Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer and its significance in Welsh literary history

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CYFOESI MYRDDIN A GWENDDYDD EI CHWAER AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN WELSH LITERARY HISTORY

Abstract

This article arises from the author's work on the AHRC-funded Myrddin poetry project. It presents a detailed account of the context and connections of a long prophetic dialogue poem in Middle Welsh, spoken in the voices of Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd. The substantial manuscript tradition is surveyed, partly to explain the editorial decisions underlying the new edition of the poem hosted on the Myrddin project website (https://myrddin.cymru/). Detailed discussion of the date of composition concludes that the whole poem was probably composed in the early thirteenth century. Aspects of the metre and ornament are investigated, and an attempt is made to show how the poem creatively drew on pre-existing Welsh literature. Lastly, the reception of the poem is traced as far as the eighteenth century.

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Introduction[1]

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is a poem that sits on several frontiers of medieval Welsh literature. It is a substantial item of so-called *Hengerdd*, running to 428 lines. It is among the best attested Welsh poems in extant medieval manuscripts, being preserved in five separate manuscripts up to *c.* 1450. Yet until recently it has not been subject to a critical edition, and published discussions of the contents have remained superficial. Two of the oldest copies (Peniarth 3 and the Red Book of Hergest) were printed individually in the earlier part of the twentieth century, and these have formed the basis for scholarly discussion hitherto.[2] A translation of the poem, based on the Red Book but taking account of Peniarth 3, was published by John Bollard in 1990, and in the same year Manon Bonner Jenkins submitted her Cambridge PhD thesis on Welsh prophetic poetry, which included an edition and translation, with notes, of the Red Book version, with select references to several other manuscripts.[3] But the lack of sustained engagement with the text and its manuscripts has left major questions unanswered. Despite the ongoing controversies over the dating of the earliest Welsh poetry, *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* has featured little in discussion.[4] Its relationships with the other Myrddin poems, and indeed with medieval Welsh poetry more widely, have remained unexplored.

Perhaps most striking of all, the poem's remarkable contents have not yet obtained the recognition that they assuredly deserve. The first part of the poem, up to line 129, has received a certain amount of comment, because it provides a rare early perspective on dynastic history in early medieval Wales;[5] but this section is only a little more than a quarter of a long, coherent and intricately fashioned poem in which dynastic commentary is only one of many strands of interest. It is not the purpose of the present article to dwell on aspects of content or literary interpretation, but it is essential at the outset to set out the scope of the poem's contents, if only to challenge the idea that it can be shrugged off as 'lengthy and rather tedious'.[6]

[1]This work was supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/W000717/1]. I would like to thank Dr David Callander and Dr Dylan Foster Evans for commenting on an earlier draft of this article. I am also grateful to Professor Ann Parry Owen and Dr Jenny Day for many stimulating conversations on this topic.

[2]J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The Poetry in the Red Book of Hergest* (Llanbedrog, 1911), 1–4 (cols 577–83); Ifor Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau yn Peniarth 3', *BBCS* 2 (1928), 112–29, at 114–21.

[3]John K. Bollard, 'Myrddin in early Welsh tradition', in Peter Goodrich (ed.), *The Romance of Merlin* (New York and London, 1990), 13–54, at 30–46; Manon Bonner Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition in the Middle Ages: incorporating textual studies of poetry from 'Llyfr Coch Hergest' (Oxford, Jesus College, MS cxi) and 'Y Cwta Cyfarwydd' (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 50)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1990, 33–90.

[4]For recent commentary on this debate, see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Undated medieval Welsh texts and the literary critic', in Helen Fulton and Georgia Henley (eds), *Imagination and Innovation in Medieval Celtic Literatures* (Cardiff, 2025), 3–17.

[5]For example, in T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), 337–9.

[6]Nerys Ann Jones, 'Hengerdd in the age of the Poets of the Princes', in Alex Woolf (ed.), *Beyond the Gododdin: Dark Age Scotland in Medieval Wales* (St Andrews, 2010), 41–80, at 46. Jones

The poem is a dialogue between Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd, in which they converse in alternating englynion. For the bulk of the poem, Gwenddydd's role is to urge and cajole her seemingly reluctant brother to reveal the future of the Welsh, and indeed the world, *kan gɔ́dost y ystyr* ('since you know its story/meaning', l. 155). Gwenddydd's questions combine pity for her brother's parlous present state (*Kyfliɔ́ dy benn ac aryen gaeaf;* / *gɔ́ares Duɔ́ dy anghen* 'Your head is the same colour as winter's frost; / may God relieve your need', ll. 38–9) with warm reminders of his former glories as a warrior (*Kyuarchaf y'm clotleɔ́ llallaɔ́c,* / *anɔ́ynaɔ́c yn lluyd* 'I ask my illustrious companion, / eminent in a host', ll. 26–7). Myrddin is evidently leading the life of a wild man following the death of his lord Gwenddolau in the battle of Arfderydd: *O leas Gɔ́endoleu ygɔ́aetfreu Arderyd,* / *handɔ́yf oeithin* ('Because of Gwenddolau's death in the bloodshed of Arfderydd, / I am tormented', ll. 29–30). He proceeds to reveal the future leaders of the Welsh, beginning with three northerners and then continuing through successive kings of Gwynedd. The pattern is clear and formulaic until the reign of Hywel Dda (d. 950; ll. 127–9), but the chronological progression nonetheless continues afterwards in a more cryptic fashion up to the early thirteenth century (ll. 199–201). From this point, successive sovereigns are more obscure, probably fictional, though in some cases they clearly allude to Angevin rulers like King John (*keneu Henri, ryuyget!* 'the whelp of Henry, let him behave arrogantly!', l. 219). Matters become more tumultuous as conflict between Wales and England is foregrounded, and the legendary prophetic deliverers Owain (l. 249) and Beli Hir (l. 274) make appearances. The ultimate redeemer Cadwaladr arrives as the salvation of Gwynedd and the Welsh (l. 291), but this is not an end in itself; it is merely a sign of the coming end of times, and Cadwaladr himself is shamefully killed (*As gɔ́an gɔ́aeɔ́ euyd o ergrywyd llog* / *a llaɔ́ gynt diwedyd.* / *Dybyd Gymry gɔ́arth o'r dyd* 'A bronze spear from the planks of a ship will pierce him / by means of the hand of an unbaptized people. / Shame will come to Wales because of the day', ll. 316–18).

Cadwaladr is succeeded by Cyndaf, a bringer of the chaos that precedes the Final Judgement:

> [Myrddin:]
> Llaɔ́ ar gled, arall ar groes,
> gogelet baɔ́p y einyoes!
> Gan Gyndaf kymot nyt oes.
>
> [Gwenddydd:]
> Neut a ganaɔ́t [i] uidyssyaɔ́t a chiwtaɔ́t plant Adaf
> a henynt o'e gnaɔ́t:
> a dioes gɔ́aret hyt Uraɔ́t?

also suggests that the poem foretells 'the eventual supremacy of the Welsh under Cadwaladr', which is not quite correct; see below.

‘[Myrddin:]
A hand on a sword, another on a cross,
let everyone defend their lives!
There is no reconciliation with Cyndaf.

[Gwenddydd:]
It is what he will sing to the world and the nation of Adam’s children
who descend from his flesh:
will they have salvation up to Judgement Day?’ (ll. 334–9)

Myrddin explains to a disbelieving Gwenddydd that this will truly be the end of the world. This sets up the most important crux in the poem’s emotional journey: we learn that Myrddin is prophesying to Gwenddydd from his deathbed, and so, for Gwenddydd, Myrddin’s prophecy of the end of time is understood in terms of the end of Myrddin’s life, sparking an outpouring of grief for him:

[Myrddin:]
Gɔ́endyd wenn, benn mynogi,
as dywedaf yn difri
na byd pennaeth byth wedi.

[Gwenddydd:]
Och, annɔ́yl, o’r oer esgar,
gɔ́edy dy uot yn trydar
gan unben deɔ́r diarchar,
dy olo di dan dayar.

‘[Myrddin:]
Fair Gwenddydd, summit of dignity,
I say it seriously
that there will be no sovereign ever after.

[Gwenddydd:]
Alas, dear, from the cold separation,
that after you were in battle
alongside a brave, unconquerable chief,
you should be buried under earth.’ (ll. 376–82)

Gwenddydd’s distress grows as she and her brother lament the passing of their family members, who are named in turn. The earlier dynamic between the siblings is reversed; it is now Myrddin who is calm and accepting of what fate should bring, and Gwenddydd who requires consolation:

[Myrddin:]
Gɔ́endyd, na vyd anhylar,
neur roet y llwyth y’r dayar,
diofryt o baɔ́b a gar.

[Gwenddydd:]
Y'm byw ny'th diofredaf,
a hyt Vraȯt y'th goffaaf.
Dy fossaȯt trallaȯt tromaf.

[Myrddin:]
Escut gorwyd, rȯyd gȯynt,
amlwm ar du afyrdȯl hynt.
Yd af yn ol a ethynt.

'[Myrddin:]
Gwenddydd, be not bitter,
the family has been given to the earth,
everyone letting go of what they love.

[Gwenddydd:]
In my life I will not let go of you,
and until Judgement Day I will remember you.
Your wounding is the heaviest tribulation.

[Myrddin:]
Swift is a steed, free is the wind,
it is very bare beside a joyless path.
I will go in the tracks of those who have gone.' (ll. 408–16)

Each sibling commends the other to God, and the poem ends with a simple, sorrowful Amen.

This extraordinary poem is finally available to be read and studied thanks to the efforts of the AHRC-funded Myrddin poetry project, led by Dr David Callander and Dr Dylan Foster Evans in Cardiff University together with colleagues at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies and Swansea University.[7] As part of the project, I have produced the first critical edition of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, taking account of the full manuscript tradition. This is now freely available, in both Welsh and English, on the project's website.[8] The purpose of the present article is to draw together some threads of interest that arose during the editorial process, pertaining particularly to the dating of the poem and its relationship with medieval Welsh literature more broadly. Further consideration of points of detail that are discussed here will be found in the notes to the edition. This article addresses five main areas of interest: 1. the manuscript tradition; 2. the date of composition; 3. metre and ornament; 4. intertextuality; and 5. reception. It is hoped that by addressing these matters from first principles in reference

[7] See https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FW000717%2F1 (accessed 3 September 2025).

[8] All references to the early poems in Myrddin's voice are to the new online editions at https://myrddin.cymru (accessed 3 September 2025), as follows: *Yr Afallennau* (poem 3), ed. Ben Guy; *Yr Oianau* (poem 4), ed. Llewelyn Hopwood; *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* (poem 5), ed. Ben Guy; *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin* (poem 6), ed. Ben Guy; *Peirian Faban* (poem 7), ed. Llewelyn Hopwood.

to a substantial item of *Hengerdd*, this study can offer a methodology for approaching other poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus.

All quotations and translations of the poem are taken from the new edition, with reference to the line numbers of that edition. Due to the relatively stable nature of the poem's textual tradition, and the large number of manuscripts in which it is preserved, it was felt appropriate to take a traditional stemmatic approach to editing the poem: the copy in the Red Book of Hergest was used as a base-text, since it is a full and relatively good copy, but it was emended with reference to the rest of the manuscript tradition with the aim of reconstructing the archetype of the tradition, and, where possible, the original text. Nevertheless, full reference is made in the edition to the textual variation in the tradition, and it is discussed below where appropriate.[9]

1. The manuscript tradition

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is preserved in a large number of medieval and early modern manuscripts. In what follows, I highlight the salient features of the primary witnesses to the text: that is, those witnesses that were significant for the editorial process. There is then a summary of the textual tradition that discusses some of the key pieces of evidence for the important nodes of the stemma. Finally, there is a brief consideration of the textual relationships between the derivative witnesses. Unless otherwise stated, all manuscripts are now housed in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

1.1. Primary witnesses

Peniarth 3, part ii, pp. 17–20 (*s.* xiii/xiv): A single quire of twelve leaves with texts of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau* alongside various other texts.[10] Owing to the loss of leaves at the beginning, the text of the *Cyfoesi* begins part-way through line 154, but continues thereafter to the end. The leaves at the beginning of the manuscript had been lost by the time that texts from this manuscript were copied by Thomas Wiliems into Peniarth 94 in the 1590s; his copy of the *Cyfoesi* is on pages 29–38 of that manuscript.

Peniarth 20, pp. 302–4 (*s.* xiv^{med}): Although the main parts of this well-known manuscript were written around 1330 in the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis, the text of the *Cyfoesi* was written in a formerly blank space, sandwiched between *Brut y Tywysogyon* and the bardic grammar, by several hands using Anglicana script around the middle of the fourteenth century.[11] Despite the plurality of hands, the textual evidence strongly suggests that they were copying a single exemplar. The latter part of the text is partially illegible due to rubbing, and the poem ends prematurely on page 304 with line 287. In

[9] In what follows, I refer to the poem simply as the '*Cyfoesi*'; for the meaning of the title, see below, p. 242.

[10] Daniel Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes*, 3 vols (Aberystwyth, 2022), i, 334.

[11] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 342–3.

the bottom margin of the following page (305) is further text that is almost impossible to read, but the few words that can just about be discerned (*merddin … br[.]nhinoedd*) suggest that this was a colophon to the text rather than a continuation of it. The final section of the poem that is extant in the manuscript, on page 304, contains several verses that were additions to the original poem, most of which are unique to this manuscript: where other copies of the poem usually have two englynion (ll. 258–63), Peniarth 20 has nine, only one of which mirrors the two in the other copies (ll. 261–3).[12] Two of these additional englynion are found in three other partial witnesses to the poem, which will be discussed briefly below.[13] One of these latter two englynion, found in Peniarth 20 and the partial witnesses, might refer to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd:

> Taleithiawc vrenin a daw
> a'y voned o Aberffraw,
> a vyd dwy vylyned devnaw.
>
> 'A crowned king will come
> whose lineage is from Aberffraw,
> who will remain for two years eighteen [times].'

Llygad Gŵr addresses Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in similar terms, and if *devnaw* has been interpreted correctly as 'eighteen times', the resulting thirty-six years would match Llywelyn's reign from when he first took power in 1246 to his death in 1282.[14]

Oxford, Jesus College, 111 [the 'Red Book of Hergest'], fols 141r–142v, cols 577–83 (1382 × *c.* 1405): One of the most famous medieval Welsh manuscripts, and certainly the most compendious.[15] The text of the *Cyfoesi* occurs alongside that of *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*, both copied by Hywel Fychan in his section of the manuscript.[16] The manuscript contains a full text of the *Cyfoesi*, and it is certainly the best-known copy owing to its publication in diplomatic transcription by Gwenogvryn Evans in 1911.[17]

Peniarth 50 ['Y Cwtta Cyfarwydd'], fols 25v–29v [pp. 44–52] (*c.* 1445): A manuscript written in Glamorgan, apparently by a scribe called Dafydd.[18] It is an important miscellany comprised mainly of prophetic texts, many of which were edited in Manon Jenkins's PhD thesis.[19] The *Cyfoesi* occurs in a section that contains the majority of the early Myrddin poems. The text breaks off prematurely at the end of folio 29v with line 384.

[12]These nine englynion have been edited in the online edition as 'poem 5.II'.

[13]Namely, in the independent witnesses to X^9: NLW 5276D, fol. 407r; Peniarth 254, part iii, p. 50; NLW 3041B, p. 111.

[14]For the relevant poem by Llygad Gŵr, see *CBT* VII, poem 24, esp. l. 107; cf. ll. 111, 115 and 120.

[15]Huws, *Repertory*, i, 741–2.

[16]Daniel Huws, 'Llyfr Coch Hergest', in Iestyn Daniel et al. (eds), *Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol* (Cardiff, 2003), 1–30, at 5.

[17]See above, note 2.

[18]Huws, *Repertory*, i, 358–9.

[19]Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 225–512.

Peniarth 26, pp. 47–56 (*c.* 1456): Almost all of this manuscript was written by a single scribe, probably in north-east Wales.[20] The text of the *Cyfoesi* is found alongside the other early Myrddin poems *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin* and *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*. This is a complete and important copy of the text. Its text has, in places, been lightly revised to a somewhat greater degree than is usual in the textual tradition. The text contains two series of unique additional verses, which are discussed below.[21] The text has a busy appearance because it was collated with another copy of the poem by a seventeenth-century hand, probably that of Robert Vaughan. The collations were taken from a lost witness that I call X^6, which was a close relative of an exemplar used by John Davies of Mallwyd, as described below.

Peniarth 94, pp. 126–7 (Thomas Wiliems, 1590s): A large compilation of prophecies, including a copy of Peniarth 3's text of the *Cyfoesi*, as noted above.[22] However, later in the manuscript, there is another, partial copy of the poem introduced by the statement *llyma byncieu o gyfoissi Merdhin wyllt a Gwenðyð yn y diwedh* ('here are passages from the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin Wyllt and Gwenddydd at the end'). What follows is an independent copy of lines 340–410, after which Thomas Wiliems writes *val or blaen* ('as before'). It seems that he deliberately extracted these lines from the end of the poem, as found in another exemplar, because they contrasted with the lines that he had already copied from Peniarth 3.

NLW 3041B [Mostyn 133], pp. 230–42 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, 1607–23): A collection of prophecies by the prolific scribe John Jones of Gellilyfdy.[23] The manuscript was written in two stints, the first in 1607 (pp. 1–229) and the second in 1623 (pp. 230–640). The manuscript contains no fewer than three copies of the *Cyfoesi*: one on pp. 109–11, which is an independent copy of lines 202–51 deriving from X^9, with some additional material related to Peniarth 20;[24] a second on pp. 230–42, which is an independent copy of lines 261–428 and is the only copy of the three that is useful for reconstructing the archetype (this is generally the copy meant when 'NLW 3041B' is mentioned below); and a third on pp. 419–54, which is a conflation of the texts in the Red Book and Peniarth 50. This latter copy in NLW 3041B ends with a colophon by John Jones, which reads as follows (I have supplied modern punctuation):

> Ac fal hynn y terfyna kyfoessi Merḍin a Gwenḍyḍ yr 16 dyḍ o fis Mai, oed Krist 1623, yr hụn a ysgrifennais if aḷan o lyfr o laụ newyḍ o'r eiḍo Mr Lewis uụçod, yr hụn a ysgrifenessid alan o hen dext, ond nid ydoeḍ yr ysgrifennyḍ yn dyaḷ y text nac yn medru ei darḷain o'r aços yr ysgrifennoḍ ef yn ffals lawer iaụn o eiriau, a mi a geryḍais

[20] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 345–6.

[21] See below, pp. 208–9. These two sequences have been edited in the online edition as 'poem 5.III' and 'poem 5.IV'.

[22] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 375.

[23] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 189–90.

[24] See above, note 13.

> lawer onaḍunt ac a edewais le i ḍodi ṛai eraiḷ i meụn ar a edowsid aḷan pan gaffer meụn ḷyfrau eraiḷ, ac a ysgrifennais eraiḷ o'r geiriau mal y kefais hụynt.
>
> 'And like this finishes the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin and Gwenddydd, on the 16th day of May, AD 1623, which I wrote out of a book in a recent hand belonging to Mr Lewis above, which had been written out of an old text, but the scribe did not understand the text nor was able to read it because he wrote very many of the words erroneously, and I corrected many of them and left space to put in some others which had been left out whenever they might be found in other books, and I wrote other words as I found them.'

It is not clear, however, that John Jones himself was responsible for the conflation of the Red Book and Peniarth 50 in this text. The conflation is such that blocks of lines have been taken from the two sources in turn: lines 1–80 from the Red Book, lines 81–101 from Peniarth 50, and line 102 onwards from the Red Book, with occasional readings from Peniarth 50. This does not seem to correspond to the process that John Jones describes above, involving correcting some words and leaving space for others; that activity is visible too in the copy, but not necessarily resulting from Red Book readings being corrected by Peniarth 50 readings.[25] The original conflation, then, may already have taken place in John Jones's source: the book belonging to Mr Lewis (i.e. John Lewis of Llynwene, *c.* 1540–1615/16). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Peniarth 50 seems to have belonged to Siôn Dafydd Rhys, a known friend and associate of John Lewis; by contrast, John Jones did not see Peniarth 50 until 1640.[26]

NLW 4973B ['*Liber B*'], fols 114r–122r (John Davies of Mallwyd, *c.* 1620–34): John Davies of Mallwyd's famous compilation of early poetry.[27] The manuscript contains two full copies of the *Cyfoesi*. The second of these, on fols 201r–206v, is a copy of the version in Peniarth 118, pp. 33–9 (Siôn Dafydd Rhys, *c.* 1580–1610), itself taken directly from the Red Book of Hergest. In his copy of Peniarth 118, John Davies corrected a few obvious errors himself and later corrected others through direct comparison with the Red Book. He also lightly annotated the text with variants drawn mainly from his other copy of the poem (or perhaps its exemplar). By contrast, this first copy, on fols 114r–122r, is independent of any other extant manuscript. At the

[25] For example, in line 11, Jones inserts the word *gadauel*, the equivalent of which in Peniarth 50 is the corrupt form *indawel*; and in line 18, he inserts the word *trewy*, which does not correspond to the readings of either the Red Book or Peniarth 50.

[26] Cf. Huws, *Repertory*, i, 359; ii, 91; Francis G. Payne, 'John Lewis, Llynwene, historian and antiquary', *The Radnorshire Society Transactions* 30 (1960), 4–16, at 7 and 15. Siôn Dafydd Rhys once referred to John Lewis as 'most expert in law and most loveable man', ibid., 15.

[27] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 208–9. Note that, in an earlier discussion of the manuscript, Huws incorrectly claimed that the copy of the *Cyfoesi* on fols 114r–122r was part of the material deriving from the Red Book: Daniel Huws, 'John Davies and his manuscripts', in Ceri Davies (ed.), *Dr John Davies of Mallwyd: Welsh Renaissance Scholar* (Cardiff, 2004), 88–120, at 107, seemingly followed by Nerys Ann Jones and Morfydd E. Owen, 'John Davies and the Poets of the Princes: *Cognoscere, Intellegere, Scire*', ibid., 171–207, at 177. This error was corrected in Huws's *Repertory*.

end of this copy is a note in Robert Vaughan's hand purporting to reveal its origin (I have supplied modern punctuation):

> D[afyd]d Jones viccar Llanvair Dyffryn Clwyd allan o hen lyfr dihenydd o barsmant a scrifennase hyn a[nn]o 1588, ac o'i lyfr ef y cafwyd hyn, hyd yr wyf yn tybiaw, pan oedd Iarll Derbi yn Flanndrys yn parlio am heddwch rhwng y frenhines Elisbeth a Philip brenin Spaen.
>
> 'Dafydd Jones, vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, had copied this out of an ancient parchment book in the year 1588, and this was taken from his book, as I suppose, when the Earl of Derby was in Flanders negotiating for peace between Queen Elizabeth and Philip king of Spain.'

Although the wording is not entirely clear, this is a description of John Davies's exemplar (the book of Dafydd Jones, written in 1588), as well as his exemplar's exemplar (the ancient parchment book). The confusion stems from the second part of the passage, beginning *hyd yr wyf yn tybiaw*, since this refers to an event that happened in 1588, when Dafydd Jones was writing, rather than something that happened when John Davies took the text from Dafydd Jones's book, as would be a more natural reading. Presumably Robert Vaughan was familiar with Dafydd Jones's book, and indeed the latter should arguably be identified with the lost witness X^6, upon which Robert Vaughan himself drew when he was annotating Peniarth 26 (discussed below). If so, the 'ancient parchment book' may be the lost X^5, a sister copy of Peniarth 26 and the exemplar of John Jones's copy in NLW 3041B, pp. 230–42.

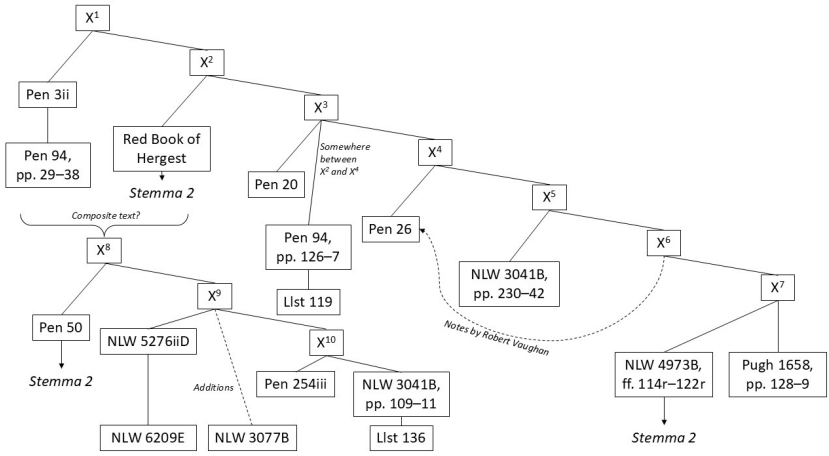
Thomas Pugh, *Brittish and Out-landish Prophesies: Most of Above a 1000 Years Antiquity, the Rest Very Antient* (London, 1658), pp. 128–9: This book of prophesies, published by Thomas Pugh in 1658, contains the first printed text of a portion of the *Cyfoesi*, and it is followed by an English translation. Although Pugh did not always understand the line divisions correctly, he preserved a complete text for lines 349–428. The text is very closely related to John Davies's text in NLW 4973B, fols 114r–122r, even in details of spelling, suggesting that Pugh's text may have been copied from a draft of the text in John Davies's own hand.

1.2. Relationships between the primary witnesses

The primary witnesses are related in the way that is shown in Figure 1. In this section, I summarise the key textual evidence for the postulated lost copies, X^1 to X^{10}, where X^1 is the archetype of the surviving written tradition.

X^1: It would appear that all surviving copies of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* derive from a single written tradition, as can be shown by certain textual corruptions that they all share. Line 284 provides a good example. At the end of the preceding stanza, Myrddin declares *gó́yn eu byt Gymry; gó́ae Wydel!* ('blessed are the Welsh; woe to an Irishman!', l. 281). Not unreasonably, Gwenddydd enquires further about this *gwae* to be suffered by an Irishman.

Figure 1: Relationships between the primary witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*



This is her next question, as found in all the primary witnesses that are available at this point (l. 284):

Peniarth 3:	*pa daw y waed i wydel*
Red Book:	*pa y wae y wydyl*
Peniarth 50:	*pa da6 y waeth y 6yddel*
Peniarth 26:	*pan daw gway hwnnw y wyddel*
NLW 3041B:	*pan ddaw y wadd y wyddel*
NLW 4973B:	*pan daw i waet i wyddel*

In four of these six versions, one can see that a dental or alveolar consonant of some kind has intruded between *wae* and the preposition *i* or *y*. The two exceptions are the Red Book and Peniarth 26, where no corresponding consonant is present. At first sight, one might suppose that the fourth word should be *waed* 'blood', yet the previous englyn (and the earlier line 275, with a parallel structure) shows that *wae* is correct. The best explanation for the extraneous consonant is that the preposition following *wae* was originally spelled *di* or *dy*, showing the original dental fricative initial of that preposition; another example of this form of the preposition is found elsewhere in the poem, as discussed below. One could suppose that the archetype X¹ spelled the preposition in this way, and that the initial *d-* was subsequently confused with the final *-d* of *waed* by multiple later copyists; but a simpler, and therefore more likely, supposition would be that X¹ already contained the textual error whereby *wae di* had become *waed i*. This was noticed and corrected during the transmission of the versions preserved in the Red Book and Peniarth 26, but left to stand in various ways elsewhere.

X²: This is arguably the most important node in the stemma, since it suggests that the Red Book of Hergest belongs to the same branch of the tradition as

most other witnesses, whereas Peniarth 3, the earliest extant witness, belongs to an independent branch. Thus, any agreement between Peniarth 3 and the remainder of the tradition, against the Red Book, should reveal the reading of X^1. The best evidence for X^2 is found in line 179. Throughout the poem, variants suggesting that certain witnesses should be grouped with other witnesses abound, but they provide little useable evidence for textual relationships unless it can be shown which of the variants are shared innovations or errors, thus revealing the textual relationships. Line 179 is useful in this regard because it is a variation of a line found in *Canu Heledd*; as discussed below, the *Cyfoesi* contains many allusions to, or paraphrases of, earlier poems, and so this line may be a deliberate paraphrase of *Canu Heledd* itself.[28] Here is the line in *Canu Heledd*, as found in a stanza concerning Caranfael:[29]

> *gnawt man ar gran kyniuiat* 'frequent on the cheek of a warrior is a scar'

Here is line 179 of the *Cyfoesi*, as found in the primary witnesses that are available at this point:

Peniarth 3:	*gwnawt man ar gran kyngrein*
Peniarth 20:	*gnawt ef yman arañ kynrain*
Red Book:	*gónawt ef gan argan kyngrein*
Peniarth 50:	*gnaót mann a grann kygrein*
Peniarth 26:	*gwnawdd ef mañ ar grañ kyngrein*
NLW 4973B:	*gnawd ef mann ar grañ cyngrain*

In *Canu Heledd*, the first word of the line is *gnawd* 'usual, customary', a typical first word for gnomic nominal sentences in the early englynion.[30] In the *Cyfoesi*, however, there is ample evidence to suggest that the line originally began with the verbal form *gwnawd*, a third-person singular present/future form of *gwneuthur*, as is shown in Peniarth 3, the Red Book and Peniarth 26 (albeit that the latter has a corrupt spelling in *-dd*). This line appears as a kind of sangiad in the middle of the sentence formed by lines 178 and 180. Exactly the same structure is used in Myrddin's previous englyn, lines 171–3, and there the second line begins with another verb in *-awd*, *kynghoraót*.

It was presumably the verbal form *gwnawd*, rather than the adjective *gnawd*, that prompted the insertion of the optional affixed pronoun *ef* to show the verb's subject more clearly. The affixed pronoun was evidently not scanned for metrical purposes: Peniarth 3, which has *gwnawt* but no *ef*, has a seven-syllable line, whereas the Red Book, which has *gónawt ef*, has an eight-syllable line.[31] This is an Englyn Milwr, of which there are fifty-four examples in the *Cyfoesi*; of those fifty-four, as the edited version of the text

[28] Note too the collocation of *man* and *gran* in the Red Book version of the *Gereint* poem (*EWSP* 458, line 11c), though that line lacks the accompanying *gnawt*/*gwnawt*.

[29] *EWSP* 442 and 492, line 93c.

[30] Most obviously, compare the poem *Gnawt gwynt*: Nicholas Jacobs (ed.), *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry* (London, 2012), 11–12 (poem IV).

[31] For the scanning of affixed pronouns, see further section 3.1. below.

stands, there are fifty-one that have a second line of seven syllables, and only three that have a second line of eight syllables. It might be noted too that there is not a single example of an Englyn Milwr in the *Cyfoesi* with a second line of six syllables, which is what Peniarth 50 has, with *gna6t* and no *ef*. We can suppose, therefore, that, the development was as follows. Upon adopting the line, either from *Canu Heledd* or perhaps a common source, the poet of the *Cyfoesi* adapted it by altering *gnawd* to *gwnawd*, and at the same time the final word *cynifiad* has altered to the synonymous plural form *cyngrain* (for the rhyme). This produced the seven-syllable line seen in Peniarth 3. Judging by the witnesses, the resulting line, with its initial verb, may have seemed ambiguous, because the subject pronoun *ef* was later added after it, making the line appear even more distant from its source. It is significant that this pronoun is found in both Peniarth 20 and NLW 4973B, which have *gnawt*/*gnawd* rather than *gwnawt*; as the pronoun must originally have been prompted by the verb, in those two copies the verb *gwnawt* must have been altered back to the more common *gnawt*. The Red Book, therefore, shares the innovation *ef* with the other witnesses, as against Peniarth 3, where *ef* is absent; the innovation provides evidence for X^2, where it must have occurred. The only outlier in this account is Peniarth 50, which has *gna6t* and, more importantly (given how easily *gwnawt* apparently reverted to *gnawt*), does not have *ef*. As discussed below, there is good reason to suppose that Peniarth 50's text of the *Cyfoesi* is composite, albeit that it drew on exemplars of high value.

X^3: There is ample evidence for X^3, which shows that Peniarth 20 derives from the same common exemplar as Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh's 1658 copy. For example, here are lines 157–61 of the edited text, a metrically irregular stanza that appears to be an Englyn Gwastad appended with an additional ten-syllable line:

> Disgoganaf Seruen Wynn,
> kennat g6astat ysg6ydwyn,
> gle6 gadarn garchar gychwyn.
> Treigla6t bro brada6c unbyn.
> Ef grynna6t h6nt racda6 hyt ym Prydyn.
>
> 'I prophesy Serwen Wyn,
> a steadfast, white-shielded messenger,
> a bold, strong prison-breaker.
> He will overthrow the land of treacherous chieftains.
> He will thrust yonder before him as far as Northern Britain.'

There are two points in this stanza where the Red Book agrees with Peniarth 3 against Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B. In the second line, Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (along with Peniarth 50) have *kennat* 'messenger' while Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B have spellings of *keimiad* 'champion'. Similarly, in the final line, Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (again with Peniarth 50) have the word *h6nt*, whereas that is omitted in Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B. Since, as we have seen, the Red Book shares the common exemplar X^2 with the latter three witnesses, the agreement of the Red Book

with Peniarth 3 on these points must reveal the reading of the archetype X^1, whereas the variants in Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B must have arisen in their common exemplar X^3.

At this point, we also need to consider Peniarth 94, whose independent copy of the poem preserves only lines 340–410. The textual evidence suggests that Peniarth 94's exemplar shared some, but not all, of the innovations of X^4. For instance, this is line 383 across the extant witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	*Gwasgarawt awel awyr*
Red Book:	*Góasgaraót awel awyr*
Peniarth 50:	*Gwas[.]arraóc awel awyr*
Peniarth 26:	*Gwasgarawd awel amwyr*
Peniarth 94:	*Gwasgrawd awel am wir*
NLW 3041B:	*Gwasgarawc awel amwyr*
NLW 4973B:	*Gwasgarawc awel am wyr*
Pugh 1685:	*Gwasgarawg awel Amwyr*

Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (again along with Peniarth 50) share the reading *awyr* for the final word, producing the sensical line 'A breeze will scatter the air'; by contrast, an intrusive *-m-* appears in Peniarth 94 and the other witnesses. On the other hand, a few lines later, Peniarth 94 preserves line 400 intact along with Peniarth 3 and the Red Book, unlike Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, which omit the line, showing that Peniarth 94 cannot derive from X^4. Peniarth 94's line of transmission thus branched off the stemma somewhere between X^2 and X^4. However, since the text in Peniarth 94 does not overlap with the text in Peniarth 20, it is impossible to know the relationship between Peniarth 94 and X^3.

X^4: The omission of line 400 has already been mentioned as clear evidence for a shared innovation in Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658. Otherwise, the most obvious textual feature of these witnesses is that Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B, which otherwise preserve complete texts of the poem, both omit lines 217–60, which are present in Peniarth 3, the Red Book, Peniarth 20 and Peniarth 50. Furthermore, and no doubt relatedly, the extant text in NLW 3041B begins with line 261, precisely after the omission that is apparent in the other two witnesses. Perhaps a leaf of X^4 became lost or damaged, leading at least one early copyist to decide that the poems either side of the resulting gap were different poems.

X^5, X^6, X^7: There is plentiful textual variation to demonstrate the relationships between these lost exemplars and their descendants. X^5 is defined as the common exemplar of NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, while X^7 is defined as the common exemplar of NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658. Between those was X^6, the source for Robert Vaughan's collations in Peniarth 26. Since the readings of X^6 are revealed only when Robert Vaughan noticed a difference between X^6 and Peniarth 26, and annotated the latter accordingly, absence of evidence for X^6 cannot be taken as evidence of absence. But enough remains

to suggest that the source of Vaughan's collations shared some, but not all, innovations with X^7. All these relationships are nicely illustrated by the englyn formed by lines 358–60. This is the edited text:

> Na rann periglawr na cherdaȯr ny byd
> nac adreidyaȯ yr allaȯr
> yny dygȯydho nef ar laȯr.
>
> 'There will be neither a priest's portion nor a poet
> nor any visiting the altar
> until heaven should fall to the earth.'

This is the Red Book text, but a similar text is found in Peniarth 3, Peniarth 50 and Peniarth 94, with minor variations and corruptions (especially at the end of the third line; compare the Red Book's *ar laȯr* with *ar y llawr* Peniarth 3; *y'r llaȯr* Peniarth 50; *lawr* Peniarth 94). What follows are the texts of all the witnesses to X^4 for these lines, with Robert Vaughan's collations in Peniarth 26 shown in superscript within curly brackets (and the words to which the collations pertain underlined, as in the manuscript):

Peniarth 26:	Na rrañ piglawr na cherddawr ni bydd nac athryhaw{achitwedyd} allawr{n} hyd peñ ddigwyddo nef hyt y llaw{hyt y llawr}
NLW 3041B:	Na ran periglawr na cherddawr ni bydd anchadwedydd allawr yn i ddigwyddwch i lawr
NLW 4973B:	Na cann periglawr na cherddawr ni bydd, na chidwedydd allan dwy ddigwydd vch y llawr
Pugh 1658:	Na Ran na Periglawr, na cherddawr ni bit, nag achitwedid allan eny digwyd vch yr llawr

This stanza preserves evidence for X^5, X^6 and X^7. At the beginning of the second line, Peniarth 26 reads *nac athryhaw*, which is recognisably *nac adreidyaȯ* ('nac athreiddio'), whereas the other three witnesses share a similar corruption, which arose in X^5. Robert Vaughan glossed Peniarth 26 with a form of the corruption closer to the forms found in NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, which must have arisen in X^6. Similarly, *allawr* must have become *allan* in X^6, as found in NLW 4973B, Pugh 1658 and Vaughan's gloss in Peniarth 26, which changes *allawr* to *allan*. In the final line, Peniarth 26 has *ddigwyddo*, agreeing with the archetypal reading, but this must have become *ddigwyddwch* in X^5. In X^7, and thus in NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, the *-wch* of this new verbal form was reinterpreted as the preposition *vch*, but this appears not to have been the case in X^6, since Vaughan's gloss on Peniarth 26 reads *hyt y llawr*, mirroring the use of *hyt* in Peniarth 26 (and perhaps therefore also X^4).

We might lastly notice that the transmission of this branch of the stemma, extending from X^3 to X^7, appears to have taken place in north-east Wales. This is apparent already in the fourteenth century in Peniarth 20, written in Valle Crucis abbey, whose text derives from X^3. In addition, Peniarth 26, deriving from X^4, was written in the north-east, perhaps in the vicinity of Oswestry, and indeed contains at least one text (*Proffwydoliaeth Myrddin*) deriving from a Valle Crucis manuscript.[32] A descendant of X^5 was copied by John Jones of Gellilyfdy, in Flintshire, while X^6 has been tentatively identified with the lost copy of Dafydd Jones, vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, just south of Rhuthun.

X^8, X^9, X^{10}: As mentioned above, it appears that Peniarth 50's text was produced by conflation; in particular, conflation between two good quality texts that were akin, respectively, to Peniarth 3 and the Red Book. Peniarth 50's text rarely strays far from the mainstream text, but when it does, it appears to share innovations with other witnesses in an inconsistent pattern. For instance, here are lines 352–4 of the edited text:

> Pan dyuo dylat (dylyet uchaf!)
> o uor hyt weryt,
> diwed, riein, orffen byt.
>
> 'When the flood comes (the highest debt!)
> from the sea over the land,
> the end, maiden, the conclusion of the world.'

With the exception that is noticed momentarily, this is the text in the Red Book, in agreement with Peniarth 3. It forms an ordinary Englyn Penfyr with lines of 9, 6 and 7 syllables. The second and third lines carry an end-rhyme in *-yd*, which also forms a proest rhyme in *-(i)ed* with the *gwant* in the first line (*dylyet*); this itself forms a line-internal proest with *-ad* in the *rhagwant* at the end of the first half of the first line. This tight metrical scheme is nonsensically disrupted in both the Red Book and Peniarth 50, which share the addition of another instance of the word *dylat* at the end of the second line. Presumably this error was prompted by the appearance of the same word in the first line, and, at first sight, it might lead us to suppose that the Red Book and Peniarth 50 share a common exemplar. Yet, only a few lines later, Peniarth 50 shares a significant omission with Peniarth 3, suggesting instead that *those* two copies share a common exemplar. In the edited text, line 361 reads *Llallaóc, kan am hatebyd* ('Companion, since you answer me'); this line varies little across the witnesses, and is paralleled closely by line 373, *Llallaóc, kan am diderbyd* ('Companion, since it will befall me'). We can thus be confident that Peniarth 3 and Peniarth 50 err when they both omit *am*, the syllabic form of the infixed pronoun, in line 361. Peniarth 50 thus appears to share separate errors with both Peniarth 3 and the Red Book. The likeliest explanation for this pattern is that the text in Peniarth 50 was produced by the conflation of two other witnesses, one of which shared innovations with Peniarth 3 and the other with the Red Book.

[32] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 345.

However, Peniarth 50 was not itself the locus of this conflation. Peniarth 50 contains a clean-looking text, unlike, for instance, Peniarth 26, where Robert Vaughan's collations would amount to an act of conflation if a clean copy of Peniarth 26 had been produced which silently incorporated those annotations. Furthermore, Peniarth 50 shares innovations with a group of partial witnesses that preserve only lines 202–51, providing evidence for a common exemplar X^8, which may itself have been the locus of the conflation. These partial witnesses themselves share a common exemplar X^9; these are the independent witnesses to X^9:

- NLW 5276D, vol. ii, fols 406v–407r (Elis Gruffydd, *c.* 1550): An extract embedded in Elis Gruffydd's chronicle of world history, along with extracts from *Yr Oianau* and *Yr Afallennau*.
- Peniarth 254, part iii, p. 50 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, *c.* 1600–20): Another copy by John Jones. The text here begins only at line 221. This and the following witness share a common exemplar, X^{10}.
- NLW 3041B [Mostyn 133], pp. 109–11 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, 1607–23): The first copy of the *Cyfoesi* in the manuscript of John Jones that is discussed above.
- NLW 3077B, p. 325 (*c.* 1642–4): This has a corrupt and fragmentary text similar to the Red Book for lines 208–57, but it has been expanded with readings from X^9.

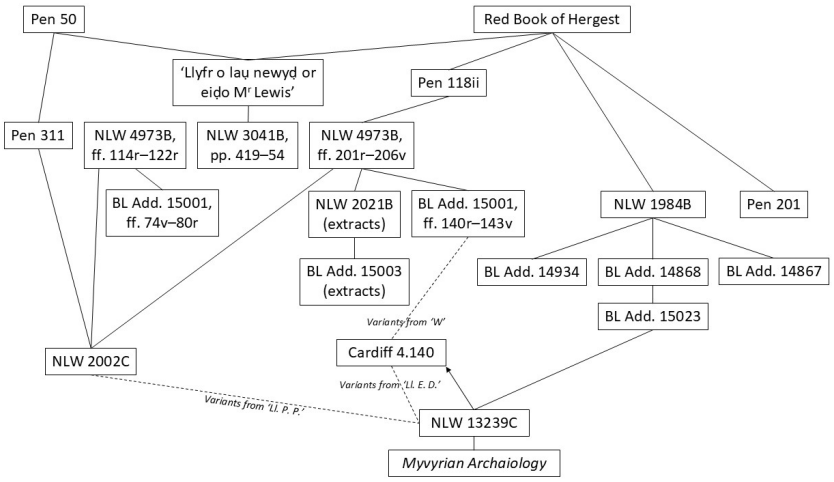
The witnesses to X^9 share all manner of corruptions; for example, they all omit line 226. Unexpectedly, they also preserve two of the additional englynion found in Peniarth 20, as discussed above. Other variants show that X^9 shared a common exemplar with Peniarth 50: for example, both Peniarth 50 and the witnesses to X^9 insert the word *gywydd* into line 240, which is absent from the other witnesses.

1.3. Derivative witnesses

In addition to those witnesses discussed above, there are numerous derivative witnesses that are related in the manner shown in Figure 2. Although these copies are interesting in their own right, they are not useful for reconstructing the archetype. They all descend from only three extant manuscripts: the Red Book, Peniarth 50, and John Davies's *Liber B* (NLW 4973B), which includes two copies of the poem, one of which itself derives ultimately from the Red Book. The most striking feature of Figure 2 is what it reveals about the role played by Evan Evans (*alias* Ieuan Brydydd Hir, 1731–88) in the transmission of the poem in the eighteenth century, leading eventually to the formation of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*'s text.[33] Evan Evans was responsible for the only extant eighteenth-century copy of the poem made directly from the Red Book (NLW 1984B, fols 35r–46r, written in 1757); the main text of the *Myvyrian Archaiology* descends from this copy via various intermediary copies. The

[33]Owen Jones, Edward Williams and William Owen [Pughe], *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales, Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts*, 1st ed., 3 vols (London, 1801–7), i, 138–49; 2nd ed., 1 vol. (Denbigh, 1870), 108–15.

Figure 2: Relationships between the derivative witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*



Myvyrian Archaiology also notes variants from two other main sources. One, called 'Ll. P. P.' (for 'Llyfr Paul Panton'), was another manuscript of Evan Evans (NLW 2002C, pp. 1–24, written *c.* 1775); the text and variant readings in this manuscript were taken from the two copies in John Davies's *Liber B* (NLW 4973B) and from Peniarth 311 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy's copy of Peniarth 50), though there is no consistency as to which of the three exemplars was used as NLW 2002C's base text and which were used for its variants. The other source for variants in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, called 'Ll. E. D.' (for 'Llyfr Edward Davies'), was Cardiff, Central Library, 4.140, pp. 287–99, written in 1792 by Edward 'Celtic' Davies (1756–1831); the base text of this copy was, like the *Myvyrian Archaiology*'s own copy of the poem, William Owen Pughe's manuscript NLW 13239C (1784), but Edward Davies had annotated his copy with readings from a source that he called 'W', and it is these variant readings that were quoted in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*. Evidently 'W' was the copy of the poem in London, BL, Add. 15001, fols 140r–143v (John Walters with two amanuenses, *c.* 1770), which had been copied from John Davies of Mallwyd's copy of the Red Book text in *Liber B*.

2. Date of composition

There is much evidence for the poem's date, which can be divided broadly into linguistic evidence and content evidence. Gratifyingly, these two strands of evidence provide independent confirmation of a date in the early thirteenth century for the poem.

2.1. Linguistic evidence

This section presents the first thoroughgoing attempt to date *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* by linguistic evidence. In 1940, Kenneth Jackson briefly

set out linguistic evidence that he thought showed that the poem could be dated later than the ninth century and earlier than the early twelfth century, but this evidence cannot now be interpreted in the way that Jackson intended.[34] It is fair to say that, when Jackson was writing, it was possible only to gain an impressionistic idea of the significance of individual linguistic features; more reliable benchmarks for the linguistic dating of poetry in this period have been established much more recently, particularly in the work of Simon Rodway and Patrick Sims-Williams. Otherwise, comments on the poem's possible date have previously been made only in relation to the poem's contents, which I address separately.

Four aspects of the linguistic evidence are considered below. Firstly, dateable linguistic changes of various kinds are used to suggest *termini ante quem* and *post quem* for the poem. Secondly, certain orthographical features of the early copies of the poem are highlighted where they can indicate the nature of the orthography used during the early transmission of the poem. Thirdly, the poem's rare vocabulary is listed alongside references to other texts in which the relevant words occur. Lastly, attention is drawn to linguistic features that can help us date some early stages in the poem's transmission.

2.2. Linguistic evidence: termini ante quem

Turning first to the *termini ante quem*, there is much evidence that the poem's verbal morphology predates the second half of the thirteenth century. Simon Rodway has discussed changes in verbal morphology during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on the basis of the period's dateable court poetry as well as the prose manuscripts of the second half of the thirteenth century.[35] The *Cyfoesi* displays a range of features which, in Rodway's analysis, had fallen out of use by the second half of the thirteenth century.[36] These are as follows:

- The final dental fricative -/ð/ in the second-person singular present indicative ending *-ydd*. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. ll. 9 *hepcoryd*, 361 *hatebyd*, 363 *dywedyd*, 365 *kyuerchyd*. One can also restore final -/ð/ in two second-person singular endings on the basis of rhyme: ll. 36 *synnyy[d]*, 176 *darogeny[d]*.
- The impersonal present indicative ending *-awr*. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. ll. 51 *alwaór*, 72 *glywawr*, 74 *hetmyccaór*, 115 *odrycaór*, 116 *pryderaór*, 122 *etmyckaór*, 195 *etmykaór*, 306 *glywaór*, 333 *trefnaór*, 356 *drefnaór*.
- Third-person singular present s-subjunctive forms. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. line 39: *góares Duó dy anghen* ('may God relieve your need').[37]

[34]Kenneth H. Jackson, 'The motive of the threefold death in the story of Suibhne Geilt', in John Ryan (ed.), *Féil-Sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill* (Dublin, 1940), 536–550, at 544–5, n. 30.

[35]Simon Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature: Evidence from the Verbal System* (Aberystwyth, 2013).

[36]See his summary ibid., 166.

[37]The same subjunctive form *gwares* is found in a poem attributed to Llywelyn Fardd II: *CBT* VI, poem 10.76.

Rodway has also shown that, between the first and second halves of the thirteenth century, *-w(y)s* was overtaken by *-awdd* as the most common third-singular preterite ending.[38] In the *Cyfoesi* there is only one relevant preterite verb, in line 215, and this has *-ws*: *a lews llyuyr Cado* ('who has read the book of Cato').

Another feature of verbal morphology that might potentially suggest an earlier *terminus ante quem* is the third-person singular present indicative ending *-yn(t)*. In the *Cyfoesi*, there are two such verbs ending in *-yn(t)*: *dywedynt* in l. 153 and *torrynt* in l. 312. Rodway identified only two possible instances of present-tense *-yn(t)* in the court poetry: namely, in twelfth-century poems by Gwalchmai and Cynddelw, though the latter example in particular is open to doubt.[39] This inclined him to posit that present-tense *-yn(t)* disappeared before the thirteenth century, and that even in the twelfth century *-an(t)* had already been generalised at the expense of *-yn(t)*. However, I have recently conducted a survey of this verbal ending across medieval Welsh poetry, with special attention to prophetic poetry, and identified at least two examples that can be dated to the first half of the thirteenth century.[40] These occur in a verse of the Peniarth 3 version of the *Oianau* concerning events of 1211/12.[41] On balance, therefore, one can say that the two present-tense verbs in *-yn(t)* in the *Cyfoesi* show only that the poem predates the second half of the thirteenth century.

The same dating is supported by the distribution of third-person singular present indicative absolute and conjunct forms in clause-initial position. Simon Rodway has shown that, in court poetry of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries, simple verbs in third-person singular present indicative forms in clause-initial position take absolute forms in over 80% of instances.[42] His tokens for the second half of the thirteenth century are low and thus inconclusive, but fourteenth-century poetry shows that there must have been a steep decline in the use of absolute forms even in formal praise poetry after *c.* 1250.[43] In the *Cyfoesi*, all third-person present indicative simple verbs in clause-initial position take absolute forms (11 or 12 instances).[44] By contrast, the only third-person singular present indicative verbs in clause-initial position with conjunct forms are compound verbs (5 instances).[45] Again, therefore, this feature is consistent with a date before the second half of the thirteenth century.

[38] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 157–63.

[39] Ibid., 57–8.

[40] Ben Guy, 'The distribution of 3. pl. pres. ind. *–(h)yn(t)* and the dating of Welsh prophetic poetry', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 25 (2024), 47–80.

[41] See Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau', 126, ll. 165–6. The two verbs, in rhyming position, are *geissyn* and *gwelyn*. For the dating of the events, see *LlDC* xxix–xxx.

[42] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[43] Ibid., 107–8.

[44] Namely, *bróydraód* l. 48, *góledychaód* l. 90, *treiglaód* l. 160, *kynghoraód* l. 172, *gónawt* l. 179, *troyt* ll. 247 and 256, *biaód* ll. 263 and 299, *elit* ll. 273 and 279. For the possible twelfth example, *grynnaód* (l. 161), see Simon Rodway, 'The syntax of absolute verbal forms in early Welsh poetry: a survey', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 22 (2021), 33–103, at 75–6.

[45] Namely, *dyderbi* l. 54, *disgogan* l. 191, *dyui* l. 194, *dybyd* l. 318, *diderbyd* l. 372.

Three syntactical features of the *Cyfoesi* might potentially be thought to suggest an earlier *terminus ante quem*, though it is difficult to be certain about their evidential value in the absence of comprehensive diachronic studies of these features. The first is the presence in the text of sentence structures lacking preverbal particles with the constructions subject + verb, object + verb, and adverb + verb. Formally, the structures subject + verb and object + verb are based on *nominativus pendens* constructions, but they were often used in early poetry for variation.[46] These are the relevant examples in the *Cyfoesi*:

Subject + verb:

- l. 54: *a oganaf dyderbi* ('what I prophesy, it will come to pass').
- l. 116: *armes Brydein pryderaór* ('the prophecy of Britain will be feared').
- l. 185: *armes Prydein pryderer* ('the prophecy of Britain will be feared').
- l. 324: *kadeu góeitheu gwledychant* ('battles, toils: they will reign').

Object + verb:

- l. 329: *oes tragoes disgoganaf* ('a time-beyond-time I prophesy').

Adverbial phrase + verb:

- l. 48: *yg kynnor bydin bróydraót* ('in the vanguard of the army he will do battle').

Simon Evans listed examples of constructions like these in his study of the language of twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, among which examples are only three of subject + verb, all of which can be dated to the twelfth century.[47] These are *Dewi differwys y eglwysseu* in *Canu i Ddewi* by Gwynfardd Brycheiniog, which has been dated to *c.* 1175/6 (*CBT* II, poem 26.254);[48] *agheu dydau urth gluydet* in the anonymous religious poem *Moli Duw yn Nechrau a Diwedd*, dated by Marged Haycock to the twelfth century for unspecified reasons (*CC* poem 18.31, with the date at p. 157); and *Duw digawn* in *Arwyddion cyn Dydd Brawd*, perhaps by Llywelyn Fardd I in the twelfth century (*CBT* II, poem 5.17). Evans also listed an example from the latter poem of the construction object + verb: *gwyrtheu goleu gwelhattor* (*CBT* II, poem 5.3). However, the examples given by Evans are intended to be impressionistic, not comprehensive, and it would be unsafe to conclude that Gwynfardd Brycheiniog's generation was the last to use constructions like these in poetry. But in the absence of a

[46] Graham R. Isaac, *The Verb in the Book of Aneirin: Studies in Syntax, Morphology and Etymology* (Tübingen, 1996), 62–4; David W. E. Willis, *Syntactic Change in Welsh: A Study of the Loss of Verb-Second* (Oxford, 1998), 97–101. For examples from the early englynion, see *EWSP* 375–6 and 381.

[47] D. Simon Evans, 'Iaith y Llys a Beirdd y Tywysogion', in Morfydd E. Owen and Brynley F. Roberts (eds), *Beirdd a Thywysogion: Barddoniaeth Llys yng Nghymru, Iwerddon a'r Alban, Cyflwynedig i R. Geraint Gruffydd* (Cardiff and Aberystwyth, 1996), 60–74, at 62. A similar list of examples is given in *GMW* 181.

[48] Also reedited and translated into English by Ann Parry Owen at https://saints.wales/theedition/ (accessed 3 September 2025).

fuller study, we might take it as doubtful that they continued in use for long into the thirteenth century.

The second potentially relevant syntactical feature is the use of a clause-initial preverbal particle *a* to support infixed pronouns. These are the examples in the *Cyfoesi*, divided between those where the pronoun denotes the direct object or the indirect object.[49]

Preverbal particle *a* + direct object:

- l. 51: *a'th alwaór aborthón* ('you are called a leader').
- l. 316: *As góan góaeó euyd o ergrywyd llog* ('A bronze spear from the planks of a ship will pierce him').
- l. 364: *As dywedaf y Wendyd* ('I tell it to Gwenddydd').
- l. 377: *as dywedaf yn difri* ('I say it seriously').
- l. 402: *A'th orchymynnaf ditheu* ('I commend you too').

Preverbal particle *a* + indirect object:

- l. 65: *A'm górthgyuarch 'ym brytuan* ('Ask me again my intent').
- l. 84: *A'm górthgyuarch yn glaear* ('Ask me again gently').
- l. 87: *A'th gyfuarchaf yn glaear* ('I ask you gently').
- l. 107: *a'm dyweit y chwaryan* ('tell me calmly').
- l. 149: *a'm dywet y chweryan* ('tell me calmly').
- l. 422: *A'm kymuno Duó ehun* ('May God himself administer communion to me').

Simon Evans described this as a feature of 'early poetry', but Marged Haycock has emphasised that it is also common in twelfth-century court poetry, especially in the work of Cynddelw.[50] However, many examples are listed in *G* s.v. *a*² (1) and *GPC Online* s.v. *a*² (2003), and, while it is clear that the frequency of the construction declines after Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch, examples can be found in the work of the following later poets:[51]

- Elidyr Sais, fl. *c.* 1195–1246 (*CBT* I, poems 15.20 and 21.41).
- Dafydd Benfras, fl. *c.* 1195–1257/8 (*CBT* VI, poem 28.9).

[49] Note that the dative function of infixed pronouns is found at least as late as the fourteenth century: cf. *GMW* 57; some examples from the court poetry are listed in Evans, 'Iaith y Llys', 68–9.

[50] *GMW* 55 and 172; *LPBT* 197 and 353. T. J. Morgan similarly notes that this use of the particle *a* occurs 'yn y cyfnodau cynnar' ('in the early periods'): *Y Treigladau a'u Cystrawen* (Cardiff, 1952), 151–2. For the particle, see too Stefan Schumacher, 'An edition and analysis of Book of Aneirin B.39 (including preliminary chapters on the grammar and poetics of early Welsh poetry', *ZCP* 64 (2017), 299–420, at 329–31).

[51] Of the later examples listed by *G* and *GPC Online*, there are grounds for disagreeing with the following, which are not listed above: *GGrG* poems 3.40 and 6.85–6; Ann Parry Owen, *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd*, iii, *Canu Amrywiol* (Aberystwyth, 2007), poem 1.12, with note on pp. 120–1; Huw Meirion Edwards, *Gwaith Madog Dwygraig* (Aberystwyth, 2006), poem 1.77.

- 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai', fl. thirteenth century (*CBT* I, poems 30.1 and 33.45, 94, 96, 98).[52]
- Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, fl. *c.* 1277–82 (*CBT* VII, poem 39.30).
- Madog ap Gwallter, fl. *c.* 1300 (*CBT* VII, poem 33.73, 78).
- Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, fl. *c.* 1325–75 (*GGrG* poem 3.41, 42, 43, 44).
- An anonymous Red Book poem dated to the early fourteenth century.[53]

Thus, despite the greater frequency of this construction up to the early thirteenth century, it does not appear to be useful as evidence for narrowing down the date of the *Cyfoesi* within the pre-1250 period.

The third potentially relevant syntactical feature is the use of infixed pronouns with dative meaning alongside the verb 'to be' to denote possession.[54] There are two examples in the *Cyfoesi*:

- l. 10: *pa ri a'n bi ni gantha6?* ('which king will we have (according to him)?').
- l. 167: *Nac eruyn hed6ch; ny'th vi!* ('Do not seek peace: you will not have it!').

As discussed further below, the second example is part of two lines that are largely shared with the Taliesin poem *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd*. Simon Evans commented that this construction 'disappeared rather early' (*GMW* 57), and elsewhere he listed some examples of it from court poetry and early religious poetry, including three lines by Gwalchmai ap Meilyr and one by the anonymous thirteenth-century poet known as 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai'.[55] Again, these examples are only impressionistic. While a comprehensive diachronic study is required in order to understand the full significance of this construction for dating, it is possible to search for specific instances in the court poetry electronically to gain a more accurate impression of its diachronic distribution.[56] Below, I have listed all the examples that I could find in twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry of infixed pronouns + third-person singular forms of the verb 'to be' to denote possession:

Present-tense *oes*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poems 3.170 (Meilyr Brydydd) and 7.25 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* II, poem 4.43 (Llywelyn Fardd I).
- Third-person singular *-s*: *CBT* I, poem 14.93 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* VII, poem 24.36 (Llygad Gŵr).

[52]Nerys Ann Jones has shown that the attribution of *CBT* I, poems 30–3 to a poet called 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai' derives solely from a copying mistake by John Davies of Mallwyd, and must be dismissed: 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai – rhithfardd!', *Dwned* 9 (2003), 23–36. She argues instead that the four poems were composed by the same unknown poet, probably in the thirteenth century. Below, attributions to 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai' are written in single quotation marks, and would be best read as 'anonymous poet of the thirteenth century'.

[53]Huw Meirion Edwards (ed.), *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan, Rhys ap Dafydd ab Einion, Hywel Ystorm, a Cherddi Dychan Dienw o Lyfr Coch Hergest* (Aberystwyth, 2000), poem 10.5.

[54]*GMW* 57.

[55]Evans, 'Iaith y Llys', 69; the lines are *CBT* I, poems 7.23, 11.29, 14.93 and 33.48.

[56]My thanks to Ann Parry Owen for supplying an electronic copy of the corpus.

Habitual present/future-tense *bydd*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poem 7.32 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* II, poem 7.17 (Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd); *CBT* VI, poem 27.79 (Dafydd Benfras); *CBT* VII, poem 30.23 and 30.38 (Iorwerth Fychan).
- First-person plural *'n*: *CBT* I, poem 16.23 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* IV, poem 5.79 (Cynddelw).

Imperfect-tense *oedd*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I poems 7.25 (Gwalchmai), 14.27 (Gwalchmai).

Preterite-tense *bu:*

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poem 21.31 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* II, poems 6.31 (Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd) and 31.39 (Gruffudd ap Gwrgenau); *CBT* III, poem 21.7 and 21.41 (Cynddelw); *CBT* IV, poem 4.177 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 22.1, 22.3 and 22.5 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 52.13 (Bleddyn Fardd).
- Note also *Mi a'th fum borthwr* ('I was your supporter') in *CBT* VI, poem 12.13 (Phylip Brydydd).

Present-tense subjunctive *bo*/*bwy*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poems 11.29 (Gwalchmai), 12.29 (Gwalchmai), 14.86 (Gwalchmai), 27.101 (Einion ap Gwalchmai), 30.1 and 30.42 ('Meilyr ap Gwalchmai'); *CBT* IV, poems 4.177, 9.9 and 17.128 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 2.69 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 39.30 (Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch).
- Second-person singular *'th*: *CBT* I, poems 17.30 (Elidyr Sais) and 33.48 ('Meilyr ap Gwlachmai'); *CBT* IV, poem 6.299 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 2.70 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 1.12 (Y Prydydd Bychan).

These examples make it clear that the construction continued to be used by poets well into the thirteenth century, including poets who lived later in the century like Y Prydydd Bychan (fl. *c.* 1222–68), Llygad Gŵr (fl. *c.* 1230–92/3), Bleddyn Fardd (fl. *c.* 1258–84), Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch (fl. 1277–83) and Iorwerth Fychan (fl. *c.* 1300). We may note in particular the examples of *bydd* with the first-person plural infixed pronoun in poems by Elidyr Sais (fl. *c.* 1195–1246) and Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195), since they mirror most closely the construction in line 10 of the *Cyfoesi*. It appears, therefore, that this construction does not allow us to push back the *terminus ante quem* for the *Cyfoesi* any further than has already been established.

The final linguistic feature that might provide a *terminus ante quem* is the form of the preposition *di*/*dy*. The common preposition *i* ('to'), MW *y*, derives from the lenited form of OW *di* < Celtic **dō*. The form *di*, which might indicate /dɨ/ or lenited /ðɨ/, is ubiquitous in Old Welsh, whereas the initial

dental fricative /ð/- of the lenited form had been lost by the time of the earliest Welsh prose manuscripts in the middle of the thirteenth century, giving MW *y* (or *i*). In the Book of Llandaf, completed around 1132, *di* or *dy* remains the dominant form, though instances of *i* or *y* appear sporadically.[57] The main period of transition, when the initial /ð/- ceased to be regularly written, appears to have been the century *c.* 1150–*c.* 1250.

Above, I set out the textual evidence for why we should think that the preposition *di* or *dy* originally appeared in line 284 of the *Cyfoesi*. There is also a variant in Peniarth 20 that suggests that line 247 also originally spelled the same preposition with initial *d-*. These are the readings of the four primary witnesses that preserve versions of line 247 ('the wind will turn within a house'):

Peniarth 3:	*troit y gwynt o vewn y ty*
Red Book:	*troyt y gó́ynt o vyó́n ty*
Peniarth 20:	*troit y gwynt o vewn dy dy*
Peniarth 50:	*troit y gwynt o veó́n y ty*

Either Peniarth 20's reading *dy dy* resulted from reinterpreting the end of the line to mean 'your house', or, more probably, Peniarth 20 uniquely preserves the original spelling of the preposition *dy* 'to', which has been updated to *y* in Peniarth 3 and Peniarth 50 and omitted altogether in the Red Book.

Interpreting the significance of these two apparent instances of *di* or *dy* for 'to' in the *Cyfoesi* depends on the distribution of the form elsewhere in medieval Welsh literature. In prose, there is one example in the White Book version of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and another, more strikingly, in the Llanstephan 1 version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, which was probably translated in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[58] It is relatively common in undated *Hengerdd*, unsurprisingly given that much of this corpus is likely to date from the twelfth century or earlier.[59] Usefully, there are also examples in two poems that can be dated a little more closely. One is *Marwnad Cedifor ap Genillyn* by Llywelyn Fardd I, as it survives in the Hendregadredd manuscript; the poem probably belongs to the second half of the twelfth century.[60] The other is *Gwasgargerdd*

[57] Ben Guy, 'The development of Old Welsh boundary clauses', in Rebecca Thomas, Sadie Jarrett and Katherine K. Olson (eds), *Memory and Nation: Writing the History of Wales* (Cardiff, 2025), 118–46, at 130.

[58] Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans (eds), *Culhwch ac Olwen*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 1997), 1, l. 12; Brynley F. Roberts, *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS. 1 Version* (Dublin, 1984), 16, l. 503, with note at 44. For the early stages of the translation of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, compare Patrick Sims-Williams, *Rhai Addasiadau Cymraeg Canol o Sieffre o Fynwy* (Aberystwyth, 2011), 6–9; Ben Guy, 'Constantine, Helena, Maximus: on the appropriation of Roman history in medieval Wales, *c.* 800–1250', *Journal of Medieval History* 44 (2018), 381–405, at 400–1.

[59] These are all the examples known to me: *LlDC* poems 8.13 (= *CC* poem 16.13) and 10.6 (= *CC* poem 2.6); *PT* poems I.25 and (?)IV.23; *LPBT* poems 1.86, 3.14, 5.107, 5.124, 8.37 and 24.34; *CC* poems 11.5, 11.38 (and cf. ll. 3, 16, 28 and 33 in the same poem) and 20.154; and possibly *CA* l. 830. I have checked all the examples listed in *G* s.v. *dy*[3] and *GPC Online* s.v. *di*[1], *dy*[2], *ddi, ddy*[1] (1960) against the opinions of the poems' most recent editors and omitted possible examples where other interpretations now seem more likely.

[60] *CBT* II, poem 4.45.

Fyrddin, in line 91 as it survives in the White and Red Books, and line 123 as it survives in Peniarth 26 and Peniarth 50. This poem has been dated to the second half of the twelfth century, probably between 1164 and 1191.

In sum, there are no certain surviving instances of *di* or *dy* for 'to' that can be confidently dated later than the second half of the twelfth century. To some extent, this conclusion must be treated with caution, since it is clear that many instances of the same preposition in poems composed in the twelfth century and earlier must have been changed to *y* or *i* in the extant Welsh manuscripts of the thirteenth century or later. It is thus possible that the form with initial /ð/- was still being used by poets in the early thirteenth century, despite its absence in extant manuscripts. Nevertheless, this feature implies that the composition and, just as significantly, the recording of the *Cyfoesi* should not be placed too long after 1200.

2.3. Linguistic evidence: termini post quem

Evidence providing *termini post quem* for the dating of the poem is slimmer, but still significant. Among verbal forms, it is notable that *-(h)o* is the default third-person singular present subjunctive ending in the poem, as seen in *achatuo* (ll. 103 and 146), *disgynno* (ll. 291 and 298), *dyuo* (l. 352), *dygóydho* (l. 360), *draetho* (l. 388) and *kymuno* (l. 422). Simon Rodway has shown that, in court poetry, *-(h)wy* was gradually superseded by the monophthongised *-(h)o* between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with poets of the first half of the thirteenth century being the first to use *-(h)o* more often than *-(h)wy*, so far as the extant texts show.[61] Unfortunately, however, none of these verbs in the *Cyfoesi* is in rhyming position, and it is possible that any or all of them could have been changed from *-(h)wy* to *-(h)o* in transmission. The value of this evidence is thus somewhat ambiguous.

Perhaps a more important aspect of the verbal system is that there are no indications that etymologically compound verbs were being analysed as compound. Firstly, the poem lacks any instances of infixed pronouns inserted after the first preverb of compound verbs.[62] The list above that shows instances of the clause-initial preverbal particle *a* supporting infixed pronouns contains many cases where pronouns could have been infixed to preverbs but were not (e.g. *As dywedaf* in lines 364 and 377).[63] It appears that the practice of infixing pronouns after the first preverb of compound verbs ceased in poetry after the beginning of the thirteenth century.[64] Secondly, there are several instances of absolute verbal endings used with compound verbs, which was historically incorrect (e.g. *Dygóydit* l. 73, *Dyrchauaót* l. 145, *Góasgaraót* ll. 300 and 383).[65]

[61] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 81–3; Simon Rodway, 'Two developments in medieval literary Welsh and their implications for dating texts', in Paul Russell (ed.), *Yr Hen Iaith: Studies in Early Welsh* (Aberystwyth, 2003), 67–74, at 71–4.

[62] Contrast *di-s-gweyt* in *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin* (l. 2), which has been dated to the second half of the twelfth century.

[63] See above, p. 195.

[64] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[65] For etymologies, see Stefan Schumacher, *Die keltischen Primärverben: Ein vergleichendes, etymologisches und morphologisches Lexikon* (Innsbruck, 2004), 319 (*dyrchafael*), 405 (*dygwydd*)

The practice of attaching absolute endings to etymologically compound verbs is already attested in Welsh in the twelfth century and possibly even the late eleventh, so it may not have arisen straightforwardly from a reanalysis of them as single semantic units.[66] Still, this feature may still provide a rough *terminus post quem* of approximately the eleventh century. As indicated above, all absolute forms in the poem are in clause-initial position or otherwise obey the expected syntactical rules, with the possible exception of *Neut a ganaȯt* in line 337; however, there are other examples of absolute forms in relative position in both the *Hengerdd* and in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, including following the relative particle *a*.[67]

Rhyme provides the other major source for *termini post quem*. In one striking verse (ll. 252–4), the end-rhyme reveals that final -/v/ was not being pronounced:

> Myrdin dec, daȯnglot bennaf,
> kanys y'th eir y credaf,
> Owein, pa hyt y para?
>
> 'Fair Myrddin, talent-famed chief,
> since it is in your word that I believe,
> Owain, how long will he remain?'

In this verse, the superlative ending *-af* and the first-person singular present indicative ending *-af* are rhymed with a third-person singular present indicative verbal form ending with the denominative suffix *-(h)a*. In terms of the phonetics, this is not especially informative, since bilabial fricatives were being lost in word-final position already by the ninth century.[68] However, there is little evidence that it was acceptable for poets to rhyme words formerly ending in a fricative with words that had never ended with a fricative prior to the fourteenth century.[69] In earlier court poetry, there is only one example from the second half of the thirteenth century.[70] There are, however, some significant examples from the *Hengerdd*. In *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* in the Black Book of Carmarthen, *go<r>uchaf* rhymes with *da*, and *tagde* ('tangdde(f)') rhymes with *arvere* ('arwyre').[71] Marged Haycock has suggested that this poem was composed in the twelfth or early thirteenth century.[72] Similarly,

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and 577 (*gwasgaru*).

[66] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 94–5, 110–11 and 113; Stefan Dedio, 'Absolute and conjunct forms in early Middle Welsh gnomic poetry', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 16 (2015), 61–80, at 74; for the possible late-eleventh-century example from the St Padarn englyn, see Rodway, 'Syntax of absolute verbal forms', 42.

[67] Rodway, 'Syntax of absolute verbal forms', 91–4, and cf. 75; idem, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 109.

[68] *LHEB* 417–18.

[69] Cf. John Morris-Jones, *A Welsh Grammar: Historical and Comparative* (Oxford, 1913), 180.

[70] *CBT* VII, poem 32.64; cf. the appendix to poem 40, l. 95.

[71] *LlDC* poem 5.105–6 and 130–1 (= *CC* poem 21.105–6 and 130–1); cf. Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Dating the poems of Aneirin and Taliesin', *ZCP* 63 (2016), 163–234, at 199–200. For the emendation to *go<r>uchaf*, see *CC* 228.

[72] *CC* 210.

an undated poem called *Deuddeg Mab Israel* in the Book of Taliesin rhymes *Adaf* ('Adda(f)') with *Eua* ('Efa').[73] This may suggest that, even though it was unacceptable to rhyme *-a(f)* with *-a* in the formal and public court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a more flexible approach may have been taken with less formal varieties of poetry.

Another aspect of rhyme provides evidence that is more decisive. There are three verses in the *Cyfoesi* where the end rhyme is carried by conjugated prepositions in their third-person singular masculine forms:

> Kanys Ryderch bieu ffaɔ
> a Chymry oll y danaɔ,
> neu gɔedy gweitheu, kɔ daɔ?
>
> 'Since it is Rhydderch who will possess fame
> and all the Welsh under him,
> after battles, where will he come to?' (ll. 14–16)
>
> Llet ynuyt urenhin a daɔ
> a gɔyr Lloegyr yn y dɔyllaɔ;
> ny byd gɔlatlɔyd y danaɔ.
>
> 'A half-mad king will come
> and the men of England will deceive him;
> there will not be prosperity for the country under him.' (ll. 231–3)
>
> Pan uo Owein ym Manaɔ
> a chat ym Prydyn geirllaɔ,
> biaɔt gɔr ef a gɔyr idaɔ.
>
> 'When Owain is in Man
> and there is a battle in Northern Britain nearby,
> there will be a man who will have men.' (ll. 261–3)

These examples are significant because the third-person singular masculine ending of conjugated prepositions was previously -/auð/. This ending began in OW *hanaud* ('from him'; cf. OIr *úad*, MCo ***anoth****o*, MBr ***anez****af(f)*, all 'from him'), from where it spread to other prepositions.[74] The only extant example of a conjugated preposition with -/auð/ in a poem in rhyming position may be found in *Mawl Cuhelyn Fardd*, from the first third of the twelfth century (as preserved in the Black Book of Carmarthen), which rhymes *itaut* ('iddawdd')

[73] *CC* poem 8.5–6.

[74] Peter Schrijver, *Studies in the History of Celtic Pronouns and Particles* (Maynooth, 1997), 35–6; idem, 'Old British', in Elmar Ternes (ed.), *Brythonic Celtic – Britannisches Keltisch: From Medieval British to Modern Breton* (Bremen, 2011), 1–84, at 51–2; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions: chronology, register and dialect', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 111 (2013), 1–50, at 6–7. OW *hanaud* is attested in the Old Welsh computus fragment from the first half of the tenth century: Alexander Falileyev, *Etymological Glossary of Old Welsh* (Tübingen, 2000), 81. The only other attested form for a third-person singular masculine conjugated preposition in Old Welsh is *racdam* 'before him' in the Juvencus glosses, which is cognate with MBr *raczaff* and has the same ending as OBr *dada em* (with the affixed pronoun, i.e. 'ef'): Schrijver, 'Old British', 51.

with *naut* ('nawdd').[75] Thereafter, the court poets only rhymed third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions in *-aw* with other words ending in *-aw*.[76] This strongly suggests that the final fricative -/ð/ had been lost by the middle of the twelfth century, even in the minds of poets who were typically conservative with language.

In theory, a conjugated preposition in -/auð/ might have formed a generic rhyme with a word that ended with the same diphthong but a different fricative consonant.[77] In the third stanza quoted above, this would never have been true, because the name *Manaw* never ended in a fricative consonant.[78] In the first and second stanzas (the second of which, we should recall, probably alludes to King John), this would have been true only up to *c.* 800. In the first stanza, the conjugated preposition *danaó* rhymes with *ffaó* < Lat. *fāma*, which would have ended with -/μ/ in Old Welsh until the latter was lost in monosyllables with /au/ by *c.* 800;[79] and the verb *daó*, which would have ended with -/ɣ/ in Old Welsh until the latter was lost after back vowels in final syllables, also before the ninth century.[80] In the second stanza, *danaó* rhymes again with the verb *daó*, and also with the verbal noun *dóyllaó*, the suffix of which probably derives from Brittonic **-ā-mā-* and would thus have ended with -/au̯μ/ before the final fricative was lost early in the Old Welsh period.[81] Therefore, these stanzas could only have carried full generic rhyme prior to the ninth century, but no other evidence indicates a date for this poem anywhere near as early as that. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that there are no other instances of fricatives of differing qualities forming an acceptable end-rhyme in the *Cyfoesi*; rather, as in other englyn poems, the fricative /ð/ could form a generic rhyme with the liquids /r/ and /l/, like in ll. 373–5 (*diderbyd* : *urodyr* : *uyd*), as explored below.[82] Much the simpler solution is to date these stanzas to the period when the final -/ð/ had been lost from third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions and it had become acceptable for poets to rhyme such prepositions with other words in *-aw*; on the available evidence, this would indicate a date after *c.* 1150. In light of this discussion, it would be worth revisiting the significance of rhymes involving third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions in other anonymous englyn poems, such as *draw* : *amdanaw* in the 'Aelwyd Rheged' section of *Canu Urien*; *ognaw* : *arllaw* : *ohonaw* in the 'Caranfael' section of *Canu Heledd*; *glaw* : *danaw* : *gwynaw* in the 'Beddau Maes Maoddyn' section of *Canu Heledd*; and *dywedaw* : *kyuodaw* :

[75] *LlDC* poem 3.34 = CBT I poem 2.36.

[76] Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 7.

[77] Cf. Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 7; idem, 'Dating the poems', 204–8.

[78] George Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, vii, *Douglas and Appendices* (Tübingen, 2005), 337–8, with earlier references.

[79] *LHEB* 416–17 and 697.

[80] *LHEB* 458 and 697; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400–1200* (Oxford, 2003), 287. For *daw* < **dɔɣ* < British **do-aget*, see *LHEB* 443.

[81] *LHEB* 417–18; Stefan Schumacher, *The Historical Morphology of the Welsh Verbal Noun* (Maynooth, 2000), 133–5.

[82] Cf. *EWSP* 334.

ymdanaw at the beginning of *Kyntaw Geir*.[83]

To summarise thus far: taking the *termini ante quem* and the *termini post quem* together, the linguistic evidence is gratifyingly consistent in placing the poem approximately in the period 1150–1250. Within that period, the two probable examples of *di* for the preposition meaning 'to' would tend to push the date back, whereas the exclusive use of the third-person singular present subjunctive ending *-(h)o*, rather than *-(h)wy*, alongside the absence of infixed pronouns following the first preverb of compound verbs, would tend to push the date forwards. This evidence can now be compared with two other forms of evidence: orthography and rare vocabulary.

2.4. Orthography

In the context of dating the composition of the poem, a full orthographic analysis of the *Cyfoesi* is not particularly helpful. For the most part, the various copies of the poem reflect the orthographical conventions of the periods in which those copies were written. Moreover, even traces of earlier orthographic systems, preserved from earlier stages in the textual tradition, reveal more about the early written copies of the poem than about the original composition of the poem. Nevertheless, these traces of earlier orthographic conventions are still a helpful confirmation of the conclusions suggested by the linguistic analysis above.

Throughout the early witnesses to the poem, one finds orthographical relics of the thirteenth century: unsurprisingly, given that the earliest copy of the poem is Peniarth 3, part ii, dated *s.* xiii/xiv (which is, of course, a palaeographical date meaning *c.* 1275 × *c.* 1325). Perhaps the most noticeable of these traces is the occasional use of <w> for /v/, a spelling that is best known as a feature of the Black Book of Carmarthen, but which is also found in several other thirteenth-century manuscripts.[84] Here is a selection of such spellings from the various primary witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	l. 274 *gorwynt* ('gorfynt', also in the Red Book).
Red Book:	l. 19 *gǒynwyd* ('gwynfyd'); ll. 169, 175, 182 etc. *annwynnaǒc* ('anfynog'); l. 317 *diwedyd* ('difedydd').
Peniarth 50:	l. 11 *indawel* (a corrupt form of the name 'Cadafel').
Peniarth 26:	l. 66 *ǒyghywyddeǒ* ('fy nghyfeddau'); l. 88 *ath gywyddeǒ* ('a'th gyfeddau').
NLW 4973B:	ll. 53, 96, 99 etc. *owri* ('(g)ofri').

More significant in the present context are the traces of what might be considered 'Old Welsh' spellings. For example, in line 390, witnesses to X[4]

[83] *EWSP* 428 (*Canu Urien* stanza 59), 442–3 (*Canu Heledd* stanzas 96 and 103) and 452 (*Kyntaw Geir* stanza 1).

[84] Paul Russell, 'Scribal (in)consistency in thirteenth-century South Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Carmarthen', *SC* 43 (2009), 135–74, at 151–7; idem, '*Rowynniauc*, *Rhufoniog*: the orthography and phonology of /μ/ in early Welsh', in Russell, *Yr Hen Iaith*, 25–47, at 29–32.

seem to preserve an instance of Old Welsh <gu> for /w/. This is the line as it is preserved in the primary witnesses that do not derive from X^4:

Peniarth 3:	a thraethuot llyfreu awen hep arswyt
Red Book:	a thauot llyfreu awen heb arsϭyt
Peniarth 94:	a thrafod llyvrau heb arswyd

And here is the same line in witnesses to X^4:

Peniarth 26:	a thraϭod llyϭreϭ a gwenn heb arswyd
NLW 3041B:	a tharvod llyfrav a gwen heb arswyd
NLW 4973B:	a thrafod llyfrau a gwen heb arswyd
Pugh 1658:	a thrafod(?) llyfrev a gwen heb ar swyd

It seems likely that X^4 inadvertently preserved <gu> for /w/ in an Old Welsh spelling of 'awen' like *aguen* in the *Historia Brittonum*, the scribe having assumed that it stood for the two words *a gwen(n)*.[85] Another example can be found in line 82, where the available witnesses spell the word 'anwarth' as *angwarth* (Peniarth 50, Peniarth 26, NLW 4973B), or in one instance as the more corrupt *aniwarth* (Peniarth 20). However, the value of these orthographical relics for dating the poem is slight. It seems probable that <gu> continued to be used for /w/ in some contexts into the early thirteenth century, since examples of it can be seen in mid-thirteenth-century manuscripts: in the vernacular portions of the law manuscript known as 'Latin C', and in the work of hands A, C, D and E in the Black Book of Chirk (which have been interpreted as deriving from that manuscript's exemplar).[86]

More indicative, perhaps, are the examples suggesting that the Old Welsh spelling <b> for /β/ was found in the archetype. Here are the spellings of 'gwynfyd' (l. 19), 'dyfynnyn' (l. 91, possibly a corruption of *dyfyndyn* 'summoned person'), 'chwyfleian' (l. 191) and 'ar debed' (l. 308) in the primary witnesses:

- l. 19 gwynfyd: *gϭynwyd* (Red Book); *gwybyd* (Peniarth 20); *gwynuyt* (Peniarth 50); *gwynϭyd* (Peniarth 26); *gwyn maydd* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 91 dyfynnyn: *dyuynnyn* (Red Book); *dybynnyn* (Peniarth 20); *dyn ynin* (Peniarth 50); *dyfynyn* (Peniarth 26); *diuynyn* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 191 chwyfleian: *chwibleian* (Peniarth 3); *chwipleian* (Red Book); *chwyblian* (Peniarth 20); *chwibleian* (Peniarth 50); *chwibleian* (Peniarth 26); *chwibleian* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 308 ar debed: *arteuet* (Peniarth 3); *ardeued* (Red Book); *ar deued* (Peniarth 50); *ar dybed* (Peniarth 26); *ar dybedd* (NLW 3041B); *ar dybed* (NLW 4973B).

[85] For OW *aguen*, see Edmond Faral, *La légende arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols (Paris, 1929), iii, 42 (§62).

[86] Paul Russell, *Welsh Law in Medieval Anglesey: British Library Harleian MS 1796 (Latin C)* (Cambridge, 2011), xxvii; idem, 'Scribal (in)competence in thirteenth-century North Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Chirk (Peniarth MS 29)', *NLW Journal* 29 (1995–6), 129–76, at 141.

The fourth example is perhaps the simplest. In Peniarth 3, the Red Book and Peniarth 50, copyists have assumed that the phrase *ar debed*, found occasionally in early poetry but not later, contained <b> for /β/, and changed it to <u> accordingly, losing the sense.[87] This implies that the copyists were used to seeing instances of <b> for /β/ in the poem. As with the example of *aguen* discussed above, it is the witnesses to X^4 that have preserved this aspect of the original spelling of *debed*, with <b> for /b/. By contrast, in the first two examples (*gwynfyd* and *dyfynnyn*), only Peniarth 20 appears to preserve spellings with <b> for /β/. In both cases, it is possible that the *-b-* actually resulted from a miscopying of an in-curling <v> (like *6*); but alternatively, in the case of *gwybyd*, a spelling with <b> for /β/ might have been preserved because the loss of the *-n-* in the word led to it being unrecognisable to the scribe. In the case of *dybynnyn*, the spellings acquire additional interest because the first part of this word is almost certainly *dyfyn* from the verb *dyfynnu*, which is a compound form of *mynnu*. In Old Welsh, the fricative would therefore have been spelled with <m>, not <b>; a spelling with <b> would be possible only when /μ/ had lost its nasal quality and fallen together with /β/, as it had done by the twelfth century.[88] Intriguingly, the same can be seen in the unusual word 'chwyfleian'. This word is restricted to early Myrddin poetry (*Yr Afallennau*, *Yr Oianau* and the *Cyfoesi*), and has been interpreted convincingly by Jarman as *chwŷf* ('motion, movement') + *llai* ('grey') + *-an*, thus 'grey wanderer'.[89] In the Black Book of Carmarthen, it is spelled *hwimleian* or *huimleian*, with the etymologically correct *-m-*, but in other manuscripts of all three poems it is spelled *chwibleian*, as in most primary witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*.[90] Here is another spelling with <b> for etymological /β/ < /μ/. Contrary to the usual assumptions about the dating implications of 'Old Welsh' spellings, these spellings are most likely to date to the period in the twelfth or early thirteenth centuries when /μ/ had lost its nasality but the graphemes <u>, <v> and <f> (as well as <w>) had yet to be adopted universally for spelling /β/, as had happened by the mid-thirteenth century.

2.5. Rare vocabulary

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is full of words that are found otherwise only in a small number of early poetic texts. The patterns of correspondence between the *Cyfoesi* and other poems regarding the use of these words could suggest the milieu in which the poem was composed. Below is a list of some of the rarest words in the poem, alongside references to the other poems in which those words occur (for present purposes, I have generally not included *hapax legomena*, since they do not help to contextualise the poem).

[87] For discussion of the word *tebed* and the phrase *ar debed*, see *CA* 304.

[88] See Russell, '*Rowynniauc*, *Rhufoniog*'; Ben Guy, 'Misunderstanding Old Welsh orthography and Insular script in the Jesus College 20 genealogies', *Celtica* 33 (2021), 59–96, at 77–80.

[89] A. O. H. Jarman, 'Hwimleian, Chwibleian', *BBCS* 16 (1955), 71–6.

[90] The Red Book's *chwipleian* is a hypercorrection by a scribe who thought that the *-b-* in his exemplar's *chwibleian* meant /b/.

In the interest of clarity, I have spelled the headwords at the beginning of each bullet point using modern Welsh spelling, showing the radical consonants.

- l. 21 *broglyd*: *CBT* III, poem 3.183 (Cynddelw).
- l. 26 etc. *clotlau*: *Peirian Faban*, l. 52 and *LPBT* poem 8.7.
- l. 30: *goeithin*: *CA* l. 993 (and possibly l. 309) and the prophecy associated with Meugan.[91]
- ll. 41 and 395 *diguedd*: *Oianau*, l. 135;[92] *CBT* I, poem 23.5 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* VI, poem 36.1 (anonymous, dated tentatively to the thirteenth century).
- l. 51 *aborthun*: *CBT* IV, poem 12.18 (Cynddelw; see below).
- l. 66 *eban*: *LPBT* poem 5.221 and *CBT* IV, poem 16.26 and 209 (Cynddelw; see below).
- l. 81 *anhrwyadl*: Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug.[93]
- l. 105 *celedigan*: *hapax legomenon*, but cf. *celedig* in *CA* l. 1363 (*Gwarchan Kynfelyn*) and *CBT* III, poem 5.111 (Cynddelw).
- l. 133 *bargodiain*: cf. *PBT* poem 4.11 (*Dygogan Awen*; see below).
- l. 139 *breuer*: *PT* poem VII.24; *CBT* IV, poem 4.278 (Cynddelw); *EWSP* 449 (*Claf Abercuawg* l. 10c); and possibly *CA* l. 474.
- l. 151 *dramyr*: *CBT* I, poem 14.83 (Gwalchmai).
- l. 152 *dierchyr* (plural of *diarchar*): *CBT* II, poem 14.83, emended from *dieithyr* (*Hirlas Owain*, perhaps by Cynddelw).
- l. 172 *diffred*: *PT* poem I.1 (see below); *CC* poem 3.12; *CA* l. 1082; and *EWSP* 417 (*Canu Llywarch Hen*, l. 9b).
- l. 191 *chwyfleian*: *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.
- l. 235 *lluyddfawr*: *CBT* III, poem 6.3 (Cynddelw); and a handful of examples from the late fifteenth century onwards (cf. *GPC Online* s.v. *lluyddfawr* (1987)).
- l. 245 *gort(h)rech*: in its adjectival sense, only *CBT* V, poem 22.17 (Prydydd y Moch) before the seventeenth century (cf. *GPC Online* s.v. *gorthrech, gortrech* (1972)).
- ll. 263 and 299 *biawd*: *Oianau*, Peniarth 3 version, l. 170.[94]
- l. 310 *rhyddyrch*: *CA* l. 530; *CBT* V, poem 20.29 (Prydydd y Moch); and *Afallennau*, l. 113.
- l. 348 *arylwch* < *arwylo*: *PT* poem VII.37.
- l. 352 *dylad*: *CBT* II, poem 1.99 (Llywelyn Fardd I); *CBT* VI, poem 18.120 (Einion ap Gwgon); the Peniarth 17 proverbs, number 159.[95]
- l. 408 *anhylar*: *GGMD* I poems 3.30 and 5.131; and *GIG* poem 9.39.
- l. 427 *gwesgrydd*: *LPBT* poem 4.186 and *CBT* VII, poem 30.48 (Iorwerth Fychan).

[91]Marged Haycock, 'A prophetic poem attributed to Meugan', *CMCS* 81 (2021), 1–41, at 15, l. 40.

[92]Note, however, that the recent editor of the *Oianau*, Llewelyn Hopwood, takes the Black Book's form *diguet* as 'diwedd'.

[93]R. Geraint Gruffydd and Rhiannon Ifans (eds), *Gwaith Einion Offeiriad a Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug* (Aberystwyth, 1997), poem 2.1.

[94]Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau', 126.

[95]Henry Lewis, 'Diarhebion ym Mheniarth 17', *BBCS* 4 (1927), 1–17, at 5.

Taking this list at face-value, these are the poets or corpora of poetry with which the *Cyfoesi* shares more than one rare word, in descending order of frequency (I have included corresponding instances that are classed above as only 'possible').

- Book of Taliesin: 8 (= 3 in *PT* + 3 in *LPBT* + 1 in *PBT* + 1 in *CC*).
- Cynddelw: 7.
- Early Myrddin poems: 6.
- *Canu Aneirin*: 5.
- *EWSP*: 2.
- Prydydd y Moch: 2.

It should be stressed that these are very rough and ready figures that cannot bear much interpretative weight: these corpora differ significantly in size, and to some extent the figures reflect the ongoing recycling of poetic words and phrases by successive poets. Nevertheless, they are broadly indicative of the connections between the *Cyfoesi* and other poems, as explored further in the section below on intertextuality. The higher number of rare words that are also found in the work of Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195) is striking, as is the correspondence with the other early Myrddin poems, and especially *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*; it should be remembered that these latter two poems contain specific allusions to political events in the second half of the twelfth century and, in the latter case, the early thirteenth century.[96] These connections support the linguistic evidence that places the *Cyfoesi* in the period 1150 × 1250.

2.6. Dating the poem's transmission

Before turning to the poem's content, it is useful to draw attention to certain linguistic features that might help us understand the early stages of the poem's transmission. There are two strands of evidence that might, at first, appear to point in contradictory directions.

It was noted above that the poem contains several instances of the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd*, which had lost its final fricative, even in poetry, by the second half of the thirteenth century. There are four examples where the ending has been preserved intact, and two where it can be safely restored thanks to the rhyme. In one of these latter two cases, in line 176, it appears that the *-yd* ending (rhyming with *lluyd* and *vyd*) had been misunderstood as *-y* plus the affixed pronoun *di* in the archetype, X^1. These are the readings of the primary witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	*darogeny di*
Red Book:	*darogeny di*
Peniarth 20:	*darogennyd*
Peniarth 50:	*ddarogeny di*

[96] *LlDC* xxviii–xxxiii.

Peniarth 26:	*ddarogeni* [..]
NLW 4973B:	*ddarogeni*

Presumably, the reading was restored in Peniarth 20 to follow the rhyme. But the original misunderstanding might suggest that the archetype was written in the second half of the thirteenth century, after the original final -/ð/ had been lost and was no longer readily understood.

The other instance of the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd* that can be restored by rhyme occurs in line 36, where it rhymes with the *gair cyrch*, *Arderyd*, at the end of the preceding line. Here is line 36 in the extant primary witnesses:

Red Book:	*asynnyy paham ym keu*
Peniarth 20:	*yssyd ym*[.] *pan ym ken*
Peniarth 50:	*a synny paham ym keu*
Peniarth 26:	*yssit ymy pan ym ken*
NLW 4973B:	*y sydd i'm pan i'm cen*

The original line is preserved in the Red Book and Peniarth 50, even though the ending has been updated to *-y* in those cases. But in the other three witnesses, which all descend from X³, the line has been reworked in a way that maintains the rhyme in -/ð/ but removes the second-person singular verb. Again, there is a suspicion that the scribe of X³ was not familiar with the verbal ending *-yd*. This can be placed alongside the evidence of line 122, which in the original text contained the present impersonal verb *etmyckaór*; in X³, this latter form was changed to *etmyckawd* (as witnessed by Peniarth 20 and NLW 4973B). The use of the third-person singular preterite ending *-awd*, which is not found in the original text, again suggests that X³ was most probably written no earlier than the second half of the thirteenth century.

However, these factors contrast with the evidence of Peniarth 26. Despite the clear textual evidence that Peniarth 26 descends from X⁴, Peniarth 26 contains linguistically early features that are not otherwise apparent in other descendants of X⁴. In line 87, which is *A'th gyfuarchaf yn glaear* ('I ask you gently') in the edited text, following all the other witnesses, a new verb is introduced in the Peniarth 26 version with the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd*: *O'm kyóerchyd yn glayar* ('If you ask me gently'). Furthermore, Peniarth 26 contains two additional series of stanzas within its text of the *Cyfoesi* that display linguistic features that are unlikely to post-date the early thirteenth century.[97] The first series is comprised of two stanzas that follow the second englyn of the main text. These stanzas include two verbs that contain infixed object pronouns after their first preverbs: *Gor-ith-gyfarchaf*[98] ('I ask you') and *Dy-m-goeó* ('it has befallen me'), the latter being a unique form of the rare verb *dygofod*, which otherwise only occurs in the Books of Aneirin

[97] These are respectively poem 5.III and poem 5.IV of the online edition of the Myrddin poetry.
[98] MS *Gor ith gyffaichaf*

and Taliesin.[99] As mentioned above, the practice of inserting infixed pronouns after the first preverb of compound verbs continued in court poetry only until the beginning of the thirteenth century.[100] In the second series of additional stanzas in Peniarth 26, between lines 170 and 171 of the main text, one finds the third-person plural conjugated preposition *chandó*, with the ending *-u* that fell out of regular use after the first half of the thirteenth century, though it is found sporadically thereafter, especially in the South, for the remainder of the Middle Ages.[101]

How can this evidence be reconciled with the indications that X^1 and X^3 probably post-dated the first half of the thirteenth century? There seem to be at least two possible explanations. The text of the poem preserved in Peniarth 26 could also have drawn on a separate, early version of the poem that does not otherwise survive. Alternatively, during the transmission of the text between X^4 and Peniarth 26, the text was reworked by a linguistically conservative poet, in contrast with X^1 and X^3, which were copied by scribes who were less linguistically conservative. The latter scenario may be supported by the fact that the main text in Peniarth 26 has been reworked creatively to a greater extent than any other copy of the poem. If so, this may possibly suggest that all the early stages of transmission between X^1 and this precursor to Peniarth 26, including X^2, X^3 and X^4, took place no later than the first half of the thirteenth century; our understanding of linguistic change in that period relies heavily on the evidence of court poetry, and it would not be surprising if the average scribes of this time were less linguistically conservative than contemporary poets, and thus more liable to make the kinds of changes seen in X^1 and X^3, as discussed above.

2.7. Content evidence

Lastly, we turn to the evidence that the content can provide for the dating of the poem. It is the content that has given the chief impetus for past commentators to suggest that the poem was originally composed in the tenth century. This is because, between lines 41 and 129, the poem follows a fairly formulaic structure in which the kings of Gwynedd between Maelgwn Gwynedd and Hywel Dda are prophesied in turn. There is a long scholarly tradition, dating back to Robert Vaughan in the seventeenth century, of interpreting this to mean that the poem was originally composed in Hywel Dda's reign.[102] The

[99] *G* s.v. *dyouot* (2); *GPC Online* s.v. *dyofyddaf** (1964). I take it that *-e6* is a third-person singular perfect ending, as in *goreu*, a variant form of *goryw* < *gorfod* (*GMW* 146–7).

[100] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[101] Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 15–20.

[102] Robert Vaughan, *British Chronology*, printed in the *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 515–33 at 524–5 (I owe this reference to Scott Lloyd, who is preparing a new edition of Vaughan's *British Chronology*); Edward Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707), 258; William F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales, Containing the Cymric Poems Attributed to the Bards of the Sixth Century*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1868), i, 239; H. Munro Chadwick and Nora K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1932–40), i, 463; Margaret Enid Griffiths, *Early Vaticination in Welsh with English Parallels* (Cardiff, 1937), 98; D. Simon Evans, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff, 1977), cxliv; *EWSP* 292; Nikolai Tolstoy, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Merlin legend', *Arthurian Literature* 25 (2008), 1–42, at 20–5; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 337–9.

key plank of the argument is that the stanzas following that about Hywel Dda prophesy figures who are described cryptically and appear obscure, such as might have been invented by a poet working in Hywel Dda's reign. It is undeniable that the style of the poem changes after line 129, which may explain why the Red Book begins the stanza about Hywel with a two-line rubricated initial on a new line; but, on the other hand, it is arguably incorrect to assume that the consecutive historical sequence is broken at this point. In what follows, I suggest that the sequence continues with little interruption from Hywel Dda to the early thirteenth century. The discussion is summarised in Table 1 at the end of this section.

Firstly, between lines 178 and 201, a little later in the poem, we appear to be on firm ground again, as the poem prophesies the rulers of Gwynedd between Gruffudd ap Cynan (r. 1099–1137) and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (r. *c.* 1200–40). These are the stanzas in question:

[Myrddin:]
Gruffud y en6, gredua6l mirein,
(g6nawt man ar gran kyngrein)
a wledych ar dir Prydein.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
anwynnawc yg kadeu,
neu g6edy Gruffud, pieu?

[Myrddin:]
Dywedwyf nyt odrycker,
armes Prydein pryderer.
Gwedy Gruffud, G6yn Gwarther.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
ann6ynna6c yn ryuel,
p6y wledych wedy G6ynn G6arther?

[Myrddin:]
Wi a Wendyd wenn, ma6r a dias!
Disgogan chwibleian chwedleu atkas:
gwehelieith a uyd ar deyrnas
ny borthant wled na iawn adas,
dyui deu vroder, deu Idas am dir,
etmyka6r o'e g6ir hir alanas.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
annwynna6c yg kadeu,
p6y wledych wedy 6ynteu?

[Myrddin:]
Disgoganaf nat gỏas beid,
brenhin llew llaỏ diwreid,
gyluin geuel, gauel bleid!

And in translation:

'[Myrddin:]
Gruffudd his name, mighty and splendid,
(he will make a mark on the cheeks of princes)
who will reign in the land of Britain.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in battles,
after Gruffudd, who will possess it?

[Myrddin:]
I will say that there will be no delay,
the prophecy of Britain will be feared.
After Gruffudd, Gwyn Gwarther.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in war,
who will reign after Gwyn Gwarther?

[Myrddin:]
O fair Gwenddydd, of great tumult!
A grey wanderer prophesies hateful tidings:
princes will be over the kingdom
who will support neither a feast nor proper justice,
two brothers will come, two Judases desiring land,
a long blood-feud will be honoured because of their claim.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in battles,
who will reign after them?

[Myrddin:]
I prophesy that he is not a servant of boars,
but a lion king with an uprooting hand,
a pincer-like beak, the grasp of a wolf!'

The sequence is clear. Following Gruffudd, who is named transparently, is Gwyn Gwarther. This is the name of a traditional hero who is mentioned several times by Cynddelw and, later, Gruffudd ap Maredudd, but in his *Marwnad Owain Gwynedd*, Cynddelw uses the name figuratively for Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170); this is probably the meaning in the *Cyfoesi* too.[103] After Gwyn

[103] *CBT* IV, poem 4.287; the other references are *CBT* III, poem 26.39, *CBT* IV, poem 8.35 and *GGMD* I, poem 3.134.

Gwarther / Owain Gwynedd are two brothers who are also *deu Idas am dir* ('two Judases desiring land'). This is surely a reference to Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1203) and his brother Rhodri (d. 1195), who killed their brother Hywel, Owain Gwynedd's chief heir, in the battle of Pentraeth in 1170, and then shared Gwynedd between the two of them. Then, lastly, is the *brenhin llew* ('lion king'), a common poetic moniker for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (d. 1240).[104]

After the stanza on Llywelyn ab Iorwerth there is one further possible item in the chronological sequence before the poem turns to non-specific prophetic commonplaces, speckled with allusions to the Angevin kings. After the *brenhin llew* comes the mysterious *mackóy deu hanner*, 'youth of two halves'. This prophetic cipher is seemingly borrowed from the Irish *mac dá leithi*, a cipher that stands for Domnall ua Néill (d. 980) in the Irish prophetic poem *Baile in Scáil* (§56), which is thought to have been redacted in the first half of the eleventh century.[105] But as a moniker for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's successor, one inevitably wonders whether it refers to Dafydd ap Llywelyn, who might be described as 'two-halved' by virtue of having a Welsh father and an English mother (Joan daughter of King John). It appears that Dafydd was born after Easter 1212, or possibly 1213.[106] If the identification is accepted, this verse contains the latest historical reference in the poem, dateable no earlier than 1212.[107]

What, then, of the intermediate lines between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan? If they are comprised only of deliberately cryptic prophetic commonplaces that have no bearing upon real history, one might suppose that a prophecy composed during Hywel Dda's reign has simply been interpolated with a sequence relating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. And yet, that is not entirely what one finds. There are six reigns that are prophesied between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan, and one of the rulers is specifically named: *Kynan y Kón* (l. 147). The same name is found in the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies, composed in Gwynedd between 1216 and *c.* 1223, in a section describing the descendants of Rhodri Mawr.[108] There we are told the following: *Meibion Ieuaf: Meig a Howel a Ieuaf tad Kynan y kwn* ('The sons of Ieuaf: Maig and Hywel and Ieuaf father of Cynan y Cŵn').[109] This statement sets out the sons of Ieuaf ab Idwal Foel (d. 988), including Maig, who was killed in 986,

[104]This is recognised in John Bollard, 'Myrddin in early Welsh tradition', 31; idem, '*Gwyn eu Byd*: some comments on the Myrddin poetry', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 10 (1990), 69–87, at 80.

[105]Kevin Murray (ed.), *Baile in Scáil: The Phantom's Frenzy*, ITS 58 (London, 2004), 47, 65 and 120; cf. Chadwick and Chadwick, *Growth of Literature*, i, 463.

[106]David Stephenson and Craig Owen Jones, 'The date and context of the birth of Dafydd II ap Llywelyn', *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society* 39 (2012), 21–32.

[107]The phrase *mackóy deu hanner* is also found in later prophetic poetry, where it is used in reference to the prophetic deliverer Owain: Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 254–5 (Peniarth 50, poem 16c) and 261 (Peniarth 50, poem 17b); Griffiths, *Early Welsh Vaticination*, 147–8 a 168; Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan: Prophecy, Lament and Absent Heroes in Medieval Welsh Literature* (Cardiff, 2013), 133–7.

[108]For the date, see Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study* (Woodbridge, 2020), 211–16.

[109]Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 370 (§28.1.2).

and Hywel ab Ieuaf, who ruled Gwynedd between 979 and 985. However, it is likely that the text has confused the parentage of Cynan y Cŵn. The only Cynan known in the next generation in the annals is the son of Hywel ab Ieuaf (rather than his brother Ieuaf ab Ieuaf), who seized Gwynedd in *c.* 1000 and ruled it until *c.* 1003.[110] It is very likely that Cynan ap Hywel can be identified with Cynan y Cŵn, and this would make sense of the reference to him in the *Cyfoesi*, within a list of kings who ruled Gwynedd. The *Cyfoesi* introduces Cynan by saying *Dyrchauaót unic o gud* ('There will arise a peerless one from hiding'), perhaps a reference to the fact that, between his father's death in 985 and his accession in *c.* 1000, Gwynedd was ruled by the southerner Maredudd ab Owain. We might presume that Cynan lived in exile during this time.

Between Hywel Dda (d. 950) and Cynan y Cŵn (r. *c.* 1000–3), the *Cyfoesi* mentions two periods: first is *Oys bargodyein* ('the age of the borderers', l. 133), and the second is *Blóydyn a hanner y ureuer vrehyryeit* ('A year and a half for lowing noblemen', l. 139). The latter is obscure, but could possibly refer to the short period between the death of Maredudd ab Owain in 998/9 and the accession of Hywel around 1000, when we do not otherwise know who was ruling Gwynedd.[111] This leaves a period of almost half a century that is described simply as *Oys bargodyein*. As the chronicles attest, the single most notable feature of this period of Gwynedd's history, particularly from the 960s to 980s, is the constant attacks that were made on Gwynedd by viking groups operating in the Irish Sea.[112] During the 970s and 980s, these attacks were primarily the work of the Islesmen of the Hebrides: the *ynyswyr*, as they are termed in *Brut y Tywysogyon* in reference to a later event in 1091.[113] Can we equate the Islesmen with the *bargodyein*? Three factors suggest that we should.

Firstly, apart from the reference in *Brut y Tywysogyon*, the only other medieval reference to the word *ynyswyr* itself is found in the poem *Saint a Merthyron Cred* in the Book of Taliesin, in a stanza concerning the *Nifer seint a deily goror* ('The host of saints who defend the border').[114] This stanza finishes with a line that evokes *ynys gwyr terwyn mor* ('the *ynyswyr* of the *terwyn* sea').[115] It is possible that *terwyn mor* here is simply a noun phrase meaning 'raging sea', but it has also been suggested that *terwyn* is a proper noun referring either to the Mediterranean Sea or, possibly, the Irish Sea, owing to the lack of a definite article preceding the phrase *mor terwyn* in

[110] These are the conventional dates, though the chronology of the chronicles is uncertain in these years; Cynan may actually have ruled from 1001 to 1005. Cf. Henry Gough-Cooper, 'Meet the ancestors? Evidence for antecedent texts in the late thirteenth-century Welsh Latin chronicles', in Ben Guy et al. (eds), *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies, and Texts* (Turnhout, 2020), 107–37, at 133–5.

[111] For the date of Maredudd ab Owain's death, see Gough-Cooper, 'Meet the ancestors?', 135 and n. 83.

[112] For general accounts, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 539–52; Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, corr. ed. (Edinburgh, 2008), 217–28.

[113] *BT (Pen. 20)* 24.

[114] *CC* poem 24.61.

[115] *CC* poem 24.67.

Culhwch ac Olwen.[116] Either way, the stanza supports the currency of the idea that *ynyswyr* could be associated with borders.

Secondly, the stanza of the *Cyfoesi* in which the *bargodyein* are named strongly suggests that they were associated with paganism. Here is the edited text of the stanza (ll. 133–5):

> Oys bargodyein ny bi ssóys,
> ny byd nes y baradóys,
> nyt góaeth urd odynn noc urd eglóys.
>
> 'In the age of the borderers there will be no sense,
> it will not be nearer to paradise,
> the dignity of *odynn* will be no worse than the dignity of a church.'

Even if we ignore the intriguing word *odynn* momentarily, it is clear that the *bargodyein* were causing trouble for Christian society: paradise is receding, and the *urd* ('dignity', or perhaps 'ecclesiastical orders') of a church is compared negatively with the *urd* of *odynn*. This scenario would certainly fit with the identification of the *bargodyein* as viking groups from the Hebrides, who are usually called *gentiles* or *cenhedloedd* in Welsh chronicles. Numerous major Welsh ecclesiastical sites were attacked during this period: Caergybi in 961, Tywyn in 963, Penmon in 971, Clynnog Fawr in 978 (admittedly by Hywel ab Ieuaf and the English rather than vikings), St Davids in 982, and, most dramatically, Llanbadarn Fawr, St Davids, Llanilltud Fawr, Llancarfan and Llandudoch in 988.[117] What, then, is the meaning of *odynn*, whose *urd*, to the poet's disgust, will be no worse than that of a church? The noun *odyn* 'kiln' might be possible, if we understand that churches would be no better than kilns because they were being burnt down, though this does not explain the double *-nn*. The verb *godynnaf* ('to remove, diminish') is attested once in a poem by Prydydd y Moch (*CBT* V, poem 17.42), and we could perhaps understand *odynn* as an adjective meaning 'diminished', thus 'diminished dignity will be no worse than the dignity of a church'. But the parallel with *urd eglóys* suggests that *odynn* would be best interpreted as a noun. In the context of attacks against Christian society in the second half of the tenth century by vikings, the obvious solution would be to interpret *odynn* as the name of the Norse god Óðinn, the father god of the Norse pagan pantheon. It is difficult to verify this suggestion, since, to my knowledge, there is only one other instance of this Norse name extant in medieval Welsh, in a poem by Tudur Aled (fl. 1490–d. 1525 × 1527).[118] But it makes excellent sense in the

[116] *CC* 263; Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), 163–4.

[117] The attack on Llandudoch in 988 is the subject of the last part of *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*. On this, as well as more on what follows here, see Ben Guy, 'Poetry and taxes: Welsh responses to viking attacks in the late tenth century', in Clare Downham et al. (eds), *Viking Connections: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Viking Congress* (Liverpool, 2026), 14–25.

[118] Spelled *Odin*: Gruffudd Antur, '"Rhyw farwol law": ailddarganfod llawysgrifau Tudur Aled', *Dwned* 27 (2021), 71–82, at 73; cf. T. Gwynn Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, 2 vols (Cardiff, 1926), i,

context: in the upside-down world of the 'age of the borderers', Óðinn and the pagan Norse gods will be treated no worse than a church.

The third factor that suggests that we should identify the *bargodyein* with the Islesmen is the relationship between this section of the *Cyfoesi* and another prophetic poem, *Dygogan Awen* (*PBT* poem 4). Although the word *bargod* was a common noun meaning either 'eaves, roof' or 'edge, border', there are only two attestations of plural forms of the noun with the meaning 'borderers': *bargodyein* in the *Cyfoesi*, and *vargotyon* in *Dygogan Awen* (l. 11). Like the *Cyfoesi*, *Dygogan Awen* prophesies a series of epochs that will bring either disaster or joy to the Welsh. At the beginning of the poem, the historical sequence seems to begin with the coming of the *bargotyon* following *diwed plo, coll Iago o tir Prydyn* ('the final ?fateful blow, the loss of Iago from the land of Prydyn ['northern Britain'?]').[119] Although it would be possible to identify this Iago with various rulers of the same name, such as the Iago ap Beli who died in *c.* 615, the obvious Iago in a tenth-century context is Iago ab Ieuaf, who ruled Gwynedd from the death of Hywel Dda in 950 until he was captured by vikings, very probably Islesmen from the Hebrides, in 979. Iago, like other late tenth-century rulers, is omitted by the *Cyfoesi*, but that is as much as might be expected given that his father Idwal Foel is also omitted, even though he ruled Gwynedd between 916 and 942, *prior* to Hywel Dda. Later in *Dygogan Awen*, also like the *Cyfoesi*, the *bargotyon* are followed by a *Gwr o Gud* ('Man from Hiding', l. 24). Although this phrase became a commonplace in later prophetic poetry, the correspondence with the *Cyfoesi* may suggest that the *Gwr o Gud* in this case should be understood, again, as Cynan y Cŵn. If so, this leaves the following lines in *Dygogan Awen* between the *bargotyon* and the *Gwr o Gud*, describing someone identified only by the moniker *Llyminawc* ('leaping one') (ll. 14–23, with Haycock's translation):

> Rydybyd Llyminawc
> a uyd gwr chwannawc
> y werescyn Mon,
> a rewinyaw Gwyned
> o'e heithaf o'e pherued,
> o'e dechreu o'e diwed,
> a chymryt y gwystlon.
> Ystic y wyneb
> nyt estwg y neb –
> na Chymry na Saesson.
> Dydaw Gwr o Gud …

poem LXX.50; (I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for bringing this example to my attention). In this context, 'Odin' should be distinguished from the related English name 'Woden', who is called *Wden* in one fifteenth-century Welsh genealogical text, drawing on English genealogical sources that ultimately derive from Anglo-Saxon genealogies: Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 396 (§G12.1); cf. 231.

[119] *PBT* poem 4.7, with Marged Haycock's translation. I have added the commas and the suggestion that *Prydyn* (originally 'Pictland') might be interpreted generally as 'northern Britain' here.

> ‘There shall come a leaping one
> who shall be a man keen
> to conquer Anglesey,
> and to bring ruin to Gwynedd
> from its outermost edge to its centre,
> from its beginning to its end,
> and to seize its hostages.
> One of steadfast honour
> who bows to no-one –
> neither (to) the Cymry or the Saxons.
> There shall come a Man from Hiding …’

Considering the period between the capture of Iago (979) and the reign of Cynan y Cŵn (*c.* 1000–3), it is difficult not to see a relationship between the description of the *Llyminawc* in these lines and the activity of Guðrøðr Haraldsson, ruler of the Isles and repeated harasser of Gwynedd, in 987, as reported in the B-text of *Annales Cambriae*:[120]

> An[n]us Gothrit filius Haraldi cum nigris gentilibus uastauit Mon, captis duobus milibus hominum. Reliquias vero Mareduc secum asportauit ad Keredigean et ad Demeciam.
>
> ‘In this year Guðrøðr Haraldsson ravaged Anglesey with the Black Gentiles, capturing two thousand men. But Maredudd carried the relics with him to Ceredigion and Dyfed.’

With the poem in mind, Guðrøðr Haraldsson was certainly someone who conquered Anglesey, brought ruin to Gwynedd, seized its hostages, and bowed neither to the Welsh nor the Saxons. Ifor Williams wished to see the *Llyminawc* of this poem as Gruffudd ap Cynan, just because a verse quoted in *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* seeks to identify Gruffudd with a *Llyminauc* in a different prophecy, attributed to Myrddin; but, in the context of *Dygogan Awen*, Guðrøðr Haraldsson is a much more credible candidate.[121]

Following Cynan y Cŵn, the *unic o gud* of the *Cyfoesi* and putatively the *Gwr o Gud* of *Dygogan Awen*, the two poems lack specific points of contact but both arguably refer to rulers of the first half of the eleventh century.[122] *Dygogan Awen* finishes with three lines explaining that, after the *Gwr o Gud*, another will come to bring *llawenyd y Vrython* (‘joy to the Britons’, l. 29). Haycock commented that this ‘may be coded discourse for a Llywelyn (?ab

[120]Text from Henry W. Gough-Cooper (ed.), *Annales Cambriae: B and C in Parallel, from AD 954 to AD 1189* (Welsh Chronicles Research Group, 2017), pp. 2–3 (annal b1009), available at http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/parallel-editions.php.en (accessed 3 September 2025). I have added modern punctuation and capitalization as well as the translation. Note that the versions of *Brut y Tywysogyon* preserve a similar record, but they imply that their exemplar read *reliquos* ‘the rest, the remainder’ rather than *reliquias* ‘relics’: *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 145–6, n. 10.1–2. It seems more likely to me that *reliquias* was the original reading, but the reverse would be entirely possible.

[121]*AP* xl–xlv; cf. *PBT* 84.

[122]Though note that the two poems use the words *pellennic* (*Cyfoesi*, l. 151) and *pellenawc* (*PBT* poem 4.28) in lines that follow their respective men from hiding, as noticed by Haycock (*PBT* 96).

Iorwerth)', whose name was often collocated with *llawenydd*.[123] Strikingly, after Cynan y Cŵn, the next known king of Gwynedd was indeed a Llywelyn: namely Llywelyn ap Seisyll (d. 1023), who appears in the chronicles for the first time when he kills Aeddan ap Blegywryd, a lord from Anglesey, in *c.* 1017.[124] If Llywelyn ap Seisyll is the subject of the allusion in the final line of *Dygogan Awen*, as the chronological thrust of the rest of the poem suggests, there must be a strong possibility that the poem was composed during his reign, around 1020. By contrast, the *Cyfoesi* does not appear to contain any allusion to Llywelyn ap Seisyll, but it may well refer to his more illustrious son, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (king of Gwynedd 1039–1064). Two Myrddin stanzas after Cynan y Cŵn (r. *c.* 1000–3), and two Myrddin stanzas before Gruffudd ap Cynan (r. 1099–1137), the *Cyfoesi* prophesies a certain 'Serwen Wyn' (ll. 157–61):

> Disgoganaf Seruen Wynn,
> kennat gɔastat ysgɔydwyn,
> gleɔ gadarn garchar gychwyn.
> Treiglaɔt bro bradaɔc unbyn.
> Ef grynnaɔt hɔnt racdaɔ hyt ym Prydyn.
>
> 'I prophesy Serwen Wyn,
> a steadfast, white-shielded messenger,
> a bold, strong prison-breaker.
> He will overthrow the land of treacherous chieftains.
> He will thrust yonder before him as far as Northern Britain.'

These lines can be linked directly to Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's career. Line 159 calls Serwen Wyn *garchar gychwyn* ('a prison-breaker'), and in 1042 Gruffudd was taken captive by the men of Dublin.[125] More significantly, Gruffudd repeatedly suffered 'treachery', as the chronicles call it, from South Wales, including one incident in 1047 when *y llas ynghylch seith vgeinwyr o deulu Gruffuδ vab Llywelyn drwy dwyll gwyrda Ystrad Tywi. Ac i δial y rei hynny y diffeithyawδ Gruffuδ vrenhin δyued ac Ystrad Tywi* ('about seven score men of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's war-band were slain through the treachery of the leading men of Ystrad Tywi. And to avenge those men, king Gruffudd ravaged Dyfed and Ystrad Tywi').[126] Quite possibly, Deheubarth is the *bro bradaɔc unbyn* of line 160, and it was Gruffudd ap Llywelyn who overthrew it. But even if Serwen Wyn can be identified with Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, the meaning of the cipher 'Serwen Wyn' remains obscure.

This leaves just two of the *Cyfoesi*'s prophesies unexplained between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan. Firstly, between Cynan y Cŵn (d. 1003) and

[123] *PBT* 85.

[124] Cf. Ben Guy, 'The changing approaches of English kings to Wales in the tenth and eleventh centuries', *Offa's Dyke Journal* 4, Special Issue: *Borders in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Ben Guy, Howard Williams and Liam Delaney (2022), 86–106, at 94.

[125] Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 6 (annals b1063 and c364); *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 13 (s.a. 1040, *recte* 1042).

[126] *BT (Pen. 20)* 18; *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 14 (s.a. 1045, *recte* 1047); cf. Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 6 (annals b1068 and c369).

Serwen Wyn (?Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, r. 1039–64), we are told that men from overseas will declare a nobleman a king (ll. 151–3). This could be interpreted in various ways, but one possibility is that this is a reference to Rhydderch ab Iestyn, a nobleman from Gwent who became king of Deheubarth and seemingly Gwynedd too between 1023 and 1033, following Llywelyn ap Seisyll.[127] I have argued elsewhere that Rhydderch was helped into power by Cnut, king of England, while Colmán Etchingham has argued that Óláfr Sigtryggsson of Dublin held overlordship over Gwynedd during the latter part of this period, from 1028 to 1034.[128] Perhaps Cnut and/or Óláfr Sigtryggsson should be equated with the men from overseas and Rhydderch ab Iestyn is the *vrenhin o vrehyr*.[129] Secondly, between Serwen Wyn and Gruffudd ap Cynan, the *Cyfoesi* prophesies the coming of *Deu ysgóydwyn Veli* ('Two white-shielded men called Beli', l. 165) who will create chaos. This pair of characters seems comparatively unlikely to be based on genuine rulers; they are probably intended to emphasise the extent of the disorder that preceded the coming of Gruffudd ap Cynan.[130]

The various suggestions of the discussion above are summarised in Table 1. There are two main conclusions to take away from this. The first is that, contrary to what has sometimes been thought, the *Cyfoesi* arguably offers a chronologically continuous set of prophecies beginning in the sixth century and ending in the early thirteenth. It is true that the allusions become more cryptic after Hywel Dda, but the historical sequence remains tolerably clear up to Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (or perhaps Dafydd ap Llywelyn). After this point, the historical progression is broken, though it is possible to identify several allusions to the Angevin kings, and especially Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's adversary King John.[131] The evidence of the content therefore agrees closely with that of the language: linguistic dating places the poem in the period 1150–1250, while the content suggests a date in the early thirteenth century. The second conclusion is that the *Cyfoesi* and *Dygogan Awen* appear to describe events of the second half of the tenth century and first half of the eleventh in strikingly similar terms. *Dygogan Awen* probably reflects the kind of poetic source that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* drew on for this time period, perhaps accounting for the difference in tone after Hywel Dda. As discussed below,

[127] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 557–8. For Rhydderch as king of Gwynedd, see Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 5 (annal c356); J. Gwenogvryn Evans, with John Rhys, *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv: Reproduced from the Gwysaney Manuscript* (Oxford, 1893), 253.

[128] Guy, 'Changing approaches', 96–100; Colmán Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular viking zone', *Peritia* 15 (2001), 145–87, at 157–62.

[129] Another possibility would be to identify the *vrenhin o vrehyr* as Aeddan ap Blegywryd, a nobleman seemingly of non-royal extraction, who had control of Anglesey in *c.* 1017 (see above, p. 217). However, this would leave the 'men from overseas' unexplained.

[130] One speculation would be to identify them with the brothers Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, who were chosen by Edward the Confessor to succeed Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1064 (Guy, 'Changing approaches', 91–4); but it is difficult to find supporting evidence for this.

[131] For example, l. 219 *keneu Henri, ryuyget!* ('the whelp of Henry, let him behave arrogantly!); l. 227 *brenhin na vrenhin* ('A king who is not a king'); ll. 231–2 *Llet ynuyt urenhin a daó / a góyr Lloegyr yn y dóyllaó* ('A half-mad king will come / and the men of England will deceive him'); for discussion, see *LlDC* xxxviii–xxxix.

the poet was highly knowledgeable about literature and traditions relating to different time periods.

Table 1: Historical references in the Cyfoesi and Dygogan Awen, 950–1240

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd	***Dygogan Awen***	**Historical references**
l. 129 *Howel*		Hywel Dda, d. 950
	l. 7 *coll Iago o tir Prydyn*	Iago ap Idwal Foel, r. 950–79
l. 133 *bargodyein*	l. 11 *gwlat wehyn vargotyon*	Viking attacks on Gwynedd, 960s–80s
	ll. 14–23: *Llyminawc … y werescyn Mon a rewinyaw Gwyned … a chymryt y gwystlon … nyt estwg y neb — na Chymry na Saesson.*	Guðrøðr Haraldsson, 987
l. 139 *Blóydyn a hanner y ueruer vrehyryeit*		998/9–*c.* 1000?
ll. 145–7 *unic o gud … Kynan y Kón*	l. 24 *Gwr o Gud*	Cynan y Cŵn, r. *c.* 1000–3
	l. 29 *llewenyd y Vrython*	Llywelyn ap Seisyll, r. *c.* 1017–23
ll. 151–3 *Góyr pellennic o dramyr … Dywedynt vrenhin o vrehyr*		(?) Rhydderch ab Iestyn, r. 1023–33
l. 157 *Seruen Wynn*		Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, r. 1039–64
l. 165 *Deu ysgóydwyn Veli*		
l. 178 *Gruffud*		Gruffudd ap Cynan, r. 1099–1137
l. 186 *Góyn Gwarther*		Owain Gwynedd, r. 1137–70
l. 194 *deu vroder, deu Idas am dir*		Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd (r. 1170–*c.* 1194, d. 1203) and Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd (r. 1170–1195)
l. 200 *brenhin llew*		Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, r. *c.* 1200–40
l. 207 *mackóy deu hanner*		(?) Dafydd ap Llywelyn, b. 1212/13

3. Metre and ornament

The poem's date should be borne in mind when assessing its metre. The metrical analysis offered below is based on the critical edition of the poem rather than upon any individual manuscript witness. This inevitably affects analysis of the metre, since the metre was one of the factors that was considered when choosing between variants, or when emending the text. The critical edition is therefore likely to be somewhat more metrically regular than any individual witness, but hopefully this better represents the original composition. However, as the notes to the edition make clear, the text has not generally been emended *solely* for the purpose of achieving metrical regularity; instead, it was used as one among several tools for interpreting the extensive textual tradition. Moreover, when considering the poem's metre, there was no assumption that the poem should conform to the prescriptive accounts of metre in the bardic grammars of the fourteenth century and later. As far as possible, the poem's metre was judged on its own terms.

3.1. Syllabic structure

The metre of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* conforms broadly with our expectations of the metre of englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus.[132] It is formed predominantly from a mixture of Englynion Penfyr and Englynion Milwr. Out of a total of 138 stanzas, there are 72 Englynion Penfyr, 54 Englynion Milwr and 12 others, including 1 probable Englyn Byr Crwca, 6 Englynion Gwastad and 5 irregular stanzas that will be discussed below.

Before discussing the syllabic structure in detail, it is worth highlighting certain aspects of the syllable counting process that has been followed here. All syllables that are present in the edited text, as it stands, have been counted, so as not to prejudice the exercise with assumptions based on other poems, genres, or periods. This includes some syllables that we might normally assume to have been elided. For example, the edited text follows the manuscript tradition wherever the manuscripts agree about keeping the definite article separate even from a preceding word that ends in a vowel, as seen in the following five cases:

- l. 176: *póy yr unic arwynnaól a darogenyd ynaeth?*
- l. 207: *ef yó y mackóy deu hanner*
- l. 290: *pa daó yny y deu ouunet?*
- l. 308: *Póy y góyn ar debed?*
- l. 359: *nac adreidyaó yr allaór*

The first of these lines (l. 176) appears in a stanza that is already metrically irregular in other respects, as discussed below. Line 207 forms an eight-syllable final line of an Englyn Milwr, which, as discussed below, is entirely acceptable, though the seven-syllable line produced by eliding the article would make the stanza more metrically regular. Similarly, line 290 is the final line of an Englyn

[132] As surveyed thoroughly in *EWSP* 305–67.

Penfyr, and as it stands it contains nine syllables, like the final lines of only two other Englynion Penfyr in the poem; but if the article were elided, it would have eight syllables, like the final lines of nineteen other Englynion Penfyr. Again, line 359 is the second line of an Englyn Penfyr, and as it stands contains seven syllables, like the second lines of only four other Englynion Penfyr in the poem; but if the article were elided, it would have six syllables, like the second lines of no less than fifty-six other Englynion Penfyr. By contrast, line 308 is the second line of an Englyn Penfyr, and it is more regular as it stands with six syllables than with the five syllables that would be produced by eliding the article. On the whole, therefore, although these articles have been left to stand in the figures quoted below, metrical regularity would generally (though not always) be increased by eliding them.

A similar situation arises for affixed pronouns. In some cases, metrical regularity could be increased by omitting these pronouns (cf. ll. 61, 67, 370). For example, line 61 (*wedy Beli, y uab ef Iago*) is nine syllables with the affixed pronoun *ef*, forming one of only three third lines among the poem's Englynion Penfyr with nine syllables (another being line 290, with its unelided article).[133] It would be much more regular as an eight-syllable line. Such examples suggest that affixed pronouns were not counted for metrical purposes by the poet, confirming our expectations from the broader medieval tradition.

In a small number of cases, there is uncertainty about how many syllables the poet would have counted. For example, *brenin* was formerly trisyllabic *breën(h)in*, and in line 200 (*brenhin llew llaó diwreid*), the second line of an Englyn Milwr, we can be fairly certain that it was counted as three; otherwise, this line would have only six syllables, uniquely in the poem among the second lines of Englynion Milwr. In other cases, however, the poem becomes less metrically regular if *brenin* is counted as three syllables (e.g. line 231 in an Englyn Milwr: *Llet ynuyt urenhin a daó*). In the statistics given below, only the instance of the word in line 200 is counted as trisyllabic, though there is one other case in which it might arguably be counted as such.[134] A similar case is *rhên* from *rhëen*, which appears in line 418 and has been counted as disyllabic.

An important remaining ambiguity is the place-name *Lloegyr*, which occurs five times in the poem (ll. 225, 232, 237, 245, 307). We might expect that this would be counted as a monosyllable. However, in three of these cases (ll. 225, 237 and 245), it would clearly improve the metrical regularity of the stanza if it were counted as disyllabic. In the other cases, it would make little difference. Nonetheless, since none of these lines is entirely irregular with *Lloegyr* counted as a monosyllable, it is reckoned as such in the statistics below.

The metre shows syllabic flexibility, but only within certain limits. Among Englynion Penfyr, the modal syllabic line structure is 8, 6, 7, with twenty-two examples. The next four most common structures are 9, 6, 8 (eight examples), 11, 6, 7 (six examples), 8, 6, 8 and 10, 6, 7 (five examples each). These figures

[133]The third nine-syllable example is line 394, which seems sound.

[134]Line 153, the third line in an Englyn Milwr: *Dywedynt vrenhin o vrehyr*. The length of the line would be less regular if *vrenhin* were trisyllabic, but it would improve the alliteration with *vrehyr*.

neatly reveal the expected syllabic limits for lines in an Englyn Penfyr. The first line was the most flexible, but was in general expected to be longer than seven syllables: the bulk of examples have between eight and thirteen syllables in the first line, while only three out the seventy-two have fewer: ll. 136–8 with seven, ll. 389–91 with six (an unusual stanza that seems to mix the syllabic structure of an Englyn Byr Crwca (6, 10, 7) with the rhyming pattern of an Englyn Penfyr), and ll. 267–9 with five (possibly missing one or more words). By contrast, the second line was generally expected to be less than seven syllables: there are fifty-six Englynion Penfyr with a second line of six syllables, ten with a second line of five syllables, and five with a second line of seven syllables; otherwise the only outlier is ll. 389–91 again. Finally, the third line was almost always seven or eight syllables, with a few exceptions: there are forty-seven Englynion Penfyr with a third line of seven syllables, nineteen with a third line of eight syllables, and otherwise only three with nine syllables, two with six syllables and one with eleven.

Lines of Englynion Milwr were treated largely like the third lines of Englynion Penfyr, with seven and eight syllables per line generally preferred. The modal syllabic line structure is 7, 7, 7, with twenty-nine examples. After that is 7, 7, 8, with eight examples, and 7, 7, 9, with three examples; other structures have just one or two examples each. The other structures usually include the use of eight-syllable lines, but there are exceptions: among first lines, there is one example with ten syllables and three with six syllables, and among third lines, there is one example with ten syllables, three with nine syllables and three with six syllables. All the second lines of Englynion Milwr have either seven or eight syllables.

The only candidate for the rare Englyn Byr Crwca is lines 310–12:

> Taryf ryw**yr** a th6ryf ryd**yrch**
> a bydinoed Kadwaladyr y ar Dardennin auon;
> torrynt allwed g6**yr**.
>
> Commotion of mighty men and an excellent clamour
> and Cadwaladr's armies on the Tarddennin river;
> they will break the key of men.

The second line does not contain a rhyme and is unusually long, at fourteen syllables. Nonetheless, the stanza still possibly fits our expectations for an Englyn Byr Crwca, provided that two suppositions are accepted: firstly, that the final word in the first line has been correctly emended from the manuscripts' *ryderch* (presumably the personal name, as Peniarth 50 clarifies by adding the epithet *hael*) to the adjective *rydyrch*, which certainly makes better sense in the context; and secondly, that *rydyrch* could form a kind of generic rhyme with words in *-yr*, allowing internal rhyme in the first line with *rywyr* and an end-rhyme with *g6yr* in the third line.

There are six examples of Englynion Gwastad in the poem, making it the third most commonly used form of englyn. An Englyn Gwastad was effectively a four-line Englyn Milwr, with an end-rhyme on every line, and consequently

lines of seven or eight syllables dominate these examples: there are three with the syllabic line structure 7, 7, 7, 7, one with 8, 7, 7, 7 and one with 7, 8, 7, 7. The only exception is lines 157–61 about Serwen Wyn, quoted above, which has the appearance of an Englyn Gwastad with the line structure 7, 7, 7, 7 but with an additional fifth rhyming line of ten syllables appended to it.

Of the five metrically irregular stanzas, three bear relation to englynion while two are not englynion at all. In every case, it is likely that the metrical irregularity was intended to draw attention to the significance of the moment. Two cases are similar to the 'extended' Englyn Gwastad just mentioned, in that they are essentially Englynion Penfyr with an additional line at the beginning. Lines b, c and d of the stanza formed from ll. 291–4 (the first appearance of Cadwaladr as prophetic redeemer) form a metrically regular Englyn Penfyr with the syllabic structure 12, 6, 7, but they are preceded by an additional line of seven syllables that does not carry the end-rhyme. Very similarly, lines 7–10 (Gwenddydd's first appearance and question) can be viewed as an Englyn Penfyr with a first line that needs to be sub-divided into two lines of nine and six syllables. The third case (ll. 174–7, introducing Gruffudd ap Cynan) is even more curious, since it has the structure of the first two lines of an Englyn Penfyr repeated twice:

> Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llall*aóc*,
> annwyn*aóc* yn llu**yd**,
> póy yr unic arwynnaól a darogen**yd** ynaeth?
> Póy y enó, pa du pan v**yd**?
>
> 'I ask my illustrious companion,
> eminent in a host,
> who is the fierce, peerless one that you prophesy after this?
> What is his name, where will he come from?'

The first two lines form a typical opening for an Englyn Penfyr in the poem, with the first line ending with a *gair cyrch* that rhymes with the first stressed word of the following line. But in this case, the third line is again a long line more typical of the first line of an Englyn Penfyr, and the end-rhyme is carried on the *gwant*.

Lastly, there are two stanzas that cannot be analysed as englynion: ll. 190–5 (on Dafydd and Rhodri, sons of Owain Gwynedd) and 224–7 (on the *brenhin na vrenhin*). These stanzas make use of awdl metres: they are, respectively, six and four lines long with line lengths ranging between eight and eleven syllables.[135] Lines 190–5 are formed from one couplet of Cyhydedd Naw Ban, one couplet that mixes Cyhydedd Fer and Cyhydedd Naw Ban, and one couplet of Toddaid:

[135]For another englyn poem that includes a section in awdl metres, see *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*: *LlDC* poem 8; *CC* poem 16; *EWSP* 203–4. Compare too the late-thirteenth-century addition to *Englynion y Beddau* in the Black Book of Carmarthen that uses awdl-gywydd metre: *LlDC* poem 18.213–18, with note on p. 103; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Medieval Welsh Englynion y Beddau* (Cambridge, 2023), 114 and 260–3.

Wi a Wéndyd wénn,/ máɔr a dí**as**!
Disgógan chwibléian/ chwédleu átk**as**:
gwehélieith/ a úyd/ ar déyrn**as**
ny bórthant wléd/ na íawn ád**as**,
dýui deu vróder,/ deu Íd**as** am d*ír*,
etmýkaɔr o'e gɔ́*ír*/ h*ír* alán**as**.

'O fair Gwenddydd, of great tumult!
A grey wanderer prophesies hateful tidings:
princes will be over the kingdom
who will support neither a feast nor proper justice,
two brothers will come, two Judases desiring land,
a long blood-feud will be honoured because of their claim.'

The opening couplet of Cyhydedd Naw Ban has 5/4 syllables in the first line and 6/4 in the second line. Deviations like the latter from the standard nine-syllable line are not unknown even in the relatively strict work of the twelfth and thirteenth-century court poets.[136] The second couplet seems to be a single line of Cyhydedd Fer followed by a single line of Cyhydedd Naw Ban, as revealed particularly by the third line having only three stresses.[137] The final couplet is a regular Toddaid formed from four parts of 5/5/5/4 syllables. An end-rhyme in *-as* runs throughout, and we might also note that each couplet is bound together by proest on the *rhagwant*: *-enn* : *-an*; *-yð* : *-eð*; *-er* : *-ir*.

More straightforwardly, lines 224–7 are made up of two couplets of Cyhydedd Naw Ban with four stresses per line, varying between eight and eleven syllables per line:

Pan uo pónt ar Dáf/ ac árall ar Dýw**i**,
y dáɔ ar Lóegyr/ lɔ́ýr dyuýsg**i**,
a mí disgogánaf,/ wédy mab Hénr**i**,
brénhin na vrénhin;/ bríthuyt a u**í**.

When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come upon England complete disorder,
and it is I who prophesy, after Henry's son,
a king who is not a king; there will be confusion.

The most striking thing about the two stanzas that use awdl metres is that they both bear a clear relationship with *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*. In the first stanza, line 191 closely parallels several lines in both of the other poems,[138] while lines 194–5 are very close indeed to two consecutive lines of *Yr Oianau*.[139] In the second stanza, the four lines are almost identical to the last four lines of *Yr Oianau* as they stand in the Black Book, albeit that

[136] Peredur Lynch, 'Yr awdl a'i mesurau', in Owen and Roberts, *Beirdd a Thywysogion*, 258–87, at 262.

[137] Cf. Lynch, 'Yr awdl a'i mesurau', 261 for combinations of this type.

[138] *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.

[139] *Oianau*, ll. 171–2.

the two couplets appear there in the reverse order.[140] One suspects that these two stanzas use awdl metres rather than englyn metres precisely because they have been borrowed from other contexts.

3.2. Ornament

Two aspects of the ornament are considered here: (1) the rhymes, and (2) the ornaments linking the first two lines of an Englyn Penfyr. In addition to full rhymes, the poem contains numerous examples of proest and generic rhyme.[141] The following types of proest are attested (unless otherwise stated, they are end-rhymes):

-ael : *-oel*	(l. 11, internal rhyme: *Kadauael* : *koel*; ll. 11–13: *koel* : *kyuarchauael* : *Hael*)
-yn : *-an*	(ll. 17–18, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *gelyn* : *gwan trywan*)
-eid : *-yd*	(ll. 20–2: *yspeit* : *broglyt* : *ryt*; ll. 106–7, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *byt* : *dyweit*)
-yð : *-eð*	(l. 41, internal rhyme: *Douyd* : *digued*)
-on : *-oen*	(ll. 44–5, *gair cyrch* rhyme (and alliteration): *vyg kalon* : *vy hoen*)
-on : *-un*	(ll. 50–2: *chanaon* : *aborthó́n* : *Run*)
-od : *-awd*	(ll. 99, 112, 130, 221, internal rhyme: *clot* : *vraó́t*)
-yr : *-awr*	(ll. 121–2, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *Merchyr* : *etmyckaó́r*)
-uð : *-yð*	(ll. 145–7: *gud* : *deurud* : *bieiuyd*)
-yd : *-ed*	(ll. 148–9, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *byt* : *dywet*; ll. 352–4: *dylyet* : *weryt* : *byt*)
-ur : *-yr*	(ll. 154–6: *echlyssur* : *ystyr* : *brehyr*)
-ar : *-or*	(l. 307, internal rhyme: *gó́ascar* : *mor*)
-awn : *an(t)*	(ll. 322–4: *teithyaó́n* : *kyflaó́n* : *gwledychant*)[142]
-ad : *-ed*	(ll. 352, 355, internal rhyme: *dylat* : *dylyet*)

It is interesting to note that proest is used in this poem only with a limited group of consonants: namely, the resonants /l r n/ as well as /d ð/. We should also note that the later prohibition against a diphthong forming a proest with a single vowel is not observed here.[143] Rather, as Jenny Rowland has discussed, what we see here, for the most part, are manifestations of an earlier rule

[140] *Oianau*, ll. 185–8.

[141] Note that /i/ and /i̯/ apparently formed a full rhyme in early englynion, especially before /r/, a nasal, or /r/ + a nasal: *EWSP* 333. Cf. the end-rhymes in ll. 113–14 (*oreudyn* : *Meruin*), ll. 228–30 (*gó́yn* : *hamouyn* : *vrenhin*), ll. 376–8 (*mynogi* : *difri* : *gwedi*, the latter ending with /i̯/) and ll. 383–5 (*awyr* : *gredir* : *dir*); and the *gair cyrch* rhymes in ll. 11–12 (*Kymry* : *bi*, plus the internal rhyme in l. 11 with *ui*) and ll. 288–9 (*oedyn* : *Myrdin*).

[142] It would be possible to emend *gwledychan(t)* to *gwledychawn(t)* to achieve full rhyme (as noticed by Jackson, 'Motive of the threefold death', 544–5 n. 30), but this has been avoided in the edited text in view of the extreme rarity of the present-tense *-(h)awnt* ending. For the six examples in early Welsh poetry, see Graham R. Isaac, 'The Old and early Middle-Welsh "future" tense: form and function of a moribund category', *JCS* 4 (2004), 153–70, at 165.

[143] Cf. John Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod, sef Celfyddyd Barddoniaeth Gymraeg* (Oxford, 1925), 254–5.

whereby the most important distinction was that short syllables should proest with other short syllables, and long syllables should proest with other long syllables, regardless of whether those syllables contained a single vowel or a diphthong.[144] Even this more inclusive rule would not allow proest between the long syllable *kalon(n)* and the short syllable *hoen* (ll. 44–5), nor the short syllables *teithyaǒn* and *kyflaǒn* and the long syllable *gwledychan(t)* (ll. 322–4); if these words were to proest, they would violate the error later known as *trwm ac ysgafn*. That said, there are some clear violations of this rule among the end-rhymes elsewhere in the poem, attesting to the greater flexibility of this type of poetry (e.g. ll. 157–61 *wynn* etc. : *Prydyn* < Brit. **Pritenī*; ll. 228–30 *gǒyn(n)* : *hamouyn(n)* : *vrenhin*).[145] It is probably significant that all of these examples involve polysyllables, since, after the accent shifted back to the penult around the ninth century, unaccented final syllables with -/nn/ merged with those with -/n/, and the long vowels of final syllables ending with -/n/ were shortened.[146] It was only the weight of tradition, informed by consideration of the morphological variation of individual words (like plural forms that maintained *-nn-* under the penultimate accent), that kept the *trwm ac ysgafn* rule alive in polysyllabic words in the formal praise poetry of the twelfth century and later.

Generic rhymes are well-attested in the poem. These are rhymes where the vowels correspond exactly but the consonants vary within defined groups. The poems contain examples that illustrate three of the generically rhyming consonant groups identified by Jenny Rowland in other englyn poems:[147]

1. /l/ : /ð/ : /r/
   - ll. 78–80: *kynnadyl* : *paladyr* : *Katwaladyr*
   - ll. 81–3, 295–7, 313–15, 319–21: *antrwyadyl* : *gynnadyl* : *Katwaladyr*
   - ll. 84–6: *glaear* : *abar* : *Idwal*
   - ll. 87–9: *glaear* : *dayar* : *Idwal*
   - ll. 90–2: *Idwal* : *diarchar* : *Kadwal*
   - ll. 127–9: *amser* : *sel* : *Howel*
   - ll. 188–9: *ryuel* : *Gǒarther*
   - ll. 279–81: *aber* : *llaǒer* : *Wydel*
   - ll. 373–5: *diderbyd* : *urodyr* : *uyd*
2. /d/ : /g/
   - ll. 99–100, 130–1, 221–2, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *vraǒt* : *anvynnaǒc*
3. all nasals (and /r/ + a nasal)
   - ll. 68–70: *draethassam* : *bodrydan* : *Katuan*

[144] Jenny Rowland, 'Some aspects of *proest* in early Welsh poetry', *BBCS* 30 (1983), 234–8.

[145] Cf. A. O. H. Jarman, *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin (o Lyfr Du Caerfyrddin)*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 1967), 51–2; *EWSP* 335–6; Rowland, 'Some aspects of *proest*', 234; Sims-Williams, 'Dating the poems', 212–16.

[146] For the date of the accent shift, see Peter Schrijver, 'Geminate spellings in the Old Welsh glosses to Martianus Capella', *EC* 34 (1998/2000), 147–60.

[147] *EWSP* 334.

The most elaborate patterns of ornamentation in the poem are found in the Englynion Penfyr. Lines 11–13 and 35–7 neatly illustrate most of the commonly occurring patterns:

> Yn gerth Kadau**ael**/ a u*i* k**oel** – Kymr*y*;
> y b*i* kyuarchau**ael**.
> Rɔyd yɔ arɔyd Ryderch H**ael**.
>
> 'Truly Cadafael will be an omen for the Welsh;
> there will be exaltation.
> Prosperity is a sign of Rhydderch Hael.' (ll. 11–13)
>
> O leas Gɔendol*eu*/ ygɔaetfr*eu* – Arder*yd*,
> a synny*yd* paham y'm k**en**?
> Gɔaladyr gɔaet, gɔlat y Ury**en**.
>
> 'Because of Gwenddolau's death in the bloodshed of Arfderydd,
> do you consider why I am troubled?
> Lord of blood, a country for Urien.' (ll. 35–7)

An Englyn Penfyr has a long first line that can carry the end-rhyme on a word known as the *gwant*, preceding the line's final syllable(s); this is *koel* in the first example, forming proest with the rhymes in *-ael* in lines b and c. The *gwant* can also be bound to the first part of line a by rhyme, as in both cases here: *koel* also forms proest with the *rhagwant*, *Kadauael*, which precedes the caesura in line a, while in the second example *ygɔaetfreu* does not carry the end-rhyme, but instead rhymes with *Gɔendoleu*, again the *rhagwant* before line a's caesura. Alliteration can similarly bind the *gwant* to the *rhagwant*, as with *koel* and *Kadauael*, and probably *gɔaetfreu* and *Gɔendoleu* (albeit that *gɔaetfreu* here begins with /ŋ/, the nasalised counterpart of /g/). After the *gwant* in line a comes the *cyrch*, which can be bound by rhyme and/or alliteration to line a and/or line b. In the first example, the *gair cyrch*, *Kymry*, alliterates with the *gwant*, *koel*, and the *rhagwant*, *Kadauael*, as well as *kyuarchauael* in line b, and it also rhymes with *ui* earlier in line a and *bi* in line b.[148] In the second example, the *gair cyrch*, *Arderyd*, both rhymes and alliterates with *a synnyyd* at the beginning of the second line (taking the proclitic preverbal particle *a* together with the verb).

Patterns like these are common in the poem, though there is variation as to which ornaments are present in individual stanzas. Altogether, the poem contains seventy-two Englynion Penfyr.[149] Of these, the *gwant* carries the end-rhyme in forty cases, and rhymes internally with a word earlier in line a in twenty-three cases. Meanwhile, the *cyrch* rhymes with a preceding word in line a in thirteen cases; it alliterates with a preceding word in line a in eleven cases; it rhymes with a word in line b in twenty-eight cases; and it alliterates with a word in line b in twelve cases.

[148] See above, n. 141.

[149] Not including the three irregular stanzas with Penfyr features, which are discussed above: ll. 7–10, 174–7 and 291–4.

Before leaving the poem's metre and ornament, it is worth dwelling on the implications of this analysis in relation to the poem's date of composition in the early thirteenth century. Metrically, this poem corresponds most closely to other englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus, being comprised mainly of Penfyr and Milwr and characterised by a certain degree of flexibility with regard to syllable structure and ornament.[150] By contrast, the englynion that are overtly ascribed to the court poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in surviving manuscripts invariably follow four-line metres like Englyn Unodl Union and Englyn Proest, and are characterised by greater metrical regularity.[151] The difference has often been explained in terms of linear development; in other words, the 'looser' englyn of the *Hengerdd* period developed into the 'tighter' englyn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[152] There was certainly an element of change over time. The twelve Old Welsh englynion in the Cambridge Juvencus manuscript are all three-line englynion, and the term for a three-line englyn in the early fourteenth-century grammar is *ynglynn o'r hengerd* ('englyn of the old poetry').[153] John Morris-Jones showed convincingly how the four-line englyn metres developed from the three-line metres, and this process must have been underway by the late eleventh century, when the four-line Englyn Gwastad known as the St Padarn englyn was copied into the Llanbadarn Augustine manuscript.[154] But the false assumption is that the three-line metres stopped being used when the four-line metres were introduced. It is certainly notable that the court poets exclusively used the four-line metres for their purposes.[155] As Nerys Ann Jones has shown, the court poets used the englyn predominantly for singing eulogies and elegies to princes, nobles and warbands.[156] But the key difference between this body of material and the englynion of the *Hengerdd* is not one of date, since the *Hengerdd* includes many poems that have not yet been dated closely as well as at least one substantial englyn poem (the *Cyfoesi*) composed in the early thirteenth century.[157] Rather, the key differences are *genre* and subject matter, as scholars

[150]Cf. Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff, 1935), lxxxiv–lxxxviii; *EWSP* 308–55.

[151]See Nerys Ann Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', in Owen and Roberts, *Beirdd a Thywysogion*, 288–301.

[152]For example: Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod*, 315–20; *EWSP* 330–2 and 360–3; Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn'; Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliii.

[153]Thus in Peniarth 20: G. J. Williams and Evan John Jones, *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid* (Cardiff, 1934), 46 and 49. The same grammar comments further (p. 49): *Ac ar y modeu hynny y kanei y milwyr gynt oll yn gwbyl* ('And it was in those forms [i.e. Englyn Milwr and Englyn Penfyr] that the soldiers of former times would sing everything altogether'). In the Red Book and Llanstephan 3 versions of the grammar, the three-line englyn is called *eglyn o'r hen ganyat* (pp. 6, 9, 25, 27). See Michaela Jacques, *Grammar and Poetry in Late Medieval and Early Modern Wales: The Transmission and Reception of the Welsh Bardic Grammars* (Cardiff, 2024), 73–4 and 81–2.

[154]Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod*, 317–18; Paul Russell, 'The *englyn* to St Padarn revisited', *CMCS* 63 (Summer, 2012), 1–14.

[155]These are summarised in Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', 290–1.

[156]See the figures in Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', 296; for the nature of religious poems in englyn metre, including some by the court poets, see Barry James Lewis, '*Genre* a *Genres* ym marddoniaeth grefyddol y Cynfeirdd a'r Gogynfeirdd', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003, 120–3.

[157]The same point, with respect to the probable dates of the *Cyfoesi* and also *Gwasgargerdd*

have increasingly begun to recognise.[158] The englynion that we ascribe to the *Hengerdd* comprise poems on a variety of themes, often focused on the emotional state of story characters, gnomic truths and natural images.[159] There is no reason to assume that poems of these types stopped being composed in the twelfth century. Indeed, recent work on the early englynion indicates that critical opinion on this matter is shifting away from that assumption, even if the implications for our understanding of metrical developments are not always highlighted.[160] The assumption that they did stop being composed is an illusion of the manuscript record: for whatever reason, it was the practice to ascribe praise poems about named patrons to known poets, whereas other types of poem tended not to be ascribed to named poets.[161] In the twelfth century, and possibly beforehand, for all we know, court poets decided to adopt the four-line englyn metres, with a greater degree of metrical rigour, for the purpose of composing praise poetry. But the three-line metres continued to be used, for a time, for their traditional purposes, as the *Cyfoesi* clearly shows. The rare vocabulary analysed above and the intertextual references discussed below emphasise the extent to which the *Cyfoesi* was firmly part of the same poetic world as the contemporary court poets.[162]

Fyrddin in relation to their metre, was made in 1900 by Joseph Loth: 'Remarques sur les vieux poèmes historiques gallois au point de vue métrique et historique', *RC* 21 (1900), 28–58, at 33–4 and 56. For other more cautious views about the dating implication of the three-line englyn metres, see *CC* xix and 117; *LPBT* 27; Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliii–xlv; Barry Lewis, review of the latter in *Dwned* 18 (2012), 99–107, at 102; Jenny Rowland, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems* (London, 2014), xxix.

[158]Cf. Barry Lewis's discussion of the differing artistic status of the awdl and the englyn in reference to religious poetry: Lewis, '*Genre* a *Genres*', esp. 124; see too his comments in *Dwned* 18 (2012), 102–3, as well as David Callander, *Dissonant Neighbours: Narrative Progress in Early Welsh & English Poetry* (Cardiff, 2019), 2; Nerys Ann Jones, *Arthur in Early Welsh Poetry* (Cambridge, 2019), 3; Sims-Williams, *The Medieval Welsh Englynion y Beddau*, 27–8.

[159]For a critical review of prior attempts to identify the genre of one such poem (*Claf Abercuawg*), see Barry Lewis, '*Genre* a dieithrwch yn y Cynfeirdd: achos "Claf Abercuawg" ', *Llenyddiaeth mewn Theori* 2 (2007), 1–37; cf. idem, *Nature and Art in Early Welsh Verse*, Paul Walsh Memorial Lecture 6 (Maynooth, 2021).

[160]Recent commentators have tended to point out that some, at least, of the 'saga' and 'gnomic' englynion could have been composed in the twelfth century: e.g. Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliv–xlv; Jenny Rowland, *Ailystyried y Canu Mawl Cynnar*, Darlith Goffa J. E. Caerwyn Williams a Gwen Williams 2014 (Aberystwyth, 2016), 19; David Callander, 'Trefn *Canu Llywarch Hen* yn Llyfr Coch Hergest', *Llên Cymru* 38 (2015), 1–11, at 2; Michaela Jacques, 'Llywarch Hen as poet: evidence from Harvard MS Welsh 8', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 37 (2017), 135–51, at 135–6. Simon Rodway's ongoing work on the early Welsh verbal system has been influential in this respect; see his *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*.

[161]Jenny Rowland has rightly noted that *genre* dictated whether an early poem was ascribed to a named poet: Jenny Rowland, 'Y beirdd enwog: anhysbys a'i cant', in Daniel et al., *Cyfoeth y Testun*, 31–49, at 43; eadem, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems*, xxix.

[162]This is also the conclusion of Jenny Rowland with regard to the other englyn poems: *EWSP* 355–63; eadem, 'Genres', in Brynley F. Roberts (ed.), *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin* (Aberystwyth, 1988), 179–208, at 189–93; eadem, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems*, xxvii.

4. Intertextuality

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is awash with intertextual connections and allusions to traditional historical knowledge. This is most obviously apparent in its enumeration of the kings of Gwynedd between the sixth and ninth centuries, where the kings are associated with the same few characteristics and events that are associated with them elsewhere in Welsh vernacular literature. Thus, the poem says of Maelgwn Gwynedd's son Rhun that *yg kynnor bydin brόydraόt* ('in the vanguard of the army he will do battle', l. 48), possibly a reference to the story preserved in two thirteenth-century manuscripts of *Llyfr Iorwerth* about Rhun leading an army north and then presiding over a debate about which component of his army should have the right to *y blaen* ('the vanguard') when crossing the River Forth.[163] In the stanza about Cadwallon ap Cadfan, we hear that *Dygόydit penn Eigyl y laόr* ('The head of the English will fall down', l. 73), a probable allusion to Edwin, king of Northumbria, who was killed by Cadwallon's forces at the battle of Hatfield Chase in 633; this should be compared with one of the surviving fragments of a medieval poem about Cadwallon that Robert Vaughan called *Gofara Braint*, which says *Can dodyw pen Edwin lys Aberffraw* / *a dyfod Cymru yn un andaw* ('Since Edwin's head came to the court of Aberffraw / and Wales became a single assembly').[164] This seemingly contradicts Bede's claim that Edwin's head was brought to York and buried in the church there after the battle.[165] At line 78, Cadwaladr is a *Gόr hir*, drawing attention to the same aspect of his stature that is mentioned in a triad in order to explain why he is one of the *Tri Hualaόc Enys Prydein* ('Three Fettered Men of the Island of Britain').[166] At line 102, Cynan Dindaethwy is associated specifically with Anglesey, just as he is in the chronicles (and as his usual epithet, absent from the poem, implies).[167] Line 111 tells us that Merfyn Frych came from the land of Man, and according to the early sixteenth-century tract *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru* (on which more below), this was the subject of a lost poem ascribed to Taliesin called *Llynges*

[163]Morfydd E. Owen, 'Royal propaganda: stories from the law-texts', in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen and Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh King and His Court* (Cardiff, 2000), 224–54 (text and translation at 252–4).

[164]R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'Canu Cadwallon ap Cadfan', in Rachel Bromwich and R. Brinley Jones (eds), *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd: Studies in Old Welsh Poetry, Cyflwynedig i Syr Idris Foster* (Cardiff, 1978), 25–43 (text and modern Welsh translation at 42–3); cf. Graham C. G. Thomas, 'Llinellau o gerddi i Cadwallon ap Cadfan', *BBCS* 26 (1974–6), 406–10. Compare the similar lines about playing ball with the heads of the Saxons in *Yr Afallennau*, l. 10 and *PBT* poem 6.22 (and note that Cadwallon appears in the latter at ll. 17–18).

[165]Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), 202–5 (ii.20).

[166]Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 4th ed. (Cardiff, 2014), no. 17 (WR version).

[167]For example, David N. Dumville (ed.), *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel* (Cambridge, 2002), 8–11 (s.aa. 815 and 816); David N. Dumville (ed.), *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The Kings of the English', A.D. 682–954: Texts P, R, S in Parallel* (Aberdeen, 2005), 16–17 (s.aa. 815 and 817).

Vorvyryn as well as a prose tale called *chwedyl Morvyn Vyrych*.[168] Lastly, line 121 draws attention to Anarawd ap Rhodri's victory over the Mercians in the Battle of the Conwy in 881, a battle which receives particular attention in two other vernacular texts from early thirteenth century Gwynedd: the chronicle *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* (written *c.* 1211/12) and the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies (written 1216 × *c.* 1223).[169]

Beyond the more general connections between the *Cyfoesi* and wider vernacular traditions about the relevant characters, there is a series of direct textual connections with other Welsh poems that are indicative of textual interface. While it is often difficult to find evidence for the direction of borrowing in individual cases, it is likely that, in the majority of instances discussed below, the *Cyfoesi* is drawing on pre-existing literature. These instances of intertextuality can be divided into three categories: (1) connections with other prophetic poems, especially those in the voice of Myrddin; (2) connections with the *Hengerdd*, especially *Canu Aneirin*, the 'historical' Taliesin poems and the legendary englynion; and (3) connections with court poetry, especially the works of Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch. These are addressed in turn.

4.1. Connections with other prophetic poems

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, some of the most obvious textual connections are with the other Myrddin poems, and especially *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*. Several short phrases are found in both the *Cyfoesi* and the *Afallennau*: thus, *Gruffud y enó* in the *Cyfoesi*, l. 178 and the *Afallennau*, l. 92, both clearly in relation to Gruffudd ap Cynan;[170] and *chat ym Prydyn* in the *Cyfoesi*, l. 262 and the *Afallennau*, l. 74. In the *Cyfoesi*'s stanza about the historical Cadwaladr (ll. 78–80), the name 'Cadwaladr' is rhymed with 'cynnadl' and 'paladr'; the same two words are rhymed with 'Cadwaladr' in the *Oianau*, ll. 91–2, while 'cynnadl' is rhymed with the name twice in the *Afallennau* (ll. 103 and 149) and 'paladr' is rhymed with the name in *Armes Prydein Vawr* (*AP* l. 91). But, as has already been mentioned, the most significant correspondences between the *Cyfoesi* and these two other Myrddin poems can be seen in the two stanzas in the *Cyfoesi* that use awdl metres rather than englynion (ll. 190–5 and 224–7): line 190 contains an echo of line 167 of *Yr Oianau*; line 191 mirrors various lines in the other two poems;[171] lines 194–5 are paralleled almost exactly in lines 171–2 of the *Oianau*; and lines 224–7 closely match the last four lines of the *Oianau* as that poem is preserved in the Black Book (ll. 185–8).

This last correspondence merits closer attention, since it suggests that the direction of borrowing was from the *Oianau* to the *Cyfoesi*. Here are the lines in the two poems:

[168] Peter C. Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru (The Descent of the Sovereignty of Wales)', *NLW Journal* 16/3 (1970), 253–63, at 258, §§5–6.

[169] Nia Wyn Jones (published under Owain Wyn Jones), '*O Oes Gwrtheyrn*: a medieval Welsh chronicle', in Guy et al., *Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March*, 169–229, at 191–3 and 223; Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 222.

[170] Cf. *Run y enó* in l. 47, a phrase found too in *Englynion y Beddau* (*LlDC* poem 18.186).

[171] *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.

Pan uo pont ar Daf ac arall ar Dywi,
y da6 ar Loegyr l6yr dyuysgi,
a mi disgoganaf, wedy mab Henri,
brenhin na vrenhin; brithuyt a ui.

'When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come upon England complete disorder,
and it is I who prophesy, after Henry's son,
a king who is not a king; there will be confusion.'
(*Cyfoesi*, ll. 224–7)

A mi dysgoganaw-e, gvydi Henri,
breenhin na breenhin, brithwyd dybi.
Ban vo pont ar Taw ac arall ar Tywi
y dav y Dyved ryvel iti.

'And it is I who prophesy, after Henry,
a king who is not a king, confusion will come.
When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come to Dyfed war to it.' (*Oianau*, ll. 185–8)

The key phrase here is *brenhin na vrenhin*, the figure prophesied in both extracts. This phrase bears some relationship to a Latin prophecy known either as *Prophetia Aquile* or *Prophetia Merlini Silvestris*, which circulated widely in manuscripts from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards.[172] In the third section of the prophecy, known as *Mortuo leone* or 'The white king', which deals with the Anarchy, it is said about King Stephen that *rex est et rex non est* ('he is a king and he is not a king').[173] In the Welsh version of this prophecy, which is known as *Proffwydoliaeth yr Eryr* and first attested in the first half of the fourteenth century, this Latin phrase is translated as *brenhin na vrenhin*.[174] In the *Oianau*, the *breenhin na breenhin* comes after a certain Henry, just as Stephen succeeded Henry I; this verse may therefore refer to King Stephen and the Anarchy, just like the Latin *Prophetia Aquile*. In the *Cyfoesi*, however, the *brenhin na vrenhin* succeeds Henry's son, following the reference to a certain *keneu Henri* ('whelp of Henry', probably King John) two stanzas earlier. The *Cyfoesi* is thus a step removed from the *Oianau* and the related Latin prophecy. Overall, given the other indications of a direct relationship between the *Cyfoesi* and the *Oianau*, it makes most sense to suppose that the *Cyfoesi* borrowed the phrase from the *Oianau*.

[172]See Victoria Flood, 'Prophecy as history: a new study of the *Prophecies of Merlin Silvester*', *Neophilologus* 102 (2018), 543–59.

[173]Text in John Jay Parry (ed.), *Brut y Brenhinedd: Cotton Cleopatra Version* (Cambridge, MA, 1937), 225–6; for an English translation of the text, see Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Richard III's books: VIII. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* with *The Prophecy of the Eagle* and commentary. 2. The prophecy and commentary', *The Ricardian* 8 (1989–90), 290–304 and 351–62, at 352–4.

[174]The prophecy was incorporated into the Cotton Cleopatra version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*: for the phrase, see Parry, *Brut y Brenhinedd*, 32. *Proffwydoliaeth yr Eryr* is also attested independently in the same period in Peniarth 47, part iii, in a hand of the first half of the fourteenth century: see Huws, *Repertory*, i, 356–7.

There is a handful of allusions to other prophetic poems outside the Myrddin corpus. It was Ifor Williams who suggested that lines 116 and 185 (*armes Prydein pryderer*, 'the prophecy of Britain will be feared') were intended to evoke the tenth-century *Armes Prydein Vawr*, and this may be correct.[175] Some connections with another Book of Taliesin prophecy, *Dygogan Awen*, have already been discussed. More directly, lines 166–7 of the *Cyfoesi* (*… a wnant dyuysgi. / Nac eruyn hedóch; ny'th vi!* '… who will create disorder. / Do not seek peace; you will not have it!') reproduce almost exactly lines 100–1 of *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd* (*brithuyt a byt dyuysci; nac eruyn-ti hedwch, ny'th vi!*), a poem in the voice of the legendary Taliesin with prophetic elements that is preserved in the Red Book of Hergest as well as, in part, in the Book of Taliesin.[176] Unfortunately, the date of *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd* has yet to be established, so its relationship with the *Cyfoesi* is unclear.[177]

4.2. Other connections with the Hengerdd

There are clear indications that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* knew some verses of the A-text of the *Gododdin*, and possibly *Gwarchan Cynfelyn* too. The stanzas in the *Cyfoesi* concerning Rhydderch Hael contain two possible verbal echoes of *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*. In line 17, the epithet *gymynat gelyn* ('feller of the enemy') is applied to Rhydderch Hael, and the same phrase forms a line of *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*.[178] In line 11, which introduces Rhydderch Hael, the word *gerth* is collocated with *koel*, and these words are also collocated in *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*, as well as the Black Book poem *Cyntaf gair a Ddywedaf*.[179] Perhaps *Gwarchan Cynfelyn* was in the poet's mind while the stanzas about Rhydderch were being composed.

More compelling are the allusions to the *Gododdin* in lines 392–4, in which Gwenddydd bemoans the deaths of various men with names beginning with *Mor-*, who should probably be identified as her brothers (and Myrddin's). The lines are as follows:

> Maró Morgeneu, maró kyfrennin Moryal,
> maró Moryen, mur trin.
> Trymaf hoet ym dy adoet, Vyrdin.
>
> 'Dead is Morgenau, dead is expert Morial,
> dead is Morien, wall of battle.
> Your demise, Myrddin, is the heaviest sorrow for me.'

The reference to *kyfrennin Moryal* clearly evokes the stanza in the A-text of the *Gododdin* that begins with *Kywyrein ketwyr kywrenhin* ('expert warriors arise', *CA* l. 656) and memorialises someone called *Moryal* (*CA* l. 662). Two

[175] *AP* xlvii–xlviii.

[176] *LPBT* poem 1.100–1; for the prophetic elements of the poem, see too *PBT* 8–10.

[177] Haycock mentions that this poem shows 'less certain symptoms' of a relationship with the court poet Prydydd y Moch than some other poems in the Book of Taliesin: *LPBT* 31.

[178] *CA* l. 1378.

[179] *CA* l. 1407; cf. ll. 967 and 973 in the Strathcarron awdl; *LlDC* poem 26.8 = *EWSP* 452 and 499, l. 3b.

stanzas prior to this in the A-text is the so-called 'reciter's prologue' (*CA* ll. 640–8), which contains the phrase *mur trin* (*CA* l. 647; *mvr trin* in the B-text, *CA* l. 653), the very epithet that Gwenddydd applies to Morien in the second line above. I have not discovered any other examples of the phrase *mur trin* in early Welsh poetry. Earlier in the A-text, the name Morien itself is found next to that of Myrddin, in lines 465–6: *amuc moryen* / *gwenwawt mirdyn* ('Morien defended the blessed song of Myrddin'; cf. the corresponding text in the B-text, l. 473, where Myrddin is absent and 'Morien' is apparently misspelt as *emorem*: *atguuc emorem ae guiau hem*).

These examples suggest that the poet was drawing on the A-text of the *Gododdin* when composing this stanza. Presumably Morgenau, Morial and Morien were connected to Myrddin because of the alliteration of the names, and in the cases of Morial and Morien, at least, the poet implied a further connection between these characters and warriors commemorated in the *Gododdin*.[180] In the case of Morien, the connection appears to have been made already in the A-text of the *Gododdin* itself.

In the same way that the *Cyfoesi* alludes to vernacular literature concerning the early kings of Gwynedd, the stanza that introduces Urien Rheged contains a clear reference to a line in the 'historical' Taliesin poem *Yspeil Taliessin*: compare the final line of the latter, *gwaladyr gwaed gwenwlat Vryen* (*PT* poem VIII.49) with line 37 of the *Cyfoesi*: *Góaladyr góaet, gólat y Uryen* ('Lord of blood, a country for Urien'). This is the clearest reference to the so-called 'historical' Taliesin poems in the *Cyfoesi*, though line 172, in reference to Gruffudd ap Cynan, also contains the phrase *kat diffret* ('protection in battle'), found too in the first line of *Trawsganu Kynan Garwyn* (*PT* poem I.1). This latter case, however, may have been a stock bardic phrase recycled in multiple contexts; compare, for instances, *dinas diffret* in another poem in the Book of Taliesin (*CC* poem 3.12).

There are perhaps fewer verbal connections than one might expect with the broader corpus of 'legendary' englyn poems. The only tolerably clear borrowing is line 179, which occurs in a very similar form in *Canu Heledd*, as discussed above.[181] There are also several phrases that mirror phrases found in *Claf Abercuawg*, which is perhaps to be expected considering the extent to which Myrddin's physical and emotional state in the *Cyfoesi* parallels that of the *claf* of *Claf Abercuawg*. Thus, in line 42 Myrddin complains *claf óyf o'r diwed* ('I am ill in the end'), in a manner very similar to that of various lines in *Claf Abercuawg* (l. 2c, *teryd glaf wyf hediw*; l. 13b, *ny wadaf wyf claf heno*); and in line 410 he consoles Gwenddydd about the deaths of their family members, observing *diofryt o baób a gar* ('everyone letting go of what they love'), just as *Claf Abercuawg* wistfully comments, with similar phraseology but opposite

[180]Compare a stanza in *Englynion y Beddau* concerning the graves of Gwrien, Morien and Morial, three names that all occur in the *Gododdin*: *LlDC* poem 18.4–6; cf. Peter C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000* (Aberystwyth, 1993), 488.

[181]There is further evidence that *Canu Heledd* was known in exactly the time and place that the *Cyfoesi* was probably composed: see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 224–5.

meaning, that *cof gan bawp a gar* (l. 9c, 'everyone remembers that which he loves').[182] Lastly, line 415 may be connected to a line in *Llym Awel*: this line is edited as *amlwm ar du afyrdól hynt* ('it is very bare beside a joyless path'), but if we read *ardu* instead of *ar du* (as may be suggested by the absence of a space in Peniarth 3), one could compare *Llym Awel*, l. 25b (*nim gunaei artu awirtul*), which has the same collocation of *arddu* and *afrddwl*.[183]

4.3. Connections with court poetry

The *Cyfoesi* contains specific, recurring connections with the work of only two court poets: Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195) and Prydydd y Moch (fl. *c.* 1174–1220). There is a strong chance that the author of the *Cyfoesi* was familiar with the work of these two poets. Intriguingly, the connections occur mostly in restricted clusters: those with Cynddelw's work in the stanzas concerning the early kings of Gwynedd and then again, later, Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd; and those with Prydydd y Moch's work particularly in the stanzas on the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, patron of Prydydd y Moch) and the latter's successor, the *mackóy deu hanner* (possibly Dafydd ap Llywelyn, born *c.* 1212/13).

Knowledge of Cynddelw's work appears to be shown in lines 50–2, which ask who will succeed Rhun ap Maelgwn Gwynedd:

> Cann óyt kedymdeit a chanaon kunlleith,
> a'th alwaór aborthón.
> Kwd a Góyned góedy Run?
>
> 'Since you are a companion to whelps of slaughter,
> you are called a leader.
> Where will Gwynedd go after Rhun?'

This should be compared with an englyn ascribed to Cynddelw in *Ymryson Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr a Seisyll Bryffwrch*:[184]

> Ked bei teu, wledic, wlad Run am Maelgón,
> Maelgynig aborthun,
> Rybytei ueu uet annhun,
> Rybytón bennkert, benn-kun.
>
> 'Even if it were yours, lord, the land of Rhun ap Maelgwn,
> leader of the Maelgyning,
> the mead of sleeplessness would be mine,
> I would be *pencerdd*, the chief leader.'

Both stanzas concern Rhun ap Maelgwn; they contain the only two attestations of the word *aborthun*; and they both rhyme *Run* with *aborthun* and words

[182] *EWSP* 448–9.

[183] *EWSP* 456. I am grateful to Barry Lewis for drawing this to my attention.

[184] *CBT* IV, poem 12.17–20. It is possible that Cynddelw was not responsible for all of this poem: see *CBT* IV, 226–8.

containing the element *kun* (*benn-kun* and *kunlleith*, which is actually the *gair cyrch* in the *Cyfoesi* stanza, forming alliteration and a proesting *llusg* rhyme with the *gwant*, *chanaon*).

Similar patterns of correspondence in diction can be found elsewhere. The stanzas formed by lines 65–7 and 84–6, concerning respectively the seventh-century kings Cadfan ab Iago and Idwal ap Cadwaladr, use parallel structures with varying vocabulary. Thus, for the second lines of the two stanzas, line 66 has *'ygyuedeu neut eban* ('my friends are feeble') while line 85 has *'ygynnedueu neut abar* ('my faculties are rotten'), where *eban* and *abar* are in parallel positions.[185] As noted above, *eban* is a rare word, found otherwise only in the Book of Taliesin poem *Kat Godeu* and twice in one of Cynddelw's poems for God.[186] Its first occurrence in the latter is in the line *Hoedyl hoedrann hoen eban abar* ('a life of grief, the countenance of a feeble corpse'), where, strikingly, the words *eban* and *abar* are found directly adjacent to one another.

In other cases, the *Cyfoesi* uses the same rhymes as Cynddelw. Lines 69–70, again concerning Cadfan ab Iago, rhyme the name *Katuan* with *bodrydan*, a form of *pedrydan(t)*; similarly, in his *Arwyrain Madog ap Maredudd*, Cynddelw rhymes *Kaduan* (in reference to the same person) with *pedrydan* two lines later.[187] Again, later in the *Cyfoesi*, in the stanza where the prophetic deliverer Beli Hir is introduced, the three rhyme words are *dyffrynt*, *gorwynt* and *gynt* (ll. 273–5); these same three words carry the end-rhyme in the first four lines of Cynddelw's *Rhieingerdd Efa ferch Madog ap Maredudd*, though there *gynt* has the meaning 'formerly' rather than 'foreign people'.[188] Several stanzas beforehand in the *Cyfoesi* is another englyn with the same end-rhyme, this time carried by *letkynt*, *dyffrynt* and *kynt* (ll. 255–7); this can be compared with an englyn in Cynddelw's *Marwnad Gosgordd Owain Gwynedd* that again uses the same end-rhyme, carried in the first two lines by *letkynt* and *gynt*, and in the third line by the phrase *gόyr goruynt*, as occurs in the *Cyfoesi*'s Beli Hir stanza, l. 274.[189]

Given Cynddelw's status, at one point in his career, as court poet for Owain Gwynedd and his family, it is interesting that there are links to Cynddelw's work in the *Cyfoesi*'s stanzas about Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd. In the stanza where Myrddin introduces Gruffudd ap Cynan by name, the end-rhyme is carried by the words *mirein*, *kyngrein* and *Prydein* (ll. 178–80). The same three words carry the end-rhyme across the last four lines of a *caniad* in Cynddelw's poem in praise of Owain Gwynedd's son and heir Hywel.[190] Hywel is compared with his grandfather Gruffudd ap Cynan earlier in this poem.[191] Lastly, when the *Cyfoesi* introduces Owain Gwynedd himself, it refers to him by the name of the traditional hero 'Gwyn Gwarther' (l. 186). As

[185] As is explained fully in a note to the edition, *abar* is usually a noun meaning 'corpse', and in this case its adjectival meaning is likely to be 'rotten, withered'.

[186] *LPBT* poem 5.221; *CBT* IV, poem 16.26 and 209.

[187] *CBT* III, poem 1.5 and 7.

[188] *CBT* III, poem 5.1–4.

[189] *CBT* IV, poem 5.81–4.

[190] *CBT* IV, poem 6.126–9.

[191] *CBT* IV, poem 6.18.

mentioned above, Owain Gwynedd himself is addressed by the same name in Cynddelw's *marwnad* for the prince.[192] Cumulatively, these correspondences suggest that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* was intimately familiar with Cynddelw's work and drew on it particularly in the stanzas concerning the early kings of Gwynedd as well as Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd.

If Cynddelw provided inspiration for the representation of earlier kings of Gwynedd, it is intriguing that one finds apparent allusions to the work of Prydydd y Moch, court poet of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, in the stanzas about the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth) and the *mack6y deu hanner* (possibly Dafydd ap Llywelyn). The line that introduces Llywelyn in the *Cyfoesi* is *brenhin llew lla6 diwreid* ('a lion king with an uprooting hand', l. 200). Compare this with two pairs of lines in one of Prydydd y Moch's praise poems for Llywelyn, where *lle6*, *diwreit* and *lla6* all appear:

> Llywelyn, lly6 Prydein a'e phar,
> Lle6 a gle6 a gly6 gyuarwar
> […]
> Lloegyr diwreit, llu rutuleit Rutglann,
> Llu racda6 a lla6 ar lluman (*CBT* V, poem 23.9–10 and 88–9)
>
> 'Llywelyn, Britain's leader and its spear,
> A lion and a hero and the joy of warriors
> […]
> Uprooting the men of England, Rhuddlan's host of bloody wolves,
> a host in front of him and a hand on a standard'

Similarly, the phrase *Lloegyr diwreit* occurs in an englyn poem by Prydydd y Moch for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, in which Llywelyn is also termed *llew o Gymry* ('lion of/from Wales').[193] These are not the only poetic allusions in the *brenhin llew* stanza, however; the stanza's end-rhyme is carried by the three words *beid*, *diwreid* and *bleid*, and the same three words (the latter in the compound *aervleid*) carry the end-rhyme in an englyn in Llywelyn Fardd I's *Marwnad Cedifor ap Genillyn*.[194]

Following the *brenhin llew*, Myrddin prophesies the *mack6y deu hanner* (ll. 205–7), who, as suggested above, might be identified with a young Dafydd ap Llywelyn. In this stanza, *mack6y deu hanner* is rhymed with *rif ser* and *niuer*. The same end-rhyme is continued in the following stanza, where *mack6y deu hanner* is rhymed with *diuuner* and *ner*. Three of the same rhyme words are found in an englyn by Prydydd y Moch in another poem in praise of Llywelyn (in **bold**):[195]

[192] *CBT* IV, poem 4.287.
[193] *CBT* V, poem 20.2 and 41.
[194] *CBT* II, poem 4.22–4.
[195] *CBT* V, poem 17.21–4.

Mabddysg yw i'm llyw llu **rif ser** i'w gylch
O'e galchdoed **nifer**,
Tarf cynnygn, can yd weler,
Torri heb noddi neb **ner**.

'An early education for my lord is having a host as numerous as
the stars around him,
A retinue as his protective covering,
A scatterer of enemies, since he is seen,
a lord shattering without saving anyone.'

Lastly, we can note several relevant connections involving line 171, where the *Cyfoesi* first alludes to Gruffudd ap Cynan before naming him explicitly. The line is *Vnic ar6yna6l, arwyneb keda6l* ('One peerless, fierce, a bountiful defence'). It is probably intended to evoke Meilyr Brydydd's *Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan*, where Gruffudd is similarly called *unyc* and the rare word *arwyneb* is also found.[196] Apart from Meilyr Brydydd, the only other court poet to use the word *arwyneb* is Prydydd y Moch, who uses it in a series of lines, composed over a long period, that correspond closely to the line in the *Cyfoesi*:

Keda6l, arwyna6l arwyneb Prydein
(*Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 1216)[197]

Keda6l, arwyna6l eryr
(*Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan o Wynedd*, 1200)[198]

Arwynya6l prydua6r, arwyneb Prydein
(*Mawl Dafydd ab Owain o Wynedd*, *c.* 1174–5)[199]

It is notable that the first two of these lines were composed for Gruffudd ap Cynan's later namesake and the latter's son Hywel, and that the poem to Hywel was composed in 1216. The date of that poem may, therefore, have a bearing on the date of the *Cyfoesi*.

For each stage in its long prophecy, the *Cyfoesi* clearly drew on existing vernacular literature, and especially poetry, to supports its references to traditional history and to situate the poem in an intertextual nexus that would have been familiar to audience members. No doubt the poem drew on material that is now lost to us, explaining references to otherwise unknown individuals and events like the apparent eighth-century king Hywel ap Cadwal. This has created a temptation for modern commentators to see the *Cyfoesi* itself as an outgrowth of an earlier, tenth-century poem on the same theme, but this is an unnecessary assumption that ignores the wider pattern of the whole poem. True, the *Cyfoesi* draws on the *Hengerdd* when commenting on the likes of

[196] *CBT* I, poem 3.50 and 69. The parallel use of the word *unig* to refer to Gruffudd ap Cynan in these two poems is noted in Evans, *Historia Gruffud*, cxliii, n. 139.
[197] *CBT* V, poem 13.9.
[198] *CBT* V, poem 11.28.
[199] *CBT* V, poem 3.10.

Urien Rheged and Cadwallon; but equally, it draws on court poetry of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries when addressing Gruffudd ap Cynan, Owain Gwynedd and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. It bears repeating that the *Cyfoesi* itself does not belong to the pre-Norman period, and that there is no evidence that it developed from such a poem; but its author certainly knew plenty of poetry pertaining to that period.

5. Reception

In this final section, I trace the reception of the poem between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, drawing attention to noteworthy references to it or interpretations of it. *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* was a popular poem that was much-copied, and its unusually ambitious content called for comment. For these reasons, it is possible to identify the various poets, scribes and scholars who knew the poem during this period.

Intriguingly, the earliest probable reference to the *Cyfoesi* itself occurs in one of Prydydd y Moch's later poems in praise of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, which celebrates Llywelyn's victories in 1217. It is worth examining the relevant lines at length:

> Darogan Mertin dyuod breyenhin
> O Gymry werin o gamhóri;
> Dywaód derwyton dadeni haelon
> O hil eryron o Eryri.
> O wyron Ywein, arwyneb Prydein,
> Un urtyein Lundein o lan deithi,
> Yn lew Loegyr gymyn, yn Ioruerth y hyn,
> Yn lary Lywelyn o lin Rodri.
> Nys kelaf, honnaf, hónn yó Beli Hir (*CBT* V, poem 25.41–9)
>
> 'Myrddin prophesies the coming of a king
> of heroism from the people of Wales;
> prophets spoke of the rebirth of generous ones
> of the line of the eagles from Eryri.
> Among the grandsons of Owain, Britain's defence,
> there is one worthy of dignified London, of pure qualities,
> a lion, England-hewing, whose forefather is Iorwerth,
> a generous Llywelyn from Rhodri's line.
> I do not hide it, I assert it, *he* is Beli Hir'

Here Llywelyn is a *breyenhin* and a *lew*, and although these words are commonly applied to Llywelyn in praise poetry, the only early prophetic poem in which Myrddin prophesies in such terms, to my knowledge, is the *Cyfoesi*.[200]

[200] Llywelyn is mentioned twice by name in the *Oianau* (ll. 36 and 218), but there are no lion metaphors there. He can also be identified with the *pendeuic eryri* mentioned in two lines that were added to the Black Book version of the *Afallennau*: see the textual note to line 71 of the online edition.

Moreover, the *Cyfoesi*, unlike other early Myrddin poems, later prophesies the coming of the prophetic deliverer Beli Hir, whom Prydydd y Moch here equates directly with Llywelyn.[201] In fact, this is the *only* reference to Beli Hir as a prophetic deliverer in the court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The only other reference to Beli Hir in this corpus is in a later poem by Llygad Gŵr for Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, in which it is claimed that Llywelyn descends from *hil Beli Hir*, seemingly conflating the prophetic character Beli Hir with the ancestral figure Beli Mawr.[202] It is very striking that this extended allusion to the *Cyfoesi*, which was presumably intended to be recognisable to at least some audience members, was composed probably in 1217, only a year later than the latest poem that can be identified as a possible source for the poem: namely, Prydydd y Moch's *Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*. Does this mean that the *Cyfoesi* was composed in 1216/17? Such a date would fit with all other available evidence, linguistic and historical. But unfortunately, this would not be a safe conclusion, because it is impossible to discern the precise nature of the apparent textual link between line 171 of the *Cyfoesi* and the line in *Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*, if there indeed is one; it is conceivable that Prydydd y Moch was echoing the *Cyfoesi*, rather than vice versa. That said, the lines listed above suggest that Prydydd y Moch was already collocating the relevant words in poems composed earlier, in 1200 and *c.* 1174–5, probably before the *Cyfoesi* was composed. The possibility must stand that the *Cyfoesi* was composed about 1216/17, conceivably by Prydydd y Moch himself or by someone well-known to him.[203]

The clearest evidence for knowledge of the poem in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries comes from a poem by Gruffudd Llwyd (fl. *s.* xiv^{ex}–*s.* xv^{in}). In his *Marwnad Gruffudd* (late fourteenth century), Gruffudd refers specifically to the *Cyfoesi* and paraphrases line 410 (*diofryt o baób a gar*, 'everyone letting go of what they love'):[204]

> Merddin wawd mawrddawn ei wedd
> A ddywawd yn ei ddiwedd,
> Gair drud i mewn gwir a drig,
> Wrth Wenddydd araith wanddig:
> 'Rhaid i bawb, er hyd y bo,
> Gwir ddiofrydu a garo'
>
> 'Myrddin spoke a verse of highly talented form
> at his end,

[201] For some later references to a prophetic deliverer called Beli, see Griffiths, *Early Welsh Vaticination*, 166–7; Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 277–8 (Peniarth 50, poem 23a, l. 22) and (with Beli Hir specifically) 477–8 and 484 (Peniarth 50, poem 327, ll. 67–8).

[202] *CBT* VII, poem 24.39. Note that, in the genealogies, the ancestral figure is always Beli Mawr, never Beli Hir.

[203] This possibility should be considered in the light of Marged Haycock's case for many of the poems in the Book of Taliesin being the work of Prydydd y Moch: *LPBT* 25–36; *PBT* 16–18.

[204] Rhiannon Ifans (ed.), *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a'r Llygliwiaid Eraill* (Aberystwyth, 2000), poem 13.41–6.

a precious word remains within truth,
a sad and sorrowful address to Gwenddydd:
"However long it may be, everyone must
truly let go of what they love" '

In view of Gruffudd Llwyd's direct knowledge of the *Cyfoesi*, it is striking that another reference to Myrddin and Gwenddydd in this period, along with a probable allusion to the *Cyfoesi*, can be seen in a poem by Gruffudd Llwyd's alleged bardic pupil, Rhys Goch Eryri (*c.* 1365–*c.* 1440):[205]

Merddin, bu dewin bob dydd,
A fu'n cadw o fewn coedydd
Rhawd o westfiledd yn rhydd,
Frodiau gwynddull, frawd Gwenddydd,
Fardd, a wnaf ar gerdd dafawd,
Fab Morfryn Frych, wych ei wawd.

'Myrddin (he was a prophet every day)
was keeping, within woodlands,
a large number of wild beasts free,
bright judgements (Gwenddydd's brother,
a poet) which I make in song,
the son of Morfryn Frych, his verse is excellent.'

The phrase *Frodiau gwynddull* ('bright judgements') may refer to the *Cyfoesi*'s prophecies of kings and their fates, bearing in mind that, in the first stanza of the *Cyfoesi*, Myrddin's prophecy is described as an *yngnadedd* (a variant of *yngnadaeth*, 'judgement'). The references to woodlands and wild beasts seem at least to suggest knowledge of the story about Myrddin's life in the wilderness that underlies the *Cyfoesi*. In this respect, the extract can be compared with a poem by Y Nant (fl. *c.* 1460s–70s), which offers an extraordinary summary of Myrddin's story, including, enigmatically, that *aeth â'i chwaer fain* / *I hengaer Brydain* ('he went with his slender sister / to the old fortress of Britain'), alluding to Gwenddydd's role.[206]

The only other specific allusion to the *Cyfoesi* in this period appears in one of the prophetic poems of Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn (*c.* 1400–*c.* 1490). In the first few lines of a *cywydd brud*, Dafydd Llwyd mentions various figures of the past associated with prophetic ability: Dewi, Alan Fardd (i.e. Alan de Lille, author of a substantial commentary on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini*), Gwido Hen (the subject of a tale about his spirit returning from the

[205] Dylan Foster Evans (ed.), *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri* (Aberystwyth, 2007), poem 11.13–18; cf. p. 30.

[206] Huw Meirion Edwards (ed.), *Gwaith y Nant* (Aberystwyth, 2013), poem 7.57–8. For other instances of explicit knowledge of Myrddin's story, see Dafydd Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* (Cardiff, 1995), poem 90.17–20; E. Bachellery, *L'œuvre poétique de Gutun Owain: barde gallois de la deuxième moitié du quinzième siècle*, 2 vols (Paris, 1950–1), i, poem XXVI.55–60; www.gutorglyn.net poem 24.63–6, ed. Barry J. Lewis (accessed 4 September 2025).

dead to warn of Purgatory)[207] and St Jerome (to whom the fifteen signs before Judgement Day were commonly ascribed in the Middle Ages). Then comes a rare instance of the word *cyfoesi* outside colophons to *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*:[208]

> Os gwir y cyfoesi gynt,
> Addaw adwyth a ddwedynt,
> Y mae ar draws y môr draw
> Rhyfeddod rhwyf fo iddaw.
>
> 'If the *cyfoesi* of former times is true,
> the promise of misfortune that they uttered,
> there is across the sea yonder
> a prodigy; he will have arrogance.'

It was probably the context of the word *cyfoesi* in these lines that led to the idea, found in Richards's edition, that *cyfoesi* could mean 'darogan, proffwydoliaeth' ('prediction, prophecy'), a suggestion that was also adopted by *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*.[209] However, it makes better sense to interpret the word *cyfoesi* in this poem not as a common noun meaning 'prophecy' in general, for which there is no etymological justification, but instead as the title of a specific prophecy: *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*. Dafydd Llwyd reveals knowledge of the story of Myrddin and Gwenddydd in another of his poems.[210] One could then understand Myrddin and Gwenddydd as the subjects of the plural verb *ddwedynt* in the second line quoted above. With regard to the actual meaning of the poem's title, it is safest to interpret *cyfoesi* etymologically as 'coexistence, cohabitation', or, following Lloyd-Jones, 'companionship' ('cymdeithas, cyweithas'), referring to the relationship between Myrddin and Gwenddydd.[211] Similar meanings would suit the other two attestations of this word too.[212]

Other references in the poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggest a general familiarity with the themes of the *Cyfoesi*, but not necessarily with the poem itself. Gwenddydd was sometimes associated with wisdom and prophecy: Sefnyn (fl. *s.* xiv²) praises his subject Angharad by saying that she

[207]Dafydd Johnston, *Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300–1525*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 204), 443; T. Gwynn Jones, 'Ysbryd Gwido a'r Prior', *BBCS* 5 (1929–31), 100–12.

[208]W. Leslie Richards (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn* (Cardiff, 1964), poem 4.9–12.

[209]Richards, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, 216; *GPC*[1] s.v. *cyfoesi*[2] (1957, probably drawing on Richards's original MA thesis of 1947).

[210]Richards, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, poem 12.39–44.

[211]*G* s.v. *kyuoessi*.

[212]The meaning 'coexistence' would probably fit the context of the word in a poem by Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr, rather than the suggested meaning 'disaster' (which follows another suggestion in *GPC*[1] s.v. *cyfoesi*[2] (1957)): N. G. Costigan (Bosco), R. Iestyn Daniel and Dafydd Johnston (eds), *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur, Gwilym Ddu o Arfon, Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr ac Iorwerth Beli* (Aberystwyth, 1995), poem 10.53–4. Similarly, the latest editor of Ieuan ap Rhydderch's poem on the life of Dewi comments that *cyfoesi* 'seems to be a compound of *oesi* "live, ensure", and may well have the same meaning as the simplex here': Barry J. Lewis (ed.), *Medieval Welsh Poems to Saints and Shrines* (Dublin, 2015), 286, n. to poem 18.89.

has *Wenddydd wybodau* ('Gwenddydd's knowledge/understanding'), while Dafydd Epynt (fl. *c.* 1456–*c.* 1515), commenting on the deceased Morgan ap Syr Dafydd Gam's understanding of prophecy, bemoans that no-one of his like will follow him, *Neu Gynddelw na Gwenddydd* ('neither a Cynddelw nor a Gwenddydd').[213] Others, including Iorwerth Fychan (fl. *c.* 1300), Mab Clochyddyn (fl. *s.* xiv[1]) and Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan (fl. *s.* xv/xvi), convey a different interpretation of Gwenddydd's role, implying that Myrddin sang a love poem to her.[214] It is not clear whether this idea was an independent tradition in which Gwenddydd was Myrddin's lover rather than his sister, perhaps influenced by the story of Merlin and Viviane/Niviane/Nimue in the French Merlin romances, or whether this way of thinking arose from a misunderstanding of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*.[215] If the latter, the misunderstanding may have been prompted by the idea that Myrddin was responsible for other poems directed to women, as found already in a poem by Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170) in the twelfth century.[216] But it is clear that other accounts of Myrddin and Gwenddydd were circulating aside from *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, such as the account of the 'five dreams of Gwenddydd' that surfaces in Elis Gruffydd's work in the sixteenth century.[217]

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, there emerges a tradition of using the *Cyfoesi* as a historical source for the early Middle Ages. This is first found in the vernacular historical tract *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru*, preserved in Peniarth 181, which was written by Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys between 1509 and 1536.[218] Much of this manuscript contains genealogical material that was copied directly from Peniarth 129 and derives ultimately from Gutun Owain's work, but this tract was not copied from that source, and could conceivably be the work of Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys himself.[219] The text explicitly acknowledges its debt to the *Cyfoesi*: when listing the three northern kings who preceded Maelgwn Gwynedd, it says *velly y dyvawt 'Kyvessi Verddin wyllt'* ('thus said the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin Wyllt').[220] The influence of the *Cyfoesi* can be seen elsewhere in the tract, such as in its claim that Cynan y Cŵn (correctly identified, though made son, rather than grandson, of Ieuaf ab

[213] Nerys Ann Jones and Erwain Haf Rheinallt (eds), *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierdyn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch* (Aberystwyth, 1995), poem 1.27; Owen Thomas (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Epynt* (Aberystwyth, 2002), poem 5.72.

[214] *CBT* VII, poem 30.59–61; *GGrG* poem 6.62, with the note on p. 105; and most overtly, M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (ed.), *Gwaith Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan, Ieuan Llwyd Brydydd a Lewys Aled* (Aberystwyth, 2003), poem 4; cf. poem 2.13.

[215] The French story of Merlin and his lover certainly became known to Welsh poets, as Rhys Goch Eryri attests: see Foster Evans, *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri*, poem 13.15–20.

[216] *CBT* II, poem 6.46–7.

[217] Thomas Jones, 'The story of Myrddin and the five dreams of Gwenddydd in the chronicle of Elis Gruffudd', *EC* 8 (1959), 315–45.

[218] For the text, see Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru'; for the manuscript and its scribe, see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 169; Gruffudd Antur, 'Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys', *Dwned* 22 (2016), 83–8.

[219] Cf. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 175.

[220] Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru', 257 (§1).

Idwal Foel) held the sovereignty of all Wales, and that Gruffudd ap Cynan, rather than his son Owain Gwynedd, *vv gwyn gwyarchev* [*recte gwarther*]*, ac y dyvot Merddin amdano* ('was Gwyn Gwarther, and Myrddin spoke about him').[221] There are also misunderstandings of the *Cyfoesi*, as when *keledigan* (from l. 105) and *dyuynnyn* (from line 91, *recte dyuyndyn*?) are interpreted as personal names and assigned backstories: the former becomes *Galydigan, kynvtai Rodri* ('Calydigan, Rhodri's firewood steward'), alleged father of Cynan Dindaethwy, and the latter becomes *Dyvyn diarchar*, a king in his own right who reigns between Cynan Dindaethwy and Merfyn Frych.[222]

A century later, another writer of Welsh history perceived the *Cyfoesi* as a source of historical value. John Lewis of Llynwene (*c.* 1540–1615/16), a recusant lawyer and antiquary from Llanfihangel Nant Melan in Radnorshire, composed a *History of Great-Britain* that probably reached its final form in the first decade of the seventeenth century, though it remained unpublished until 1729.[223] In an introductory chapter, entitled 'Of the Prophecies of the *Britains*', Lewis mounts a defence of the use of prophecy as a historical source, claiming that 'I dare not say there is no Truth in those Prophecies, being the Gift of God, and not the Inspiration of any *Puthon* or Devil'.[224] Of particular interest to him are 'Taliessin and the two *Merlins*, viz. *Merlin Calydonius* or *Sylvester*, called also *Merlin Wyllt*, and *Ambrosius Merlin*'.[225] References to the first of those Merlins at several points in the *History* suggest that the *Cyfoesi* was the key text that he attributed to him. He names the five kings who preceded Maelgwn Gwynedd, according to *Merlin Calidon*, as *Rytherch Hael*, *Morgan Mwynfawr* and *Vryen*, the same three kings who precede Maelgwn in the *Cyfoesi*.[226] More strikingly, he later quotes verses from the *Cyfoesi* as evidence for Rhun ap Maelgwn, Cadwallon and Cadwaladr.[227] The quotations show that John Lewis was using the same full copy of the poem that John Jones of Gellilyfdy later drew on in NLW 3041B, pp. 419–54, which he attributed to a manuscript belonging to John Lewis, as noted above.[228] Lewis was evidently aware of elements of the early Welsh story of Myrddin, as can be discerned in poems like the *Afallennau*; for instance, he mentions that 'Some say, that, in the Batel of *Camlan* he, fighting on King *Arthur*'s Syde, at unawares slew his Nephew, his Syster *Gwendythe*'s Son, which was the Caus that he fel distracted.'[229]

Nonetheless, even in the seventeenth century, it is clear that some readers continued to pore over the text of the *Cyfoesi* in order to identify prophetic allusions to their own time. In John Jones's composite copy of the *Cyfoesi*

[221]Ibid., 259 (§§8–9).
[222]Ibid., 258 (§§3–4).
[223]Payne, 'John Lewis', 13.
[224]John Lewis, *The History of Great-Britain, From the First Inhabitants Thereof, 'till the Death of Cadwalader, Last King of the Britains; and of the Kings of Scotland to Eugenev* (London, 1729), 34–7, quotation from 35.
[225]Ibid., 34.
[226]Ibid., 205.
[227]Ibid., 207, 216 and 220
[228]See above, p. 182.
[229]Lewis, *History of Great-Britain*, 206.

in NLW 3041B, pp. 419–54, he added the following comment between the verses about the *deu Idas am dir* (probably Dafydd and Rhodri sons of Owain Gwynedd) and the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth):

> Ụrṭ gyfflybiaeṭ mae peṭ yn eissiau yma, ac naiḷ ai ef a goḷwyd ai ef a adawyd aḷan o amser Edward y kyntaf hyd Risiart y trydyḍ
>
> 'By comparison there is something missing here, and from the time of Edward I up to Richard III either it was lost or it was left out.'

Clearly, John Jones was interpreting the poem in terms of English regnal history in the later Middle Ages; perhaps he understood the *brenhin llew* as Henry VII, successor of Richard III, conforming with the contemporary idea that Henry Tudor was the *mab darogan*.[230] Very similarly, Thomas Pugh, in his introduction to the extract of the poem that he printed in his 1658 book, explains why he decided to print only the final part of the poem (from l. 349): 'in respect of the tediousness of it, I began at Queen Elisabeth'.[231] This was because Pugh understood line 354 as a reference to Elizabeth I: in the edited text, this is *diwed, riein, orffen byt* ('the end, maiden, the conclusion of the world'), where *riein* is a vocative noun addressing Gwenddydd, but in Pugh's text *Rhiain* is capitalised, and he translates the stanza as 'When the wages of the dull people comes to be paid, which will come to passe after the reign of a Virgin, then an end is at hand'.[232] Again, in David Parry's transcript of John Jones's lost copy of Elis Gruffydd's chronicle, which Parry made for Edward Lhuyd around 1698–9, prophecies from the *Cyfoesi* are identified with kings and periods in the seventeenth century between the reigns of Charles I and William III.[233] It is clear that prophetic poems like the *Cyfoesi* continued to appeal because they were capable of being reinterpreted in reference to later times.

Scholarly treatment of the *Cyfoesi* began with Robert Vaughan in the seventeenth century. Robert Vaughan's involvement with the poem's manuscript transmission has been noted above: he collated Peniarth 26 with the lost copy X^6, and he annotated the two copies of John Davies in *Liber B*. Following the approach of *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru* a century earlier, he used the poem as a historical source in his *British Chronology*, in which he attempted to reconcile Geoffrey of Monmouth's date for the battle of Camlan with other sources.[234] Vaughan's analysis of the text is remarkable for its time, and can

[230] Jones, *Darogan*, 3–4.

[231] Pugh, *Brittish and Out-landish Prophesies*, 128.

[232] Ibid., 130.

[233] NLW 6209E, pp. 145–6; cf. Huws, *Repertory*, i, 222. The identifications may have been made originally by John Griffith of Caecyriog, who had annotated David Parry's exemplar.

[234] Robert Vaughan's *British Chronology* is printed in *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 515–33. For the true origin of Geoffrey of Monmouth's date for the battle of Camlan, see Ben Guy, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth's Welsh sources', in Georgia Henley and Joshua Byron Smith (eds), *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Leiden, 2020), 31–66, at 51–3.

be counted as the first scholarly treatment of it. He describes the *Cyfoesi* as follows:[235]

> there is an old historical tract, written dialogue wise, in the British tongue, entitled Cyfoessi Merddin a Gwenddydd, that is, the joint lives or living together of Merlin and Gwenddydd, being brother and sister, wherein the sister demandeth of her brother Merlin, under what kings her nation, the Northern Britons, should be governed; and, thereupon, he taking occasion to answer her question, prophetically reckoneth the kings of Cambria, from king Arthur's time, or shortly after, successively by their names, (although some of the first kings, as it seemeth, were dead, before the prophecy was written) until Howell Dda, king of the Britons; but from him forward to the end, he seldom nameth them by their own proper names as before, but denoteth them by some peculiar property, or quality, eminent in them, whereby the residue is not so intelligible and plain as the beginning, which gives occasion to some to think that it was not the work of Merlin, but of another bard, who living in the time of Howell Dda, gave it the title aforesaid; but whosoever was the author of it, certainly it was very ancient, as by the dialect, and several ancient copies thereof, fairly written on parchment many hundred years since, it is very apparent.

Since the seventeenth century, many others have shared this view of the poem, though perhaps few have expressed the view so elegantly.[236] Vaughan's thinking may be reflected in the summary of the poem offered in Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica*, published in 1707:[237]

> Kyvoese Myrdhyn a Gụendhydh i χụaer. *Merlini & Gwendidiæ sororis ejus, Synchronismus: sive Dialogus de futuris principibus Cumbriæ; ignoto authore quem circa annum* 948 *non reverâ de futuris, sed præteritis (cùm eos nominatim designet) scripsisse constat.* L. K. H. [Llyfr Coch Hergest] 577. *Init.* Deithym i attat, i adrodh. *Fin.* Gogeled Duụ o ụendhydh. *Const. pag.* 4.
>
> ʿCyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer. *The Synchronism of Merlin and Gwendidia his sister: or a Dialogue concerning the future*

[235] *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 524–5.

[236] See above, n. 102. Note, however, the perceptive note by Robert Saunderson in his 1834 edition of Robert Vaughan's *British Antiquities Revived*, glossing Vaughan's reference to the *Cyfoesi*: 'The prophecies attributed to Merddin Sylvester alluded to in this argument, as foretelling the accession of Anarawd, are evidently the production of some person in the reign of Henry II. The succession of the Princes of North Wales are detailed by name, in the form of a dialogue, in the precise manner in which they reigned down to Owen Gwynedd; from which time the narrative is too mysterious to admit of an explanation, for the plain reason that the compiler's powers of penetrating futurity were no more acute than those of other people. His testimony however to the fact of Anarawd being the heir of Rodri is important': Robert Saunderson in Robert Vaughan, *British Antiquities Revived* (Bala, 1834), 79.

[237] Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica*, 258.

> *princes of Cumbria; by an unknown author who wrote, it is certain, around the year* 948 *not really concerning future princes, but past princes (since he refers to them by name).* Red Book of Hergest 577. *Begins* Deithym i attat, i adrodh. *Ends* Gogeled Duụ o ụendhydh. *It consists of* 4 *pages*.'

This is a view that one finds repeated in the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and there the matter has largely rested prior to the Myrddin project.

Conclusion

Drawing on the editorial work that has taken place as part of the Cardiff Myrddin project, this discussion has sought to establish the basic parameters for understanding *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*. The primary manuscript witnesses have been described, and the key pieces of evidence for their interrelationships have been set out. A large amount of information relating to the poem's date has been analysed. The linguistic evidence consistently points towards a date of composition within the time bracket 1150 × 1250, though further work would need to be done on the individual dating criteria in order to narrow down this dating window on linguistic evidence alone. Happily, this agrees with the poem's content, since the latest historical individuals mentioned in the poem are Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (r. 1200–40) and perhaps his son Dafydd (born 1212/13), as well as, most probably, King John (r. 1199–1216). The disjuncture that has previously been perceived within the poem after the reign of Hywel Dda, leading to the supposition that the extant poem is a twelfth- or thirteenth-century elaboration of a tenth-century poem, has proven illusory, since the historical sequence arguably proceeds unbroken from Hywel Dda to the twelfth- and thirteenth-century kings of Gwynedd. An early thirteenth-century context for the poem is significant for the history of the englyn metres. The poem is comprised mainly of Penfyr and Milwr in a style similar to that of other englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus, yet the date of the *Cyfoesi* shows that these three-line englyn metres continued to be used for anonymous poems on certain themes into the thirteenth century. This should prompt us to reassess the dating and context of other anonymous englyn poems.

Like other early Welsh poems, the *Cyfoesi* exists within a network of intertextuality, thanks in part to the poets' habit of drawing on a common stock of bardic words and phrases. Nonetheless, specific allusions to other poems can be discerned in the *Cyfoesi*, including allusions to *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*, to the A-text of the *Gododdin*, and to court poems by Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch. The latest potential allusion is to a line in a poem by Prydydd y Moch composed in 1216, even though Prydydd y Moch himself appears to allude to the *Cyfoesi* in a poem of 1217 in praise of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. Judging by the evidence of the language and content, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's Gwynedd, around 1216/17, is exactly the time and context in which

we would expect the poem to have been composed. It remained well-known thereafter across many centuries, initially to poets and then increasingly to the scholar-scribes who came to dominate cultural activity in the seventeenth century.

In a sense, all of these observations are preliminary to the literary interpretation of the poem. A huge amount could be said about this poem that has never been said before. Yes, it is a prophecy, but it is also a dialogue poem between a worried sister and a brother on his deathbed who sees before him the full passage of time, and the inevitability of disaster and Judgement. Hopefully this article can stimulate others to read the poem for what it is. Long, certainly, but by no means tedious.

Abbreviations

AP	Ifor Williams (ed.), *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain, from the Book of Taliesin*, trans. Rachel Bromwich (Dublin, 1972).
BT (Pen. 20)	Thomas Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogyon: Peniarth MS. 20* (Cardiff, 1941).
BT (Pen. 20 trans.)	Thomas Jones (trans.), *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes: Peniarth MS. 20 Version* (Cardiff, 1952).
CA	Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Aneirin* (Cardiff, 1938).
CBT I	J. E. Caerwyn Williams et al. (eds), *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd e'i Ddisgynyddion* (Cardiff, 1994).
CBT II	Kathleen Anne Bramley et al. (eds), *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif* (Cardiff, 1994).
CBT III	Nerys Ann Jones and Ann Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, i (Cardiff, 1991).
CBT IV	Nerys Ann Jones and Ann Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, ii (Cardiff, 1995).
CBT V	Elin M. Jones and Nerys Ann Jones (eds), *Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Prydydd y Moch'* (Cardiff, 1991).
CBT VI	N. G. Costigan (Bosco) et al. (eds), *Gwaith Dafydd Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd Hanner Cyntaf y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg* (Cardiff, 1995).
CBT VII	Rhian M. Andrews et al. (eds), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg* (Cardiff, 1996).
CC	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Blodeugerdd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar* (Llandybïe, 1994).
EWSP	Jenny Rowland (ed.), *Early Welsh Saga Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990).
G	John Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Cardiff, 1931–63).
GGMD I	Barry J. Lewis (ed.), *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd*, i, *Canu i Deulu Penmynydd* (Aberystwyth, 2003).

GGrG	Rhiannon Ifans et al. (eds), *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog, Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, Mab Clochyddyn, Gruffudd ap Tudur Goch ac Ithel Ddu* (Aberystwyth, 1997).
GIG	Dafydd R. Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Iolo Goch* (Cardiff, 1988).
LHEB	Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain: A Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages, First to Twelfth Century A.D.* (Edinburgh, 1953).
LPBT	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, 2nd ed. (Aberystwyth, 2015).
LlDC	A. O. H. Jarman (ed.), *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Cardiff, 1982).
PBT	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Prophecies from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2013).
PT	Ifor Williams (ed.), *The Poems of Taliesin*, trans. J. E. Caerwyn Williams (Dublin, 1968).

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