

*Adu6yn gaer yssyd*: an early Welsh poem  
revisited



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## ADUGYN GAER YSSYD: AN EARLY WELSH POEM REVISITED

### ABSTRACT

The poem, *Etmic Dinbych*, preserved in the Book of Taliesin, is a much anthologized poem about which much has been written – about both the poem itself and its historical context. For a poem that has been so studied a number of issues remain, both textual and contextual. In particular, the extra stanza apparently appended to the end of the poem in the Book of Taliesin, a version of which also appears in the Black Book of Carmarthen, remains understudied. This paper provides a new discussion and edition of the poem with special emphasis on the problems presented by the extra stanza for which a new date and context are proposed.

The poem, conventionally entitled *Etmic Dinbych*, preserved in the fourteenth-century Book of Taliesin (Aberystwyth, NLW, Peniarth 2), is a much anthologized poem about which much has been written – about both the poem itself and its historical context.<sup>1</sup> It might be thought therefore that little remains to be said. However, two reasons might be offered for revisiting it. First, in Nikolai Tolstoy's recent discussion of the Four Branches considerable weight has been placed on the poem, both in terms of its date and its contents, and it is important to assess whether the poem is capable of bearing such a weight of interpretation.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, for a poem that has been so studied and analysed a surprising number of issues remain, both textual and contextual. Editors of the text have been torn between emending the text and not emending it but merely suggesting possible changes. This is in part due to its odd structure; there is an extra stanza apparently appended to the end of the poem in the Book of Taliesin, a version of which also appears in the Black Book of Carmarthen (Aberystwyth, NLW, Peniarth 1). No one has ever seemed quite sure what to do about this stanza: is it part of the poem or not? If it is, in what sense is it part of it? Editors and translators have taken this uncertainty as a licence to include it or discard it at will, and to think about it a little or not at all. There also seems to be a general assumption (in that nothing else is said) that the poem is of a piece (with or without its final stanza). However, as will emerge, it is possible that the poem is more fragmentary than has been supposed. In other words, there might be some merit in going back to first principles and asking some basic questions.

<sup>1</sup>Earlier versions of this paper were delivered at Harvard and Oxford, and I am grateful for the comments of those present on both occasions. I am also grateful to Barry Lewis, Thomas Charles-Edwards, and an anonymous reviewer for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup>Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature: The Compilation of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (Lewiston, 2009), 495–520.

## PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Work on this poem is of two types: editions and discussions of the poem, on the one hand, and, on the other, historically focused analyses which seek to provide a more detailed historical context for the poem's composition. As so often with early Welsh verse, work began with Ifor Williams who published his edition of the poem in 1940 (in Welsh but with an English translation of the poem);<sup>3</sup> an English translation by Rachel Bromwich appeared in 1972.<sup>4</sup> He argued that the poem could be dated to *c.* 875 and located its composition in Tenby.<sup>5</sup> This edition effectively established the framework for all subsequent discussion. The late Geraint Gruffydd had several encounters with the poem; his first discussion in the late 1970s was perhaps his most innovative.<sup>6</sup> His more recent edition was first published in 2002 with a text in modern spelling and with a Modern Welsh rendering;<sup>7</sup> an English version of this appeared in 2005.<sup>8</sup> Gruffydd's edition takes into account some more recent discussions, such as that of Breeze on the poet's relationship to the king,<sup>9</sup> but mainly follows Williams in his explication of the text, often incorporating suggestions originally made by Williams in the notes to his edition. A notable difference, however, is that Gruffydd does not discuss the extra stanza at all, although he had seemed content to regard it as part of the poem in his earlier discussion.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the translations provided by Williams and Gruffydd, the poem appears in the usual anthologies of translations.<sup>11</sup>

The historical context has received more attention of late. In a long discussion which *inter alia* proposes that *ysgriuen Brydein* (l. 45) refers to the Four Branches, Nikolai Tolstoy offers two different dates for the composition of the poem.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that the argument is embedded in a very particular argument about the date of the composition of the Four Branches. More recently, the poem has been considered by Charles-Edwards who, like Williams, pairs it with a discussion of *Echrys Ynys*;<sup>13</sup> the discussion is set within an examination of what these poems might tell us about the history of

<sup>3</sup>Ifor Williams (ed. and trans.), 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', *THSC*, 1940, 66–83.

<sup>4</sup>Ifor Williams (ed. and trans.), 'Two poems from the Book of Taliesin: I. The praise of Tenby', in Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff, 1972; second ed. 1980), 155–72.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 161; Williams, 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', 72.

<sup>6</sup>R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'The early court poetry of south west Wales', *SC* 14–15 (1979–80), 95–106 (at 96–8); the innovation can be seen in his acceptance that the extra stanza belongs to the poem, and his robust rejection of Williams's suggestion about *browyr*.

<sup>7</sup>R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'Edmyg Dinbych': *Cerdd Lys Gynnar o Ddyfed*, Darlith Goffa J. E. Caerwyn a Gwen Williams, 2001 (Aberystwyth, 2002).

<sup>8</sup>R. Geraint Gruffydd, '"The praise of Tenby": a late ninth-century Welsh court poem', in J. F. Nagy and L. E. Jones (eds), *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition. A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, CSANA Yearbook 3–4 (Dublin, 2005), 91–102.

<sup>9</sup>Andrew Breeze, 'Poet and patron in *The Praise of Tenby*', *SC* 31 (1997), 272–5.

<sup>10</sup>Gruffydd, 'The early court poetry', 96.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Joseph Clancy, *Medieval Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 2003), 99–101, entitled 'In praise of Tenby' (cf. Joseph Clancy, *The Earliest Welsh Poetry* (London, 1970), 89–91 (notes pp. 201–2)); Tony Conran, *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend, 1986), 117–19.

<sup>12</sup>Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature*, 495–520.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), 659–65.

the period. Both of these more recent discussions accept the text as discussed by Williams and Gruffydd.

In terms of date, the general view seems to have settled on the ninth century, though there is some variation within that period – later in the ninth century for Williams and Gruffydd, but earlier for Charles-Edwards – with only Tolstoy proposing later dates, late tenth and then the early eleventh. The following discussion is not intended to offer a revised date for the main poem nor revise the historical context significantly, but focuses on the poem itself as presented in the manuscript; it will however return to the historical context towards the end of the discussion.

A complete text, translation and notes are presented in the Appendix (pp. 24–36).

#### CONTENT

The main poem begins (ll. 1–2) and ends (l. 56) with a conventional invocation to God.<sup>14</sup> However, l. 57 *ar nyn gŵnel yn vrowyr gorŵyr owein* ‘may He not make us the countrymen of Owain’s great-grandson’, which seems intended to form a closing couplet with l. 56, is oddly politicized. Views have differed over the identity of the great-grandson, but Gruffydd suggests that he had only just become king and ‘that the poet – perhaps speaking for the retinue as well – was apprehensive about his intentions’.<sup>15</sup> But the tone of this line strongly suggests a devout wish that he is not to be the new ruler (and indeed, if he were already installed, it would be an extremely ill-advised view to express in public). We return to the historical context below, but at this point I would simply note that this line may be a later addition expressing a hope which is strangely out of line with the conventionally pious sentiments expressed in the closing lines of such poems. That said, there is no necessary reason why *gorŵyr Owain* is referring to a successor from a local dynasty rather than to an external threat, such as that implied in the additional stanza; in other words, *browyr* could mean ‘country-men’ but not necessarily ‘men of the same country’.<sup>16</sup>

The focus of each of the intervening seven stanzas is the *aduŷyn kaer* ‘a fine fortress’ as observed from different angles and perspectives: it is described as ‘on the surface of the ocean’ (*ar glaŵr gŵeilgi* (l. 3)), ‘upon the broad sea’ (*ar llydan llyn* (l. 11)), ‘on the ninth wave’ (*ar ton nabuet* (l. 19)), ‘on a headland’ (*ar eglan* (l. 33)), ‘rising up’ (*yn ardŵyrein* (l. 48)) ; all could be taken as describing the fortress from land, but some could plausibly be viewing the *caer* and the headland from the sea. Furthermore, this is a place where things happen: systematic parallels are drawn (especially in stanzas 1, 4 and 7)

<sup>14</sup>The extra stanza which stands outside the invocations to God, and is also found in a slightly different version in the Black Book of Carmarthen, is discussed in detail below, pp. 13–16.

<sup>15</sup>Gruffydd, “‘The praise of Tenby’”, 93; this allows Gruffydd to date the poem to 893 × 895.

<sup>16</sup>Although *bro* can often mean something like the land one has in common with others, it can have a more neutral sense of ‘land’; cf., for example, *nid hoffet meiwret bro* (*LIDC* 2.6) ‘the cowardice of a land is not a thing to boast about’. We might also note that *bro* is occasionally attested in the sense of ‘border’.

between the crashing of the waves, the calling of the sea-birds outside, and the noise of the celebrations within, and it is clear that this is a place where gifts abound (*ae kyffrŷy kedeu* (l. 41)). Leaving aside the marginal title, which may be derived from the poem itself, we do not know where this *caer* is until l. 35: *atwen yn dinbych gorwen gŷylan* ... ‘I know at Dinbych – bright white its seagull ...’. It is generally supposed that this refers to *Dinbych y Pysgod*, Tenby in Pembrokeshire, and there are no good reasons for thinking otherwise. A Dyfed focus is also supported by the slighting reference to the poor status of *eillon* ‘villeins’ (l. 24) in Deudraeth (Gwynedd) in comparison with that of a *caeth* ‘slave’ in Dyfed.

As the poem progresses, it turns out that we, the audience, are gatecrashing the New Year’s feast of a ruler and his *gosgordd*;<sup>17</sup> the late December and early January storms are crashing in against the headland but they are drowned out by the din indoors, much of it *gorun beird* ‘the tumult of bards’ (l. 6). But just as the audience is settling in for a poem in praise of Dinbych, of its lord, and of his generosity to his people and poet, there is a gradual but unsettling shift in tone: from l. 15 onwards some of the tenses begin to move into the past (e.g. *bu* ... *bu*... (l. 15), *ymdullyn* (l. 18)), before we reach l. 30 where we first meet the *arglŷyd hywyd hebr eiran* ‘a generous lord, a fine hero’ (whose name we do not yet know) around whom there is joyful song on New Year’s Day (ll. 29–30). But in the next line there is a sudden shift as we learn that this is how it was before he died: *kyn y vynet yn y adŷt yn deruin llan* ‘before he went in [his] death into the oaken enclosure’ (l. 31). The tenses of the verbs then begin to slide more rapidly; while the waves continue to crash and the birds continue to cry, the lord and the activities of the poet are referred to in the past tense: *rodes* (l. 32), *oed* (ll. 35, 42) *dewissŷn* (l. 43), *ryscatŷn* (l. 43), *treidŷn* (l. 47). It gradually emerges then that the lord, eventually identified as Bleiddudd (ll. 36 and 54) has died and the identity of the next ruler is not yet known, or at least not revealed.<sup>18</sup> But, whoever it may be, it appears that the poet is concerned to consolidate and emphasize his own rights and privileges with him.

#### TITLE

The title of the poem is understood as *Etmic Dinbych*.<sup>19</sup> This is based on the incomplete title written in the margin opposite l. 15 of fol. 20v, the first few letters of which have been trimmed off. In many other cases in the Book of Taliesin (e.g. fol. 17r, 17v, 19v, 21v, 22r), but not all (e.g. fol. 14r, 18v), the scribe provides the title in red in a full-sized hand in the spaces provided in the text, but here he, or perhaps someone else, has left the title space blank and has put the title in a smaller size in the margin. It is possible that there

<sup>17</sup>Strictly speaking the poem does not say that it is *Calan Ionawr* but the weather conditions make it likely, especially as New Year was a significant festive occasion for bards.

<sup>18</sup>It is striking that the names of the place and the lord in question are delayed until ll. 35–6, more than halfway through the poem.

<sup>19</sup>Williams, ‘Moliant Dinbych Penfro’, 66–7; Williams, ‘Two poems’, 155–6.

was no title in the scribe's exemplar and that the marginal title is an extrapolation from the text of the poem by the scribe himself or perhaps by a later scribe after the rubrication had been completed. One reason for thinking that it might not be the scribe himself is that the letter forms are different; this may simply be the scribe using a different pen and writing in a smaller script, though the form of the *d* and the angular minims with a differentiating accent in *din* suggest it might be a different hand. Could the marginal title have been added after the rubricator had done his work?

What survives has been usually read as *..]mic dinbych*, and this reading is supported by the copy made by Dr John Davies of Mallwyd in his 'Liber B' (NLW MS 4973, fol. 80v5).<sup>20</sup> But on closer examination this reading is at least problematic. There are two points at issue. There are four minims visible before the *-c* of the first word and it is most easily, but unhelpfully, read as *imc*, or perhaps more plausibly as *iníc* (the first stroke is a minim which might be read as *i* but could be the final minim of a different letter). Crucially, it seems to me difficult, as it stands, to read it as *mic* as there is nothing joining the first two minims at the edge of the page, though this may be due to more recent deterioration in the manuscript. The second point relates to the reading of the second word where the *b* of the conventional reading is more naturally read as 6. There is also an accent written over the *i* (intended to separate the minims). The most accurate reading of the title as it is currently in the manuscript, then, and the least prejudicial, is *juuc dín6ych*. If we are to accept the traditional reading, we have to assume that the title, as preserved in the Book of Taliesin, was miscopied from the exemplar; as it stands, the second word should be understood as *dinvych* or *dín6ych* but not easily as *dinbych*. That the place-name was extrapolated from the main poem might be supported by the fact that the form of *b* in *dinbych* (fol. 21r17 = l. 35) is markedly less angular and serified than the scribe's usual *bs*. To judge from its relative height it was still intended to be a *b* rather than a 6 but it is not surprising that it might have been read as a 6.

It is certainly clear that something has been trimmed off by the binder, but whether that was the *et* of *[et]mic* is not clear. Given the content of the poem, there are other possibilities: it may be, for example, *celenic* or *celennic* 'a New Year's gift', with which we might compare *kelennic etmic* in *Hirlas Owein*.<sup>21</sup> Given the uncertainty surrounding the title, there is no point in proposing an alternative, but it is important to recognize that the title of this poem is not as clear as it might be. In view of the uncertainty I would be inclined to refer to the poem as *Aduŷyn gaer yssyd*.

<sup>20</sup>For an image of the page in John Davies's manuscript, see <https://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/early-modern-period/liber-b-john-davies-of-mallwyd/> (consulted 13 December 2016).

<sup>21</sup>*GLIF* 14.102 (p. 114); this phrase at least indicates that *celennic* and *etmic* can be found in the same context. Elsewhere in the poem the scribe spells the word *kelenic* (as at l. 44 and also *BT* 77.21), which may militate against *kelennic* here; but it is not impossible that a title might be spelt differently.

## FORM

The main poem consists of seven stanzas, most of which consist of 8 lines, though stanza 4 has six lines and stanza 6 seven lines. Of the fifty-seven lines of the main poem, forty-one have nine syllables, thirteen have ten (ll. 4, 5, 8, 9, 15, 18, 39, 41, 47, 49, 55, and 57); two lines have eleven syllables (ll. 7 and 32), and one has twelve (l. 31). Each stanza has a different end-rhyme except for stanza 5 where the rhyme changes from *-an* to *-ein* for the last two lines (ll. 39–40). In stanza 6 the first line ends in *-eu* (l. 41) while the end-rhyme in the rest of the stanza is in *-6n*. In this case there is *odl gyrch* between *kedeu* and *rydeu* (l. 42) but l. 41 is relatively short and does not contain the main rhyme earlier in the line. However, Barry Lewis has argued that we should be wary of thinking that short lines could not contain a *gair cyrch* and furthermore he has suggested that a *gair cyrch* could be sufficient without the end-rhyme earlier in the line.<sup>22</sup> In other words, it is possible that there was no gap between l. 41 and l. 42. On the other hand, a lacuna between l. 38 and l. 39 is far less easy to explain away, and in this case we may have to do with the beginning of one stanza and the end of another. The repeated *Adu6yn gaer yssyd* with which each stanza opens would have made eyeskip very easy especially as the emphatic capitals used in some stanzas could have been very distracting. In the edited text presented below this possible lacuna is marked. One consequence of this suggestion is that we should be very careful about any interpretation which spans that gap.<sup>23</sup>

Gruffydd proposed that in stanza 6 a line has dropped out after l. 44 which would have provided both a transition to the second half of the stanza about *ysgrifen Brydein* and restored an eighth line. His concern had in part to do with the sudden shift from l. 44 to l. 45. But this may not be necessary if the lines are read differently. If we take *y gell* not as ‘the cell’ and as the subject of *pereit* but as *ygell* ‘in a cell’ then it becomes possible to take *ysgrifen Brydein* as the subject of *pereit*. Furthermore, it is possible that *pereit hyt* should simply be read as *perheit*.<sup>24</sup> The lines could then be understood as ‘may the writing of Britain ... last long in a cell I used to frequent’.

There are three lines with more than ten syllables and considerable ingenuity was devoted to tidying up the syllable count of these lines by Williams and Gruffydd. Of these, l. 32 could perhaps be reduced to nine syllable by emending *ef am rodes* to *am rodes* ‘who gave me’ as suggested by Gruffydd. More problematic are ll. 7 and 31. In both cases, Williams (followed by Gruffydd) was tempted to identify and expunge an incorporated gloss to reduce the lines to nine syllables. In l. 7 it is proposed that *ar vrys* is a gloss

<sup>22</sup>Barry Lewis, review of Nicolas Jacobs (ed.), *Early Welsh Gnostic and Nature Poetry* (London, 2012), *Dwned* 18 (2012), 99–107, at 105–6; examples from the Black Book include *LIDC* 12.9–10, 13–14, 17–18; 17.22–23, 28–29 (I am grateful to Barry Lewis for providing these examples).

<sup>23</sup>Such as those made by Proinsias Mac Cana, ‘The poet as spouse of his patron’, *Ériu* 39 (1988), 79–85, and Breeze, ‘Poet and patron’.

<sup>24</sup>For discussion of (and possible objections to) these proposed readings, see the Notes on the poem below, p. 35.

on *dybrys* and so can be removed. However, a simpler adjustment of the line might be to emend *Dydybyd* to *Dybyd* and read *Dybyd g6anec ar vrys dybrys idi* ‘a wave will come in a rush; it surges to it’.<sup>25</sup> In l. 31 *yn y ad6yt* is thought to be a gloss on *kyn y vynet yn deruin llan*. But in this case, if we are seeking to reduce the syllable count, it might be simpler to assume that the two possessive pronouns are scribal additions, and to read *kyn mynet yn ad6yt yn deruin llan*, where the minims of *mynet* or *minet* could have been read as *i uynet* or *i uinet*. Alternatively, the preposition before *deruin* could be removed. More generally, we might in the first place question the assumption that such a poem might have been glossed. There is no clear evidence (as there is for some Old Irish poems) that such verse was ever glossed.<sup>26</sup> However, overall we might wonder whether it is wise to attempt this kind of pre-emptive editing. After all, there is no good reason to suppose that a poem composed in the ninth century should necessarily conform to the strict syllable-counting rules of the later bardic grammars. While the longer lines attracted the attention of Williams and Gruffydd, they seemed less bothered about the ten-syllable lines, but even those would be longer than expected according to the later rules. While there might be ways of reducing longer lines to nine syllables, there are also shorter lines, such as l. 61 (and arguably l. 29 if we take *llyfyn* at face value).<sup>27</sup> It is probably more sensible to accept the variation in line-length unless there are good reasons, based on sense, for thinking that something has gone astray.<sup>28</sup>

So far we have been concerned with the arrangement of the poem and what is going on within each *caniad*. But it is possible that the form of the capital letters used to mark the beginning of *caniadau* signals a bigger structural pattern.<sup>29</sup> The poem begins with a large two-line blue-coloured capital *A*. Smaller uncoloured versions of the same letter-form mark the beginnings of

<sup>25</sup>See Marged Haycock, *The Legendary Poems in the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2007; second ed. 2015), poem 21.2; she also comments on this verb being used in reference to the sea (p. 469). There may simply be a scribal error here as *Dy|dybyd* is split by a line-break and the *dy* may have been repeated in error.

<sup>26</sup>One might adduce poems such as *BT* 3.12–24 (edited by Marged Haycock, *Blodeugerdd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar* (Llandybie, 1994), pp. 151–5 (poem 17)), but the relationship between the Latin and the Welsh in this poem is problematic and cannot provide clear evidence of glossing. I hope to return to this poem on another occasion.

<sup>27</sup>See the notes to l. 29 below (p. 33).

<sup>28</sup>On the debate about the syllabic or accentual basis of early Welsh verse, see D. Ellis Evans, ‘Rhagarweiniad i astudiaeth o fydryddiaeth Y Gododdin’, in Rachel Bromwich and R. Brinley Jones (eds), *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd: Studies in Old Welsh Poetry*, *Cyflwynedig i Syr Idris Foster*, (Cardiff, 1978), 88–122; Marged Haycock, ‘Metrical models for the poems in the Book of Taliesin’, in Brynley F. Roberts (ed.), *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin* (Aberystwyth, 1988), 155–77; Marged Haycock, ‘Probleme der frühmittelalterlichen kymrischen Metrik’, in Hildegard L. C. Tristram (ed.), *Metrik und Mediawechsel: Metrics and Media* (Tübingen, 1991), 155–71; Graham Isaac, ‘Mydr a morffoffonemeg yn yr Hengerdd’, *BBCS* 40 (1993), 1–16; Graham Isaac, ‘Meter and performance in early Welsh poetry’, in Christoph Küper (ed.), *Meter, Rhythm and Performance – Metrum, Rhythmus, Performanz: Proceedings of the International Conference on Meter, Rhythm and Performance, Held in May 1999 at Vechta* (Frankfurt, 2002), 307–22 (a Welsh version was published as ‘Mydr a pherfformiad yr Hengerdd’, *Dwned* 7 (2001), 1–26); and the bibliography cited in these works.

<sup>29</sup>These are marked in the diplomatic version of the text printed in the Appendix (pp. 24–36).

*caniadau* 1, 5 and 7. The beginnings of the intervening stanzas are marked by yet smaller, less elaborate capitals. If we are to take the variation between these letter-forms seriously, it suggests that we should be thinking of the poem as falling into three main sections, ll. 3–32, 33–47, and 48–55. If so, some potentially interesting structural features emerge. The first four stanzas bring us from the noise of celebration and feasting on New Year's Day to the realisation that Bleiddudd is dead (l. 32). The second section (which in origin may have been longer as it contains at least one instance of broken rhyme) is relentlessly focused on the poet and his concerns in the context of his lord's demise; his *defaŷt* 'custom' on New Year's Eve was to recline with the king (by virtue of his current status), to receive gifts so that his status might rise to that of the chief poet of Britain, to act as the preserver of rights and obligations, and to preserve the writings of Britain; the third section then reverts to the *caer* and the screeching birds, and offers up hopes for Bleiddudd's bliss in heaven and the preservation of his memory. If this is correct, then it places the poet centre-stage; while he is present throughout in the first-person references (in ll. 9–10, 23–4, 32, and then possibly in l. 55),<sup>30</sup> he comes to the fore in the central section. It is for this reason in particular that the emendations proposed by Williams and Gruffydd – *kerd* (l. 15) to *kord* and *cherdeu* (l. 29) to *chordeu* – are unnecessary in that they militarize a poem which is fundamentally about a poet, poetry, and the status of poets.

#### THE ADDITIONAL *CANIAD*

So far the discussion has concentrated on what is generally thought to be the main poem (ll. 1–57). At fol. 21v8–16 of the Book of Taliesin, after the main poem ends, there is an additional *caniad*, a version of which is also found as a single item on fol. 23v of the Black Book of Carmarthen.<sup>31</sup> As noted above, there has been considerable uncertainty as to whether it forms part of the poem. Ifor Williams had his doubts:

The poem, according to the conventions of the Gogynfeirdd at least, ought to end with line 57. This last stanza seems to be a 'stray': it was the only one known to the B.B.C. scribe, and B.T. stuck it on at the end, *after* the reference to God, which usually concludes such a poem. The text in both is unsatisfactory.<sup>32</sup>

It was omitted by Gruffydd in both of his later discussions (though accepted as part of the poem in his earliest discussion of the poem)<sup>33</sup> and by most translators; Conran notes that he has 'omitted the final couplet to God, and also

<sup>30</sup>For this possibility, see the notes to l. 55 (p. 35).

<sup>31</sup>For a recent detailed study of the Black Book, see Myriah Williams, 'Studies in the Black Book of Carmarthen', unpublished PhD dissertation (Cambridge, 2016).

<sup>32</sup>Williams, 'Two poems', 171–2; cf. Williams, 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', 83.

<sup>33</sup>Gruffydd, 'The early court poetry', 96.

a stray, fragmentary stanza that follows it in the manuscript<sup>34</sup>; and likewise Clancy: 'I have omitted the final section in Williams' text as apparently unrelated to the poem'.<sup>35</sup>

We may usefully set the two versions side-by-side (a translation can be found on p. 30):

Book of Taliesin, fol. 21v8–16

Aduŷyn gaer yssyd ar lan lliant.  
aduŷyn yt rodri y pawb y chŷant.  
Gogyfarch ti vynet boet teu uŷyant. 60  
Gŷay[aj]waŷr' ryn rein a derlyssant.  
Duŷ merchyr gweleis wyr ygkyfnofant.  
Dyf ieu bu gŷartheu a amugant. 63  
Ac yd oed vriger coch ac och ar dant.  
Oed lludued vynet dyd y doethant.  
Ac am gefyn llech vaelŷy kylchŷy vriwant.  
eŷd cŷydyd y gan gefyn llu o garant. 67

Black Book of Carmarthen, fol. 23v1–8

Adwin caer yssit ar lan llyant.  
Adwin yd rotir y paup er y chwant.  
Gogywarch de gwinet boed tev wyant. 3  
Gwaewaur rrin rei a darwant  
Dyv merchir. Gueleiss e guir yg cvinowant  
Dyv iev bv ir guarth. it adcorssant. 6  
Adoet bryger coch. ac och ar dant.  
Oet llutedic guir guinet. dyt y deuthant.  
Ac am kewin llech Vaelvy kylchuy wriwant.  
Cuytin y can keiwin llv o carant. 10

There are both similarities to, and differences from, the main poem. As it stands, with its ten lines this stanza is longer than any of the other stanzas. Six of its lines have nine syllables and three have ten syllables. One line (l. 61 = BBC l. 4) contains eight syllables.<sup>37</sup> In fact at an earlier stage the stanza could have been longer: l. 60 (= l. 3) *Gogyfarch ti vynet boet teu uŷyant* is clearly related to ll. 13–14 of the main poem *gogyfarch ty prydein kŷd gygein hyn. | Blaen llyn ap erbin boet teu voyn*. If so, it is possible that at least two half-lines have dropped out (although some adjustments to the rhyme would need to have been made) and we might speculate that on the model of the main poem the name of a person might have been in one of the missing half-lines. This is not the only similarity; the first two lines (ll. 58–9 = BBC ll. 1–2) are in terms of content and tone identical to the opening lines of several stanzas of the main poem, especially stanza 5, *Aduŷyn gaer yssyd yn yr eglan. | atuŷyn y rodri y paŷb y ran*. On the other hand, the use of a 'days of the week' topos, the references to Gwynedd, and the relentlessly martial nature of the rest of the *awdl* speak of a different context.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Conran, *Welsh Verse*, p. 118.

<sup>35</sup>Clancy, *Medieval Welsh Poetry*, p. 368.

<sup>36</sup>The second *a* is marked with a *punctum delens*, see next note.

<sup>37</sup>The Book of Taliesin reading *Gŷayawaŷr* has a *punctum delens* under the second *a*; the scribe may have been anticipating the *a* after the *w* or contemplating adding an extra syllable. Since it is argued above that 'long' lines should not necessarily be emended to shorten them, there is likewise no good reason to seek to lengthen a 'short' line.

<sup>38</sup>For other examples of the 'days of the week' topos, cf. Marged Haycock (ed.), *Prophecies from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 133; for a later example, see Ann Parry Owen et al. (eds), *Guto'r Glyn.net* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 24.5–14 (<http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=024&first-line=%23>); E. I. Rowlands (ed.), *Poems of the Cywyddwyr, c. 1375–1525* (Dublin, 1976), 20–3 (poem 7); J. Llywelyn Williams and Ifor Williams (eds), *Gwaith Guto'r Glyn* (Cardiff, 1939), poem LIII.

The position of this extra stanza in the Book of Taliesin and as a single item in the Black Book points to its having had an independent existence. But whether it is better seen as an additional, perhaps later, stanza modelled on the main poem or as a stanza which has fallen out of the main poem in an early phase of transmission and was then restored to the manuscript remains to be seen. Even so, the stanza deserves closer attention than it has usually attracted because the degree of variation between the two versions may allow us a glimpse of the kind of orthographical and textual variation which may lie behind the main poem.

Significant verbal differences, such as *a derllyssant* (l. 61) : *a darwant* (BBC l. 4), *g6artheu a amugant* (l. 63) : *gwarth it adcorssant* (BBC l. 6), *lludued vynet* (l. 65) : *llutedic guir guinet* (BBC l. 8), make it clear that neither is a copy of the other. If, as suggested above, at least two half-lines have dropped out from l. 60 (= BBC l. 3), some of the error must go back to the common archetype. In terms of orthography the Black Book version broadly follows the usual orthography for that manuscript, but there are hints from the Book of Taliesin version that the archetype may have shared a similar spelling system:<sup>39</sup> *adu6yn* (ll. 58, 59): *adwin* (BBC ll. 1, 2) suggest that the archetype was using *uu* or *vv* which was misread as *wi* in the Black Book or that *w* was understood as /vu/. Such a reading would only be possible if the scribe was expecting *i* for /i/. Similarly, the variation between *kyfnofant* (l. 62) and *cvinowant* (l. 5) is only explicable if the archetype had *ciun-* (or *kiun-*) which was read by the Black Book scribe or a predecessor as *cuin-* (and so taken to represent a later *cwynofain* 'lamenting' rather than *cyfnofant* 'fighting'). In the Book of Taliesin version Gwynedd is referred to as *vynet* with *t* for /ð/, the standard Black Book spelling; it follows that the archetype was probably using *t* for /ð/ and presumably therefore *d* for /d/. In most other cases of spelling /ð/ the Book of Taliesin scribe, or a predecessor, seems to have correctly adjusted the spelling of the dentals but in this case, perhaps because he thought it was the lenited form of *mynet*, it was allowed to stand. The use of *y* for /i/ in *bryger* (BBC l. 7): *vriker* (BT l. 64) is relatively uncommon and may here be the result of an over-extended changing of *i* to *y*, and likewise *ti* (BT l. 60) beside Black Book *de* (l. 3) suggests that the pronoun might have been spelt with *e* in the archetype. There are other instances in the main poem where it appears that the modernisation of *i* and *e* to *y* has been over-extended: *llyn* (l. 14; for *llin*), *ty* (l. 15; for *ti*).<sup>40</sup> In the main poem mutations are more consistently, though not universally, spelt, but cases

<sup>39</sup>Paul Russell, 'Scribal (in)consistency in thirteenth-century south Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Carmarthen', *SC* 43 (2009), 135–74, especially 162; Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 7.

<sup>40</sup>Another possible example is in l. 4 where *yri* could be read as *eri* 'host'; cf. *eri attkas* perhaps to be rendered 'a hateful host' (*LIDC*, 16.18 (p. 26), and also p. xxxi, n. 4); the suggestion derives from Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Aneirin* (Cardiff, 1938), 135, who refers to our form in the note. In the edition below I prefer to retain the manuscript reading but understand it as *y ri* 'the king'. Similarly it has been suggested in the previous editions that *llyfyn* (l. 29) is an incorrect modernisation of *llewyn* (plural of *llawen*); if so, it would be an indication that a modernising scribe was aware that *w* could be used for /v/ (cf. also *wleidud* (l. 36)). However, again in the edition below, I retain the reading of the manuscript and understand it as 'fluent'.

in the additional stanza like *bryger* (BBC l. 7) and *o carant* (BBC l. 10) make it likely that mutations were not spelt in the archetype of the additional stanza.

The extra stanza may also help to cast light on some textual problems in the main poem. The phrase *ud erllyssan* (l. 36) has not received a satisfactory explanation; the rendering 'lord of a little court' has held the field (perhaps because it could be seen as playing on the name *Dinbych*), but it is only minimally compelling as it requires us to assume an otherwise unattested *erllyssan* 'little court'; but, if we take a hint from l. 61 *a derllyssan*, we might understand it as 'a lord they deserve' which provides a more satisfactory and explicable reading.<sup>41</sup>

Although the extra stanza may have had a rather different textual transmission from the main poem, it does show the kind of variation, and perhaps modernisation, that might help to illuminate what went on in the transmission of the main poem in the Book of Taliesin. One case involves possessive pronouns, the spelling of which can often be unpredictable. It is clear that the standard mode of reference is to use a third singular feminine pronoun to refer to the *caer*; thus, *llyfyn y cherdeu yn y chalan* (l. 29) 'fluent its songs on its New Year's Day'. However, in some cases a third plural pronoun is used instead, e.g. *eu gwerin* (l. 20), *eu hor* (l. 50). Both Williams and Gruffydd propose emending these forms to *e* 'its' but it possible that *e* was first modernised to *y*. The two cases of *eu* in ll. 21 and 22 refer to *gwerin* and so may have been third plural though still originally spelt *e* or *y*. A final case where awareness of the orthographical conventions may help to clarify our interpretation involves l. 37, *i nos galan*, which could be understood as *yn nos galan*, but the scribe may have thought that the *i* was the affixed pronoun after *vyn defa*6t.<sup>42</sup>

The extra stanza then deserves more scrutiny than has been devoted to it previously as it offers ways of thinking about the main poem and how it might have been modernised. We return to the historical aspects of the stanza below.

#### POETS, POETRY, STATUS, AND THE LAW

It has been suggested above that, if we take the variation in the size and shape of the capital letters seriously, a central section of the poem (ll. 33–47) emerges which focuses on the poet himself. As we have it, this section consists of two stanzas, but both contain problematic rhymes and it has been suggested above that in at least one of these cases (ll. 38–9) text may have dropped out; if so, it is possible that this section was originally longer, perhaps by as much as a stanza.

The strong presence of the poet in these lines is striking. His concern throughout for the *goscor(d)* of his lord suggests that in part he fulfills the

<sup>41</sup>For the tense of this verb, see the discussion in the note to l. 36 below (p. 33).

<sup>42</sup>Gruffydd's modernised version seems to imply that he understood the *i* as an affixed pronoun, though this would then leave an eight-syllable line; for further discussion, see the notes, p. 34.

role of a *bardd teulu* as defined in the laws.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, he has at least aspirations to be of a higher status: *hyny udyf taua6t ar veird prydein* (l. 40) ‘until I should be the tongue over the bards of Britain’, a line which seems to be delivered with all the panache of a Cynddelw. I take it that this means that he sees himself as a future *pencerdd* over the poets of Britain. His credentials for such an ambition are presented in the striking concentration of legal terminology and preoccupation with legal status and entitlement of the next stanza.<sup>44</sup> Earlier in the poem we have seen him make a claim to be the intermediary between his lord and God: *am bdyfo de6s dros vy gwedi, | pan gattdyf amot, kymot a thi.* (ll. 9–10) ‘And may I have, O God, in return for my prayer, when I shall keep my promise, reconciliation with you’. Here his relationship with God is defined contractually in terms of *amot* ‘pledge’ and *kymot* ‘reconciliation’. In l. 39 and then in ll. 41–4 he makes a similar claim: along with his purple robe (which, we assume, has been given to him by his lord) one of his rights is that of *medu prein* (l. 39) ‘to enjoy a feast (sc. as of right)’. But in ll. 42–4 his claims gather pace:

oed meu y rydeu a dewiss6n.  
Ny lafaraf i deith, reith ryscat6n,  
ny dyly kelenic ny gypyo h6n.

‘Mine were the freedoms which I used to choose.  
I do not speak of entitlement but of a right I was to maintain.  
He who does not know this is not entitled to a New Year’s gift.’

He is clear about his *rydeu* ‘freedoms’ (sc. from obligations) and, in a rhetorical *praeteritio* he need not speak of his *teith* ‘his natural, rightful entitlements’ but rather of a *reith* ‘that which is right’ which was his to maintain; and all of this is so well known to other members of the court, and also probably to inferior poets, that anyone ignorant of them does not deserve to be part of the court, or for that matter be a poet, and so should not receive a *celennig* ‘a New Year’s Day gift’ (received as of right by virtue of status). The poet is thus very clear about his own standing. Slightly earlier in the poem, to draw attention to his own proximity to the king and perhaps to underline his own inter-connectedness with him, he observes that his own *defa6t* ‘custom’ on New Year’s Eve had been *lledydfa6t y gan ri* (l. 38) ‘to recline with the king’.<sup>45</sup> The term *defa6t* is presumably intended to invoke

<sup>43</sup>Dafydd Jenkins, ‘*Bardd teulu* and *pencerdd*’, in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, and Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh King and his Court* (Cardiff, 2000), 142–66.

<sup>44</sup>For discussion of the different renderings of these terms in translations of this section, see the notes below on ll. 42–3 (pp. 34–5).

<sup>45</sup>The notion that *lledydfa6t* reflects the ancient (if not Indo-European) practice of a poet sharing the king’s bed has been canvassed by Mac Cana, ‘The poet as spouse’ and Breeze, ‘Poet and patron’. I would be reluctant to go that far, though it might simply mean ‘reclining’ or the like. The word is only attested here but it is clearly an abstract noun based on *lleddf*, which has such a wide-range of meanings that an abstract noun based on it is thoroughly ambiguous; *GPC* lists the meaning of the adjective as ‘declining, slanting, sloping, oblique, awry; fig. indirect, not

in the minds of the audience *defa6t a moes y llys* ‘the custom and practice of the court’, the way things are properly done at court.<sup>46</sup> This has already been raised at ll. 22–4 where a particular aspect of the honourable nature of the court is brought up – that it is not their *defa6t* to be harsh (*calet*). This is immediately associated with the poet again referring to his own status, this time his *tr6ydet* (l. 23), a legally loaded term in court circles in that it refers to status in terms of an entitlement to reside within the court and have food and accommodation free from the king.<sup>47</sup> All of this culminates in the claim that such is the generosity and nobility of the court that (ll. 24–6):

noc eillon deutraeth g6ell kaeth dyfet.  
kyweithyd o ryd wled waretret.  
kynn6ys rwg pop deu goreu kiwet.

‘a slave of Dyfed is better (off) than villeins of Deudraeth.  
A company of freemen, the protection of a feast,  
includes pair by pair the best people.’

The poet’s attention switches from his own status to that of others: with a swipe at Gwynedd, he observes that even a *caeth* ‘slave’ in Dyfed is relatively better off than an *aillt* ‘unfree client’ in Gwynedd.<sup>48</sup> All these legal references are intended to remind the audience that this was a well-run and properly regulated court where everything was ‘comme il faut’, and that he, the poet, was at its centre.

Something else, however, may also be going on: the half-line *reith ryscat6n* ‘a right I was to maintain’ may not just be referring to *rhaith* in relation to the poet but to a more general sense of what is right.<sup>49</sup> That seems to be the train of thought which takes us from ll. 43–4 into the second half of the *awdl*. He is the preserver of *ysgrifen Brydein* and, whatever it was (or might be imagined to have been), the implication is that he is the preserver of tradition.

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straightforward, distorted, wanton, lascivious, prostrate(d), flat, low; not strident, soft, smooth; mournful, sad, downcast, plaintive, melancholy; insipid; calm, dispassionate, impassive, cold, tardy, languid, gentle, mild, obedient, humble’. However, the significant and relevant context in which it frequently occurs is that of poetical composition, where it refers to a type of diphthong. While it is difficult to be sure with such a polysemic word, it is quite possible that it was intended to mean something like ‘composing or reciting poetry with the king’, but it could just as well mean something like ‘being obedient’ or the like. It is also important to note, as indicated above (p. 11), that there is a rhyme break after this line, and so we cannot be sure that the line which now follows in the manuscript, *A llen lli6 ehoec a medu prein* (which has been taken to refer to gifts and entitlements), did follow immediately; it may have been in origin part of a later stanza.

<sup>46</sup>For discussion of this phrase, see Manon Phillips, ‘*Defod a moes y llys*’, in Charles-Edwards et al., *The Welsh King and his Court*, 347–61.

<sup>47</sup>For discussion, see D. Simon Evans (ed.), *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff, 1977), 72; Rachel Bromwich (ed. and trans.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (second ed., Cardiff, 1978), 172–3 (triad 63).

<sup>48</sup>On the status of an *aillt* (above a *taeog* but below an *uchelwr*), see Dafydd Jenkins (trans.), *The Laws of Hywel Dda: Law Texts from Medieval Wales* (Llandysul, 1986), 310–11.

<sup>49</sup>For the precise sense of *rysca6n*, see the notes to ll. 42–3 (pp. 34–5).

In other words, his role can be seen as the equivalent of a *ceidwad*, not only a ‘keeper’ or ‘guardian’ but also by implication the guarantor of the tradition which was so important (especially in relation to land law).<sup>50</sup> In part, he is presumably sending out a message to Bleiddudd’s successor (whoever that might be) that he is not to be trifled with. But it is difficult to avoid thinking that he also has in mind the role of the poet as a protector of a people’s rights, such as we see in *Breintiau Gwŷr Powys* and *Gwelygorddau Powys*, the pair of poems in which Cynddelw reminds the successors of Madog ap Maredudd of the lineage and entitlements of the people of Powys.<sup>51</sup> As such, the poem more generally seems to be suggesting that the poet is both the intermediary between his lord and God – a relationship based on *cymod* and *amod* – and the intermediary between Bleiddudd and his people; as a *ceidwad*, the poet is presumably setting himself up as the one to whom the people should turn to preserve their rights and entitlements in these uncertain times.

This section has focused on the poem’s preoccupation with status and entitlement. We conclude with two further examples which seem to be working the same theme; they both concentrate on single words which have not perhaps received the attention they deserve but which could be incorporated into the same line of argument.

The final stanza of the main poem opens (l. 48) with the line *Adu6yn gaer yssyd yn ard6yrein*, which may be easily rendered as ‘There is a fine fortress rising up’, perhaps as seen from the sea. Now in the poeticised context of the poem, and especially at the opening of the stanza after the poet has been talking of rights, obligations, and being an upholder of the tradition, it is difficult not to think of the semantic range of *ard6yrein* as not only generally meaning ‘rising up’ but also the very specific ‘exalting’ which a court does to its lord, and even more specifically its use as a term for ‘encomium, eulogy’.<sup>52</sup> Is an alternative image being presented here of a

<sup>50</sup>On the *ceidwad*, see Jenkins, *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, 256.

<sup>51</sup>See Thomas Charles-Edwards and Nerys Ann Jones, ‘*Breintiau Gwŷr Powys*: the liberties of the men of Powys’, in Charles-Edwards et al., *The Welsh King and his Court*, 91–123, with discussion (91–213) and text, translation and notes (216–23); the edition is based on that in *GCBM* I, poem 11 (pp. 128–42). *Gwelygorddau Powys* is edited in *GCBM* I, poem 10 (pp. 113–27), but there is no English translation. On these texts, see also David Stephenson, *Medieval Powys: Kingdom, Principality and Lordships* (Woodbridge, 2016), 182–3, 190, 196–8, 205–6. We may also compare prose texts, such as *Breintiau Gwŷr Arfon* (edited by Morfydd Owen, ‘Royal propaganda stories from the law-texts’, in Charles-Edwards et al., *The Welsh King and his Court*, pp. 225–54, at 238–45 (discussion), 252–4 (text)) and the *Gravamina* (edited and discussed by Llinos Beverley Smith, ‘The *Gravamina* of the community of Gwynedd against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd’, *BBCS* 31 (1984), 158–76 (text at 173–6)).

<sup>52</sup>See Ann Parry Owen, ‘Canu arwyrain Beirdd y Tywysogion’, *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* 24 (1998), 44–59; Morfydd E. Owen ‘Noddwyr y beirdd’, in Morfydd E. Owen and Brinley F. Roberts (eds), *Beirdd a Thywysogion* (Caerdydd, 1996), 75–107, at 92–4; Charles-Edwards and Jones, ‘*Breintiau Gwŷr Powys*’, 195–6, in which it is argued that an *ard6yrein* is the prerogative of a *brenhin*. See also now Catherine McKenna, ‘Terms of art: theorizing poetry in the earliest Welsh anthology’, in Matthieu Boyd (ed.), *Ollam. Studies in Gaelic and Related Traditions in Honour of Tomás Ó Cathasaigh* (Madison, 2016), 287–98, at 294–5.

personified *caer* (and all its occupants) rising up to honour its (dead) lord and conceivably in future his successor?

Another particularly problematic word is the most frequent word in the poem, namely the opening word of each stanza, *aduŷyn*.<sup>53</sup> The principal problem has been thought to be which adjective we have here. The main poem regularly spells it as *aduŷyn* throughout which is most straightforwardly understood as /aδvui/ (though Williams thought it should be read as *addwyn*).<sup>54</sup> It is spelt likewise in the extra stanza in the Book of Taliesin, but in the Black Book of Carmarthen it is spelt *adwin*, which is ambiguous. If the spelling is taken as being consistent with the usual Black Book orthography, the dental should be read as /d/, but *wi* could represent /ui/ or perhaps /vui/; in the Black Book *w* often represents what might have been spelt as *uu*, *vv* or *vu* in the exemplar. Thus, the Black Book version suggests /aduin/ or /advuin/, but not /aδvui/. Matters are not made any clearer by looking at examples elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> Within the Book of Taliesin we find *atwyn*, presumably for /aduin/ which occurs throughout a poem entitled *Aduwyneu Taliesin*.<sup>56</sup> In another poem there is one case of *atuwyn*, presumably for /advuin/.<sup>57</sup> The spelling *aduwyn* is also found in a poem to God by Einion ap Gwalchmai,<sup>58</sup> and *adwyn* is attested alongside *aduwyn* in Gwalchmai ap Meilyr's *Gorhoffedd*.<sup>59</sup>

There are two main issues here. First, is the dental /d/ or /ð/? Generally, unless it is fixed by alliteration as in *aduan* : *adwyn*,<sup>60</sup> it is difficult to be sure. The second issue is whether to read -/vui/ or -/uin/. This may be a matter of orthography as much as phonology; as noted above, in some spelling systems scribes tended to use *w* for an original *uu*, *vv* or *vu*, but in addition there is a problem about (mis)counting minims: if the adjective was spelt *aduuun* or *aduun*, there is plenty of room for confusion. As a note in *GPC* indicates, it is extremely difficult to separate these forms out: moreover, it is possible that a form such as /aδvui/ (modern *addfwyn*) could easily simplify to /aduin/, and likewise /advuin/ (modern *adfwyn*) to /aduin/.<sup>61</sup> That said, in

<sup>53</sup>For discussion, see *GPC*<sup>2</sup>; *Geirfa*, s.v. *addwyn*<sup>1</sup>, *addfwyn*; Williams, 'Two poems', 167; Williams, 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', 78; Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 97.

<sup>54</sup>Williams, 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', 78; Williams, 'Two poems', 167.

<sup>55</sup>It is worth observing that in his 'Liber B' (NLW MS 4973, fol. 80–1) Dr John Davies of Mallwyd regularly spells it as *addfwyn*, but that is no more probative than any of the other evidence amassed here.

<sup>56</sup>Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 3.94–7 (97n); she notes that the same form is thought to occur in poems by Cynddelw (*GCBM* I, 29.17 and *GCBM* II, 9.93 (the latter confirmed by alliteration)), and in *GLILL*, 12.48, 16.17 (but taken as *addwyn* by the editors). Variant versions of the Cynddelw poem (*GCBM* II, 9.93) read *adwyn* (NLW Peniarth 3B), *addwyn* (Hendregadredd), *atuŷyn* (Red Book of Hergest); note that two lines later all the manuscripts read *adwyn*; in a long note on l. 93 (p. 202) the editors argue that in that line the form should be read as *adwyn* to alliterate with *aduan*, but that in l. 95 it should be *addwyn*.

<sup>57</sup>Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 4.195 (p. 119 with note on p. 158).

<sup>58</sup>*GMB*, 29.25–35; cf. Catherine McKenna (ed. and trans.), *The Medieval Welsh Religious Lyric: Poems of the Gogynfeirdd, 1137–1282* (Belmont, MA, 1991), 184–7 (ll. 25–8).

<sup>59</sup>*GMB*, 9.135–7, 147–50; *adwyn* is found at ll. 135–7 (*adwen* in the Hendregadredd version), but *aduwyn* in ll. 147 and 149.

<sup>60</sup>*GCBM* I, 9.93.

<sup>61</sup>*GPC* s.v. *adfwyn*; cf. *GCBM* II, 9.93n (p. 202).

terms of interpretation it looks as if all these adjectives belong to the same broad semantic field which covers the range of 'fine, splendid, noble' as well as 'mild, gentle', and so probably one should simply use the form which is attested in a particular poem. One observation is, however, worth making and that relates to the range of possible senses of *aduŷyn* which might have had some relevance for our poem. One of the other senses listed in *GPC* is 'legally competent, legally sound'.<sup>62</sup> Given the other legal terminology which is being deployed in this poem, it is not impossible that the repeated phrase *aduŷyn gaer* might have been intended to carry at least a secondary sense of a *caer* where things are done properly and according to the law.

#### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT REVISITED

As noted above, the historical context of the poem has received a certain amount of attention over the years and particularly so recently, with discussion focusing on evidence for the date of the poem and the identity of the deceased ruler (apparently called Bleiddudd) and his possible successor, who may be obliquely referred to as the great-grandson of Owain. Ifor Williams does not commit himself on Bleiddudd but suggests that the Owain in question was Owain ap Maredudd who died in 811.<sup>63</sup> As a result he proposed that the poem is to be dated to 'a little before 900, say 875, and this dating agrees perfectly with the impression given by its language and craftsmanship'. Geraint Gruffydd, whose reading of the poem generally follows that of Williams, offers some refinement and identifies the great-grandson of Owain as Llywarch ap Hyfaidd ap Tangwystl ferch Owain who ruled Dyfed between 893 and 904, thus leading him to date the poem to 893 × 895.<sup>64</sup> A ninth-century date has also been recently followed by Thomas Charles-Edwards, but he rightly points out that there is no room for a Bleiddudd as ruler of Dyfed from c. 870 onwards and so an earlier date is more likely, between 815 and c. 870 (with the reservation that Bleiddudd might have been a kinsman of the ruling family who held Penfro as a subordinate ruler).<sup>65</sup> The one significant divergence from this ninth-century dating is the view expressed by Nikolai Tolstoy who argues for a later date (or in fact two later dates):<sup>66</sup> first, based on interpreting *clas Ffichti* as referring to the Vikings he concludes '... the

<sup>62</sup>*GPC* s.v. *addfwyn* (c); cf. in particular the examples from *Llyfr Iorwerth*; for example, a particular process (in this case denying sureties) can be described as *nat iaun ac nat aduuen* 'not proper and not competent' (Aled Rhys Wiliam (ed.), *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Caerdydd, 1960), 36 (§61.23–4); trans. Jenkins, *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, 67); an individual can also be described as *aduyn* 'legally competent': for example, the selection of witnesses for the denial of theft involves half of them coming *o'r guyr a gaffer o wyr aduyn* '(from) such men as may be got from among competent men' (Wiliam, *Llyfr Iorwerth*, 75 (§111.23); trans. Jenkins, *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, 157). It was suggested by both Wiliam and Jenkins that the sense arose from such people being 'gentlemen, men of gentle birth' (Wiliam, *Llyfr Iorwerth*, 124; Jenkins, *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, 281), but that does not fit the first example above quite so well.

<sup>63</sup>Williams, 'Two poems', 161; cf. Williams, 'Moliant Dinbych Penfro', 72.

<sup>64</sup>Gruffydd, "'The praise of Tenby'", 92–3.

<sup>65</sup>Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 659–65.

<sup>66</sup>Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature*, 495–520.

last two decades of the tenth century and the first of the eleventh ... provide the most convincing chronological parameters for composition of the poem Edmic Dinbych'; but eight pages later he has shifted his view of the dating slightly later: 'thus virtually every historical allusion in Etmic Dinbych points to its composition during the years following the death of Llywelyn ap Seisyll in 1023'.<sup>67</sup> As noted above, his argument forms part of a larger argument about the date of the Four Branches, one which involves the claim that *ysgrifên Brydein* in our poem are the Four Branches. It is based on the idea that *clas Ffichti* is a reference to a particular Viking raid on the Pembrokeshire coast at the end of the tenth century. Another strand of the argument involves treating Bleiddudd not as a name but as a descriptive compound noun 'wolf-lord' which could refer obliquely to someone with a different name.<sup>68</sup> Thus, eventually he concludes that the deceased ruler was Llywelyn ap Seisyll (†1023) and that the great-grandson of Owain was Maredudd ap Hywel ap Edwin. There is a number of problems with this line of thinking. As Charles-Edwards points out, it is not necessary to suppose that *clas Ffichti* refers to a specific raid; it is stormy with rough seas; it is New Year's Day and we are feasting, and so the seas can be safely left to the *Ffichti* if they want to risk it. As such, it is more likely that *Ffichti* is being used generically as a term for sea-raiders of one type or another than referring to a particular raid by Vikings. The argument for a later date is very much driven by other factors; if *ysgrifên Brydein* does refer to the Four Branches (which seems implausible), then Tolstoy has to argue for a later date and so cannot argue that *Ffichti* refers to the Viking campaign of 892–6.<sup>69</sup>

But none of these considerations takes the extra stanza into account. At an earlier point, I discussed the two versions of the extra stanza mainly from a textual point of view but observed that 'the references to Gwynedd and the relentlessly martial nature of the rest of the *awdl* speak of a different context'.<sup>70</sup> The question still remains as to whether it should be regarded as a stanza which dropped out from the main version or was an addition. It is strikingly different in its strongly warlike tone and the incorporation of the days-of-the-week topos but at the same time the first few lines seem intended to bring it into the same orbit as the main poem; it begins in the same way and l. 60 (= BBC l. 3) looks like a reworked version of ll. 13–14 but replacing *Prydein* with Gwynedd (*vynet*). The preoccupation with Gwynedd is notable and seems to envisage, in a mixture of present and past tenses, the defeat of

<sup>67</sup>Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature*, 510 and 518 respectively; for reviews, see Sioned Davies, *SC* 44 (2010), 209–12; Jenny Day, *CMCS* 60 (2010), 102–5; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *ÉC* 38 (2012), 340–6. Day's review has most to say about this section of Tolstoy's work; in particular she picks up on Nicolas Jacobs' comment in the foreword to the volume that Tolstoy's later datings were not out of line with the current trend for later datings of early poetry, and she makes the point that just because some can be dated later does not mean that everything is later or that it is more likely that some other unrelated poem might be later.

<sup>68</sup>But there is little evidence for compounds being used like this of individuals; generally some terms are used in the plural as kennings for warriors in verse but usually as collective terms.

<sup>69</sup>A point made by Davies in her review, 211.

<sup>70</sup>See above, p. 14.

a Gwynedd army. The final line (l. 67) also adds an extra bite. The standard reading is a seemingly unremarkable report that a host of kinsmen fell along with a third cousin (who would by definition be a kinsman anyway). Williams tentatively takes the third cousin as a relative of the poet.<sup>71</sup> However, a harsher and more striking reading presents itself if we take *y gan* to mean ‘by, at the hands of’, thus ‘a host of kinsmen fell at the hands of a third cousin (*ceifn*)’. We then have a situation where kinsmen are fighting on both sides and killing each other.

We might also observe that the specificity of *ceifn*, which goes beyond the common observation that kinsmen fought against kinsmen, is striking and likely to have had some significance for the original audience.<sup>72</sup> Such a scenario might make sense at a point when Gwynedd had a firmer grip on parts of Dyfed and family loyalties might on occasion be split, and so fit into a slightly later period than the main poem. While the opening lines clearly signal a connection with the main poem, it can plausibly (and perhaps best) be seen as a later addition.<sup>73</sup>

One possible scenario would place this stanza in the late tenth century and involve the southern and northern branches of the Merfynion descending from the two sons of Rhodri Mawr, Anarawd and Cadell.<sup>74</sup> In the late ninth and early tenth centuries the Merfynion gradually gained control of Dyfed.<sup>75</sup> By the second half of the tenth century the descendants of Cadell (including Hywel Dda) controlled Dyfed and those of Anarawd Gwynedd and Anglesey. Following the death of Hywel ap Ieuaf, king of Gwynedd, in 985, Maredudd ab Owain and the southern Merfynion, taking advantage of the disruption in Gwynedd, killed Cadwallon ap Ieuaf and took possession of the north.<sup>76</sup> For our purposes what is significant in all of this is that Maredudd and Cadwallon were *ceifnaint* ‘third cousins’, the one from Dyfed and the other from Gwynedd. The circumstances fit the scenario presented in the additional stanza of our poem very well: kinsmen fall at the hands of a third cousin in battle; and the hostilities involve Gwynedd and could be read as the defeat of Gwynedd. If this reading is correct, the battle was won by the men of Dyfed under Maredudd ab Owain but was fought in Gwynedd; that may be signposted by the place-name Cefn Llech Faelwy if we only knew its location.<sup>77</sup> Such a

<sup>71</sup>Williams, ‘Moliant Dinbych Penfro’, 77; Williams, ‘Two poems’, 166: ‘with (my) nephew’s son’.

<sup>72</sup>That *ceifn* alliterates with *Cefn* in the preceding line I take to be a convenient but not a determining factor in the choice of *ceifn*.

<sup>73</sup>Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 475, 507–10.

<sup>74</sup>I am grateful to Thomas Charles-Edwards for suggesting this possibility to me.

<sup>75</sup>Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 507–10.

<sup>76</sup>Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 548–50; on Maredudd ab Owain, see David Thornton, ‘Maredudd ab Owain (d. 999): the most famous king of the Welsh’, *Welsh History Review* 18 (1997), 567–91, esp. 575–9 (genealogy on 571).

<sup>77</sup>No location has been proposed. A reviewer suggested that it might have been intended to refer to Penrhos y Feilw in Anglesey (where there are *llechi*), though admitting that this would probably be too far north for a battle between the men of Gwynedd and Dyfed. The earliest forms in the Melville Richards Archive are seventeenth-century: *Penrhos y Feliw* (1670), *Penrhose ucha alias Penrhosyfeilw* (1695), *Penrhos y Veilw* (1721). There is no evidence for a variant in *Faelwy*. *GPC*, s.v. *meilwn*, suggests that *meilw* is a scribal error, but if our example is related

reading points to the additional stanza being a later addition composed soon after 986 and while Maredudd was still alive (he died in 999).

However, if this is right, why then did the poet want to tie this later episode to the main poem about Dinbych by taking over similar opening lines as the individual stanzas? One possibility is that the later poet (like the earlier poet viewing this from a Dyfed perspective) wanted to bring out the contrast between the earlier and later situation: while the main poem may have been set at a period when Gwynedd was exerting its power in Dyfed, the additional *caniad* (and we cannot be sure there were not more which have been lost) was marking a waning of that power and the defeat of Gwynedd in its own territory.

#### APPENDIX

##### *Diplomatic text*<sup>78</sup>

Aberystwyth, NLW, MS Peniarth 2 (Book of Taliesin), fol. 20v16–21v16 (= pp. 42.16–44.16).

juuc dínŷych (*left margin opposite l. 15*)

[fol. 20v16 = p. 42.16]

**A**rchaf y wen yduŷ plŷyf escori. perchen  
 nef allaŷr pŷylluaŷr wofri. **A**duŷyn ga-  
 eryssyd ar glaŷr gŷeilgi. bit lawen ygkalan  
 eiryan yri. **ac** amser pan wna mor maŷr ŷrhy-  
 dri. ys gnaŷt gorun beird uch med lestri. Dy-  
 dybyd gŷanec ar vrys dybrys idi. **a**daŷhŷynt  
 ywerlas oglas ffichti. **ac** am bŷyf o deŷs dros-  
 vygwedi. pan gattŷyf amot kymot athi.  
**A**duŷyn gaer yssyd ar llydan llyn. Dinas di-  
 achor mor oe chylchyn. gogyfarch ty prydein  
 kŷd gygein hyn. Blaen llyn ap erbin boet teu

[fol. 21r = p. 43]

voyn. Bu goscor abu kerd yn eil mehyn. **ac** e-  
 ryr uch ŷybyr allŷybyr granwyn. Rac vd felyc

then that cannot be right. In sum, there is very little here that is certain, but in the absence of other proposals it remains a possibility, though nothing can be based upon it. I am grateful to David Parsons for discussion of this.

<sup>78</sup>The forms of initial letter *A*- in the manuscript seem to indicate structural blocks in the poem; see pp. 12–13 above for discussion. A bold, underlined, and enlarged capital *A* represents a two-line coloured capital letter. A bold and underlined capital represents a capital letter which is the same shape and thickness of line as the bigger letter but which is uncoloured and one-line in size. A bold capital represents a more elaborate uncoloured, one-line version of the usual capital letter. A capital represents a less elaborate uncoloured capital letter. A lower-case bold letter represents a large form of the lower case letter often used after a stop. The hyphens are scribal.

nac escar gychwyn. Clot wascar agóanar yd  
 ymdullyn. Aduón gaer yssyd ar ton naóuet.  
 aduón eu góerin yn ymwaret. ny wnant 5  
 eu dóynuyt tróy veuyilhaet. nyt ef eu defa-  
 ót bot yn galet. Ny llafaraf eu ar vyntróyd-  
 et. noc eillon deu traeth góell kaeth dyfet.  
 kyweithyd o ryd wled waretret kynnóys  
 rwg pop deu goreu kiwet. Aduón gaer ys- 10  
 syd ae góna kyman. medut a molut ac a  
 dar bann. llyfyn ycherdeu yny chalan. Am ar  
 glóyd hywyd heór eiran. kynny vynet yny<sup>79</sup>  
 adóyt yn deruin llan. ef am rodes med a góin  
 o wydrin ban. Aduón gaer yssyd yn yr eg- 15  
 lan. atuón yrodír ypaób yran. atwen yn  
 dinbych gorwen góylan. kyweithyd wleidi-  
 ud ud erllyssan. Oed ef vyn defaót i nos ga-  
 lan. lledyfaót ygan ri ryfel eiran. allen llió  
 ehoec a medu prein. hyny uóyf tauaót ar 20  
 veird prydein. Aduón gaer yssyd ae kyffróy  
 kedeu. oed meu yrydeu adewissón. ny lafar-  
 afi deith reith ryscatón. ny dyly kelenic ny  
 óyppo hón. yscriuen brydein bryder briffón.  
 yn yt wna tonneu eu hymgyffrón. pereit 25  
 hyt pell ygell atreidón. Aduón gaer yssyd

[fol. 21v = p. 43]

yn ardóyrein. Gochaón y medut ymolut gofrein.  
 aduón areu hor escor gynfrein. Godef górych  
 dymbi hir y hadein. dychyrch bar karrec crec  
 mor ednein. llit ymyón tyghet treidet trath-  
 [.]umein.<sup>80</sup> ableidut gorllóyt goreu afein. Dimpy- 5  
 ner oduch llat póy llad cofein. Bendith culóyd  
 nef gytlef afein. arnyn gónel yn vrowyr gor-  
 óyr owein. Aduón gaer yssyd ar lan lliant.  
 aduón ytrodir ypawb ychóant. Gogyfarch ti  
 vynet boet teu uóyant. Góayawaór ryn rein 10  
 aderllyssant. Duó merchyr gweleis wyr ygkyf-  
 nofant. Dyf ieu bu góartheu a amugant. ac  
 yd oed vriger coch ac och ar dant. Oed lludued  
 vynet dyd ydoethant. ac am Gefyn llech vaelóy  
 kylchóy vriwant. cód Cóydyn ygan gefyn 15  
 lluo o garant.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup>The second y is semi-erased.

<sup>80</sup>On this word, see the discussion in the Notes, I. 53.

<sup>81</sup>The rest of the line is filled with the title of the next poem.

[Aberystwyth, NLW, Peniarth 1 (Black Book of Carmarthen), fol. 23v1–8]

**A**dwin caer yssit ar lan llyant. adwin yd rotir  
y pauper y chwant. Gogywarch de gwinet boed tev wy-  
ant. Gwaewaur rrin. Rei adarwant. Dyv merch  
ir. Gueleisse guir yg cvinowant. Dyv iev bv. ir.  
guarth. itadcorssant. **ad** oet bryger coch. ac och 5  
ar dant. Oet llutedic guir guinet. Dit y deuthant.  
**ac** am kewin llech Vaelvy kylchuy wriwant.  
Cuytin y can keiwin llv ocarant.

### *Edited text*

Divergences from the manuscripts are noted in the apparatus. Since a diplomatic text is also provided, the text has been edited for punctuation, capitalisation, and lineation, and to incorporate emendations proposed in the Notes. For reasons discussed in the Notes, the orthography has not been adjusted except where a scribe has obviously over-extended the modernisation of *i* and *e* to *y*. For further discussion, see the notes below (pp. 31–6).

[...] = possible missing lines. Text in [ ] deleted by scribe.

Juuc Dinŷych (*left margin*)

[fol. 20v16] **A**rchaf y wen y duŷ plŷyf escori, 1  
perchen nef a llaŷr pŷylluaŷr wofri.

Aduŷyn gaer yssyd ar glaŷr gŷeilgi;  
bit lawen ygkalan, eiryan y ri.<sup>82</sup>  
Ac amser pan wna mor maŷr ŷrhydri, 5  
ys gnaŷt gorun beird uch med lestri.  
Dydybyd gŷanec ar vrys dybrys idi.  
Adaŷhŷynt y werlas o glas Ffichti.  
Ac am bŷy fi,<sup>83</sup> o deŷs, dros vygwedi,  
pan gattŷyf amot, kymot a thi. 10

Aduŷyn gaer yssyd ar llydan llyn,  
dinas diachor, mor oe chylchyn.  
gogyfarch ti,<sup>84</sup> Prydein, kŷd gygein hyn.  
Blaen llin<sup>85</sup> ap Erbin, boet teu [fol. 21r] voyn.  
Bu goscor a bu kerd yn eil mehyn, 15

<sup>82</sup>yri *MS*.

<sup>83</sup>bŷyf *MS*.

<sup>84</sup>ty *MS*.

<sup>85</sup>llyn *MS*.

ac eryr uch 6ybyr a ll6ybyr granwyn  
 Rac vd feleic; rac<sup>86</sup> escar gychwyn,  
 Clotwascar a g6anar yd ymdullyn.

Adu6yn gaer yssyd ar ton na6uet,  
 adu6yn eu g6erin yn ymwaret. 20

Ny wnant eu d6ynuyt tr6y veuylhaet.  
 Nyt ef eu defa6t bot yn galet.  
 Ny llafaraf eu ar vyn tr6ydet:  
 noc eillon Deutraeth g6ell kaeth Dyfet. 25  
 Kyweithyd o ryd, wled waretret,  
 kynn6ys rwg pop deu goreu kiwet.

Adu6yn gaer yssyd ae g6na kyman,  
 medut a molut ac adar bann.  
 Llyfyn y cherdeu yn y chalan 30  
 am argl6yd hywyd, he6r eiran.  
 Kyn y vynet yn y ad6yt yn deruin llan,  
 ef am rodes med a g6in o wydrin ban.

Adu6yn gaer yssyd yn yr eglan.  
 Atu6yn y rodin y pa6b y ran.  
 Atwen yn Dinbych – gorwen g6ylan – 35  
 kyweithyd Wleidud, ud erllyssan.  
 Oed ef vyn defa6t i nos galan  
 lledyfa6t y gan ri ryfel eiran.  
 [...] 40  
 a llen lli6 ehoec a medu prein,  
 hyny u6yf taua6t ar veird prydein.

Adu6yn gaer yssyd ae kyffr6y kedeu.  
 Oed meu y rydeu a dewiss6n.  
 Ny lafaraf i deith; reith ryscat6n.  
 Ny dyly kelenic ny 6yppo h6n. 45  
 Yscriuen Brydein, bryder briff6n,  
 yn yt wna tonneu eu hymgyffr6n,  
 perheit<sup>87</sup> pell ygell a treid6n.  
 Adu6yn gaer yssyd [fol. 21v] yn ard6yrein,  
 gocha6n y medut, y molut gofrein. 50  
 Adu6yn ar eu hor, escor gynfrein,  
 godef g6rych dymbi – hir y hadein –  
 dychyrch bar karrec crec mor ednein.  
 Llit y my6n tyghet treidet tra thrumein.

<sup>86</sup>felyc nac *MS*.

<sup>87</sup>pereit hyt *MS*.

A Bleidut gorllŷt goreu a ffein.  
Dimpynyr oduch llat pŷyllad cofein. 55

Bendith culŷyd nef gytlef a fein;  
ar nyn gŷnel yn vrowyr gorŷyr Owein.

Aduŷyn gaer yssyd ar lan lliant.  
Aduŷyn yt rodîr y pawb y chŷant.  
Gogyfarch ti, Vynet, boet teu uŷyant. 60  
Gŷay[a]waŷr ryn, rein a derllyssant.<sup>88</sup>  
Duŷ Merchyr gweleis wyr ygkyfnofant.  
Dyf Ieu bu gŷartheu a amugant.<sup>89</sup>  
Ac yd oed vrîger coch ac och ar dant.  
Oed lludued Vynet<sup>90</sup> dyd y doethant. 65  
Ac am Gefyn Llech Vaelŷy kylchŷy vriwant.  
[c6d] Cŷydyn y gan gefyn llu o garant.

Version corresponding to ll. 58–67 from the Black Book of Carmarthen

Adwin caer yssit ar lan llyant.  
Adwin yd rotîr y pauper y chwant.  
Gogywarch de, gwînet, boed tev wyant.  
Gwaewaur rrîn; rei a darwant.<sup>91</sup>  
Dyv merchîr gueleiss e guîr yg evinowant. 5  
Dyv iev bv îr guarth it adcorssant.<sup>92</sup>  
Adoet bryger coch ac och ar dant.  
Oet llutedic guîr guînet<sup>93</sup> dyt y deuthant,  
ac am kewin llech Vaelvy kylchuy wriwant.  
Cuytin y can keiwin llv o carant. 10

#### TRANSLATION

I ask God's favour that he gather in his people,  
lord of heaven and earth eminent in great wisdom. 1

There is a fine fortress on the surface of the ocean;  
may it be joyful on New Year's Day, radiant its king.  
And when the sea makes a great battle-din, 5  
the tumult of bards is usual over the mead vessels.

<sup>88</sup>rein a derllyssant] rei a darwant *BBC*.

<sup>89</sup>gŷartheu a amugant] îr guarth. it adcorssant *BBC*.

<sup>90</sup>lludued vynet] llutedic guîr guînet *BBC*.

<sup>91</sup>rei a darwant] rein a derllyssant *BT*.

<sup>92</sup>îr guarth. it adcorssant] gŷartheu a amugant *BT*.

<sup>93</sup>llutedic guîr guînet] lludued vynet *BT*.

A wave will come in a rush; it surges to it.  
 Let them leave the angry, grey (sea) on account of the band of raiders.  
 And may I have, O God, in return for my prayer,  
 when I shall keep my promise, reconciliation with you. 10

There is a fine fortress upon the broad sea,  
 an unyielding fortress, sea encircling it.  
 Ask, Britain, where these things might be fitting.  
 Chief of the line of Erbin's son, may it be yours that they be.  
 There was a retinue and there was song in the hall of the place, 15  
 and an eagle above a cloud and a path of white-faced ones  
 before a splendid lord; against the rising of an enemy  
 fierce ones of broad fame used to draw up in array.

There is a fine fortress upon the ninth wave,  
 fine their people in defending themselves. 20  
 They do not derive pleasure through causing shame.  
 It is not their custom to be miserly.  
 I do not speak falsehood about my rights at court:  
 a slave of Dyfed is better (off) than villeins of Deudraeth.  
 A company of freemen, the protection of a feast, 25  
 includes pair by pair the best people.

There is a fine fortress where a throng makes  
 carousal and praise together with the noisy birds.  
 Fluent its songs on its New Year's Day  
 around a generous lord, a fine hero. 30  
 Before he went in [his] death into the oaken enclosure,  
 he gave me mead and wine from a glass goblet.

There is a fine fortress on the headland.  
 Finely to each is given his portion.  
 I know at Dinbych – bright white the seagull – 35  
 the company of Bleiddudd, a lord they deserve.  
 My custom it was on New Year's Eve  
 to recline with a king splendid in war,

\*\*\*

with a mantle of purple colour and enjoying a feast,  
 so that I may be the tongue over the bards of Britain. 40

There is a fine fortress where gifts abound.  
 Mine were the freedoms which I used to choose.  
 I do not speak of entitlement but of a right I was to maintain.  
 He who does not know this is not entitled to a New Year's gift.  
 The writing of Britain, the chief object of care, 45

where the waves make their crashing,  
may it last long in a cell I used to visit.

There is a fine fortress rising up,  
lavish its carousal, lofty its praise.  
Finely on its cliff, the enclosure of champions, 50  
abides the spray which rushes in – with long wings –  
hoarse sea-birds seek the top of a rock.  
May anger be destined to go off over the hills.  
May Bleiddudd have the finest bliss that there would be.  
May consideration of his memory be pondered over drink. 55

May the blessing of the God of harmonious heaven prevail;  
May He not make us the countrymen of the great-grandson of Owain.

*BT version:*

There is a fine fortress upon the shore of the sea.  
Finely is given to each his desire.  
Ask, Gwynedd, that it be yours that they might be. 60  
Steadfast spears, these they deserve.  
On Wednesday I saw men fighting.  
On Thursday it was disgrace they fought over.  
And there was bloodstained hair and a lament on a string.  
(The men of) Gwynedd were tired the day they came, 65  
and around the ridge of Llech Faelwy they broke shields.  
A host of kinsmen fell together at the hands of a third cousin.

*BBC version:*

There is a fine fortress upon the shore of the sea.  
Finely is given to a poor man his desire.  
Ask, Gwynedd, that it be yours that they might be.  
Steadfast spears; this is what happened.  
On Wednesday I saw men lamenting (?) 5  
On Thursday in disgrace they returned.  
And there was bloodstained hair and a lament on a string.  
The men of Gwynedd were tired the day they came,  
and around the ridge of Llech Faelwy they broke shields.  
A host of kinsmen fell together at the hands of a third cousin. 10

NOTES

These notes should be read alongside those of Williams and Gruffydd. References to their work in these notes are mainly to the notes in their editions; since the line-numbering is the same in all the versions, I have not provided more detailed references. As noted above, Williams's frequently innovative suggestions about the text were often left in the obscurity of the notes to his two editions, whilst his text remained very conservative. But his proposals were at

times adopted by Gruffydd, especially in the text printed in “‘The praise of Tenby’”. Gruffydd’s text is, therefore, more innovative than that of Williams, though most of the suggestions can be found in Williams’s notes. The text proposed here is more conservative in some respects and more innovative in others because a diplomatic text is also to hand (pp. 24–6).

Note on orthography: the scribe of the Book of Taliesin uses *o* (the incurling form of *v*) as a separate letter to spell /u/, in the diphthongs /au/ and /ui/, and in /gw/-, while *v* and *u* are used for /v/ and /u/. The letter *w*, which consists of two overlapping *o*s is used mainly for /w/, but occasionally for /u/. Since the letter form *o* has a different range of values from *w*, it is retained in this edition, and not replaced by *w* as has been conventional.

1 *plwyfescori*: Williams and Gruffydd take this as ‘protector of the people’ (cf. also Haycock, *Prophecies*, 108) presumably taking the construction of object + verbal noun as an epithet (lit. ‘people-protecting God’). Another possibility which I adopt here is that this phrase is the petition which the poet is making to God.

3 *Adu6yn*: Gruffydd (following Williams’s discussion) takes it as representing a medieval *adwyn* and modernises it as *addwyn* here and throughout. For further discussion on the senses of this word, see above, pp. 20–1.

4 *bit*: Previous editions seem to have assumed that this is to be read as /bið/, thus ‘is’, but it should probably be read as the imperative, ‘may it (*sc.* the court) be’.

*y ri* (*yri* MS): Ifor Williams, *Canu Aneirin* (second ed., Caerdydd, 1961), 135, suggested that *yri* was a faulty modernisation of *eri* perhaps ‘host’, but in his edition of this poem takes it as the second element of *Eryri*, thus ‘headland’; cf. also p. 15 above. Following a reviewer’s suggestion, I propose here to take it simply as *y ri* ‘its king’; since *ri* is often used of God and is so close to the beginning of the poem, its use here to refer to the ruler has the effect of linking him implicitly with God.

7 *Dydybyd ... idi*: Williams (followed by Gruffydd) proposed taking *ar vrys* as a gloss on *dybrys*; Gruffydd is more certain than Williams: ‘*ar vrys* obviously glosses *dybrys*’ (“‘The praise of Tenby’”, 99). But this seems unlikely; cf. also l. 31 *yn y ad6yt* which is also thought to be a gloss, and the discussion above, pp. 11–12. The line has 11 syllables but could be shortened by emending *dydybyd* to *dybyd*; however, the double preverb may simply be a scribal error as there is a line break between *dy* and *dybyd* and the scribe may have mistakenly repeated the *dy*.

8 *o*: Williams and Gruffydd emend *o* to *e* ‘to’; thus, ‘they will leave ... to ...’. Both take *glas* as the lenited form of *clas* ‘tribe, band’. I tentatively take *o* here to be ‘on account of’, and also note the ironical use of *clas*, which is usually associated with monastic groups, of a band of raiders. However it is tempting to think that the original reading might have been different: if *clas* is understood in the basic sense of the Latin loanword ‘fleet’ (< Latin *classis*), then it is easy to read *o* as ‘under’; thus, ‘he will leave the angry, grey sea

under the fleet of the raiders'. However, examples of *o* 'under' seem to be restricted to *Y Gododdin*, and there are no other examples where *clas* can be interpreted as 'fleet', and so such an interpretation remains speculative.

9 *b6y fi*: Williams and Gruffydd propose emending the manuscript's *b6y f* to *b6y* (3 sg. pres. subj.), which is probably right; I follow a tentative suggestion of Williams that the *-f* is a reflex of the 1 sg. affixed pronoun.

*drws*: Williams and Gruffydd propose reading *drws* or *trws* to make internal rhyme with *de6s*, but this is hardly necessary as not all the lines have internal rhyme.

13 This line seems to be the model for the phrasing of the first half of l. 60. I follow Williams and Gruffydd in treating *Prydein* (and also *Vynet* (= *Gwynedd*) in l. 60) as vocatives following an imperative; thus 'Ask, Britain ...'. It would be possible in each case to treat the noun as the object of the verb; thus 'Ask Britain ...'.

*ti* (*ty* MS): I follow Williams and Gruffydd in emending to *ti*. This spelling with *y* is one of a number of reflexes of a modernising scribe somewhere in the line of transmission who tended to turn *i* into *y* but over-extended his modernisation to some instances where *i* should have been retained; cf. *llin/ llyn* (l. 14) and discussion above, pp. 15–16.

14 *llin* (*lyn* MS): This is another case of over-extended modernisation; I follow Williams and Gruffydd in emending to *llin* 'line'. See the discussion on l. 13.

15 *goscwr ... kerd*: Williams and Gruffydd propose emending *goscwr* to *goscord* and *kerd* to *kord*, thus creating internal rhyme. Neither seems necessary. On the militarisation of the poem by changing *kerd* to *kord* here, and *cherdeu* to *chordeu* (l. 29), see above, p. 13. Adding *-d* to *goscwr* would still create alliteration with *kerd*. Williams points to BT 21.26 (Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 4.190 (*Angar Kyfundawt*)) where *oscord* is intended to rhyme with *heissor* and Haycock emends *oscord* to *oscor*; cf. also BT 18.26 (Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 18.26 (*Preiddeu Annwfn*)) and note on p. 445) where *goscord* is found as part of a rhyme-scheme in *-or*. One wonders whether forms in *-or* were understood to rhyme with forms in *-ord* anyway.

16 *a ll6ybyr*: Williams and Gruffydd propose *ar ll6ybr*, but it might be possible to construe *ll6ybyr* as being governed by the *uch*, thus 'above a cloud and the path of the white-faced ones'. Perhaps better *a ll6ybyr granwyn* could be taken with the next line: 'and a path of the white-faced ones (i.e. the route they take in flight) before a splendid lord'. While *granwyn* may refer to the enemy, a literal rendering makes fewer assumptions. The second *rac* (emended from *nac* (see next note)) could then be taken with the next line, 'against the rising of an enemy ... they used to assemble'.

17 *feleic* (*felyc* MS), *rac* (*nac* MS): I take the spelling *felyc* as another over-extension of *y* spellings. It is clear that *nac* in the manuscript is a mis-reading of *rac*.

20 *eu*: this could be emended with Gruffydd to *e*, or perhaps *y*, thus making it possible to treat it as a 3 sg. fem. possessive agreeing with *caer*, but it could be read as referring to the occupants of the *caer*.

29 *llyfyn y cherdeu*: *llyfyn* is taken as a mis-modernised form of *llewyn* (pl. of *llawen* ‘joyful’) and Gruffydd proposes to emend it thus. This may be right but it could simply be the monosyllable *llyfyn* meaning ‘smooth, fluent’ (cf. *GPC* s.v. *llyfn* (b)), and so the reading of the manuscript is retained here. On the mistaken proposal to change *cherdeu* to *chordeu*, see l. 15 above.

30 *hebr*: I tentatively follow Williams and Gruffydd in taking this as *hywr* ‘a fine man’, but, as it stands, it could be read as ‘sower, scatterer’; the latter would be acceptable in the sense of ‘a scatterer of enemies’, but there are not enough early examples to be clear that it can bear that meaning, as opposed to ‘a sower or scatterer of seed’.

31 *kyn y vynet yn y adbyt*: Williams and Gruffydd observe that with 12 syllables the line is long but conclude that *yn y adbyt* was a gloss mistakenly incorporated into the text; cf. l. 7 above on *ar vrys*. If we think this line is too long, it could be reduced by deleting one or both of the possessive pronouns, which a scribe may have introduced for clarification. See also the discussion above, pp. 11–12.

32 *ef am rodes*: the line is eleven syllables long and Gruffydd proposes deleting the *ef*; for discussion, see above, p. 11.

34 *y rodir*: l. 59 in the additional stanza has *yt rodir* and Gruffydd suggests emending to *yt rodir* here; note also that the same particle occurs in l. 46, *yn yt wna tonneu* ... The emendation is possible but not necessary. On this particle, see Stefan Schumacher, ‘y(d) und yt: Zur Syntax zweier ‘Partikeln’ des Mittelkymrischen’, *Keltische Forschungen* 6 (2013–14), 159–217.

36 *ud erllyssan*: attempts to interpret *ud erllyssan* as ‘lord of a small court’ vel sim. are not compelling; see p. 16 above. Following the reading of l. 61 in the additional stanza, *a derllyssant*, it is better to read it as ‘a lord they deserve’. A further, but unnecessary, step might be to emend to *ud derllyssan*. The translations of this verb in l. 61 have assumed that it is preterite: Simon Rodway assumes the stem *derlless-* is preterite without comment (*Dating Medieval Welsh Literature: Evidence from the Verbal System* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 224). Lloyd-Jones expresses some doubt (*Geirfa*, s.vv. *derllyð*, *erllys*), but the fullest discussion is by Schumacher who proposed that there were two distinct verbs, *derllyð-* and *derllys-* (*The Historical Morphology of the Welsh Verbal Noun* (Maynooth, 2000), 46). Ifor Williams argued that *derllys-* was an analogically formed s-preterite of *derllyð-* (*Canu Aneirin*, 302), but, as Schumacher points out, the analogical model of *gorðiwes-* ‘is completely isolated in Welsh verbal-noun formation and highly unlikely to have provided an adequate model base for analogical spread’ (*The Historical Morphology of the Welsh Verbal Noun*, 46). We may also note that the other example of this verbal stem in BT *erllys* (11.16), is treated as a present by Haycock (*Blodeugerdd*, 20.93, and note on p. 197). In both cases, here and at l. 61, the forms are read as present; in the latter, the verbs which follow are preterite, but I would understand *G6ay[a]wa6r ryn*, *rein a derllyssant* ‘steadfast spears, these they deserve’ as meaning that Gwynedd, as the enemy, deserves spears (sc. to be thrown at them). The BBC reading *rei a darwant* ‘this is what happened’ is in the past tense but I take this as belonging to more narrative section which follows.

37 *i nos*: This probably represents the accidental preservation of an older spelling for *yn nos*; for discussion, see above, p. 16. Many of the lines end in a four-line cadence which *yn nos galan* would provide, as would *pob nos galan* (suggested by a reviewer).

38 *lledyddaŷt*: for this term, which has generated some discussion, see above, n. 45 (pp. 17–18).

38–9 The end-rhyme changes here and it is possible that some text has dropped out; for discussion, see above, p. 11.

41 *kedeu*: Williams (but not Gruffydd) proposes emending to *kerdeu* or *kordeu*. Neither is necessary; we might have expected to find *keteu*, but there are a few examples of *-d-* for */d/*, e.g. *prydein* (l. 13), *brydein bryder* (l. 45).

41–2 The end-rhyme changes here and it is possible, but not necessary, that some text has dropped out; *kedeu* is the *gair cyrch* rhyming with *rydeu* but *kyffrŷg* does not carry the main rhyme. For discussion, and the suggestion that the *gair cyrch* may be sufficient here, see above, p. 11.

42–3 The legal terminology in these lines, and how it is rendered and understood, deserves close scrutiny. We may begin with the various translations:

Williams ('Two poems', p. 165): 'mine were the privileges I desired  
| I shall not speak of rights, due order would I keep'.

Gruffydd ("The praise of Tenby", p. 98): 'mine were the privileges that I used to choose | I shall not speak of legal right, I would keep due custom'.

Conran (*Welsh Verse*, p. 119): 'where every concession which was mine | – I say nothing of rights! I kept good order'.

Clancy (*Medieval Welsh Poetry*, p. 101): 'What honours I wished for were mine | (I will not say 'rights': I must keep decorum)' (the earlier translation has 'my place' instead of 'decorum' (Clancy, *The Earliest Welsh Poetry*, p. 91)).

Given the concentration of legal terminology in these two lines, we should at least attempt to extract their full sense; after all they did not land here in a cluster by accident and we should be expecting that the poet is playing them one off the other. *Rydeu* are 'freedom from obligations which are placed on others'; clearly such was his status that he could choose which obligations he might take on. 'Privileges' or 'concessions' capture some but not all of this. *Teith* is in one sense the converse of *rydeu*, namely that to which he was entitled by virtue of his status; again 'rights' is close but is perhaps too general in the context. The final phrase, *reith ryscatŷn*, has received the most divergent renderings. *Reith* is more than 'due custom', 'due order', 'decorum', 'my place'; it is no less than 'that which is right' (and not for nothing is it the root of *cyfreith* 'law'). However, only Clancy has got anywhere near the sense of *ryscaŷn*; it is a 1 sg. impft. subj. with a prefixed *ry*. None of the examples

quoted in *GMW* 113 (§ 124)) are in main clauses and so I take the verb here as relative. On the point of *cadw*, see above, pp. 18–19.

47 *perheit pell* (*pereit hyt* MS): for discussion, see above p. 11. I would take the subject to be *ysgriuen brydein* (l. 45) and read the MS *pereit hyt* as an attempt to correct a miscopying of *perheit* ‘may it last’.

*ygell*: I propose here that, rather than *y gell* ‘the cell’, it should be read as *ygell* ‘in a cell’. An objection to this reading (pointed out by a reviewer) is that the Book of Taliesin scribe consistently spells *yn* followed by *c/k* as *yg* + radical, e.g. *yg kaer ofanhon* (BT 3.2); *yg corff* (4.9); *yg kynted* (4.11, 9.11); *yg kylch eluyd* (6.1); *yg kywyd* (7.3); *yg kebystyr* (9.21); *yg ketoed kymry* (13.19); *yg keithiwet* (13.20); *yg custud* (15.21), etc. But in fact all that tells us is that the scribe thought it represented *y gell* ‘the cell’; the poet may have intended something else. A further reason for thinking that this may mean ‘in a cell’ is the relative rarity of the definite article (in the form *y*) in the early poetry.

50 *eu*: Williams and Gruffydd suggest reading *e*, but *y* would be possible; for discussion, see the note on l. 20 above.

51–2 *hir y hadein*: my translation is based on the assumption that the poet is being clever and wants *hir y hadein* to refer both backwards to the plumes of foam thrown up onto the cliffs below the *caer* and forward to the wings of the birds. Williams’ translation ‘its (i.e. the spray’s) wings’ is problematic because *gŕych* is masculine (and so we would not expect *h-* on *hadein*), but, if we were to take *gŕych* as a morphological collective with plural agreement, ‘plumes of spray’, *y hadein* would work.

53 *tra thrumein*: I follow Williams in this reading. The manuscript reads *trath-| [.]umein*. Although a *u* has usually been read before the *m*, only a minim is visible and it is not clearly linked at the bottom to what precedes. As Williams suggests (‘Two poems’, 170 (with further discussion)), it is possible that originally *trathumein* was copied and then the *u* was partially erased to make room for *ru*, but was written has now been obscured by a blot. Gwenogvryn Evans (BT *Facsimile*, 44.4–5) printed *trath-|amein*, but it is difficult to see how an *a* can be rescued from the text as it is currently.

54 *a ffein*: With reservations, I follow Williams in treating this as *a fein* (3 pl. impft. subj.) ‘which would be’; the difficulty is that *gorllŷt goreu* is singular though the subjunctive *fein* could allow the antecedent to be read indefinitely (and so perhaps with a plural verb), thus ‘whatever bliss which ...’. Gruffydd’s suggestion that *affein* is a borrowing of Old Irish *affaig* (itself borrowed from Old English) in the sense of ‘wealth’ is unhelpful.

55 *dympyner*: the sense is uncertain and partly turns on whether we see *dym-* as containing two preverbs, a 1sg. infixed pronoun, or relative marker (for the first two, see Williams, ‘Two poems’, 170; Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, 102; Haycock, *The Prophecies*, 135; the last is proposed in *Geirfa*, s.v. *dimbrodic*). Williams prefers the first possibility and thus renders it ‘be weighed, be welcomed’; Gruffydd opts for ‘be pondered’. However, if the *-m* is treated as the pronoun, it may be that we are seeing the poet edging into the picture again; i.e. he is the one doing the preserving of Bleiddudd’s memory.

57 *vrowyr*: Williams' interpretation as 'cow-herds' seems overly etymological and based on what might have survived of the Old Irish of Dyfed; it is more likely that it means 'men of a *bro*, countrymen'. Cf. also Gruffydd, 'The early court poetry', 96 n. 2, who briskly rejected the 'cow-herd' interpretation, though he returned to it in his later work on the poem. In the same discussion he also seems to suggest that *gorŷyr Owain* is the subject of the clause: 'there is talk of *gorŷyr Owain* "the great grandson of Owain" making people *browyr*' (p. 96), though later he reverts to God being the subject (Gruffydd, '*Edmyg Dinbych*', 23; Gruffydd, "'The praise of Tenby'", 99). We should also note that the internal rhyme between *vrowyr* and *gorŷyr* is faulty (if it were ever intended).

58–67 the additional stanza: the variant readings from the Black Book are provided in the apparatus of the BT version and vice versa.

58 *ar lan lliant*: on versions of this phrase elsewhere, see *GLIF* 14.110 and n. on pp. 247–8).

61 *derllyssant*: on the form and tense, see the discussion at l. 36 above.

67 [c6d]: this was deleted by the scribe after he realised that he had miscopied the first syllable of *cŷdynt* and he started again; one possibility is that this is a pronunciation error and that he was pronouncing *cŷd-* as /kuð/ (cf. pronunciations of various parts of *gwybod* with the first syllable as /gub/-).

*y gan gefyn* (*y can keiwin* BBC): the BBC reading shows that we should understand *ceifn* 'third cousin'. Williams and Gruffydd take *y gan* as 'together with'. However, if we understand it as 'at the hands of', then a note of horror is added in the final line since it would imply that members of the same kin-group were fighting on both sides of the conflict; for further discussion, see above, pp. 23–4.

#### *Black Book of Carmarthen version*

2 *pauper*: the *er* is written as a cross-bar on the descender of the final *p* as part of the Latin abbreviation for *per*; this implies that the scribe thought that *pauper* was one word. The *er* was not printed in *LIDC* 13.2 (p. 23), though it is commented upon in the notes (p. 94). I take it that, in the context of dispensing generosity, the scribe understood the line as 'finely is given to a poor man (Latin *pauper*) his desire'. If so, it implies that the Black Book scribe was used to encountering Latin words in his Welsh verse.

5 *yŷ cvinowant* (BBC), *yŷkyfnofant* (BT): on this variation, see p. 15 above.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BBC | Black Book of Carmarthen (NLW Peniarth 1); for the edition, see <i>LIDC</i> below; facsimile: J. Gwenogvryn Evans, <i>Facsimile of the Black Book of Carmarthen</i> (Oxford, 1888); digital images: <a href="https://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/black-book-of-carmarthen/">https://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/black-book-of-carmarthen/</a> . |
| BT  | Book of Taliesin (NLW Peniarth 2); facsimile: J. Gwenogvryn Evans, <i>Facsimile and Text of the Book of Taliesin</i> (Llanbedrog,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

- 1910); digital images: <https://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/book-of-taliesin/>.
- ByT (RB)* Thomas Jones (ed. and trans.), *Brut y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes: The Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955).
- CBT* Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion.
- GBF* Rh. M. Andrews, N. G. Costigan (Bosco), C. James, P. I. Lynch, C. McKenna, M. E. Owen, and B. F. Roberts (eds), *Gwaith Bledodyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, CBT VII (Caerdydd, 1996).
- GCBM I* N. A. Jones and A. Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, I, CBT III (Caerdydd, 1991).
- GCBM II* N. A. Jones and A. Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, II, CBT IV (Caerdydd, 1995).
- Geirfa* J. Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg, A–Heilic* (Caerdydd, 1931–63).
- GLIF* K. A. Bramley, N. A. Jones, M. E. Owen, C. McKenna, G. Aled Williams, and J. E. Caerwyn Williams (eds), *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif*, CBT II (Caerdydd, 1994).
- GMB* J. E. Caerwyn Williams and P. I. Lynch (eds), *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, CBT I (Caerdydd, 1994).
- GPM* E. M. Jones and N. A. Jones (eds), *Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch'*, CBT V (Caerdydd, 1991).
- LIDC* A. O. H. Jarman (ed.), *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Caerdydd, 1982).

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