

LLYFR CYNOG OF CYFRAITH HYWEL
AND ST CYNOG OF BRYCHEINIOG

Cyfraith Hywel (the Law of Hywel) is the name given to the native Welsh law texts, written in Welsh and Latin, which are preserved in manuscripts datable to the period between c.1250 and c.1550, and originating from different parts of Wales.¹ These law texts are traditionally attributed by their prefaces to the tenth-century king, Hywel Dda.² Other authors or editors are also mentioned in the texts.³ Some of these were secular rulers or other laymen and some were clerics. The most well-known are Blegywryd,⁴ Cyfnerth and Morgenau,⁵ and Iorwerth ap Madog,⁶ to whom the main Welsh redactions, namely *Llyfr Blegywryd*, *Llyfr Cyfnerth* and *Llyfr Iorwerth*, are attributed. Other names, such as Rhys ap Gruffudd,⁷ Bleddyn ap

¹ I am grateful to Morfydd E. Owen, who first suggested the possibility that the Cynog of the law tracts should be identified with St Cynog and supervised the thesis from which this article is derived. Thanks also to Huw Pryce for his bibliographical references, to Howard Davies for his many helpful suggestions, and Helen Davies for help with the Latin translations. For a list of the manuscripts and their sigla, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *The Welsh Laws* (Cardiff, 1989), pp. 100–2.

² J. G. Edwards, 'Hywel Dda and the Welsh lawbooks', in D. Jenkins (ed.), *Celtic Law Papers* (Brussels, 1973), pp. 135–60; H. Pryce, 'The prologues to the Welsh lawbooks', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 33 (1986), 151–87.

³ See G. A. Elias, 'Awduron cyfraith Hywel' (unpub. M.Phil. thesis, University of Wales, 2004).

⁴ H. D. Emanuel, 'Blegywryd and the Welsh laws', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 20 (1963), 256–60; idem, 'The book of Blegywryd and MS Rawlinson 821', in Jenkins (ed.), *Celtic Law Papers*, pp. 163–70; J. G. Edwards, 'Studies in the Welsh laws since 1928', ante, *Special Number, 1963: The Welsh Laws* (1963), 1–17.

⁵ D. Jenkins, 'A family of medieval Welsh lawyers', in idem (ed.), *Celtic Law Papers*, pp. 123–33.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ M. E. Owen, 'The din of Dinefwr: prince, poet and physician', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 32 (1996), 15–25; D. Jenkins and M. E. Owen, 'Welsh law in Carmarthenshire', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 18 (1982), 17–27; N. A. Jones and H. Pryce (eds), *Yr Arglwydd Rhys* (Cardiff, 1996).

Cynfyn⁸ and Cynyr ap Cadwgan,⁹ appear in the texts as the authors of single rules or tractates. One section of the laws is referred to as *Llyfr Cynog* (the Book of Cynog). This article seeks to identify that Cynog by examining the Welsh law texts, together with other written sources and church dedications.

LLYFR CYNOG

Llyfr Cynog does not survive independently but is cited as the source of legal material in several of the extant medieval Welsh law texts, which clearly assumed it to be an authoritative lawbook in the native legal tradition. While it is difficult to say how faithfully these compilations reproduce the contents of the original *Llyfr Cynog*, an examination of their references to it allows some important conclusions to be drawn about its character. As previous scholars have recognized, a particularly valuable source in this regard is National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 35 (conventionally referred to by the siglum G), the first part of which concludes with the colophon ‘Ac yuelly y teruyna llyuyr Kyna6c’ (‘And thus ends the Book of Cynog’).¹⁰

A reference to *Llyfr Cynog* was made in John Davies’s *Dictionarium Duplex* of 1632.¹¹ In the index of sources John Davies lists K., K.H. and K.K. He expands K.H. as *Cyfraith Hywel* and K.K. as *Cyfraith Cynog*. It is likely that this is the source which inspired William Maurice a little later, between 1660 and 1663, to use the title *Llyfr Cynog* on the

⁸ J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (London, 1911), II, p. 378.

⁹ Graham Thomas (ed.), *The Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell* (Aberystwyth, 1997), pp. 48, 204, 206; H. Pryce, *Native Law and the Church in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 34–5, 76, n. 21, 185, 190, 255; idem, ‘Lawbooks and literacy in medieval Wales’, *Speculum*, 75 (2000), 47; idem, ‘The context and purpose of the earliest Welsh lawbooks’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 39 (Summer 2000), 54; G. A. Elias, *Llyfr Cynyr ap Cadwgan* (Pamffledi Cyfraith Hywel [Aberystwyth], 2006).

¹⁰ A. R. William, *Llyfr Cynog: A Medieval Welsh Law Digest* (Pamffledi Cyfraith Hywel; Aberystwyth, 1990), pp. ii, 60; T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘NLW Peniarth MS 35 (G) and the textual tradition of *Llyfr Iorwerth*’ (unpub. article), p. 14. I should like to thank Professor Charles-Edwards for generously giving me permission to read his work.

¹¹ See C. Davies, ‘The *Dictionarium Duplex* (1632)’, in C. Davies (ed.), *Dr John Davies of Mallwyd: Welsh Renaissance Scholar* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 146–70.

cover of Peniarth MS 35.¹² Between 1660 and 1663 William Maurice collected numerous law manuscripts of *Cyfraith Hywel Dda* in his *Deddfgrawn*, which is preserved in the two manuscripts known as Wynnstay MSS 37 and 38.¹³ While copying the contents of the Hengwrt law manuscripts, which later formed the main basis of the Peniarth collection, he probably noticed the colophon, ‘Ac yuelly y teruyna llyuyr Kyna6c’ (‘And thus ends the Book of Cynog’), on quire eleven of Peniarth MS 35 (G). He gave the name CYN, that is *Llyfr Cynog*, to the first part of the manuscript (fos 1–76) and AD-CYN to the remainder (fo. 77–). He believed that the latter folios, AD-CYN, were an appendix to *Llyfr Cynog*. CYN was incorporated into William Maurice’s *Deddfgrawn*.¹⁴

However, before discussing references to *Llyfr Cynog* in G and other late medieval lawbooks, let us consider passages in *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, *Llyfr Blegywryd* and the Latin texts of Welsh law which quote Cynog’s book as an authority on deposits.

Llyfr Cyfnerth:

If there be a legal guardian, and chattels are taken by stealth from under his guardianship, and the keys remain with him safely, and there be seen a breach in the house; the Book of Cynog says that it is easier to believe him if there be chattels of his own taken together with the other chattels which were taken by stealth from him. He is, however, to swear conjointly with all the persons in the house as to his being clear as to those chattels. If the earth, however, be excavated under the house, after showing in law that he is clear, the king owns the earth and there is to be no guardian answerable for it.¹⁵

¹² Maurice had access to Davies’s manuscripts – for instance, he copied Davies’s manuscript, London, B[ritish] L[ibrary], Add. MS 14869, in Aberystwyth, N[ational] L[ibrary of] W[ales], MS Llanstephan 31B: see N. A. Jones and M. E. Owen, ‘John Davies and the poets of the princes: *cognoscere, intellegere, scire*’, in Davies (ed.), *Dr John Davies of Mallwyd*, pp. 171–207.

¹³ D. Jenkins, ‘Deddfgrawn William Maurice’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, 2 (1941–2), 33–6.

¹⁴ This part of G also formed the basis of Book VIII of A. Owen (ed.), *The Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales*, 2 vols (London, 1841), II, pp. 174–211.

¹⁵ A. W. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Welsh Medieval Law* (Oxford, 1909), p. 63: ‘Or byd keitwat kyfreitha6l ad6yn da oe warchad6 yn lletrat. A bot yrallwedeu gantha6 ef yn diwall. Aguelet torr ar yty. llyuyr kyna6c adyweit bot yn haws ygredu ordygir da ida6

Llyfr Blegywryd:

If a guardian loses a deposit, without losing any of his own property, he is to pay the whole loss himself, by law. The Book of Cynog says that it is easier to credit him, if his own property is stolen along with the other, and the breach in the house be seen. He is, however, to swear, and the men of the house with him, to his being clear of the property. If the earth, however, be excavated under the house after showing in law that he is clear, the king owns the earth, and the guardian is not to be answerable for it.¹⁶

Latin B:

If a guardian loses that which is on deposit, he shall make restitution in full for that which is lost. The Book of Cynog says that if a thief digs under a house and takes something from it while a guardian holds the key, the guardian shall make no restitution; however he shall swear with all his family.¹⁷

ef gyt ar da arall. adycker yn lletrat yganta6 ef. Ef adyly hagen tygu adynyon yty ganta6 oll yuot ef yn iach or da h6nn6. Or cledir ydayar hagen ydan yty guedy gunel ef ygyfreith y uot yn iach. brenhin bieu dayar ac ny dyly keitwat uot drosti'. Translation adapted from *ibid.*, p. 212. See also H. Pryce, 'Early Irish canons and medieval Welsh law', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 112.

¹⁶ S. J. Williams and J. E. Powell (eds), *Cyfreithiau Hywel Dda yn ôl Llyfr Blegywryd (Dull Dyfed)* (Cardiff, 1942), p. 46: 'Os keitwat a gyll adneu heb gollu y da ehunan, ef a tal y collet oll, o gyfreith. Llyfyr Kynawc a dyweit hagen bot yn haws y gredu ef or dygir y da ef yn lletrat gyt a'r llall, a gwelet torr ar y ty. Ef a dyly hagen tygu, a dynnyon y ty gantaw, y vot ef yn iach o'r da hwnnw. Or cledir y dayar hagen y dan y ty gwedy gwnef ef y gyfraith y vot yn iach, brenhin bieu dayar, ac ny dyly keitwat uot drosti.' See also *ibid.*, pp. 186–7, for an explanation of the clause 'Or cledir . . . drosti' ('If the earth be excavated . . .'): as the king nominally owned all the lands in his kingdom the guardian should not be held responsible if a thief dug under the house to get at the property.

¹⁷ H. D. Emanuel (ed.), *The Latin Texts of the Welsh Laws* (Cardiff, 1967), p. 256: 'Si depositarius depositum amiserit, rem perditam totaliter reddet. Liber Kenauc dicit quod, si fur domum foderit, et ex ea aliquid abstulerit, custode clavem habente, custos nichil restituet; iuret tamen cum omni sua familia' (author's translation). The rule in Latin E is identical apart from the order of the last two words: *ibid.*, p. 499. A version of the rule also occurs in Latin A, but this lacks the ascription to *Llyfr Cynog*: *ibid.*, p. 124 (and see Pryce, 'Early Irish canons', 124, for a rejection of H. D. Emanuel's argument that the omission indicates that Latin A was known as *Llyfr Cynog*).

Latin D:

If a guardian loses that which is on deposit, his own property being safe, he shall by law make restitution for all that is lost. The Book of Cynog says that if a thief digs under a house and takes something from it while a guardian holds the key of the house, the guardian shall make no restitution for the things taken by stealth. However, he himself and all his family shall swear that they are blameless. Moreover it must be all the more believed if he has lost his own property.¹⁸

These passages are basically the same. They are found mainly in lawbooks which originated from south Wales and its border, namely *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, Latin D and *Llyfr Blegywryd*, while Latin B and E probably belong to the border of north-east Wales.¹⁹

Peniarth MS 35 (G) contains numerous citations which are said to be derived from *Llyfr Cynog*. G is written in two hands, both of which are dated by T. M. Charles-Edwards and Daniel Huws to the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁰ It is a composite manuscript, with a copy of *Llyfr Iorwerth* as the main text. Aled Rhys Wiliam classified the contents of the manuscript as follows: a tractate on surety (fos 20–5), a copy of *Llyfr Cynghawredd* (the Book of Pleading) (fos 52–70), parts of *Llyfr Cynog* (fos 1–19 and 73–6), a digest of *Llyfr Iorwerth* (fos 26–49 and 77–111), as well as *Damweiniau* (rules opening with the formula *O derfydd*, 'If it happens') (fos 112–19).²¹ These five different sections are included in the compilation but the original order of the text has been distorted, the quires having been misplaced when the manuscript was bound.

¹⁸ Emanuel (ed.), *Latin Texts*, p. 376: 'Si depositarius depositum amiserit, re sua salva, de iure totum amissum reddet. Liber Kynawc dicit quod si fur domum suffoderit et ex ea aliquid abstulerit custode clavem domus habente, de rebus furtim ablati nihil custos restituet. Iurabit tamen ipse et familia eius tota se sine culpa esse. Insuper, si rem suam amiserit, magis credendum est' (author's translation).

¹⁹ The textual relationship of the different passages, which ultimately derived from the eighth-century *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (on which, see further below, p. 32 and n. 24), is discussed in Pryce, 'Early Irish canons', 110–12.

²⁰ Charles-Edwards, 'NLW Peniarth MS 35 (G)', p. 1; D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), p. 59. This dating supersedes that of the second half of the thirteenth century proposed in J. G. Evans, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language* (London, 1898–1910), I, p. 367.

²¹ A. R. Wiliam, 'Restoration of the book of Cynog', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 25 (1988), 246.

The passages in G apparently derived from *Llyfr Cynog* are a mixture of *cynghawsedd* (pleading), rules on surety and legal proverbs. Part of the material has an ecclesiastical element. On fo. 12v is a tractate on deposits, followed by an anecdote attributed to 'the book which is called the Book of the Fathers (*Buched y Tadeu*)'. This tells the tale of a monk who died without paying his debts and was resurrected for that purpose.²² The following rule stresses that deposits should not be kept in a church, as 'The church is a place of holiness and mother of every man . . . a house of prayer and not a den of thieves.'²³

As Huw Pryce has shown, both of these rules are ultimately derived from the early eighth-century Irish compilation of canon law, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, and the same is true of the passages on deposits cited above from *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, *Llyfr Blegywryd* and the Latin redactions.²⁴ The tale attributed to *Buched y Tadeu* refers to one of the citations from *Vita Patrum* found in the canons of the *Hibernensis*. Moreover, Pryce argues that these were introduced into Welsh law through *Llyfr Cynog*.²⁵ These borrowings from the *Hibernensis* into native law were translated into Welsh, and even the rules in the Latin redactions may have been translated from Welsh back into Latin.²⁶ This suggests not only that *Llyfr Cynog* was written in Welsh, but also that its compiler had access to an ecclesiastical library which contained a copy of the *Hibernensis* and that he could understand Latin, and therefore that he may well have been a cleric.

²² Wiliam, *Llyfr Cynog*, pp. 31–2.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 32: 'Lle gleindit y6 yr egl6ys a mam pob dyn . . . ty gwedi y6 ac nyt ty lladron' (author's translation). Both this and the preceding passage (referring to *Buched y Tadeu*) also occur in the fifteenth-century lawbook, BL Add. MS 22356: Owen (ed.), *Ancient Laws*, II, p. 420.

²⁴ Pryce, 'Early Irish canons', 107–27; *idem*, *Native Law and the Church*, pp. 25–6. Although the *Hibernensis* was originally an eighth-century text, copies were current in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries. One notable copy, that of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 42, whose readings are close to those found in the Welsh text, was at Worcester by the eleventh century (L. M. Davies, 'The *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* and its sources' (unpub. D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1995), p. 26 and cf. p. 45). In view of the association of Bishop Urban of Llandaf with Worcester, such a text might well have been the source of the Welsh excerpts, *pace* Pryce, who believes the canons came from 'direct Welsh contacts with Ireland': 'Early Irish canons', 121.

²⁵ Pryce, 'Early Irish canons', 124–5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 115–16, 121; R. Thurneysen, 'Celtic law', in Jenkins (ed.), *Celtic Law Papers*, p. 53.

Shortly after the passages cited above on deposits, G has a version of the tract called *Saith Escopty Dyfed* (the Seven Bishop Houses of Dyfed):

There are seven bishop-houses in Dyfed; these are: Mynyw, this is the chief bishop-house in Wales, and Llan Ismael, Llan Decheman [*sic*], Llan Usyll, Llan Teilaw, Llan Euleda6c, Llan Keneu. The abbot of Teilaw and the abbot of Euleda6c and Ismael and Degeman should be clerics; when he dies every one of them should give to the lord of Dyfed twelve pounds. Mynyw, because it is the chief [bishop-house], is free from all obligation; the other two are free because they have no land. Whoever insults any one of those, or whoever draws blood from them, let him pay a fine of six pounds to the lord.²⁷

Versions of this section exist in Latin A, Latin B, Latin D, *Llyfr Cyfnerth* and *Llyfr Blegywryd* as well as in Peniarth MS 36C and Peniarth MS 259B; in the last two cases, the passage is presented as the opening of *Llyfr Cynog*.²⁸ Charles-Edwards argued that the archetype of these versions was composed in the twelfth century, although its roots lie in an earlier period, and that it was probably written in Welsh, as *Llyfr Cyfnerth* (the earliest of the redactions of Welsh law), unlike *Llyfr Blegywryd*, shows no signs of translation. He also argued convincingly for the identification of the bishop-houses with sites in Dyfed.²⁹

²⁷ Wiliam, *Llyfr Cynog*, pp. 32–3: ‘Seith escobty yssyd yn Dyuet; sef y6 y rei hynny: Myny6 – pennaf esgobty yg Kymry y6 – a llan ismael, llan decheman [*sic*], llan usyll, llan teila6, llan euleda6c, llan keneu. Abbat teila6 ac abbat euleda6c ac ismael a degeman a dylant bot yn yscolheigon; a phob un ohonunt a dyly rodi y argl6yd Dyuet pan uo mar6 deudecpunt. Myny6, canys pennaf y6, ryd y6 o bob dyllet; y d6y ereill ryd ynt 6rth nat oes tir udunt. P6ybynhac a sarhao un o rei hynny, neu a diotto g6aet arna6, talet chwe phunt dir6y y’r argl6yd.’ The manuscript forms of the names have been preserved in the translation.

²⁸ Pryce, ‘Early Irish canons’, 124.

²⁹ T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The seven bishop-houses of Dyfed’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 24 (1970–2), 247–62. Theophilus Jones, in the course of an argument alleging that Brycheiniog had originally formed part of Demetia or Dyfed rather than of Siluria or Syllwg, identified ‘llan decheman’ with Llanddegyman in the parish of Llanfihangel Cwm Du in the commote of Ystrad Yw and ‘llan keneu’ with Llangenau or Llangenni in the adjacent commote of Crucywel (Crickhowell): T. Jones, *History of the County of Brecknock* (Brecon, 1805–9), I, p. 7. Yet, as Lloyd, *History of Wales*, I, p. 208 (followed by Charles-Edwards, ‘Seven bishop-houses’, 251), pointed out, ‘llan decheman’ may be identified with Rhoscrowther in the

A further possible indication of the ecclesiastical interests of *Llyfr Cynog* appears in a triad attributed to *cyfraith Cynog* (the law of Cynog) by John Davies in his *Dictionarium Duplex*: 'Gorseddog, *Tribunalis*. Tri dyn gorseddog yw Escob, ac Abad, ac Ysbytty. K.K.' ('Pertaining to a court, *Tribunalis*. Three men holding court are a bishop and an abbot and a hospital (*sic*).').³⁰ The triad is not found in Wiliam's edition of *Llyfr Cynog*, based on MS G, but it does occur in the mid-thirteenth-century lawbook *Llyfr Colan*, a revised version of *Llyfr Iorwerth*.³¹ A more elaborate version of the triad can be found in MS G's main text, which stems from *Llyfr Iorwerth*.³² 'There are three holders of courts of law who are able to hold their ecclesiastical court (*cabidol*) according to their own law, where they do not hinder the king's law. They are: a bishop and an abbot and a master hospitaller'.³³ Since the version of the triad cited by John Davies is different from that contained in MS G, this suggests that he used a source other than that manuscript; the same may well be true of his other quotations from *cyfraith Cynog*.

The term *Ysbytty* (hospital) almost certainly refers to lands held by the Knights Hospitallers; if so, the triad is unlikely to be earlier than the second quarter of the twelfth century. The Order was recognized by the pope in 1113³⁴ and may have begun to receive patronage in south Wales

cantref of Penfro, since the old name for its church was *eglwys Degemar*; see also B. G. Charles, *The Place-Names of Pembrokeshire* (Aberystwyth, 1992), II, p. 712. It has also been argued that two farm names may indicate Llangenau was located in the parish of Clydai in the *cantref* of Emlyn: Charles-Edwards, 'Seven bishop-houses', 262 (a view rejected, however, in Charles, *Place-Names of Pembrokeshire*, I, pp. 369–70).

³⁰ John Davies, *Antiquae linguae Britannicae et linguae Latinae, Dictionarium Duplex* (London, 1632), p. 58 (s.v. *gorseddog*).

³¹ D. Jenkins (ed.), *Llyfr Colan* (Cardiff, 1963), p. 36.

³² See A. R. Wiliam (ed.), *Llyfr Iorwerth: A Critical Text of the Venedotian Code of Medieval Welsh Law mainly from BM Cotton MS Titus Dii* (Cardiff, 1960), pp. 54–5.

³³ NLW, Peniarth MS 35, fo. 43v: 'Tri gorseda6c yssyd a allant g6neuthur eu cabidol tr6y eu k[yfreith] ehun yn lle na lesteir6ynt k[yfreith] y brenhin. Sef ynt h6y, esgob ac abbat a meistr yspyt6r.' For the textual relationships of the various versions of the passage in the manuscripts of *Llyfr Iorwerth* and in *Llyfr Colan*, see Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, pp. 212–14. *Cabidwl* derived from Latin *capitulum*, which meant a chapter or an ecclesiastical court; it did not develop the latter meaning until the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and thus near the time that *Llyfr Iorwerth* was probably compiled. See R. E. Latham *et al.* (eds), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford, 1975–), I, p. 272; Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, pp. 215–16.

³⁴ W. Rees, *A History of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border* (Cardiff, 1947), p. 6; see also H. J. Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitaller*

and on the border fairly soon after this. A forged document in the name of Wilfred, bishop of St Davids (1085–1115), probably composed c.1133–5, shows that it was not impossible to imagine their presence in south Wales at this time, and it has been argued that some grants must have been made to them in that region before the middle of the twelfth century.³⁵ Their first benefactors in Wales were the Marcher lords.³⁶ For example, the lord of Pencelli – that is, presumably, William III de Briouze or one of his mesne lords – gave Llanfeugan church, south-east of Brecon, to the order between 1176 and 1198.³⁷ However, the Lord Rhys and other native rulers of Deheubarth also confirmed and augmented the Hospitallers' possessions from the later twelfth century, and the Order had reached Gwynedd by the time of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth.³⁸

Both Wiliam³⁹ and Charles-Edwards have suggested that the tractate on suretyship found on fos 20–5 of G was also cited from *Llyfr Cynog*. Charles-Edwards further suggests that the texts found on fos 20–5 and fos 73–6 were used in the compilation of *Llyfr Iorwerth*, the redaction of Welsh law compiled in early thirteenth-century Gwynedd: 'we have here two isolated quires surviving from a law book prior to, and perhaps used in the compilation of Ior'.⁴⁰ This statement is true of G itself but not necessarily of *Llyfr Iorwerth* as a whole. Although one could argue that a form of the tractate on surety in G lies behind that of *Llyfr Iorwerth*, and although Cynog is named on fo. 76v of G, it is notable that he is mentioned in none of the other Iorwerth manuscripts. *Llyfr Cynog* is not mentioned in *Llyfr Iorwerth* but it is quoted in *Llyfr Cyfnerth* and *Llyfr Blegywryd*. This could indicate a provenance for *Llyfr Cynog* in southern Wales and its borders rather than in Gwynedd.

Such a provenance is supported by Charles-Edwards's demonstration of G's association with Brycheiniog.⁴¹ Within the manuscript is a

(Boydell, 2001); eadem, *Templars, Hospitallers, and Teutonic Knights: Images of Military Orders, 1128–1291* (Leicester, 1993).

³⁵ J. Barrow (ed.), *St Davids Episcopal Acta 1085–1280* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 34, 50.

³⁶ Rees, *History of the Order of St John*, p. 19.

³⁷ Barrow (ed.), *St Davids Episcopal Acta*, pp. 69, 72; cf. Rees, *History of the Order of St John*, p. 29.

³⁸ H. Pryce (ed.), with the assistance of C. Insley, *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), nos 23–4, 31–2, 58–60, 64, 256.

³⁹ William, 'Restoration of the book of Cynog', 253.

⁴⁰ Charles-Edwards, 'NLW Peniarth MS 35 (G)', p. 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

reference to 'pen y celli': 'llyma ha6yll der6yn rwg gr ap ll vychan a Ien ap Ien dd6n arglwydd pen y geli' ('Here is a boundary between Gruffudd ap Llywelyn Fychan and Ieuan ab Ieuan Dwn, lord of Pen y Gelli').⁴² Charles-Edwards argued that this is Pencelli, Brycheiniog, rather than Penygelli in the commote of Ceri, as the latter was not the centre of any lordship, whereas Pencelli was a major mesne lordship of the lordship of Brecon, located in the eastern half of Cantref Mawr in Brycheiniog and named after Pencelli castle, north-east of Llanfeugan. The leading Welshmen of a Marcher lordship could describe themselves as its *arglwyddi* (lords).⁴³ The orthography of the hand that wrote the sections in G that are thought to have stemmed from the original *Llyfr Cynog* also suggests a connection with Brycheiniog. According to Charles-Edwards, the orthography used is not that of the north and it also lacks some features of manuscripts from the south, such as *wh-* for *ch-*.

Most of the contents of *Llyfr Cynog* are also found in Wynnstey MS 36 (Q), a Blegywryd manuscript of the fifteenth century which originated from Llandeilo Fawr, Cantref Bychan, near the border of Brycheiniog. The material follows a similar sequence, but the colophon 'Ac yuelly y teruyna llyuyr Kyna6c' ('And thus ends the Book of Cynog') is omitted. Peniarth MS 259B (Z), which is another border manuscript from the fifteenth century, originating from north Wales but containing a text in the *Cyfnerth* tradition, includes some material from *Llyfr Cynog* and the colophon quoted above. Parts of *Llyfr Cynog* are also quoted in Peniarth MS 34 (F), which seems to be based on G.⁴⁴

There seems no doubt, then, that there existed a lawbook, attributed to someone called Cynog, which was independent of the three main law redactions. This book is referred to and quoted in other lawbooks. Cynog's version of the Welsh laws was also recognized by John Davies and William Maurice and is represented by sections of the manuscripts G, F, Q and Z. In addition, there are textual grounds for supposing that the book originated in southern Wales, that it was written in Welsh and, if it contained a version of the section on the seven bishop-houses of

⁴² NLW, Peniarth MS 35, fo. 55v.

⁴³ Cf. W. Rees, 'The mediaeval lordship of Brecon', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1915–16), 165–224 and map opposite 165; R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 92–5.

⁴⁴ William, *Llyfr Cynog*, pp. x–xi; 'Restoration of the book of Cynog', 251.

Dyfed and/or the triad which apparently refers to Hospitallers, that it was compiled no earlier than the twelfth century.⁴⁵

CYNOG

Next let us consider who the Cynog of *Llyfr Cynog* was. Cynog is a Brythonic adjectival name which means 'one with the nature of a wolf or hound'.⁴⁶ Only two examples of the name occur in medieval Welsh genealogical texts: Cynog Mawr ap Iorwerth Hirflawdd, who appears as an ancestor of twelfth-century members of the dynasty of Arwystli in mid Wales in pedigrees preserved in late medieval and early modern manuscripts, and St Cynog ap Brychan, chief saint of Brycheiniog.⁴⁷ The A-text of *Annales Cambriae*, compiled in the tenth century, records the death of Bishop Cynog (*Cinauc*) in 606, but it is uncertain whether this refers to St Cynog of Brycheiniog.⁴⁸ In the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth held that a Cynog – presumably different from that of Brycheiniog – had been bishop of Llanbadarn before succeeding St David as archbishop of St Davids; Cynog is also named as David's immediate successor in the first two recensions of Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Cambriae* (Journey through Wales), although he is omitted in the third recension.⁴⁹ However, both Geoffrey's account and Gerald's list

⁴⁵ Wiliam, *Llyfr Cynog*, p. ii, suggests that the book was 'probably compiled sometime in the twelfth century'.

⁴⁶ C. Thomas, *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?: Post-Roman Inscriptions in Western Britain* (Cardiff, 1994), p. 157, n. 12.

⁴⁷ P. C. Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 81, for Cynog ap Brychan; and pp. 96–7, 104, for Cynog Mawr ap Iorwerth Hirflawdd. Bartrum placed Cynog Mawr's floruit c.800; idem, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300–1400* (Cardiff, 1974), I, p. 46; see also idem, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about AD 1000* (Aberystwyth, 1993), pp. 182–3; on St Cynog, see further below.

⁴⁸ K. Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1980), p. 91; M. Miller, 'Date-guessing and Dyfed', *Studia Celtica*, 12–13 (1977–8), 46 and n. 1.

⁴⁹ N. Wright (ed.), *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 132 (§179); J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warner (eds), *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* (Rolls Series, London, 1861–91), VI, p. 102 and n. 4; L. Thorpe (trans.), *Gerald of Wales – The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales* (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp. 161–2 and n. 263. Cf. S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints* (London, 1908), II, p. 271, which also suggests that the church of Llangynog in Carmarthenshire is probably dedicated to this Cynog.

of alleged archbishops of St Davids are patently pseudo-historical; moreover, it is unknown how far, if at all, they drew on pre-existing traditions or how widely current those traditions were in the twelfth century.

Of these possible candidates, Cynog Mawr ab Iorwerth Hirflawdd is most unlikely to have been the individual after whom *Llyfr Cynog* was named: it is difficult to see why a twelfth-century lawyer would have chosen to attribute a compilation to an obscure ancestor of a minor dynasty. The ecclesiastical nature of some of the text included in *Llyfr Cynog* would be consistent with an attribution to either St Cynog of Brycheiniog or the Cynog whom Geoffrey of Monmouth described as bishop of Llanbadarn and archbishop of St Davids. The same goes for one thing that differentiates Cynog from the other authorities referred to in the law texts, namely his lack of a patronymic. When cited he does not carry his father's name, as do Hywel mab Cadell, Cyfnerth ap Morgenau, Iorwerth ap Madog, Gwair ap Rhufawn, Goronwy ap Moriddig and Cynyr ap Cadwgan. Neither saints nor bishops usually carry a patronymic. Nevertheless, the balance of probability is strongly in favour of St Cynog of Brycheiniog.⁵⁰ As shown above, MS G, which preserves extracts from *Llyfr Cynog*, is associated with Brycheiniog. Above all, the cult of St Cynog flourished in the twelfth century, the period of the lawbook's compilation, whereas the Bishop Cynog associated with Llanbadarn Fawr and St Davids enjoyed far less renown. Moreover, it is surely more likely that any lawbook produced at either of those churches would have been ascribed to the church's patron saint, namely St Padarn or St David, rather than to a successor.

The importance of Cynog's cult in the twelfth century (and later) is revealed by a number of texts. Medieval sources attributed the foundation of the realm of Brycheiniog to Brychan, who was allegedly St Cynog's father.⁵¹ Saints were often reputed to be of royal blood: for example, genealogical and hagiographical sources claim that both St David and St Cadog were sons of kings.⁵² Although no *vita* of Cynog

⁵⁰ J. Lloyd Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Cardiff, 1931–63), I, p. 244, accepts this identification, making no distinction between the Cynog of the lawbook and Cynog the saint.

⁵¹ Lloyd, *History of Wales*, I, pp. 270–1.

⁵² A. W. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Geneologiae* (Cardiff, 1944), pp. 24–9, 151; Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, pp. 20, 24–5, 26–7. St David provides a particularly close parallel, as, according to his Life, he was born after his mother Non had been raped by the king of Ceredigion.

has survived, a legend about him is recorded in a tract called *De Situ Brecheniauc* (DSB), which is preserved in BL, MS Cotton Vespasian A. XIV (fos 10b-11b) written c.1200, quite possibly at Monmouth Priory.⁵³ This contains the earliest account of Cynog and Brychan's lineage, and was copied from an older manuscript, probably written in the eleventh century or earlier.⁵⁴

Afterwards Anlach gave his son Brachan as a hostage to the king of Powys. Then, in process of time, Brachan violated Banadlinet the daughter of Benadel. And she became pregnant and bore a son, Kynauc by name, who was carried to the camp [*recte* Castanius?] and baptized. After this Brachan took a torque from his arm, and gave it to his son Kynauc. That Saint Kynauc is very celebrated in his own country of Brecheiniauc, and that torque is preserved to the present time in the aforesaid province amongst its most precious relics.⁵⁵

The account is immediately followed by a Latin version of St Cynog's pedigree: 'This is the genealogy of St Kynauc son of Brachan. Brachan son of Marchel, Marchel daughter of Teuderic, Teudiric son of Teudfall, Teudfall son of Teuder, [Teuder] son of Teudfal, Teudfal son of Annhun, king of the Greeks.'⁵⁶

BL Cotton Vespasian A. XIV refers to many saints from south-east Wales, and must have ultimately derived its material from a number of

⁵³ S. M. Harris, 'The kalendar of the *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*', *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, 3 (1953), 3-53; Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 53-66.

⁵⁴ Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, p. xiii; see also n. 57 below.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 314: 'Postea uero Anlach dedit filium suum Brachan regi Powis obsidem. Deinceps uero successu temporis Brachan oppressit Banadlinet [*sic*] filiam Benadel. Illa autem pregnans, genuit filium nomine Kynauc, qui deuctus ad castra baptizatus est. Quo facto, Brachan accepta armilla a brachio suo dedit illam Kynauc filio suo. Iste sanctus Kynauc celebris est ualde in patria sua Brecheniauc, ipsaque armilla usque in presens perpreciosis reliquiis in predicta prouincia seruatur.' For the suggestion that *castra* is an error for Castanius, i.e. St Gastyn of Llangasty Tal-y-llyn, see *ibid.*, n. 1. Translation adapted from Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, II, p. 264.

⁵⁶ Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, p. 314; the text is also given in Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 14: 'Hec est genealogia sancti Kynauc filii Brachan. Brachan filius Marchel, Marchel filia Teuderic, Teudiric filius Teudfall, Teudfall filius Teuder, [Teuder] filius Teudfal, Teudfal filius Annhun, rex Grecorum.'

different churches. Although Robin Flower's suggestion that the manuscript was written at St John's Priory, Brecon, has been questioned,⁵⁷ it is very likely that DSB was originally composed in Brycheiniog. Indeed, Charles Thomas argued that the extant version of DSB was written after St John's Priory was established in Brecon, between 1110 and 1125.⁵⁸ Another important Latin document which preserves the traditions of the family of Brychan is *Cognacio Brychan* (CB). Sir John Prise of Brecon transcribed the only copy of this text in the sixteenth century from an earlier manuscript that is now lost.⁵⁹ This contains broadly similar material to that in DSB, including a more elaborate version of the saint's genealogy.⁶⁰ Thus both DSB and CB communicate – and probably also conflate – traditions concerning the foundation of the kingdom of Brycheiniog, namely accounts of Brychan and St Cynog, St Cynog's lineage, lists of Brychan's children and a list of burial places. The short introductory narratives found in both tracts suggest that there once was a more extensive legend about establishing Brycheiniog or about St Cynog's life. Several features of the texts emphasize the special status of St Cynog and his importance

⁵⁷ Compare Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, pp. ix–x, with Harris, 'Kalendar of the *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*', and Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 53–66.

⁵⁸ Thomas, *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?*, p. 131.

⁵⁹ Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, pp. xix–xx, 315–18 (from BL, MS Cotton Domitian I, s. xvi). Phillimore held that DSB derived from a manuscript written no later than the eleventh century, and that CB was copied from a manuscript probably of the thirteenth century: *ibid.*, pp. xiii, xix; Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, pp. 14, 17. More recently, it has been argued that both DSB and CB derive from texts written before 1100, and that before the tenth century they may have been housed at the monastic church of Llan-gors before being taken to Brecon: Thomas, *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?*, p. 131. Llan-gors Lake or Llyn Syfaddan was also the site of a royal crannog, which attests the importance of this area in the ninth and tenth centuries: see E. Campbell and A. Lane, 'Llangorse: a 10th-century royal crannog in Wales', *Antiquity*, 63 (1989), 675–81; M. Redknapp, *The Christian Celts, Treasures of Late Celtic Wales* (Cardiff, 1991), pp. 16, 24. Other possible evidence of pre-Norman literary activity at Llan-gors is discussed in P. Sims-Williams, 'The provenance of the Llywarch Hen poems: a case for Llan-gors, Brycheiniog', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 26 (Winter 1993), 27–63.

⁶⁰ Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, p. 316; Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, pp. 17–18. There is a similar genealogy, in Welsh, in Oxford, Jesus College MS 20 (s. xiv/xv): Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, p. 318; Bartrum (ed.), *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 42; for the date of the manuscript, see Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, p. 60.

to their authors. The account of the saint's conception and birth precedes any mention of Brychan's other children, and the lineage that follows begins, not with Brychan, but with Cynog.⁶¹ Furthermore, Cynog is one of only four members of the family whose supposed burial place is mentioned, namely at Merthyr Cynog; in addition, Brychan himself was said to be buried at Monmouth, his father Anlach in front of the door at Llansbyddydd church and Brychan's son Rhain at Llandyfaelog Fach. Interestingly, Cynog is not included in the list of Brychan's sons in DSB, though he heads the corresponding list in CB, which also adds that Rhain ap Brychan succeeded his father as ruler.⁶² A parallel could be drawn here between Cynog and St Tysilio. Tysilio belonged to the royal family of Powys, allegedly established by Brochfael, but it was his brother, Iago, who inherited the kingdom. Tysilio turned to God and became the patron saint of Powys, as did Cynog in Brycheiniog.⁶³

As we have seen, DSB and CB placed great importance on the torque or *armilla* considered to have been Cynog's. The fullest description of this famous relic is given by Gerald of Wales in the late twelfth century:

I must tell you what they say about a torque which is supposed to have belonged to Saint Cynog. From its weight, texture and colour one would think that it was gold. It is made of four sections, as you can see from the joins, wrought together artificially by a series of weldings and divided in the middle by a dog's head, which stands erect with its teeth bared. The local inhabitants consider this to be a most potent relic, and no one would dare to break a promise which he had made when it was held in front of him. On the torque there is a mark of a mighty blow, as if someone had hit it with an iron hammer. A certain man, or so they say, tried to break the collar, for the sake of the gold. He was punished by

⁶¹ D. E. Thornton, 'Brychan and Welsh genealogy' (unpub. MA thesis, University of Wales, 1989), p. 65.

⁶² Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, pp. 314, 317.

⁶³ See N. A. Jones and A. P. Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr I*, Canu Beirdd y Tywysogion III (Cardiff, 1991), pp. 15–51. That Cynog was thought of in a different light from the other children of Brychan is also suggested by DSB's reference to three wives of Brychan, namely Praust, Ribrausta and Pristri, whereas Banadlwedd, Cynog's mother, is said to have been raped by the king and did not become his wife: Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, pp. 314, 315 (and cf. p. 317 for the treatment of this material in CB); Thornton, 'Brychan and Welsh genealogy', p. 60.

God, for he immediately lost the sight of both eyes. To his life's end he lingered on in darkness.⁶⁴

Perhaps the torque that Gerald of Wales described was kept around the neck or arm of a statue of Cynog.⁶⁵ He praises its efficacy in taking oaths – a legal as well as religious act that played an important part in medieval Welsh law.⁶⁶ As Gerald of Wales notes, oaths were sworn upon relics.⁶⁷ This practice reflected the supernatural element that surrounded oath-taking and stressed the power and influence of the saints.

The Lord Rhys took the torque to Dinefwr castle in 1194. Gerald of Wales believed that his imprisonment in Nevern castle by his sons in that year was God's vengeance for this.⁶⁸ The Lord Rhys had other connections with Brycheiniog. Gwynfardd Brycheiniog was probably his court poet, and the poet Seisyll Bryffwrch refers to Rhys's campaigns in Brycheiniog in 1168.⁶⁹ Gwynfardd sang a panegyric to St David, propagating the cult of the saint and emphasizing his authority over other saints, including Cynog:

Dewi's two oxen, two wondrous ones,
They put their back beneath Cynog's cart,
Dewi's two oxen, they were excellent ones,
Two dear ones who walked beneath the same yoke,
To take a gift running,
To Glasgwm, the three dignified ones were not heavy;

⁶⁴ Thorpe (trans.), *Gerald of Wales*, p. 86. The Life of St Cadog also mentions a man in court terrified of perjuring himself by giving a false oath in the presence of what was said to be St Cadog's knife: Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, pp. 94–7. If *Llyfr Cynog* were ever quoted in a court in the presence of what was reputed to be St Cynog's torque one can imagine the effect that this could have had on anyone about to commit perjury.

⁶⁵ The word used in the text of DSB is *armilla* ('bracelet', 'armlet').

⁶⁶ Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, pp. 39–53.

⁶⁷ Brewer *et al.* (eds), *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, VI, pp. 26–7; Thorpe (trans.), *Gerald of Wales*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Brewer *et al.* (eds), *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, VI, p. 112; Thorpe (trans.), *Gerald of Wales*, p. 171; T. Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogyon, or, the Chronicle of the Princes, Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955), p. 174.

⁶⁹ M. E. Owen (ed.), 'Gwaith Gwynfardd Brycheiniog', in K. A. Bramley *et al.* (eds), *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif*, Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion, II (Cardiff, 1994), p. 417; M. E. Owen (ed.), 'Gwaith Seisyll Bryffwrch', *ibid.*, pp. 399 (no. 24, l. 44), 405 (note).

Bangu was left there, the dear chained one,
And the two other fine ones, to Brycheiniog.⁷⁰

Gwynfardd uses the theme of the legendary oxen from Llanddewibrefi lifting Cynog's carriage, that is, taking Cynog's weight and powers upon themselves. This poem reflects Gwynfardd's close acquaintance with the churches of Brycheiniog and suggests competition between the cults of St David and St Cynog, the most prominent saint of Brycheiniog.⁷¹ The Lord Rhys, Gwynfardd's patron, may have tried to use the cult of St David, which was rapidly superseding the traditions of more local saints in Wales, in his attempt to extend his rule over Brycheiniog. Gwynfardd's poem to David may thus have had a political as well as a religious motive.⁷² A similar double motive possibly also lies behind Rhys's quest to obtain the torque of Cynog, which was the main symbol of that saint's cult in Brycheiniog.⁷³

Church dedications further demonstrate the strength of Cynog's cult, especially in Brycheiniog. Welsh churches were often dedicated to the saint who was believed to have founded them, so that dedications give us a glimpse of the history of the saints' cults and their politics.⁷⁴ Most of the churches dedicated to Cynog can be found in Brycheiniog: Merthyr Cynog, Defynnog, Penderyn, Ystradgynlais, Battle and Llangynog. The church of Bochrwd (Boughrood) in Radnorshire is also a Cynog church, and villages called Llangynog are found in Montgomeryshire,

⁷⁰ Owen (ed.), 'Gwaith Gwynfardd Brycheiniog', p. 450 (no. 26, ll. 51–8): 'Dau ychen Dewi, dau odidawg, / Dodysant – hwy eu gwar dan gar Cynawg; / Dau ychen Dewi, ardderchawg – oeddynt, / Dau gâr a gerddynt yn gydbreiniawg / I hebrwng anrheg yn rhedegawg / I Lasgwm, nid oedd drwm dri urddasawg; / Edewid Bangu gu, gadwynawg / A'r ddau eraill fraisg i Frycheiniawg.'

⁷¹ The poem was composed when there was a movement to establish the supremacy of St David's cult over all the other cults of Wales.

⁷² Owen (ed.), 'Gwaith Gwynfardd Brycheiniog', pp. 435–8.

⁷³ On the basis of Gerald's description, the torque could be dated to the tenth or eleventh century: J. E. Lloyd and R. T. Jenkins (eds), *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London, 1959), p. 92. M. Redknap has suggested that the 'description is reminiscent of copper alloy door rings with animal head mounts of Irish type dating to the 8th–9th centuries': *Christian Celts*, p. 79. See also T. T. Jones, 'St Cynog's torc', *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, 22 (1972), 5–11.

⁷⁴ Cf. J. R. Davies, 'The saints of south Wales and the Welsh church', in A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (eds), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 361–95.

Herefordshire and Monmouthshire.⁷⁵ Of these churches, Merthyr Cynog was the centre of the cult.⁷⁶ Its name implies that it was believed to be the saint's burial place, and, as we have seen, it is explicitly described as such in DSB and CB.⁷⁷ In the thirteenth century the church was 'the best endowed in the deanery of Brecon', being valued at the substantial sum of £30 in the papal *Taxatio* of 1291,⁷⁸ and until the eighteenth century its parish was the largest in Brecknockshire. The main body of the present church may be dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century, and the size of its Romanesque tower is a further indication of the church's wealth in that period. The importance of Merthyr Cynog church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries probably derived from its being a pre-Norman foundation, a possibility strengthened both by its large sub-circular periphery, typical of the early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure or *llan*, and by the discovery of burnt bone and charcoal when a section was made through the churchyard wall in 1992.⁷⁹

The importance of Cynog's cult in the later Middle Ages is reflected in the work of several poets. Hywel ap Dafydd ab Iefan ap Rhys (Hywel Dafi), a fifteenth-century bard, composed a *cywydd* to Cynog addressing him as chief governor of Brycheiniog, a position of authority and standing.

Cynog from the land of Brecon
keep our land, good keeper
thou hast become the chief justice of the land
[the] owner and son of Brychan art thou.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, II, p. 265.

⁷⁶ For suggestions that Merthyr Cynog was the centre of the saint's cult and perhaps the first *llan* dedicated to him, see J. D. Evans and M. J. Francis, 'Cynog: spiritual father of Brycheiniog', *Brycheiniog*, 27 (1994), 21.

⁷⁷ T. Roberts, 'Welsh ecclesiastical place-names and archaeology', in N. Edwards and A. Lane (eds), *The Early Church in Wales and the West* (Oxford, 1992), p. 42; see above, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Lloyd, *History of Wales*, I, p. 272, n. 248, citing *Taxatio ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicolai IV circa AD 1291* (London, 1802), p. 273.

⁷⁹ See Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust website: www.cpat.demon.co.uk/projects/longer/churches/brecon/16909 (accessed 17 January 2005). For the dating of pre-Norman sites, see D. Brook, 'The early Christian church east and west of Offa's dyke', in Edwards and Lane (eds), *Early Church in Wales and the West*, pp. 77–89 (with discussion of Merthyr Cynog at pp. 86–7).

⁸⁰ T. Williams (ed.), *Iolo Manuscripts* (Liverpool, 1888), p. 302 (from NLW, Llanstephan MS 47, fo. 220): 'kadw yn tir kaedwad da / kynog o wlad vrekania / pen raith y wlad yth adwyd / perchen a mab brychan wyd.' See also H. D. Thomas, 'The works of Hywel Davi' (unpub. MA thesis, University of Wales, 1913).

Dafydd Epynt also has a *cywydd* which narrates a few unique traditions about the saint. He refers to the land around Merthyr Cynog as the land of Cynog, as well as making a reference to the hammer blow on his torque.⁸¹ Huw Cae Llwyd, another fifteenth-century poet, also refers to Cynog.⁸² It was in the fifteenth century, too, that parts of *Llyfr Cynog* were incorporated into law manuscripts from the north (Z) and south (Q) of Wales. As with the literary works just mentioned, this may reflect a renewal of interest in the saint's cult at that period.

CONCLUSIONS

It is the contention of this article, then, that *Llyfr Cynog* was named after St Cynog of Brycheiniog. As previous scholars have assumed, some of its contents suggest that the lawbook was originally compiled in the twelfth century and most probably in Welsh instead of Latin.⁸³ Morfydd E. Owen and Nerys Ann Jones have recently argued that the twelfth century saw a revival of interest in local saints in the face of Norman invasion and associated ecclesiastical reorganization. In addition, the *Gogynfeirdd* poems composed in that period to the saints Dewi (David), Tysilio and Cadfan may have represented an attempt to defend the Welsh church from the threat posed to the status of major native churches by the foundation of houses belonging to continental monastic orders, notably the Cistercians.⁸⁴ Naming a lawbook after Cynog might have been another method of calling upon traditions associated with an early hero of Welsh Christianity in order to strengthen native ecclesiastical institutions and Welsh law.

The church played an important part in the production of legal manuscripts,⁸⁵ and manuscripts containing legal documents were sometimes related to the names of saints. *Braint Teilo* (the Privilege of Teilo), which

⁸¹ O. Thomas (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Epynt* (Aberystwyth, 2002), pp. 30–1, 64 (l. 35), 73 (l. 37). See also the textual notes on pp. 88–9.

⁸² L. Harries (ed.), *Gwaith Huw Cae Llwyd ac Eraill* (Cardiff, 1953), pp. 46 (l. 34); 50 (l. 62); 105 (ll. 45–6).

⁸³ See above, pp. 32, 36.

⁸⁴ M. E. Owen and N. A. Jones, 'Twelfth-century Welsh hagiography: the *Gogynfeirdd* poems to saints', in J. Cartwright (ed.), *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults* (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 45–76.

⁸⁵ Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, pp. 17–36.

sets out secular law that was related to the church of Teilo, was incorporated into the Book of Llandaf.⁸⁶ The Life of St Cadog, composed c.1100 at Llancarfan, suggests the existence of a Book of Cadog, as it states that offences against or by clerics of Llancarfan should be judged according to the saint's *liber iudicialis* (judgement book).⁸⁷ The law of St Cadog was presumably to do with the legal rights and procedures of the saint's church.⁸⁸ Since a 'judgement book' was attributed to St Cadog, a nephew of St Cynog, according to hagiographical and other texts, it is quite possible that a lawbook was ascribed to St Cynog himself. Cynog and his torque were renowned in the twelfth century, and the torque was regarded as prize booty by the Lord Rhys in 1194. But in *Llyfr Cynog* we have a book that was concerned with much more than the church's jurisdictional powers, and that played an important part in the wider native legal tradition.

The compilation of Welsh law is associated with the name of a king, Hywel Dda. Several individual lawbooks are attributed in the texts to lawyers and ecclesiastics. On the present evidence we have also references to an important lawbook attributed to a famous saint. *Llyfr Cynog* may have been written by a lay legal expert who had close connections with the church or by a cleric who was a legal expert. A parallel may be provided by the lawbook of Cynyr ap Cadwgan, which is also cited in MS Q. Cynyr is named in one of the charters of the abbey of Ystrad Marchell (Strata Marcella) as the abbot of Llandinam in the first half of the thirteenth century. Llandinam was a *clas* institution which preserved native pre-Norman ecclesiastical practices and, as Cynyr's lawbook suggests, preserved native law.⁸⁹

To sum up: there are strong grounds for concluding that *Llyfr Cynog* represents a law book which was attributed to St Cynog and was originally produced in a church dedicated to this saint somewhere in Brycheiniog, quite possibly at his principal church of Merthyr Cynog. The fragments of Cynog's book which survive reflect an awareness of the cultural, political and spiritual influence of the church and are an

⁸⁶ W. Davies, 'Braint Teilo', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 26 (1974-6), 123-37.

⁸⁷ Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae*, p. 104, discussed in Pryce, *Native Law and the Church*, p. 26, and idem, 'Context and purpose', 43-5.

⁸⁸ Pryce, 'Context and purpose', 44-5.

⁸⁹ See above, p. 28, n. 9.

important addition to the evidence for the practice of Welsh law in Brycheiniog in the Middle Ages.

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