1767	Monachty Blaenairon	6	David Thomas	CD II/348
1625	Masse Clache	268 acres whereof 86 at 2s, 86 at 12d, and 96 at 6d. The Acres cometh to £15, 6s per ann	Jevan David Thomas, John David Thomas, and Thos. David Thomas	CD I/230
1662 January	4 th part of Maes Glas	Messuage and lands called Ty yn y Gounol, 3 lbs, 13 years unexpired of 21 years rent of 3 lbs 20 shillings herior, suit of mill to Fullbrook	Walter Thomas the son of Thomas John of Maes Glas	CD I/296
1670	Masse Glathe	268 acres whereod 86 at 2d, 86 at 12d, 96 at 6d. Per annum: £15.6	Ievan David Thomas, John David Thomas, & Thos. David Thomas	CD I/402
1 Sept. 1534	Tithen Bwlch/Castell Fflamys	Rent and heriot 10s 10s 2s. I topstone 1 sheep 3 teals of meal 1 truck kilchmarch. For 99 years.	David Ritherz (rithergh) ap Thomas (dead), David Thomas Gwilin Iwan Philip David (process)	CD IV/1
1560	Castell Flemingie Yche		Thomas David Thomas, David? Riddz.	CD IV/2
1621	Castle Flemingie Yche		Thomas David Thomas, David Riddz. Thomas, Morris ap David, (<i>illeg.</i>) Morgan (<i>illeg.</i>) James	CD I/215

			(<i>illeg.</i>) David	
1625	Castle Fleming Yche	212 acres 1/2 whereof 53 at 24d, 53 at 12d, and 106 1/2 at 6d. The acres cometh to £10, 12s, 3 per ann.	Thomas Dav. Thomas and David Ruddz Thomas with others	CD I/230
1670	Castle Fleming Yche	212 ½ acres, whereof 53 at 3d, 53 at 12d, 106 ½ at 6d. Per annum: £10.12.3	Thos. David Thomas and David Ruddz Thomas with others	CD I/402
1762	Ty yn y Berth	£0,13,0	David Thomas	CD I/967
1767	Tyny Bwsh (chief or Ffee Farm rents) 13(?)		David Thomas	CD II/348
1762	Bryn y Cippil	0.14.2	John Thomas	CD I/967
1625	Esker Syson	314 acres whereof 80 at 18d, 80 at 12d, and 154 at 4d. The acres cometh to £12,11,4	Ievan ap Griffith Ievan Thos. Leurance (<i>illeg.</i>) Thoms, David Thomas	CD I/230
1670	Esker Syson	314 acres whereof 80 at 18d, 80 at 12d, 154 at 4d. Per annum: £12,11,4	Ievan ap Griffiths Ievan Thos. Leurance (<i>illeg.</i>) Thomas, and David Thomas	CD I/402
1767	The fourth part of Eskir Season called Taihinion Rhos	6.	David Thomas	CD II/348
1659 August	The 4 th part of Esgyr Saeson	10 years expired 02.00.00	David Thomas of Llandewy Brevy	CD I/296
1532 1 May	Lloyn Gwynecam (and tenement Mab de Lia) [Llwyngwinau]	13s4d8s4d 12d 6d 1 topstone, 1 sheep, 9 trucks of mean, 7 trucks of kilchmarch. Leased for 99 years.	Iwan ap Griffith Goz Iwan Thomas ap Iwan David ap Thomas John ap Thomas Jenkin ap Thomas	CD IV/1

			Claim as nephews and heirs of Iwan ap Griffith Goz	
1670	The 5 th part of Llwyn y gwine called Ty yn y Berth	00.13.0	Thomas Rees and John Thos.	CD I/401
1767	Llwyn y Gwinne and Tyyny Swydd	11	Morgan Rees and Dd. Thomas	CD II/348
1762	Ty yn yr Eskir	1.11.0	Morgan Thomas	CD I/967
1762	Blaen yr Esgir	0.17.8	Richard Thomas	CD I/967
1762	Ty yn y Berth	0.13.0	David Thomas	CD I/967
1767	Tyyn yr Eskir and a meadow by Pont Gamddwr	3,3	Morgan Thomas	CD II/348
	Tyabullch	10s 6s 8d 12d 6d 1 topstone 1 sheep 7 trucks of oats Quare above Castell Flemish	Philip ap David Lewelin Ychan Tellynnor <i>dead</i> David Thomas ap Gwillim David Ritherz ap Thomas <i>dead</i> David Floid ap Morris John Stidman for the tithes there – 3s 4d John Stidman has purchased it is said	CD IV/1

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