

Three notes on *Canu Urien*

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Abstract: This paper discusses three terms in the run of *englynion* known as *Canu Urien* which have given rise to discussion and debate: the meaning of *llad* ‘strike’ or ‘kill’; the precise sense of two related phrases *ry’m gallat* and *ry’m gallas*; and what is meant by the geographical term *Erechwyd* or *Yr Echwyd*. In doing so, it draws on a wide range of evidence from other medieval Welsh prose and verse, and in one case also contributes to the understanding of a Middle Cornish verb.

Key words: *Armes Prydein*, Book of Taliesin, *Canu Urien*, *Erechwydd*, *Gogynfeirdd*, Middle Cornish *galsof*, Middle Welsh *gallu*, Middle Welsh *llad*, perfectivity.

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The well-known run of *englynion* preserved in the Red Book of Hergest (Oxford, Jesus College MS, 111) known as *Canu Urien*, which lament the death of Urien, have been well studied and analysed over the years (CLLH and EWSP for text and translation; Sims-Williams 1996 for historical context).¹ Definite answers to some of the bigger questions, such as the identity of the speaker, and any

¹ An earlier version of the second part of this paper was presented in March 2019 at a meeting of the British Academy-funded workshop, ‘Datblygiad yr Iaith Gymraeg’ (History of the Welsh Language) in Cambridge; I am grateful to those present then for useful comments and discussion, and also to the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions for improvement. I am also grateful to Oliver Padel and Rebecca Thomas for reading and commenting on particular sections of this paper, and to Linus Band for allowing me to refer to his unpublished PhD thesis (Band 2017).

possible narrative context, are probably unattainable. But close examination of problematic details in the text may help to tip the balance in one direction or another. This paper explores three of such issues; in doing so, occurrences of the same phrases and expressions elsewhere in medieval Welsh literature are also explored.

1. *Gwae fy llaw llad tat Owein*

The series of stanzas on the burial of Urien's body end with a line beginning *Gwae fy llaw* 'woe to my hand' (CLLH III.20–7; EWSP 422 (text), 478–9 (trans); PLLH 104–7; Clancy 2003: 78; R 1040.2–17).² Much debate has ensued as to how the second half of each of these lines is related to the first. In this section I want to consider the lines which have the syntactic structure of 'llad x' (where x is the various ways in which Urien can be described): e.g. *gwae fy llaw llad tat Owein* (20c); *gwae fy llaw llad mab kynuarch* (23c), etc. Two aspects are worth considering here: the syntax of these lines and the meaning of *llad* in this context.

Irrespective of what we think *llad* might mean, the syntax is worth dwelling on not least because there is significant variation in the way these lines are translated. There has been a tendency to imply a link between the *llaw* 'hand' and the following *llad*. Ford makes this link explicit: 'woe to my hand striking ...' (Ford PLLH 105–7); for Rowland the link remains implicit: 'alas, my hand, for the killing ...' (EWSP 478–9). Syntactically, the second half of the line, *llad X*, seems to be apposition to the woe expressed in the first half. It seems to me that the point of the verbal noun is that it is neutral as to person, mood, and tense with the result that the poet can use it to signal a distancing between the hand and the action of *llad* and thus avoid being explicit about who is doing the action. Of course, we know it is almost certainly the hand which has carried out the act, but whatever has been done is so wrapped up in guilt and remorse the distancing is entirely understandable. If this is right, then it is probably best to understand the various reflexes of *llad Urien* as an indirect statement and to mean 'that Urien has been struck/killed'. By doing so, we avoid attributing more agency than the poet does.

² Throughout, my preferred translation immediately follows the quoted text (other variant translations may follow); unless otherwise indicated it is my own.

With regard to the meaning, I would follow Williams (*Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, 143) and Sims-Williams (1996: 44–50) in accepting that these lines refer to the act of chopping Urien’s head off after his death rather than to the act of killing him. Illuminating historical parallels are discussed by Sims-Williams (1996: 47–50), but I want to consider two other reasons for thinking that we are talking about *post mortem* decapitation.

The first is internal to the poem. The run of stanzas about Urien’s death and aftermath begins with a run of stanzas about carrying his head and there then follows a further run on burying Urien’s headless corpse. In the former Urien is praised and the consequences of his death are beginning to be explored. But the lines which begin *gwaefy llaw* are part of the latter when the focus is on the burial of the body. If there is any narrative logic to these runs of stanzas (and the fact that we have a run talking about his head followed by one about his body suggests there is), we have already moved away from his death to how his body is to be dealt with. In this context, it makes more sense to think in terms of *llad* meaning ‘striking’, the act of separating Urien’s head from his body after death so that the head can be carried back to Rheged.

The second has to do with the broader (but nevertheless still Welsh) context for the dismemberment. If we accept the argument above, it is clear that this act still causes grief to the first-person *persona* of the poem. It is, admittedly, difficult to separate grief about taking off Urien’s head from more general lamentation about the loss of Urien and its consequences for the people of his kingdom. But the latter seems to be subsumed under the notion of *llam* ‘fate’, and especially *llam ry’ m tynhgit* ‘the fate which has been destined for me’ (for which see the next section). But the stanzas which refer to the ‘striking’ of Urien are still themselves imbued with grief for the act which, we assume, the hand has carried out. That the act of striking a corpse, even with the most pragmatic of motives, should be so upsetting is probably to be seen in the light of two other texts from medieval Wales, both from the moral and legal sphere which have not previously been brought into discussion of these stanzas.

First, among the various groups of legal triads preserved in legal texts, there is a pair of triads which refers to the mutilation and dishonouring of corpses (Roberts 2007: 78–9):

Teir sarhaed kelein yw: y llath, a’e yspeilyaw, a gwan gwith troed yndaw.

Teir gwarthrud kelein yw: gofuy'n 'pwy ladawd hwnn?', a 'phiev yr elor?', a gofuy'n 'piev y beth newyd hwnn?'

The three shames³ of a corpse are striking it, and despoiling it, and giving it a shove with a foot.

The three shames⁴ of a corpse are asking 'who killed this one?', and 'whose is this bier?', and asking 'whose is this fresh grave?'

While the latter has to do with dishonouring and disrespecting the corpse presumably by turning up at the funeral not knowing who it is and what has happened (the assumption is that you would probably be a kinsman or should at least have done due diligence before turning up at the grave), the former has to do with insulting the corpse by physically damaging it. Another triad states that *gwarthrud kelein* (i.e. the latter triad above) is one of the three things 'not augmented', that is, an extra payment of compensation was not made, which implies that compensation at the standard level was paid (Roberts 2007: 174–5). On the other hand, it is not stated anywhere whether compensation was paid for *sarhaed kelein*, although it is reasonable to suppose that it probably was. But for our purposes the crucial point is that one of three insults was *y llath* 'striking it' (with *th* for *d / ð /*), and it is clear that the violence is being done to a corpse. It is the kind of action which we might assume was regarded as morally as well as legally problematic even if it was being done for good reasons.

Secondly, among the religious texts preserved in 'the Book of the Anchorite', *Llyfr Agkr Llandewibrefi* (Oxford, Jesus College MS, 119) there is a text about 'how a person should believe in God' (*Py delw y dyly dyn credv y Duw?*). Part of it provides a version of the Ten Commandments with added commentary. Under the fifth item 'thou shalt not kill', we find the following (LLA 143 (fol. 122v); my translation):

³ Perhaps better translated 'insults'.

⁴ Perhaps better translated 'disgraces' or 'dishonourings' to distinguish it from the preceding triad.

Pymhet Geir Dedyf yô na lad gelein. Yn y geir hōnnô yd eirch Duô y dyn na ladho ae laô nac oe arch nac oe gynghor nac oe annoc nac oe ystryô nac o gytssynnyaô na rodi ehofynndra y amdyffynn lleidyat. Ac yn y geir hōnnô heuyt yd eirch Duô y dyn na wnel argyôed ar gorff dyn oe daraô nev oe doluryaô nev y garcharv. Ac yn y geir hōnnô yd eirch Duô y dyn na dycco ymborth na da dynyon tlodyonn. Sef yô hynny trôy dōyll nev trôy gamôed. Ac na atter dynyon tlodyonn y varô o neôyn ac eissev. Ac na chattôo dyn lit o digassed gantaô vrth y gymodaôc.

The fifth commandment is ‘do not kill’. In that commandment, God asks a person that he should not kill, neither by his hand, nor his request, nor his advice, nor his exhortation, nor his stratagem, nor his consent nor by giving support to the protection (or legal defence) of a killer. And in that commandment God also asks a person not to inflict injury on the corpse of a person by striking it or by wounding it, or by locking it up. And in that commandment God asks that a person should not take the support or goods belonging to the poor; that is, through trickery or wrong-doing. And the poor should not be allowed to die from hunger or want. And a person should not nurse within him anger as a result of enmity towards a neighbour.⁵

The basic notion of ‘thou shalt not kill’ has been developed here to include a range of activities which in Welsh law come under the province of the *affaith* ‘accomplice’, such as giving advice or exhorting the killer (Russell 2007:152–3, where this passage is discussed in that context). The second sentence might be read to say that you should not cause harm to a person generally, but in the context of the fifth commandment the use of *corff dyn* ‘the body of a person’ strongly suggests that it has to do with mutilation of a corpse (as does the use of *taraw* which is implied in *llath* in the triad above). It then goes on to talk about doing harm to the poor of such a kind that might lead to

⁵ The translation presented here improves on that printed in Russell 2007: 152–3; I now understand the possessives in the second sentence as referring to the *corff*. In that context, I would see *y garcharu* as relating to preventing burial.

their death, and about rage towards a neighbour with the same consequence. This second comment might have been triggered by the potential ambiguity of *llad celein/gelein* which seems to mean ‘kill completely, slaughter’ (i.e. with a sense something like ‘kill so that there is a corpse’) in some contexts, but it does appear that the term can also be used of mutilating corpses which is what we have here in this passage.

The combination of this developed form of the fifth commandment together with the legal triad can help us better understand the dismemberment of Urien’s corpse, and how a medieval audience would have viewed it and understood these stanzas. However expedient the act might have been, it is clear that it would have caused considerable moral disquiet and this may be what we see reflected in these stanzas; it is not guilt about whether it should have been done or not done in this particular instance, but a deep moral unease about doing it whatever the circumstances.

2. *ry’m gallas, ry’m gallat*

These verbal phrases occur several times in *Canu Urien* and elsewhere in verse (but not in prose) in several different forms. Their structure seems clear: it consists of the perfective particle *ry* and forms of the verb *gallu* ‘be able’. It is also tolerably clear from the context that it means ‘carry off, take away’ (usually with an implication of violence), though there are some later examples where it seems to have come to mean ‘cause to be’ (GPC s.v. *gallaf* 2).⁶ What is less clear is how a form of *gallu*, which usually means ‘to be able, can’, came to be used in this sense. Matters are further complicated by the way in which the poet manipulates the personal and impersonal forms of the verb in close succession, the latter often with infixed personal pronouns, inviting us presumably to read these phrases in mutually compatible ways.

Discussion will begin with the three instances in *Canu Urien*, but in order to gain a full understanding of the structure we shall also consider parallel phrases in the poem. We then move on to examples elsewhere in medieval Welsh verse.

⁶ Schumacher (2004: 326) suggests that the form of the endings, in *-as* and *-at*, was influenced by the corresponding forms of *caffael*; I have no view about this as the morphology is not the issue in what follows, though one might wonder whether *gwelas* and *gwelat* were also possible models.

The first example in *Canu Urien* is relatively straightforward: *Pen post Prydein ry allat* ‘The chief pillar (or ‘the head of the pillar’) of Britain has been carried off’ (CLLH III.16c; EWSP 421 (text), 478 (trans) ‘carried off’; PLLH 102–3 (v. 117), ‘snatched away’; Clancy 2003: 77 ‘Prydein’s pillar-head, it was removed’). There are minor variations in the translations of various scholars, the only significant one being the treatment of *pen post* either as ‘chief pillar’ or ‘the head of the pillar’. Given the context of decapitation, even if we prioritise the former in translation, the latter must surely be implied (PLLH, p. 105, n. 117c).

The other two examples run in parallel with an impersonal and personal verb: *Gwae fy llaw, llam ry’m gallat* ‘Woe to my hand, the fate by which I have been carried off’ (CLLH III.26c; EWSP 422 (text), 479 (trans) ‘Alas, my hand, for the fate which has been brought about for me’; PLLH 106–7 (v. 127) ‘Woe to my hand, by fate was I moved’; Clancy 2003: 78 ‘woe’s hand, the fate designed for me’); and then a stanza later: *Gwae fy llaw, llam ry’m gallas* ‘Woe to my hand, fate has carried me off’ (CLLH III.27c; EWSP 422 (text), 479 (trans) ‘Alas, my hand – it caused my fate’; PLLH 106–7 (v. 128) ‘Woe to my hand, fate has empowered me’; Clancy 2003, 77 ‘woe’s hand, the fate that was mine’). These phrases are formally parallel, and it seems to me important that we should understand them as running in parallel, as mine do; but, but to judge from the variation in how these phrases are rendered, this seems not to have been a priority for many translators. Ford, for example, has gone for a completely different sense for *gallas* ‘empowered’ which shows no parallel to the impersonal *gallat* a few lines previously.

Furthermore, these phrases cannot be considered apart from two similar phrase in preceding stanzas, the first impersonal and the second with an active verb: *gwae fy llaw llam ry’m tynghit* ‘woe to my hand, the fate which has been destined for me’ (CLLH III.22c; EWSP 422 (text), 479 (trans); PLLH 104–5; Clancy 2003: 77 ‘woe’s my hand, the fate that befell me’); *gwae fy llaw llam ry’m daerawd* ‘woe to my hand, the fate which has befallen me’ (CLLH III.25c; EWSP 422 (text), 479 (trans); PLLH 106–7; Clancy 2003: 77 ‘woe’s my hand, the fate that beset me’).

Another issue in these lines, just as above, is how we understand the relationship between the hand and fate; Rowland’s translation seems to suggest a connection: ‘woe to my hand, for the fate ...’, and indeed in 27c she makes the hand the subject of *ry’m gallas* which is out of line with all the other stanzas, ‘alas, my hand – it caused my fate’, with a sense of the verb which is only attested

later and is anyway out of line with how these verbs seem to be working in these stanzas. A further complication is whether we are to understand the personal pronouns as direct or indirect objects; for example, in *ry'm gallat* I take it to be the object 'I have been carried off' but in *llam ry'm tynghit* it has to be indirect. With the active verbs they are probably to be understood as direct objects. A similar problem arises with another example in one of the Llywarch Hen stanzas about Maen: *Anrec ry'm gallat o Dyfryn Mewyrnyawn* (? read *Mafwrn*) 'a gift from Dyffryn Mafwrn ... has been taken away from me' (CLLH IV.7a; EWSP 411 (text), 472 (trans.)). But, if *anrheg* was understood as '(good) fortune', this could be read in a similar way to *llam ry'm gallat*, thus 'a fate by which I have been carried off'. The context of this stanza is very unclear and we lack any repetitive phrase to get a sense of what is going on: Rowland comments 'this verse appears to be irrelevant and may be an interpolation' (EWSP 531).

These stanzas are deceptively difficult to understand but through the whole run it seems reasonable to assume that we are being invited to see a hint of a link between the *llaw* and *llad* 'striking' even though the poet is at pains to ensure that it is not stated explicitly, and that all of this has to do with *llam* an inevitable and irresistible 'fate'. The variation between the impersonal and active forms seems to capture the nature of *llam*, as something impersonal and imposed from outside on the one hand, but on the other something capable of initiating action over which an individual has no control.⁷ But the lack of specificity is deliberate and the danger is that we end up reading them on the basis of what we think happened rather than letting them remain ambiguous. Even so, it is important that we allow ourselves to be led by the syntactic patterns and that our interpretations should at least be consistent with them. But in the end it comes down to what we think *ry + gall-* means.

There are more examples to be considered. When we turn to the Gogyfeirdd, in some respects matters are simpler as most of the forms seem formulaic, and only *ry allas* and *ry allat* (with only one example with a personal pronoun) are attested. Three instances of the active verb are relatively clear: Gwalchmai ap Meilyr: *can rygallas Duw dreic Powys* 'since God has carried off the

⁷ Although these forms are in rhyming position, I give the poet enough credit not to assume that the demands of rhyme were the over-riding concern.

dragon of Powys' (CBT I 7.135; Loth 1911: 198 'puisque Dieu a enlevé le dragon de Powys'; Dafydd Benfras: *anwas ry gallas pan ry gollet* 'it (sc. death) has snatched him away terribly, when he has been lost' (R 1385.20; CBT VI 33.68);⁸ Bleddyn Fardd: *Trist wyf, treis Duw ry gallas* 'I am sad, the violence of God has carried him off' (CBT VII.44.15). Likewise a case of the impersonal form from the same poem by Bleddyn Fardd: *Dauyd / Dyfrydet Gwynet, gwaen ni, ry allat / gweilch ffyscyad* 'Dafydd, ... Gwynedd is dejected, woe to us that he has been carried off, he of the nimble falcons' (CBT VII 54.27–8; Loth, p. 198 '... Gwynedd est dans l'abattement, malheur à nous qu'il ait été enlevé (par la mort), celui qui poursuivait les faucons'). An example from Elidir Sais where both forms occur in successive lines is more complicated as the semantics seem to have shifted slightly: *O golled rym gallad mowrwaeth / Rhyllas drais diredd Catraeth* (CBT I 15.21–2) 'as a result of loss great pain has been brought to me; he has brought violence to the lands of Catraeth'. In most cases the semantics of this verb suggest that the person or something has been carried off but here the directionality seems to have changed so that 'great pain has been brought to me' with the pronoun taken as the indirect object; similarly in the next line *ry allas* has to be read as 'he brought'. In both cases there may be a real semantic change, but the verb might be read as 'brought to ... (sc. from somewhere else)'; in other words rather than thinking the directionality has changed, we might suppose that the directionality has been partially suppressed.

Three examples from one poem by Cynddelw to Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (CBT IV.6) present further complexities and perhaps a further semantic shift. The first instance is relatively unproblematic: *Rygallas rec dinas racdud / O'e hygder ehagdud Uaredut* 'he has carried off from them the defender, in their distress, of the broad land of Maredudd (sc. ap Gruffudd ab yr Arglwydd Rhys)' (CBT IV.6.9–10).⁹ But later in the poem, as the account of Hywel's further successes are related, two other instances of the verb occur where the syntax is more complex: *Teyrnet yn taŵ, yn teŵ daearglas / Ryllas rwyf anaŵ* (lit.) 'The lord of wealth has carried off princes silent, in a tight-packed retinue in

⁸ In cases, like this (and others follow) where there seems to be the lack of mutation after *ry*, i.e. *ry gallas*, the simplest explanation might be that there was a proleptic 3rd sg. infixed pronoun which was formally merged into the preverbal particle.

⁹ On unlenited *rhygallas*, see n. **.

the earth (sc. in death)' (CBT IV.6.82–3);¹⁰ *Rutuoa6c varcha6c, ueirch ysgein, / Riallu ryallas yg crein* (lit.) 'A bloody and ravaging horseman, who would distribute horses, he carried off a retinue in writhing (sc. in death)' (CBT IV.6.108–9).¹¹ In the former, *teyrned ... ryallas rwyf* seems unproblematic, 'the lord carried off princes', but the presence of the predicates 'silent, in a tight-packed retinue in the earth' changes the sense to something like 'caused them to be ...'. Likewise, in the second example, *yg crein* 'in writhing' shifts the sense to 'he made them ...'. There is nothing particularly problematic about the semantics (we might compare the English usage of 'it has gone yellow' meaning 'it has become yellow'), but it is useful to see how they have developed from what I take to be the basic sense of *ryallas*.¹²

If we now return to the basic sense of these form, 'take away, carry off', the only attempt to explain the semantic development was by Ifor Williams (*CLH* 121–2):

Yr hen esboniad oedd cydio'r ferf gyda Cern. *gylly* 'to go', *gallas* 'gone, is gone' ... Gwell yw cychwyn gyda WM 227 [= CO 37] ... *kwt ynt plant y gwr am rydyallas yn gordwy?* ... Felly 'dug ymaeth' yw *rydyallas*, cymryd gfael iddi a'i chipio i ffwrdd (*deall* 'comprehend' ac 'apprehend').¹³

This needs a certain amount of unpacking.¹⁴ We shall return to the possible connection with the Cornish forms below (pp. **–**). The preferred starting point of *rydyallas* 'has carried off' has some

¹⁰ Cf. the translation in CBT IV, p. 134: 'Arglwyddi yn ddistaw [bellach], yn fintai niferus yn y ddaear, a barodd pennaeth cyfoeth'.

¹¹ Cf. the translation in CBT IV IV, p. 134: 'Marchog gwaedlyd a difaol sydd yn dosbarthu meirch, y mae wedi peri i lu['r gelyn] ymrwyfo [ar y llawr].'

¹² This is presumably the source of the last meaning in GPC s.v. *gallaf* 2 'take, take away, steal; cause'; but that change in meaning is contextually very specific, and cannot be taken to be one of its meanings in all cases.

¹³ 'The old explanation was to link the verb with Cornish *gylly* 'to go', *gallas* 'gone, is gone' ... It is better to start from WM 227 [= CO 37] ... *kwt ynt plant y gwr am rydyallas yn gordwy?* ... Thus, *rydyallas* is 'take away', to take hold of it and snatch it away (*deall* 'comprehend' ac 'apprehend').

¹⁴ We may note that Ifor Williams' verbal noun *gylly* ('Cern. *gylly* "to go"') does not exist but was extracted from Robert Williams 1865 s.v.); see below, pp. **–**.

relevance but seems to me to put the cart before the horse as our concern is with a different compound of *gallu*; at best it is a helpful parallel as the original sense of *dyall*, *deall* seems also to have been something like ‘carry off’ as in the example quoted from *Culhwch ag Olwen* above: ‘where are the children of the man who carried me off in violence?’ Another example of this sense is found in an *englyn* preserved in BBC (BBC 65.12–15; *LlDC* poem 30 (pp. 62–4); *CLH* VII.21; *EWSP* 456 (text), 503 (trans) ‘the news which has been conveyed to me’; *PLH* 130–1 (v. 201)):

Ni’m guna llewenit llad
o’r chuetleu a’m diallad¹⁵
mechid golo guid arnat

‘Drink does not bring me joy
as a result of the news which has been conveyed to me,¹⁶
that, Mechydd, a covering of wood is upon you.’

A slightly more developed sense is present in a couplet of Dafydd ap Gwilym’s ‘Morfudd fel yr haul’: *Paham, eiddungam ddangos, / Na deaill y naill y nos* ‘Why (making a desirous step) does the one not take possession of the night ...?’ (CDG 111.63–4; GDG 42.63–4).¹⁷ The sense of ‘understand’ is already attested in the thirteenth century and must have arisen through the same semantic development which produced Latin *comprehendere* ‘understand’ from a verb whose basic sense is ‘seize, grasp’. None of this is problematic but it is less clear how we account for the semantic shift from a verbal root *gall-* with its sense of ‘can, be able to’.

However, if we step back and see it in a broader context, we can place the changes in sense in the context of the semantics of perfective and imperfective verbs. We may begin with two

¹⁵ It might be possible, but not necessary, to emend to *ry’m diallad* here.

¹⁶ The sense of ‘convey’ being literally ‘which has been carried away (sc. from somewhere else) to me’.

¹⁷ Curiously GPC s.v. *deallaf* quotes this example under section 1c but the other two are quoted under 2, even though ‘take possession’ is easily derived from ‘carry away (to)’.

relatively basic observations: first, verbs of ability ('can, able to', etc.) are frequently based on verbal roots relating to power; for example, Latin *poti-* > *potens* 'powerful', *potest* 'can' (cf. also Greek δεσπότης 'master'); Greek δυνά- > δύναμις 'power', δύνάμαι 'I can', etc.; Latin *valēre* 'have the strength to' (cf. Latin *validus* 'strong') is used in the medieval language to mean 'be able'; similarly, Welsh *gall-* beside Cornish *gallos* 'power, strength', etc. Secondly, this use of *gallu* to mean 'carry off' is restricted to forms with the perfective particle *ry*, and it is well known feature of perfectivity, that is, the marking of a verbal stem to indicate completed action (often but not always in the past), that it can produce semantic changes. For example, taking another 'able, can' verb in Welsh, in perfective contexts (such as in the preterite tense) *medru* 'be able, know how to', can mean 'shoot, hits, strike' (GPC s.v. *medraf* c–d); in Latin *potuit*, the perfect of *potest* 'can', often means 'prevail' (cf. Greek δύνομαι 'I am able' with an aorist ἐδυνήσάμην 'I prevailed'). Broadening the semantic field, the aorist of Greek τυγχάνω 'happen to' means 'hit, strike, succeed'; the aorist of ἀμαρτάνω 'fail to' means 'miss'. Finally we may consider Old Irish *icc-* with an original sense of 'reach' (Schumacher 2004: 200); the compound *con-icc* means 'is able'; but with the *ro* perfective particle *ro-icc* means 'comes, reaches, arrives'; cognate to this is Welsh *rhyngu* 'attain, satisfy, etc.' (Schumacher 2004: 200–4). In the light of such evidence it is easy to see how a perfective form of a verb 'be able', etc. might come to mean 'prevail, seize control over', and thus 'carry off'.

At this point we may return to Cornish *galsof* 'I have gone' and related forms.¹⁸ Ifor Williams (CLLH 121–2) was inclined to dismiss any connection between it and the forms discussed above preferring the connection with *rydyallas*, etc.¹⁹ But this need not be a matter of 'either or'. Middle Cornish 1 sg. *galsof*, 2 sg. *galsos*, 3 sg. *gallas*, 3 pl. *galsons* form a suppletive perfect to *mones* 'go' (Lewis

¹⁸ I am grateful to Oliver Padel for discussing these forms with me and sharing a draft of his unpublished expanded version of Lewis 1946. For earlier mentions of these forms, see Robert Williams 1865: 159b; Pedersen 1909–13: II.374; G. P. Williams 1910: 338–9; Lewis 1946: 64 (trans. Zimmer 1990: 60); Lewis & Pedersen 1961: 298; Schumacher 2004: 506; Band 2017: 244.

¹⁹ Their existence is noted by Pedersen (1909–13: II.374), and Lewis & Pedersen (1961: 298) link them to the Welsh forms; already in the middle of the nineteenth century these forms were being linked with *galles* 'able' (Robert Williams 1865: 159b)

1946: 64), e.g. *gallus the'n fo* 'he has fled (lit. 'he has gone in flight' (BK 455); *gallas an Iowl the Hel* 'the rogue has gone to Hell' (BK 1002 (emended to *th'e kel* 'to his hideout' by Williams)), etc.; but in many examples the forms are used with an adjective in the sense of 'have become', e.g. *galsaf in fol* 'I have gone mad' (BK 119); *galsof coyth ha marthys gwan* 'I have become old and wondrously weak' (OM 855); *galsos pur worth* 'thou art become very contrary' (RD 1470); etc.

While the basic semantics are clearly perfective as the particle *re* is not required to perfectivise it, the paradigm has some oddities about it.²⁰ Some parts look straightforward: the 3 sg. *gallas* looks like a preterite in *-as*; 3 pl. *galsons* 'they have gone' (BM 1069 which rhymes with *ny alsons* 'they were not able' in the next line); 3 sg. pluperfect *galse* 'he had gone, he would have gone' seems regularly formed on a preterite stem in *-s-*; and a regular participle *gyllys*. These can be taken as parts of *galles* 'able' with a similar semantic development to that in Welsh. Other forms of the paradigm, however, *galsof* and *galsos*, are less clear and are unexpected if we think we are dealing with the *s*-preterite of *galles*: at first sight, they seem to be formed by the addition of the present tense forms of the verb 'to be' to a stem containing *-s-* (Lewis & Pedersen 1961: 298), comparable perhaps to the irregular perfect and pluperfect forms of Middle Welsh *mynet* 'go', *dyuot* 'come', and *gwneuthur* 'do' where the paradigm looks as if it is formed by adding forms of the verb 'to be' to a stem in *a(e)th-*, *do(e)th-*, *gwna(e)th-*, e.g. *ethyw* 'has gone', *dothwyf* 'I have come', etc. The origin of these forms is unclear and has never been properly discussed;²¹ it looks like a preterite stem with part of the verb 'to be' added but the stem might in origin have been, or perhaps later perceived to be, a past participle.

Since other verbs in Cornish show *-s-* between the stem and the ending in the 2sg and 1-3 pl. preterites, e.g. *mynsys* 'thou wast willing', *gwelsyn* 'they have seen', it may only be *galsof* which is anomalous, and the ending could be explained as a remodelling on the 1 sg. form of *bos*. But the 2sg. preterite of *galles* would probably be *gylses* though it seems not to be attested. The problem is that both the 1 sg. and 2 sg. seem to have an ending modelled on *bos* and a different stem vowel, and

²⁰ G. P. Williams 1910: 338–9; cf. Lewis & Pedersen 1961: 255; and Zimmer 1990: 60n.

²¹ I have briefly discussed the latter in the context of possible Latin influence (Russell 2011: 152–3; Band 2017; cf. also Schumacher 2017: 323–9 who discussed the pluperfect but ignores the perfect).

these forms suggest that they might have had a different starting point. One possibility is that we could take *gallas* to be the cognate of Middle Welsh preterite impersonal *gallat* ‘was carried off’ with similar semantics, the other persons might have been formed on it with the addition of parts of the verb ‘to be’, thus literally *gal(la)s + of* (‘carried off’ + ‘I am’) ‘I have been carried off’ > ‘I have gone’ > ‘I have become’. If so, although it is tempting to see this as an old formation, similar to the type we find in Welsh, it must be a relatively late creation within Cornish as the end of the stem would have undergone assibilation from *-/d/*.

Another attempt to explain these forms, albeit brief and partial, has been proposed by Schumacher (2004: 506): these forms may go back to a root **all-* (< **ǵaln-* ‘sich nähern, losgehen auf’), a present-stem root, the subjunctive stem of which, **el-*, is the source of the Brittonic present subjunctive stem *el(-)* ‘go’ (subsequently generalised to the verbs ‘come’ and ‘do’). He argues that the initial *g-* is secondary on the assumption that *all-* was lenited: ‘Das anlautende *g-* von *gall-* ist sekundär und beruht darauf, dass der vokalische Anlaut von *all-* als Lenitionprodukt interpretiert wurde’ (ibid.). In some respects this is an attractive idea but really does not account for all the evidence. First, only the Middle Cornish forms are mentioned and then only the regular-looking ones, not *galsof*, etc. Secondly, no connection with the Middle Welsh forms is noted even though the semantic development seems too close to ignore. If it were applied to Welsh as well, how might *dyallas* and *deall* fit in? And are we to see that as a parallel development or an inherited development? More problematically, it is clear from both the Welsh and Cornish evidence that the stem is perfective in its semantics: *ry* is almost always required in Middle Welsh but in Middle Cornish *re* is never found precisely because the stem does not need perfectivising (G. P. Williams 1920: 338–9). However, Schumacher’s account starts from a present stem formation. Semantically he assumes ‘has gone’ as the basic sense but, if the link with Welsh is to be sustained, there was a further underlying stage of ‘carried off’ > ‘gone’. It is the former stage which unites these forms semantically and, as argued above, we can extract all the shades of meaning from perfective forms of **gall-* ‘able’.

The morphological problem, however, remains. If we start from an assumed regular *s-* preterite *gallas*, there is no reason why the irregular forms, like *galsof*, would have developed as it would have been perfectly possible to generate a full paradigm on that basis of *gallas*. But if we start

from the principle that it is methodologically preferable to start from the irregular forms and argue for increasing (if experimental) regularisation, we could start by seeing *gallas* as a cognate of Middle Welsh *gallat*. If so, we may be dealing with several attempts to regularise an awkwardly irregular verb: one of these involved taking *gallas* as a verbal stem (perhaps perceived as participial) to which parts of the verb ‘be’ were added. This is a familiar strategy in Cornish and Breton (more so than in Welsh) as an attempt to regularise the paradigms of some verbs (Lewis 1964: 61–2; Hemon 1975: 225–9; Band 2017). But even so, there remains the difficulty that this must be a relatively late formation as it post-dates the assibilation of final *-/d/*. The other strategy was to take *gallas* as a 3 sg. active form and then other forms were based on it, thus *galsons*, *galse*, etc. As a result, forms like *galsof* remained as relic forms of an older pattern. It is noteworthy too that the example quoted above from OM, *galsof coyth ha marthys gwan* ‘I have become old and wondrously weak’, was reworked in the later *Gwreans an Bys* as *coth a gwan ythof gyllys* ‘old and weak am I become’ (Stokes 1864: 73 (l. 1965)) using what looks like the regular form of the participle in an analytic construction, suggesting that *galsof* had fallen out of use. There also seem to be two examples of present forms with similar semantics where it looks as if the paradigm is being brought into line with forms of *galles*: *pesouch nag yllough yn temptacion* ‘pray that ye enter not into temptation (PC 1077), and *Ny dueth an prys ernag yllyf den nef dum tas* ‘The time is not come until I go to heaven to my father’ (RD 878).²² Presumably such semantics must have started in the perfective forms of the paradigm and spread from there, thus providing further indirect evidence for the creation of a verbal paradigm with these semantics.

As for *galsof*, further progress on this must await a more detailed examination of the Middle Welsh forms, such as *ethwyf* ‘has gone’, etc. (cf. Band 2017 for a useful starting point). But, provisionally, whatever the strategies were to regularise the morphology of this verb in Cornish, its semantics seem best explained as arising out of the same developments (perfective semantics arising from ‘able’) as in Middle Welsh *ry’m gallas* and *ry’m gallat*.

²² I follow Oliver Padel’s segmentation in these examples: *nag yllough* (for *na gyllough*) and *ernag yllyf* (for *erna gyllyf*).

3. *Erechwyd, Yrechwyd, echwyd*

Identifying locations of place-names in early medieval Welsh verse is an activity fraught with difficulty.²³ The location, for example, of Rheged has been subject to various proposals which, if amalgamated, would have endowed it with the square-mileage of the whole of the northern half of Britain. Much of it is guesswork and given to the kind of methodological speculation which involves deciding what the word means, or what geographical figure is designates, and then seeking out a suitable location which ticks sufficient boxes. The results are then often couched in terms of high degrees of certainty.²⁴

A particularly egregious example is the name variously preserved (and editorially spelt) as *Yrechwyd*, *Erechwyd*, or *Yr Yrechwyd*. In this case there are two interesting variations on the usual method: first, there seem to be no forms of the name surviving in the later onomastics of northern Britain in the way that, for example, Rheged has been associated with various places (e.g. Breeze 2012 and 2018); we are thus spared the phonological and orthographical contortions to make it match a name in Old English or Lowland Scots. Secondly, there is a curious distortion in the discussion because a significant possibility, that in some instances *echwyd* might mean ‘noon, midday’ (or a related sense), was unthinkingly written out of the dossier in the late twentieth century and has barely broken surface since.

The evidence and core argument were presented by Morris Jones (1918: 68–70). But nowadays thinking on this name rarely goes back further than to a series of notes in the commentaries to editions of early Welsh poetry by Ifor Williams: the poetry associated with Llywarch Hen (CLLH 117–18), the historical poems preserved in the Book of Taliesin (CT xxv–xxviii and PT xlii–xliii), and the prophecy poem *Armes Prydein* (AP¹ 62–6; AP² 67–8). The favoured proposal

²³ Cf. David Dumville’s comment (1988: 12, n. 35) about ‘the fantastic nonsense of academic geography’; this in reference to attempts to locate Rheged.

²⁴ We might contrast Ifor Williams’ careful remarks on the location of *Erechwydd* ‘all this, needless to say, is speculation if not sheer guesswork’ (PT xliii) with Breeze’s assertion on the meaning of *echwydd*: ‘what is certain is that *echwydd* means “fresh water”’ (Breeze 2010: 322); it is argued below that it is far from certain. For a sensible and thoughtful approach, see Haycock 2013b.

for this name presented with varying degrees of certainty is in short that *echwyd* (with final *-/ð/*) is the word for ‘fresh water’ (perhaps to be contrasted with salt water) which may refer to a lake, river, or some other area containing fresh water; there is occasional debate about whether ‘running water’ is to be included in the definition (PT xlii–xliii). It is suggested fairly uncontroversially that the form *Erechwyd* contains the prefix *Er-* ‘next to, facing’ (cf. also *ar-*, earlier *are-*), thus interpreted as ‘facing, next to fresh water’. Some scribes misunderstood the prefix as the definite article, hence *Yrechwyd* or *Yr Erechwyd*; others may simply have been treating it as a noun *yr echwyd* (to be discussed below). Most scholarly dispute has arisen over the location of this area: given that northern Britain is not known for its arid and desert-like terrain, finding a patch of fresh water is easy enough and the candidates for the location of *Erechwyd* come thick and fast; proposals range from the Solway Firth, to the Swale and Swaledale including Catterick (CT xxvi; PT xliii), or the marshes of central Yorkshire (Breeze 2010; summarised in 2012: 62), and other ideas are also available. Some scholars have chosen, perhaps sensibly, to treat it simply as a name redolent of the Old North, about the location of which even the poets probably had no idea and even less concern. This is not the place for a full gazetteer of all the possibilities as it is not the purpose of this article to offer up another location for dissection; all modern discussions have orbited the same body of data and possibilities distinguishing themselves only by their level of certainty (Haycock 2013b: 10, and 29–30). The aim here is rather to go back and reconsider the evidence in greater detail and in particular to think harder about all the evidence and not just a selection of it.

Erechwydd

We may begin with cases where the editors have treated it as a name (and sometimes printed it with a capital initial), before moving on to cases where *echwyd* seems to be functioning as a noun (and also in a few instances, it appears, as a verb). The distinction is not always easy to maintain (and it will be suggested below that not all examples have been correctly interpreted) but it does give us a starting point, whereby we begin with the most familiar evidence before moving on to the less familiar. Furthermore, a neglected feature of this word is the nature of the diphthong *-wy-*, and, where it is in rhyming position, the rhyme will be noted and discussed later.

In the run of *englynion* preserved in *Canu Urien* we find five references to *Erechwydd*: in the first Urien is described as *yr erechwyd oed ugeil* (CLLH III.10b; EWSP 420 (10b); R 1039.26–7) ‘he was shepherd over Erechwydd’ (EWSP 478).²⁵ The next three come in the second line of three successive stanzas where Erechwydd is the object of attack on Urien and his sons by their enemies: *erechwyd gwneuthur kelein* (CLLH 37b; EWSP 424 (37b); R 1040.36) ‘to make Erechwydd corpses’; *erechwyd gwneuthur catwen* (CLLH 38b; EWSP 424 (38b); R 1040.38) ‘to make Erechwydd a battlefield’; *erechwyd gwneuthur dynin* (CLLH 39b; EWSP 425 (39b); R 1040.40) ‘to make Erechwydd slaughter’.²⁶ It has been suggested that in these example *erechwyd* could mean something like ‘at noon’ (CLLH 136; cf. EWSP 564), but I think Rowland is probably right that in the context of Urien and his sons it is more likely to be the place or area.²⁷ The final example is *Ar erechwyd ethyw gwall* (CLLH 44a; EWSP 425 (44a); R 1041.6) ‘loss has fallen on Erechwydd’.²⁸ The name also occurs in the so-called historical poems in the Book of Taliesin (NLW Peniarth 2) in the context of the living Urien: *Urien yr echóyd* (CT/PT III.1; BT 57.14; rhyming with *bedyd*, *rodyd*) ‘Urien of Erechwydd’;²⁹ *rac vd yr echóyd, yrechóyd teccaf* (CT/PT III.18–19; BT 58.2; rhyming with *dyd*; cf. also the same phrase CT/PT VI.13; BT 60.17; rhyming with *gerenhyd*) ‘before the Lord of Erechwydd, fairest Erechwydd’. In all these instances *Erechwyd* (or variants thereof) is being treated as a name working alongside Rheged as a place, associated with Urien, that will be destroyed and upon which despair will fall on Urien’s death. Similarly in *Armes*

²⁵ Williams (CLLH 117) suggested that the first *yr* is to be read as *ar*; Rowland that it could be emended to *yn* ‘in’ (EWSP 554).

²⁶ The translations are mine; both Rowland (EWSP 480) and Ford (PLH 111) treat *erechwyd* as prepositional ‘in Erechwydd’.

²⁷ It may also be worth noting that in all three of these lines there are eight syllables (when seven might be expected) but there is no good reason to think they are corrupt.

²⁸ My translation; Rowland (EWSP 481) has similar: ‘need has befallen Erechwydd’, but in the light of 44c is clear that the loss of Urien is being lamented.

²⁹ Examples from BT are spelt as in the manuscript; thus *ó* is retained and not replaced with *w*.

Prydein after the English have been driven out, the rule of the British will spread: *llettaŷt eu pennaeth tros yr echŷyd* (AP^{1/2} 175; BT 18.6; rhyming with *byd*) ‘their dominion will spread across Erechwydd’.³⁰

echwydd ‘water’, ‘noon’

None of these examples gives much away about location or what the word originally might have meant. To gain a little more clarity we need to turn to the uses of *echwyd* as a noun in prose and verse. At this point we then encounter one of those accidents of scholarship which has made matters less clear than they might be. As long ago as 1918 Morris Jones discussed the name, spelt by him *yr Echwydd*, and proposed that the name should probably be understood as *Erechwydd* with the prefix *Er-* (Morris Jones 1918: 68–70), and he also noted examples of the noun *echwydd* which he thought referred to water, perhaps running water or fresh water. That view forms the basis of the modern understanding. It was taken up and developed by Ifor Williams to propose additionally that it could mean fresh water in contrast to salty water on the basis of examples like *kyfrwnc allt ac allt* (recte *hallt*) *ac echwyd* (LPBT 23.4; BT 69.10; rhyming with *eidolyd*; cf. Haycock 2013b: 29–30) ‘between a height and salt water and fresh water’. However, in a footnote (1918: 69, n. 1) he also pointed out that there was another word *echwydd* meaning ‘noon, midday’; he also suggested tentatively that these two words were formally distinct: *echwydd* ‘water’ with a rising diphthong (rhyming with *-ydd*) and *echwydd* ‘noon’ with a falling diphthong (rhyming with *-wydd*), though, as it turns out, matters are not that simple. In addition, he also drew attention to a possible cognate, Breton *ehoazyet* (Léon *ec’hoaz*) ‘the rest cattle take in the middle of day’ (which also in fact means ‘noon, midday’; cf. Ernault 1895–6: 204).

In the first, Welsh, edition of *Armes Prydein* Ifor Williams had a long and important note on *echwydd* ‘noon’ (AP¹ 62–4).³¹ However, in the second edition, translated into English and updated by Rachel Bromwich (which has now become the standard), virtually all the lexical discussion of

³⁰ Note that *llettawt* is an emendation of *lettatawt* MS. If *yr echwyd* is a place-name, it should probably be read as *Erechwyd*, but, if as a noun, *yr echwyd*, might be preferred; we return to this example below, p. **.

³¹ Part of this discussion is concerned with later usage where *echwydd* can sometimes mean ‘afternoon’ and ‘evening’

echwydd as a noun was excised and especially the section on *echwydd* ‘noon’ ended up on the cutting room floor with only a brief note to mark its original presence (AP² 67). Bromwich’s rationale for this was that, since Williams had rejected *echwydd* ‘noon’ as having anything to do with *Erechwydd*, it was not worth discussing and anyway ‘these meanings and the appropriate references have been listed in G, pp. 436–7’ (AP² 67). Since AP¹ and Lloyd-Jones’ *Geirfa* are now not easy to come by, this means that one possible avenue of exploration for anyone not wholly convinced by the watery explanation has quietly slipped from the scholarly consciousness, or at least made much less visible. This is particularly curious since even a glance at GPC suggests that *echwydd*¹ ‘noon’ is rather better attested than *echwydd*² ‘water’. Crucially it is much better attested in prose where it is easier to get a sense of meaning and usage.

A survey of the databases of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Welsh prose reveals twenty examples of *echwydd* ‘noon’ beside three of *echwydd* ‘water’ (Isaac et al. 2013; Luft et al. 2013). Of these there are four examples of the former in the thirteenth-century collection and none of the latter. But, since these databases record the texts of manuscripts, in fact the number of distinct attestations is smaller as some texts are preserved in more than one manuscript; for example, the three examples of *echwydd* ‘water’ amount to one attestation in *Ystorya Adda* in variants of the phrase *dwfyr echwyd* ‘fresh water’.³² *Echwydd* ‘noon’ occurs in a number of texts, *Peredur*, *Ystorya de Carolo Magno*, *Marwolaeth Meir*, and also in some law texts, where it is possible to compare Welsh and Latin versions of effectively the same text. The same kinds of phrase occur several times, e.g. *ar awr echwyd* ‘at the hour of noon’ (LLA 79.30–1, 84.9), *am bryd echwyd* ‘around noon-time’ (LLA 78.11), *yngkylch echwyd o’r dyd* ‘around the middle of the day’, *hyd echwyd* ‘up to midday’, etc. (G V.437a for other examples). It can also be seen as the end of a period of time: *o’r bore hyt echwyd e bydei yn y gvedieu. O nawn eilweith y bydei en e gwedi ...* ‘from the morning until noon she would be at her prayers. From nones again she would be praying ...’ (*Mabinogi Iesu Grist* (NLW Peniarth 5 version, ed. M. Williams 1912: 240)).

In legal texts *echwyd* occurs in two distinct contexts: first, in *Llyfr Iorwerth*, when a male yearling calf is being tested to see if it can plough, it is deemed acceptable *ot ard hyt echuyd o’r bore* ‘if

³² NLW Peniarth 5, fol. 4v7; Peniarth 14, p. 168.21; Peniarth 7, fol. 53r28–9.

he ploughs until noon from morning' (Wiliam 1960: 86 (§ 128.10); trans. Jenkins 1986: 176.31; variants include the simple *o'r bore hyt echwyd*, but also *hannerdyd* for *echwyd* (Peniarth 32, p. 136.24; see Owen 1841: VC III.vi.4)). In the Blegywryd redaction the cheese which forms part of the summer *dawnbuyd* 'food-gift' is to be made from milk from the morning milking and the milking at *echwyd*: *a chossyn gyt a phob dawnbwyd, a wnelher o holl laeth y neb a'e talho bore ac echwyd* 'a cheese along with every foodgift is to be made of the whole of the morning and midday milk of the one who pays for it' (Williams & Powell 1961: 69.28–9; my trans.); another Blegywryd version, preserved in NLW Peniarth 33, p. 145.37–8, reads *bore ac echwyd a ffrynghawn* 'morning, midday and afternoon'. In these cases some translators have rendered *echwyd* as 'evening' (Owen 1841: DC II.xix.11; Richards 1954: 73.39–74.1) which seems to reflect a more modern usage (discussed and rejected by Morris Jones 1918: 69, n. 1, and AP¹ 63), but the redactor of Peniarth 33 clearly thinks that *echwyd* is earlier in the day. We can also test the meaning by turning to the Latin texts of laws. The Iorwerth example is not found in the Latin texts, but the relevant part of the Blegywryd example is rendered in Latin D as *quod lac mulcetur in mane et terciam* (recte *tercia*) 'the milk which is gathered in the morning and at terce (sc. the third hour of the day)' (Emanuel 1967: 382.21; my trans.); in Latin B the equivalent text is *lacte ... collecto mane et meridie* 'from the milk collected in the morning and at midday' (Emanuel 1967: 204.36; my trans.). *Echwyd* is rendered in the two Latin versions as 'terce' and 'midday' respectively, and there are other examples which support the idea that *echwyd* may refer to a period of time rather than a fixed point; for example, one of the examples in *Ystoria de Carolo Magno* (Williams 1968: 20.12) *yngkylch awr echwyd* corresponds to *hora tertia* in the Latin ((Williams 1968: 247, s.v. *echwydd*); another example, *a ffeunydy rwng echwyd a hanner dyd* 'daily between *echwyd* and midday' (Williams & Jones 1876–92: 249.12–13 (ll. 249–50)) suggests that *echwyd* can be seen as a point earlier than midday but not later; hence later terms like *godechwydd*, *gwedechwydd*, etc. for 'afternoon, evening' (lit. *gwedi* 'after' + *echwydd*).³³ The upshot seems to be that *echwydd* is best regarded as a period of time equating to late morning which can also refer to any point in time between terce and midday. In conclusion, the prose of this period, then, indicates that *echwydd*

³³ Since these forms are only attested from the sixteenth century onwards, it is possible that they are calques on English 'afternoon'.

‘water’ is minimally attested while *echwydd* ‘midday, a period in the middle of the day ending at noon’ is well attested.

We are now in a position to return to the use of these nouns in verse. Both senses are attested though, as with prose, *echwydd* ‘water’ is less common. It occurs in several poems in the Book of Taliesin (in addition to the line quoted above about fresh and salt water): *echóyd a muchyd kymescetor* ‘water and smoke are mixed together’ (LPBT 18.25; BT 55.10); *ýylhaót eil echóyd yn torroed mynyd* ‘(sc. the cloud) will weep like a torrent on the slopes of the mountain’ (PBT 7.36; BT 75.1–2); a *dófyndófynd echóyd* ‘with the fresh deep water’ (LPBT 7.60; BT 32.20; rhyming with *dofyd ... vyd ... gynnyd*). A similar instance occurs in the Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW Peniarth 1): *redcauc duwyr echwit* ‘fresh running water’ (LIDC 29.28; BBC 88 (addition in left margin); Haycock 1994: 106; rhyming with *pedwerit*). Clear-cut early examples of *echwydd* ‘noon’ are harder to find, though we shall return to some ambiguous cases below.

The vast corpus of Gogynfeirdd poetry only produces six examples of these nouns, and strikingly none of the name *Erechwydd*. One clearly refers to water: *yn dwfyr echwyt* ‘in fresh water’ (Gwalchmai ap Meilyr: CBT I.14.36; HGC XIV.36; rhyming with *dedwyt* which has a rising diphthong); a second probably does in the sense that the context implies that it means water but the text is unstable: *Adfwyn dydaó dyuyr (dychwart gwyrth wrth echwyt)* ‘Finely will water come (the green sea laughs at fresh water)’ (Gwalchmai ap Meilyr: CBT I.9.149n; rhyming with *drydyt*).³⁴ There are four examples of *echwyd* ‘noon’ of which three pair it with *ucher* ‘evening’: *dióuner ucher ac echwyt* ‘lordless at evening and at midday’ (Daniel ap Llosgwrn Mew: CBT II.18.53; rhyming with *uyd*);³⁵ *Aber Menwenóer ucher echwyt* ‘Aber Menfer (?) at evening (and) at midday’ (Llywelyn Fardd I: CBT II.1.46; HGC XXXV.46 and note; rhyming with *esyllyt*); *merweryd echwyd ac vcher daó* ‘the tumult of midday

³⁴ In the discussion at AP¹ 63 the reading of the MA² 144a37 is accepted: *dychward gwyr wrth echwydd* ‘men laugh when the time for rest (i.e. midday) comes’ (cf. CBT I.9.149 (note on p. 222)). This is rejected by the editor of CBT on the grounds that it is not supported by the rhyme; but see below, p. **, where it is argued that the rhyme is not diagnostic.

³⁵ I wonder whether the phrase *ucher ac echwyd* is an expression meaning something like ‘for ever more’.

and the evening quiet' (Dafydd Benfras: CBT VI.24.10).³⁶ What seems to be an emerging fixed phrase (*yn awr echwydd*) occurs twice: *kyfeiliô gwenn waôr yn aôr echwyt* 'like a fair dawn at midday' (Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd: CBT II.7.8; rhyming with *cywydd*); *llofrud by neurudd yn awr echwyd* 'causing the destruction of my cheeks (which are like the light of) midday' (Iorwerth Fychan: CBT VII.30.8; rhyming with *dyd*).

When we turn to the *Cywyddwyr*, the phrase *awr echwydd* accounts for four of seven examples, e.g. *neu hydd awr echwydd yn ochr creigfer lefn* 'or a noon-day stag on the slope of a smooth rocky ridge' (Gruffudd ap Maredudd (Lewis 2005 ii. 3.79)).³⁷ Two of the others are in the work of Lewys Glyn Cothi (Johnston 1995: 83.47 and 97.11). But it is striking that there is no clear example of *echwydd* 'water'.

In all of this there is a number of ambiguous examples and it might be helpful to explore whether the rhyming patterns are of any use in helping us to disambiguate them. Morris Jones (1918: 68) was the first to claim that *echwydd* 'noon' rhymed in *-wydd* (a falling diphthong) citing the example from Hywel ap Owain Gwynedd noted above where *yn awr echwydd* rhymes with *cywydd*; the two other examples he cites are ambiguous. Although he did not say so, the implication of his statement is that *echwydd* 'water' had a rising diphthong, rhyming with words in *-ydd*. That said, he does admit that the poets were likely to have confused the two words and that the two diphthongs were prone to confusion anyway (cf. also Morris Jones 1913: 43–7). In fact this is borne out by the evidence underlying this discussion: in cases where the word is in rhyming position all the examples of *echwydd* 'water' rhyme with a rising diphthong and the only example where *echwydd* 'noon' rhymes with a falling diphthong is the example cited by Morris Jones; but even that example is problematic in that it is the only example of *cywŷydd* 'clear, bright, pleasant' cited by GPC (< *cy-* + *gŷydd* 'presence, sight, face'; cf. G III.274, s.v. *kywŷyd*). We also know that falling diphthongs following a vowel were prone to change to a rising diphthong (Morris Jones 1913: 47 (§ 39.x)). All in all, this example cannot provide the firm evidence we need. We can only conclude that almost all

³⁶ For a different interpretation, see below, p. **.

³⁷ Cf. also Johnston 1997: 7.30; Bryant-Quinn 2000: 6.73 (cf. on *echwydd* 'yr ysbaid rhwnd hynny (sc. 9 a.m.) a chanol dydd (p. 132)); Ifans 2000: 12.15; Bowen 1990: 109.109.

the rhyming examples rhyme with -ydd. Unsurprisingly all the rhyming examples of *Erechwydd* do likewise. Rhyme therefore cannot help us separate out these forms.

We are still left, however, with a few ambiguous examples which require discussion. There are two examples where the rhyme is with a falling diphthong but in the light of the discussion in the preceding paragraph this may be coincidental. The first of these is a line from the poem *Kadeir Teŷrnon* in the Book of Taliesin: *ban corn kerdetrôyd, ban biô 6rth echôyd* ‘splendid is a free-circulating [drinking-]horn, splendid are cattle at noon’ (LPBT 9.32 (text and trans.); BT 35.1–2; rhyming with *kerdetrwyd*). Given that the focus in the preceding line is on celebratory drinking, it is possible that maintaining the bibulous theme this means ‘splendid are cattle at fresh water’. In the run of *englynion* known as *Canu Heledd* lines b and c of stanzas 55 and 56 take the form ‘more usual was [insert: war-related activity] than [insert: an entirely domestic and normal activity]’. The first of these is *oed gnodach ysgwyt tonn yn dyuot o gad / nogyt ych y echwyd* ‘more usual was a broken shield coming from battle than an ox going to a noon-day resting place’ (CLLH XI.55b–c; EWSP 436 (55b–c), 487 (trans.); R 1046.29–30; rhyming with *throdwyd* (recte *rhodwyd*)). Like the previous example, I see no good reason why this cannot mean ‘than cattle to fresh water’. The translation ‘noon-day resting place’ is curious. As far I can see, there is no clear evidence for this sense to be attached to Welsh *echwydd*, and it might be suspected that it has been extrapolated from the comment about Breton *ec’hoaz* made originally by Morris Jones and repeated by Williams. But such has been the influence of their work that it has been adopted as a possible meaning of *echwydd* in G V.436 and GPC s.v. *echwydd*¹ (and subsequently found its way into EWSP); in both dictionaries we find the definition ‘gorffowysfa anifeiliaid rhag haul canol dydd’ which is expanded in the English version in GPC as ‘time of day when (also place where) cattle, &c., shelter from the heat’.³⁸ I know of no evidence independent of the work of Ifor Williams to suggest that *echwydd* ever meant this in Welsh.

The upshot of the discussion so far is that *echwydd* ‘noon, midday’ is appreciably more common than *echwydd* ‘(fresh) water’. That should not necessarily deter us from thinking that *Erechwydd* is based on the latter, but we need to be clear that we are doing so with a full understanding of the range of the evidence.

³⁸ Two further ambiguous examples will be considered below following the next stage of the argument (p. **).

echwydd ‘flow (away)’

In addition to the forms discussed above, there are several examples of where *echwydd* seems to function as a verb (G V.437; the verb is not listed in GPC). For the sake of completeness, they require discussion, as some have been, or can be, treated as nominal forms. All seem to bear a sense of ‘flow (away)’ or figurative developments of that, and so might be thought to be related to *echwydd* ‘water’.

Two examples are verbally very close and one may well be echoing the other. In the first the sense of the verb is very literal since the context is water. In the Black Book of Carmarthen in a poem entitled *Bendith y Wenwas* a question is asked about water (in fact *echwydd* ‘fresh water’, in contrast to the sea, also occurs a line or so later) (LLDC 29.25–8; Haycock 1994: 12.25–8 (p. 106)):³⁹

A thrydit ryuet. yv merwerit mor:

cv threia, cud echwit?

Digones periw pedwerit rivet:

redecauc duwyr echwit

And a third wonder is the tumult of the sea:

Where does it ebb? Where does it withdraw?

The Lord performed a fourth wonder:

flowing fresh water.

Haycock (1994: 106) translates *echwit* (l. 26) as ‘cilia’, but it seems to me that this line is about the ebb and flow of the tides; since *cw(d)* can mean ‘to where?’, ‘from where?’ and simply ‘where?’, it could thus be translated ‘To where does it ebb? From where does it flow in?’ In the poem entitled *Mydwyf merweryd* in the Book of Taliesin, the usage is more figurative when the poet asks: *awen – cōd*

³⁹ Note that the last two lines (ll. 27–8) are added in the left margin in BBC with an insertion mark after *echwit* (l. 26).

echuyd ar veinyoeth veinyd? ‘where does inspiration flow to at midnight [and] midday?’ (LPBT 7.7–8; BT 31.23–4; probably rhyming with forms in *-ydd*). We may note in passing that it is possible that in the reference to *meinyd* ‘midday’ the poet is flaunting his awareness of the other sense of *echwydd*.

The implication of fading in a verb meaning ‘flow’ also occurs in a line of Mab Clochyddyn: *lleuuer heul ucher hyloew echwydd* ‘one like the light of the sun of a fine evening fades away’ (R 1351.9–10; Ifans et al. 1997: 46).⁴⁰ Another example takes the metaphor a stage further as the sense of ‘flow away’ develops into ‘fail’: in the context of churches dedicated to St David, Gwynfardd Brycheiniog observes: *naót ny echwyt* ‘protection does not fail’ (CBT II.26.105; cf. HGC XVIII.105).

All of these examples are 3rd singular present tenses, but there is one possible example where the same verb is found in the imperfect: *ny echyuydei ffyd ganthu* ‘? faith did not leave them’ (EWSP 437 (64c), 488 (trans.); R 1047.4; cf. CLH XI.64c). The verb was interpreted by Williams (CLH p. 221) as a form of **echfod* ‘to be wanting’ (a possible cognate of Irish *esbaid*). Rowlands (EWSP 597) tentatively read it as a form of *echwydd* ‘flow’, but noted that ‘the theory that *echwydd* means ‘flowing water’ has since been dismissed’ (referring to PT xlii–xliii). The debate about whether *echwydd* could refer to flowing water seems to me to be null; water flows whether slowly or quickly. The more important point is that the other examples in this section show that there was a verb *echwydd* which had a basic meaning of ‘flow’. I would take it to be a denominative verb based on *echwydd* ‘water’; alternatively, but less likely in my view, it could be a compound form of, for example, *cwyddo* ‘fall’ (less likely would be a compound of *chwyddo* ‘swell’).⁴¹

echwydd ‘south’

So far the discussion has been working within the understood semantic framework of these words. But there is more to be said and another possibility to be considered.

⁴⁰ We can also return to an example discussed above (p. **) where we had read *echwydd* as a noun: *merweryd echwyd ac vcher daó* ‘the tumult of midday and the evening quiet’ (Dafydd Benfras: CBT VI.24.10), but, if *echwydd* is understood as a verb, it could be read as ‘the tumult fades away and the evening is quiet’.

⁴¹ For discussion, see Band 2017: 176–9.

It is a common feature of many languages that words that originally mean ‘middle of the day, noon’ can come to be used to refer to the south; examples are numerous: Greek μεσημβρία ‘midday’ and ‘south’ (< *meso- ‘middle’ + hēméra ‘day’); Latin *meridies* ‘midday’, *meridionalis* ‘southern’ (< *medi-dies) (cf. also Italian *mezzogiorno*, French *midi*, Spanish *mediodía* ‘midday’ and ‘south’); Breton *kreiste(z)* ‘midday’ and ‘south’, etc.⁴² The semantic link is obvious: at noon the sun is directly south and is also at its warmest (even in winter). Now if a similar semantic development occurred in Welsh with *echwydd* ‘midday’, with a prefixed *er-* it could have meant ‘that which faces the south’ or ‘that which lies to the south’, just as in France Le Midi is the name of the southern part of the country. Such terms are always geographically relative to the position of the speaker who would have to be to the north of what he was referring to. Crucially this proposal does not offer a specific location but simply a direction to look in, nor does it provide any help as to whether *Erechwydd* is to be thought of as the southern part of Rheged or a more general term for any territory to the south of Rheged over which they might have, or aspire to have, control. It looks very much like *Erechwydd* is a name (and so should have an editorial capital), but the question arises as to whether there is any evidence that the noun *echwydd* ‘noon’ also developed a secondary sense of ‘south’. An answer to this depends on how certain examples are read (and indeed spelt by editors) and interpreted.

Three cases from the Book of Taliesin are worth considering where a case can be made that *echwydd* means ‘south’. The first two come from the same poem, *Kychwedyl a’ m dodyw o Galchuynydd* (PBT 3; BT 38.11–40.3). The first is very similar that one just discussed in that *yr echwyd* could be treated as a name or a more general regional term: *Pan discynnŷs Owain rac gwenŷlat -- yrechŷyd* ‘when Owain attacked for the sake of the fair land of *Erechwydd*’ (PBT 3.62 (text and trans.); BT 40.2; cf. also Haycock 2013b: 29). In the context of Owain it seems more likely that this is *Erechwydd*, but it could be interpreted as ‘the fair land of the south’. Earlier in the same poem there is a more difficult passage: *Pan ymchoeles echŷyd o gGludŷs vro / nyt efrefŷys buch ŷrth y llo* ‘when the flowing water retreated from the region of the Clyde men, no cow lowed to its calf’ (PBT 3.15–16 (text and trans.); BT 38.21–2). But it is not easy to see how *echwyd* ‘water’ makes sense here and the difficulties

⁴² For an overview, see Buck 1949: 873.

are acknowledged by Haycock (PBT pp. 73–4). If we assume the subject is the war-leader, this could be translated as ‘when he returned south from the region of the Clyde men’.

The last example, which we have already discussed in outline, is in *Armes Prydein: llettaŏt* (MS *llettataŏt*) *eu pennaeth tros yr echŏyd* ‘their dominion will spread across Erechtwydd’ (AP^{1/2} 175 (trans. from AP²); BT 18.6; rhyming with *byd*). The standard translation reads this as the place-name. But it could be read as *yr echŏyd*. It may be helpful to consider the broader context of this line (AP² 172–4 (text and trans.); BT 18.4–7):

o vynaŏ hyt lydaŏ yn eu llaŏ yt vyd.
 o dyuet hyt Danet 6y bieuyd.
 o waŏl hyt Weryt hyt eu ebyr.
 Llett(at)aŏt eu pennaeth tros yr echŏyd.

They will possess all from Manaw to Brittany.
 From Dyfed to Thanet will be theirs;
 from the Wall to the Forth, along their estuaries,
 their dominion will spread over Yr Erechtwydd.

After the English have been driven out, the spread of the dominion of the British is delineated in ll. 172–3 on a north–south and a west–east axis; l. 174 then focuses on the inter-wall region in the north, and it has been assumed that l. 175 is to be read in that context too with the result that ‘Yr Erechtwydd’ is assumed to be somewhere in the north. But l. 175 ends the geographical overview. While the first two lines can read as mapping out what the poet thinks should be British territory and the l. 174 refers to the north, we could read l. 175 as ‘their dominion will spread over the south’. If so, this is consistent with the fact that most of the poem focuses on the south (with references to *gwyr deheu* ‘men of the south’ (AP² l. 78), place-names (e.g. AP² l. 58 (Wye), l. 69 (Cirencester)), and so on), while, by contrast, the north is relatively rarely mentioned (l. 174 being one of only a few examples). One could go further and suggest that for the poet of *Armes Prydein* a term like *yr echwydd* which could be understood both as *Yr Erechtwydd*, a name associated with former British

territories, and also ‘the south’ where in the poem the battles against the Saxons are mostly prophesied to be fought. This might play well as part of the poet’s strategy of merging past, present and future: *o wawl hyt weryt* and the reference to *Yr Echwydd* (my capitalisation) could be read as a nod to the Old North (as with *gwyr gogled* at AP² l. 15), while the reading the same words as *yr echwyd* (my lack of capitalisation) could be understood as playing into the poet’s contemporary message about the men of the south rising up to expel the Saxons.⁴³

It is argued, then, that in these three cases *echwyd* and *yr echwyd* could be read as referring generally to the south, that is to the south from the perspective of the poet, and that this sense can be derived from the noun *echwyd* meaning ‘noon, midday’. It would also allow for the possibility that poets might have different views about what they had in mind when they talked of *Erechwyd*. For poets composing from the perspective of someone apparently located in the Old North, describing their kingdom as southern might make sense if locating it in relation to the Wall and the Picts. But the poet of *Armes Prydein* may have been doing something different and appropriating the term for a different use.

If nothing else, while *Erechwydd* may not have the balmy, sunlit, herb-scented connotations of Le Midi, nevertheless this interpretation might help to make better sense of this name and help us understand something about the medieval Welsh sense of geography of northern Britain in the period when these poems were being composed without tying us down to unprovable geographical specifics.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP ¹	=	Williams 1955
AP ²	=	Williams 1972
BK	=	Thomas & Williams 2007
BM	=	Beunans Meriasek (Stokes 1872)
BT	=	Book of Taliesin (NLW Peniarth 2)

⁴³I owe this last very interesting suggestion to Rebecca Thomas, and I am grateful to her for reading this section and discussing it with me.

BBC	=	Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW Peniarth 1)
CDG	=	Johnston et al. 2010 (references are to numbered poems)
CT	=	Williams 1960
CBT I	=	Williams & Lynch 1994
CBT II	=	Bramley, Jones et al. 1994
CBT III	=	Jones & Parry Owen 1991
CBT IV	=	Jones & Parry Owen 1995
CBT VI	=	Costigan, Gruffydd et al. 1995
CBT VII	=	Andrews, Costigan et al. 1996
CLlH	=	Williams 1935
EWSP	=	Rowland 1990
G	=	Lloyd-Jones 1931–63
GDG	=	Parry 1952 (references are to numbered poems)
GPC	=	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: University of Wales Dictionary</i> , ed. R. J. Thomas and G. A. Bevan, 1st edn., 4 vols. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950–2002; 2 nd edn. 2003– ; online: <i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> , ed. G. Angharad Fychan and M. W. Roberts, http://www.geiriadur.ac.uk/
HGC	=	Lewis 1931
LPBT	=	Haycock 2015
MA ²	=	Myvyrian Archaiology, 2 nd edn (Owen Jones et al. 1870)
OM	=	<i>Origo Mundi</i> (Norris 1859: I.1–219)
PBT	=	Haycock 2013a
PC	=	<i>Passio Christi</i> (Norris 1859: I. 221–479)
PLlH	=	Ford 1974
PT	=	Williams 1968
R	=	Evans 1911
RD	=	<i>Resurrectio Domini</i> (Norris 1859: II.1–199)

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