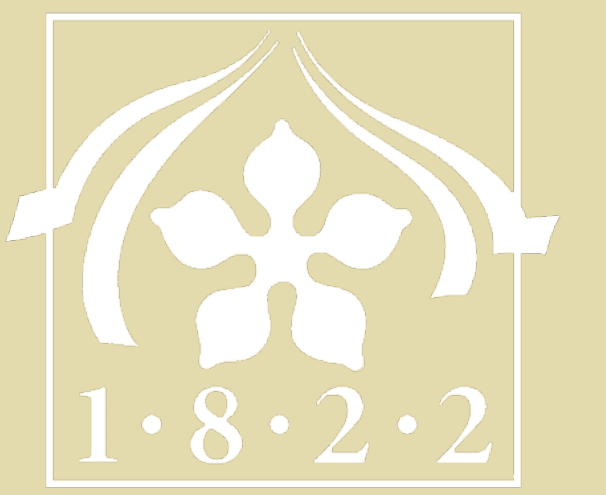




The Strata Florida Landscape Project

UNIVERSITY OF WALES
LAMPETER



Farmscapes: Place and Identity in Rural Wales

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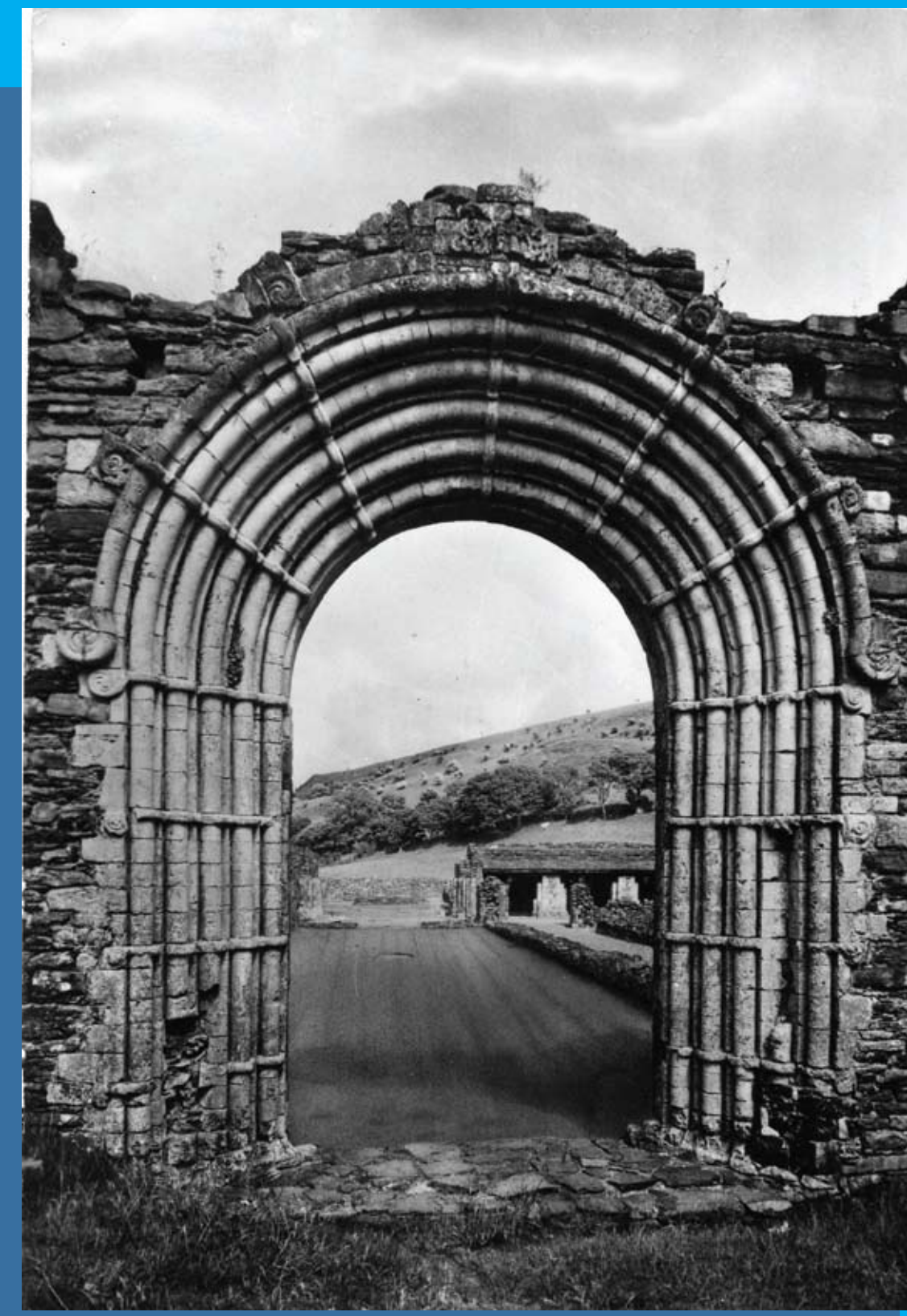
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At the heart of Wales's largest Cistercian estate, **Strata Florida Abbey** is sometimes known as the 'Westminster of Wales' and is centrally placed both geographically and spiritually.

The abbey was patronised by Rhys ap Gruffudd, Lord of the threatened kingdom of Deheubarth. In the face of Norman Conquest, Rhys established a range of systems focussed on the consolidation of his Kingdom.

Many of these were innovative but some were rooted in ancient administrative systems and the territories of **cwmwd** (district), **maenor** (estate) and **tref** (township) are fossilised in his grants to Strata Florida.



The iconic west doorway, Romanesque and Celtic motifs combined

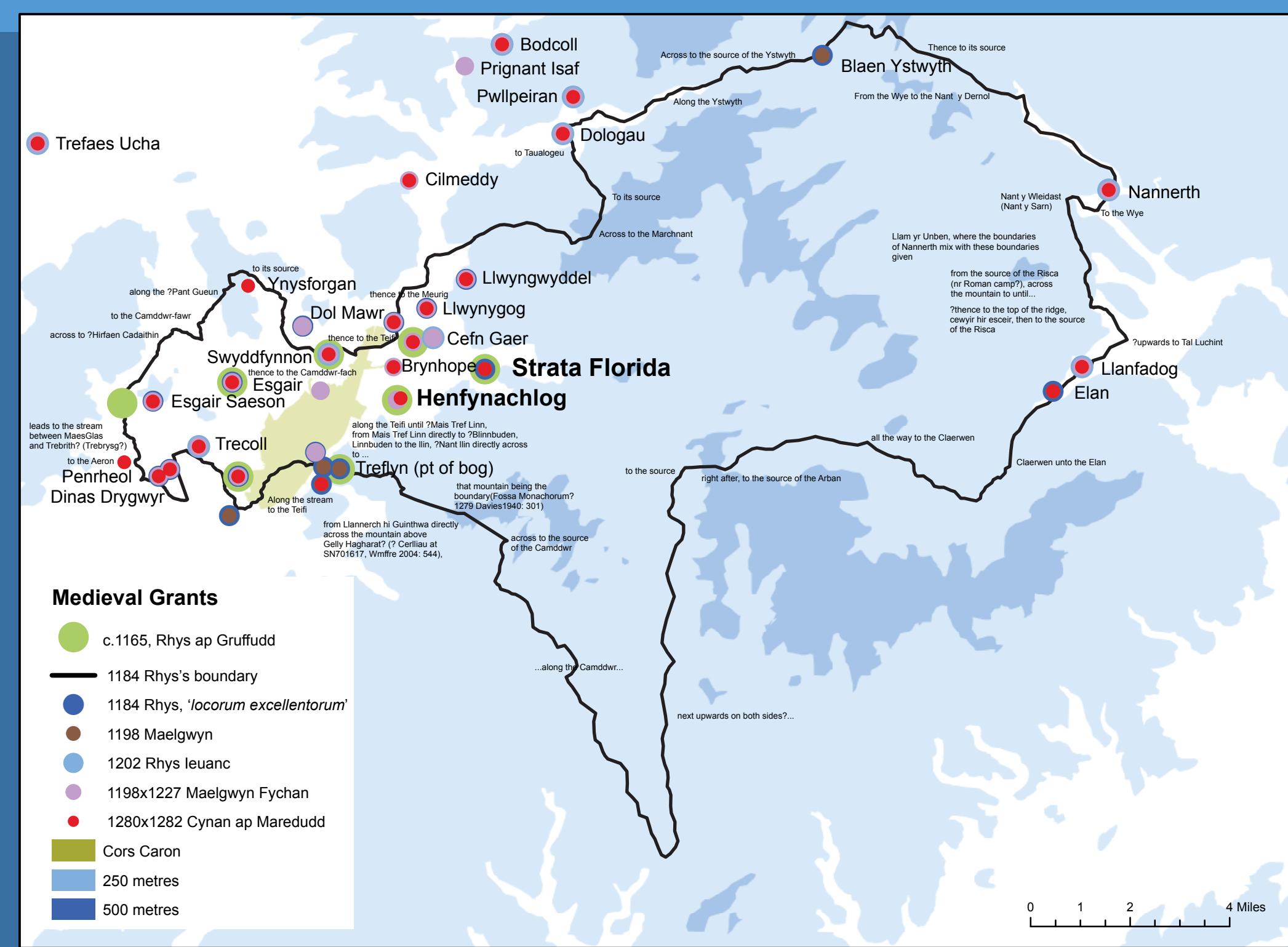
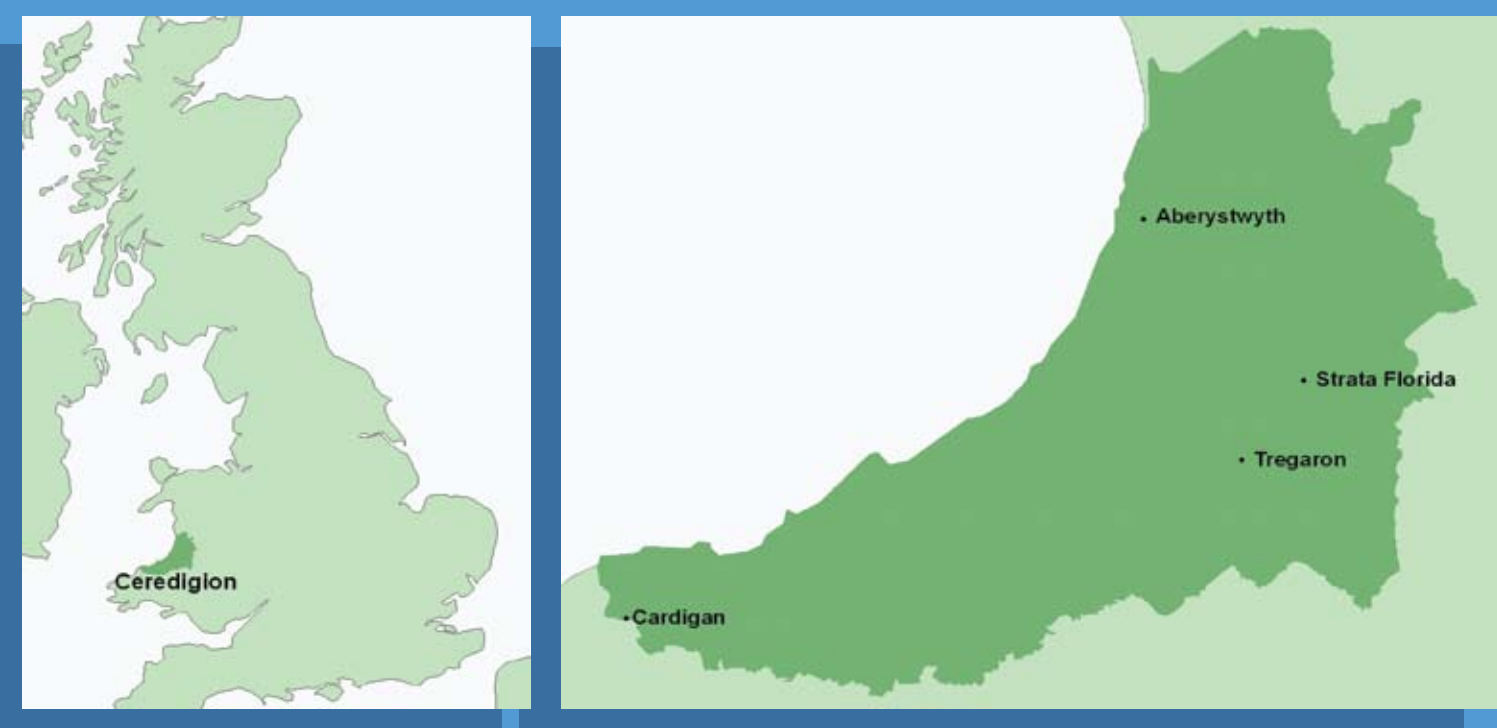
The **Strata Florida Landscape Project** was conceived as a way of investigating the wider monastic landscape. The project aims to investigate the rural landscape predicated on the former abbey's estate.

Historical, archaeological and environmental data has been input to a spatial database and this new **GIS** is facilitating the reconstruction of the historic landscape.

The Project has been structured on **3 scales** of resolution:

SCALE ONE 'REGION'

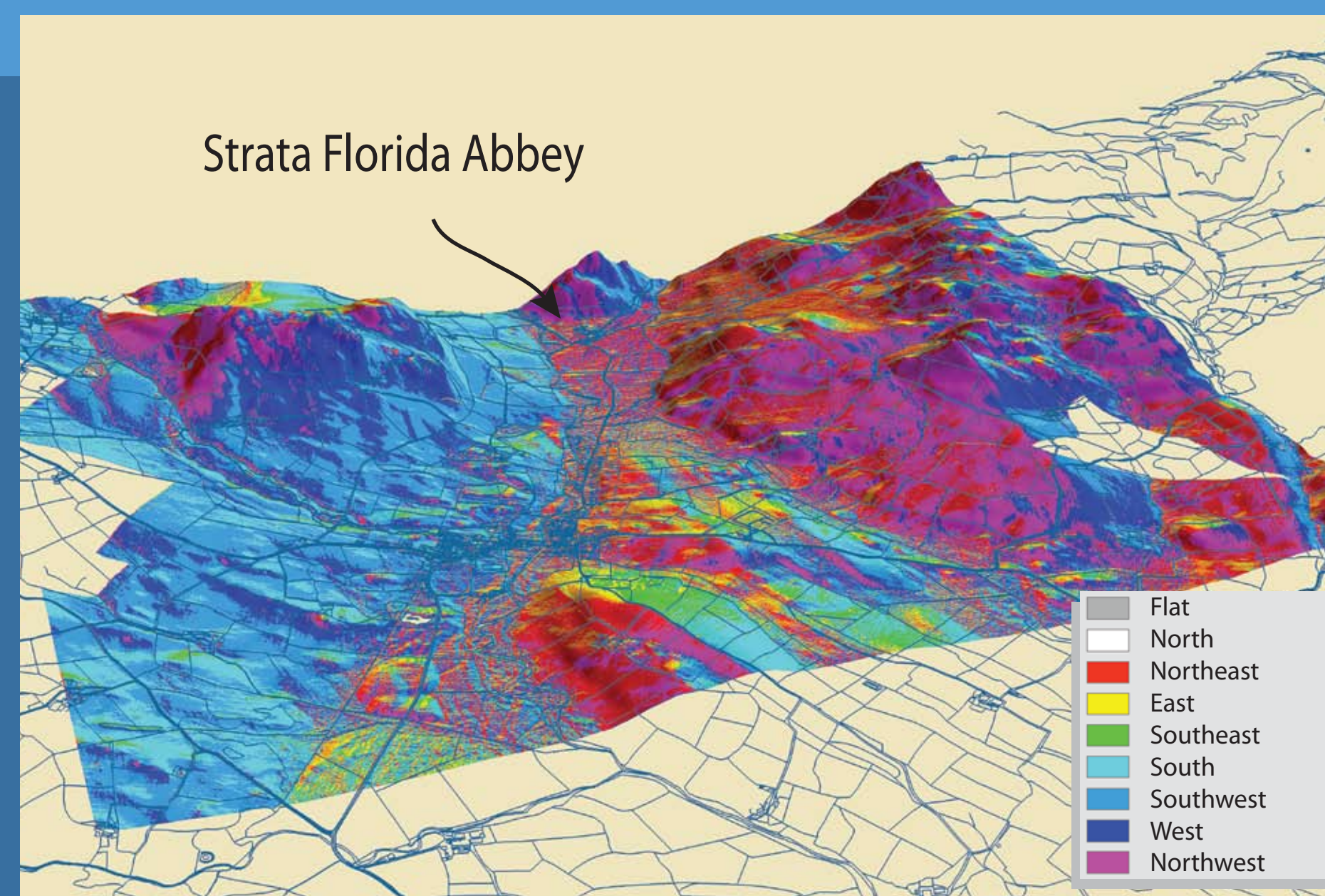
The grants made by Rhys and his successors have now been mapped in detail and evidence is emerging that these territories were based on the pre-conquest cwmwd.



Rhys's earliest grant in 1165 is modest and probably reflects the foundation grant of Robert FitzStephen made in the previous year. In 1184 though, Rhys adds a vast swathe of central upland Wales. This also included Cwmwd Llansantffraed Cmwdeuddwr, which was outside Rhys's traditional lordship and reflected the jurisdiction of his unique position as Justiciar.

SCALE TWO 'COMMUNITY'

Lidar data for the abbey environs has allowed the creation of a high resolution digital elevation model. Aspect analysis (right) of this DEM has highlighted the valuable south facing slopes where specialist agricultural centres were located, whilst the north facing slopes opposite were reserved for the demesne woodland.



But the component 'granges' of the estate are described in the Dissolution surveys as territorial areas - clearly different to the English grange farm. It is likely that the administration of these territories was effected through selected demesne farms and there is evidence to suggest that these might be located at former high-status centres controlling the former cwmwd.

SCALE THREE 'FAMILY'

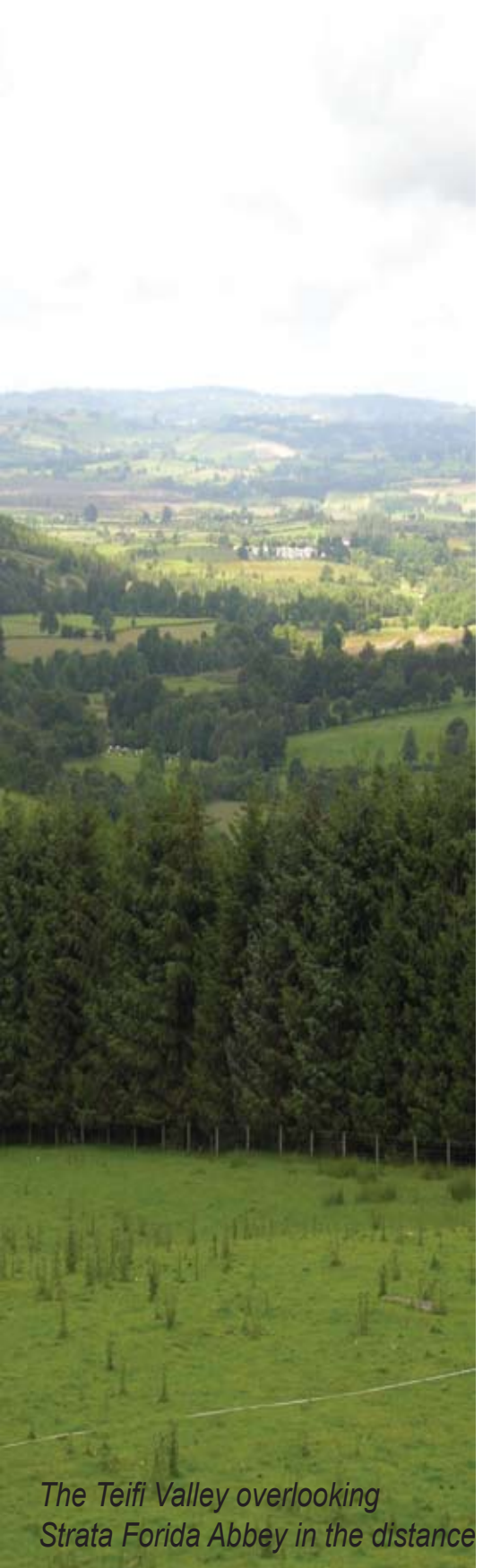
Place and identity are indivisible in rural Wales: where you come from defines who you are and the Lloyd family have been farming at Henfynachlog ('Old Abbey') Farm for generations. Early medieval dues such as *commorth* and *gwestfa* continued to be used here into the 16th century demonstrating that the monastic granges were occupied on a hereditary basis and were being farmed on traditional Welsh systems.



Henfynachlog was one of a number of ancient farms fringing Tregaron Bog. The 3D rendering of an 18th century estate map (left) demonstrates the 3 agricultural zones:

1. wetland bog
2. enclosed fields and settlement
3. upland grazing

This integrative methodology has allowed the creation of a complete 'biography of place' from the early medieval period onwards.



The Teifi Valley overlooking Strata Florida Abbey in the distance



Fieldwork, teaching and research