

## HYWEL ab OWAIN GWYNEDD (died 1170), soldier and poet

**Name:** Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd  
**Date of death:** 1170  
**Parent:** Pyfog  
**Parent:** Owain ap Gruffydd ap Cynan  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** soldier and poet  
**Area of activity:** Military; Poetry  
**Author:** Arthur James Roderick

The natural son of [Owain Gwynedd](#) by Pyfog, an Irishwoman. Hywel played a leading part in the occupation of Ceredigion by the house of Gwynedd. His father assigned southern Ceredigion to him in 1139. There was continual strife between him and his uncle [Cadwaladr](#) who held northern Ceredigion and Meirionydd. In 1143 Hywel drove his uncle out of Ceredigion. In 1144 there was a reconciliation and [Cadwaladr](#) was reinstated. In 1145 Hywel and his half-brother [Cynan](#) tried unsuccessfully to storm Cardigan castle, which had remained in Norman hands. In 1146 Hywel joined forces with [Cadell](#) of Deheubarth against the Normans of West Wales; they took the castles of Carmarthen, Llanstephan, and Wiston. In 1147 Hywel and [Cynan](#) drove [Cadwaladr](#) out of Meirionydd. When [Cadwaladr](#) handed over northern Ceredigion to his son Cadfan, Hywel invaded that territory, captured Cadfan (1150) and occupied the new castle at Llanrhystud. Meanwhile, the princes of Deheubarth, [Cadell](#) and his brothers, to whom Ceredigion rightfully belonged, overran the southern part; by 1153 they had recovered northern Ceredigion also, and Hywel's career there was at an end. In 1157 Hywel was with his father in the Basingwerk campaign against Henry II. In 1159 he accompanied a Norman force from Carmarthen against the [lord Rhys](#), then in revolt against Henry II. This move was probably prompted by [Owain Gwynedd](#)'s desire to keep on good terms with the Crown. We hear little more of Hywel until his death in battle against his half-brothers near Pentraeth, Anglesey (1170), in the strife that followed the death of [Owain Gwynedd](#). Hywel was buried at Bangor.

Hywel is probably better known as a poet. He was pre-eminent in his day as a lyric poet. He was not restricted as to subject matter as were the professional court bards; he sang of love and of the natural beauty of his native Gwynedd. Eight of his poems survive; they are printed in [The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales](#)<sup>[?]</sup>, i, 275-8.

### Author

Arthur James Roderick

### Sources

J. E. Lloyd, [A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest \(London 1911\)](#), 489-91, 501-4, 533-4, etc.

J. E. Lloyd, [The Story of Ceredigion \(400-1277\) \(1937\)](#), 56-9

T. Parry, [Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd 1900 \(1944\)](#), 47-52

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J. Williams (ed.), [Annales Cambriae \(1860\)](#)

[Brut y Tywysogion](#)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd](#)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [47163753](#)

Wikidata: [Q2367819](#)

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