

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/154707/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Hopwood, Llewelyn 2021. Creative bilingualism in Late-Medieval Welsh poetry. *Studia Celtica* 55 (1) , pp. 97-119. 10.16922/SC.55.5

Publishers page: <https://doi.org/10.16922/SC.55.5>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies. See <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



# Creative Bilingualism in Late-Medieval Welsh Poetry

## *Abstract*

This article considers why bilingual poets from medieval Wales exploited their various languages as avenues of creativity. It discusses five poems from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that synthesize Welsh and either English or Latin to varying degrees. The article untangles the conscious and often complex linguistic integration, using the term ‘extralinguistic bilingualism’ to do so with two exclusively English poems that nonetheless use Welsh strict-metre and ‘orthography’, one of which is a series of once anonymous English *englynion* recently found to be the work of prolific fifteenth-century poet Tudur Aled. By examining the poems in tandem and by contextualising their apparent isolation within Wales’ contemporary linguistic landscape and within the phenomena of multilingual poetry, Marian lyrics and ‘aureate’ diction, the impetus behind their curious hybridity is queried. It is argued that comedy, piety, and literary craft are key considerations, which are all connected by an overarching concern for relative linguistic prestige: the perceived divergence between the social and literary status of each language.

\*\*\*

With medieval examples in particular, the curious rarity of Welsh poetics crossing linguistic borders is often noted, sometimes dissected, but rarely interrogated.<sup>1</sup> The question ‘why’ is never asked. This article asks that question. A search for instances of medieval Welsh poets writing consciously and simultaneously in two languages has uncovered texts by five different poets from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Tudur Penllyn (*fl.* 1460–70), Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys (*fl.* 1520–60), Tudur Aled (*fl.* 1480–1526), Ieuan ap Rhydderch (*fl.* 1430–70) and Ieuan ap Hywel Srdwal (*fl.* 1430–1480). Many of these poems coincide with the usual associations of macaronic poetry as defined by sixteenth-century Italian poet, Teofilo Folengo: farcical, burlesque and light-hearted subject-matter.<sup>2</sup> However, beyond being humorous or intriguing, these poems can also be considered products of piety, of a concern for literary craft and of the perceived relative prestige of the languages synthesised to varying degrees.

This key term, ‘bilingualism’, has a vast spectrum of meaning, and so sociolinguist Suzanne Romaine’s definitions offer helpful clarification. Loanwords and the occasional insertion of single words from one language into another – the equivalent of ‘tag-switching’ in

---

<sup>1</sup> Examples include: R. Garlick (1972: 8–12); Ll. B. Smith (2000: 10–11); G. Evans (2019: 213–5).

<sup>2</sup> T. Folengo (2007–8).

speech – will not be considered, since ‘borrowing can occur in the speech of those with only monolingual competence’.<sup>3</sup> Under scrutiny instead is the written equivalent of intersentential and intrasentential code-switching: a switch at clause or sentence boundaries in the former, and within sentence-constituents in the latter, both requiring significant fluency in both languages. Therefore, only poems that mix languages more extensively than including solitary words or phrases will be considered. In order to discuss cases of poems written in English but in quintessentially Welsh forms, I add a further dimension, ‘extralinguistic bilingualism’, i.e., where the language is not Welsh but everything else about the poem is.

Medieval poets who code-switch are not unique to Wales nor to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ninth-century examples include ‘The Phoenix’ – *Hafað ūs ālyfed lucis auctor / þæt wē mōtun hēr merueri / gōddædum begietan gaudia in celo* (‘The author of light has granted us / so that we may here obtain / [and] attain with good deeds joy in heaven’) – and the ‘Juvencus Englynion’, one of the few examples of Old Welsh verse in a contemporary copy: *Omnipotens auctor / Ti dicones adiamor* (‘Almighty Creator / Thou hast made’).<sup>4</sup> However, in medieval English poetry at least, code-switching did climax in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup> As for Wales during these centuries, as mentioned, there seems only to be five examples: four blend Welsh and English, one blends Welsh and Latin, and all bar one are written in Welsh strict-metre, *cynghanedd*.

The lively social history of the Welsh and English people and languages plays a significant role in our understanding of these poems. Despite the socio-economic coexistence and gradual integration of the English and Welsh nobilities, the ethnic identities and divisions that had been fluctuating since around the seventh century maintained a sharp distinction during the fifteenth.<sup>6</sup> The antagonism that arose from the notorious Penal Laws (1402) following the Glyndŵr revolt (1400–c. 1415) finds clear expression in Welsh poetry, particularly that which engages with the Wars of the Roses, where there is an unwavering desire to perpetuate anti-English rhetoric and a “we-they” dichotomy’, e.g., *Na ad, f’arglwydd, swydd i Sais, / Na’i bardwn i un bwrdais* (‘Do not, my lord, allow any office to an Englishman, / nor give any burgess his pardon’).<sup>7</sup> How this relates to bilingualism is evident in John Davies’s reminder that, in the absence of statehood, what defined the Welsh nation as distinct from the

---

<sup>3</sup> S. Romaine (1989: 112–15).

<sup>4</sup> S. Wenzel (1994: 2); N. Blake (1990: 49–67), ll. 667–9; H. McKee (2000: 81), ll. 1–2. All translations into (Modern) English are my own unless otherwise stated.

<sup>5</sup> H. Schendl (2012: 28).

<sup>6</sup> R. R. Davies (1978: esp. 302–318); D. F. Evans (2011); D. H. Owen (1975).

<sup>7</sup> H. Fulton (2008: 195); R. R. Davies, (1984: 52); Guto’r Glyn, (2013).

English was the Welsh language. Middle Welsh *iaith* could mean both ‘language’ and ‘nation’, echoing Bede’s ‘nations’ of Britain as speakers of the same language.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship between this *iaith* and English is essential to their creative interaction. During the central Middle Ages, throughout most of Wales, Welsh was both the prestigious language of the native nobility and the everyday language of the populace. English, on the other hand, was the low-status language of the peasant colonizers and small traders who came to the Welsh Marches and, to a lesser extent, *pura Wallia* during the Norman conquest. However, during the fourteenth century, as English became the dominant partner in England’s French-English diglossia, it also began to challenge Welsh as the high-status vernacular of Wales. An influx of English-speaking nobility as a result of the Edwardian conquest made English the dominant language of commerce, bureaucracy and, to some extent, higher learning, but crucially not of literary communication.<sup>9</sup> The Welsh-speaking gentry (*uchelwyr*), whose power ultimately depended on serving the English Crown, increasingly engaged in what Helen Fulton terms ‘discursive acculturation’: the process by which speakers acquire access to a prestige discourse to enter into relations of cultural and political power.<sup>10</sup> Yet, while bilingual *uchelwyr* could be English in terms of politics and class, they remained culturally Welsh and patronized strong expressions of anti-English resentment in poetry, where Welsh was still prestigious. There are hints here of Homi Bhabha’s post-colonialist theories of ‘doubling’ and ‘mimicry’ where the colonised subject is split between aspiring to be like the powerful colonisers and continuing to assert an inherent ‘otherness’.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in terms of social coherence and notions of literary and linguistic superiority, the interplay between Welsh and English is complex.

Latin is the third language dealt with in this article and once again social and cultural associations play their part in our understanding of its creative employment. Latin was the pan-European language par excellence: the living language of educated churchmen and scholars and, by association, of ecclesiastical, scientific and sometimes courtly authority. Most importantly for the poetry we shall be analysing, it was the transcending language of Christian devotion, the prestigious currency of which remained intact in Wales in the late Middle Ages even when it was beginning to be questioned in England by the Wycliffite movement.<sup>12</sup> Latin pervaded all corners of Wales, as it did Europe, and all strata of Welsh society. Indeed, it was

---

<sup>8</sup> J. Davies (2007: 164, 198); Bede (1999, 9–12).

<sup>9</sup> Ll. B. Smith (1997: 36).

<sup>10</sup> H. Fulton (2011: 147).

<sup>11</sup> H. Fulton (2013); H. Bhabha (2004: 57–93, 121–31).

<sup>12</sup> Ghosh (2002).

so universal and pervasive that it could be argued that all medieval Europeans were bilingual: passively so, with fluency in the vernacular and a smattering of mostly liturgical Latin, or more extensively so with proficiency in both.<sup>13</sup> This is crucial to understand the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of medieval Latin-Welsh poetry.

These are the questions that this article asks of the few poems that exhibit creative interaction between the languages of medieval Wales. It will do so by contextualising the poems within neighbouring literatures and disciplines, interrogating the nature of their bilingualism and querying the impetus for the language synthesis.

### **Tudur Penllyn**

One of the earliest and best-known Welsh-English macaronic poems is the ‘Ymddiddan Rhwng Cymro a Saesnes’ (‘A Dialogue Between a Welshman and an Englishwoman’) by Tudur Penllyn; a poem that has been subject to recent detailed discussions, though none which examines the impetus behind its language-mix.<sup>14</sup>

The ‘Ymddiddan’ demonstrates the bilingual competence of this wealthy Llanuwchllyn *brutiwr* (diviner), satirist and composer of eulogies and elegies. Tudur’s bilingualism was such that he could manipulate it according to the strict metrical rules of *cynganedd* that apply to this *cywydd deuair hirion*. This remarkable poem consists of an erotic dialogue between the poet’s persona, who speaks exclusively in Welsh, and an Englishwoman who speaks exclusively in English; two purported monoglots who seem unable to understand each other. The former pursues the latter, though the increasingly explicit advances are spurned by increasingly violent protests. There is a couplet-by-couplet separation between the languages, which are both encased in independent, syntactical units; as the product of Tudur’s code-switching mind, the bilingualism is ‘intersentential’. The ethnic and linguistic segregation is signposted from the offset and these remain the character labels throughout:

‘Dydd daed, Saesnes gyffes, gain. Yr wyf i’th garu, riain.’	‘Good day, fine, skilful, Englishwoman. I’m in love with you, maiden.’
<u>‘What saist, mon?’ ebe honno,</u>	<u>‘What are you saying, man?’ said she,</u>
<u>‘For truthe, harde Welsman I tro.’</u>	<u>‘For truth, I believe you are a Welshman.’<sup>15</sup></u>

The poet capitalizes on the full farcical potential of the macaronic style and on the richly humorous possibilities of a generally but not universally bilingual society. The satisfaction a bilingual audience draws from this type of poetic dialogue stems from their privileged position

---

<sup>13</sup> E. M. Tyler (2011: 10); A. Putter and K. Busby (2010).

<sup>14</sup> P. Malone (2012).

<sup>15</sup> T. Penllyn (1958: 53–4), ll. 1–4. Translation based on D. Johnston (1998: 70–3).

of understanding the entire interaction, unlike the two interlocutors. They notice, for example, the bawdy wordplay between the Englishwoman swearing *by the rwde* and the Welshman's response, *hyd y groes onid oes dôr?* ('is there no opening to the cross?'), or the unwittingly sexual imagery in the Englishwoman's threat to *make the blodei*, implying the various medieval connections between blood and sexual intercourse.<sup>16</sup>

This satisfaction and sense of linguistic superiority is heightened on this occasion due to the subverted relationship between the two languages in question.<sup>17</sup> The standard relationship between English and Welsh features in Tudur Penllyn's satire of Flint; his only other poem to include a speck of bilingualism. Here, the poet's hopes of entertaining a crowd with an *awdl* are dynamically rejected in favour of a raucous English musician: '*Ywt,*' *ebr Sais, drais drysor, / 'Ynelo mynsdrel na mor*' ('"Out"', said the violent, English doorman, / "I want no more of a minstrel"'). Tudur then lashes out breathlessly at the diabolical and 'captive' Anglo-Welsh town: the *[t]ref ddwbl, gaergwbl, gyrgam* ('a fully-fortified, crooked, double town'), as he describes it earlier in the poem.<sup>18</sup>

With this anti-English sentiment in mind, the fact that the English-speaker of the 'Ymddiddan' is the mocked defensive outsider goes some way to explain why the poet thought to include English. In the triangle of humorous (mis)understanding between the two characters and the audience of omniscient bilingual Welsh eavesdroppers, the latter are fully aware of the Welshman's intentions and the obscenities he expresses, as they share a secret language at the Englishwoman's expense.

The Flint satire's narrative of a Welsh poet scoffing at English-speaking drinkers who fail to recognise good poetry demonstrates the notion that English was the prestigious vernacular of all social spheres bar the literary. The 'Ymddiddan' plays with this same premise. Indeed, the 'Ymddiddan's' humour lies in how any social distinction that was initially signposted by the woman's English disintegrates as that language is comically misused. The double-entendres mentioned above turn the Englishwoman's high-status vernacular into the vulgar vehicle of burlesque. At times, it also seems that she might be failing to speak in correct (English) *cynghanedd*: *kyste dyfyl, what kansto doe* ('kiss the devil, what are you doing'), for example, is a failed *cynghanedd draws*, frustrated by the presence of the /n/ and by the fact that the first half of the line is unstressed and the second stressed, which are patterns prohibited by

---

<sup>16</sup> T. Penllyn (1958: 53–4), ll. 27–30; B. Bildhauer (2006: 22–8, 119–25); despite the double-entendres, *harde* (l. 3) is surely the 2sg form of 'to be', 'art', and not 'hard' and thereby 'erect' as suggested in P. Malone (2012: 124).

<sup>17</sup> This can be added to Malone's reading of the poem as pertaining to the subversive genres of *fabliau* and *pastourelle*.

<sup>18</sup> T. Penllyn (1958: 51–3), ll. 15–6, 3.

the metre's rules.<sup>19</sup> In terms of subject-matter, the Flint satire also associates English with such low-brow topics as peas and dung compared to the Welsh poet's attempts at high-brow verse.<sup>20</sup> We sense then that the high literary status of Welsh is maintained whereas the socio-economic status of English is undermined as it becomes an imperfect, lower-grade language once it sets foot in the unfavourable realm of Welsh poetry.

Bilingualism is a creative literary tool in Tudur's 'Ymddiddan'. Its comedic employment offers insights into perceived linguistic hierarchies as they are manipulated. The projected Welsh-leaning bilingual audience, privileged in their ability to comprehend the entire poem, are made to perceive English encroachment on the Welsh strict-metre tradition as subversive and comic. While the anti-English sentiment is more light-hearted than in the satire on Flint, it is nevertheless present as Welsh and English fail to synthesize.

### **Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys**

Another English-Welsh macaronic poem is 'Cân Cymhorthfa' ('A Song for Succour') by Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys. This early-sixteenth-century poet belonged to the leading bardic family of Tir Iarll, upper Vale of Glamorgan, though he lived in the lowlands of Tythegston, near Bridgend. This southward migration to the Vale proper embodies the late medieval 'Welsh revival' of Glamorgan, which saw the resurgence of Welsh-language culture after centuries of inferiority in the Anglo-Norman lordship's distinctively English ambience.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, English remained prevalent enough to be creatively interwoven with Welsh in a manner reminiscent of Tudur Penllyn's treatment. While there are only four lines of English in the sixty-six-line poem, these too are in dialogue, in a female voice and in a comic narrative that plays on the struggle between English and Welsh as prestigious vernaculars in separate realms. Though common in this poet's repertoire, the *cywydd deuair fyrion* form is unusual in medieval Welsh poetry as a whole, and while its free-metre form renders its bilingualism less of a metrical feat than Tudur Penllyn's, it still required conscious crafting.<sup>22</sup>

The poem is a self-deprecating, humorous account of an old man who regrets marrying his spirited, emasculating young wife.<sup>23</sup> The sluggish Tomas laments his situation as he is sent to fetch corn from donors: *Ny cha'i lonydd, na nos na dydd / genti ond a i'r Vro i ytta* ('I get

---

<sup>19</sup> T. Penllyn (1958: 53–4), l. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Sôn am bys, Wiliam Beisir, / Sôn o'r ail am dail i'w dir* ('William Beiser speaks of peas, / The other speaks of dung for his land'), T. Penllyn (1958: 51–3), ll. 17–8.

<sup>21</sup> B. Ll. James (1972: 16–36).

<sup>22</sup> D. Evans (1993: 91).

<sup>23</sup> See 'J445.2: Foolish marriage of old man and young girl' in S. Thompson (1955, vol. iv: 39).

no peace night or day / From her unless I go to the Vale to beg for corn').<sup>24</sup> He presents a myriad of excuses as to why he cannot fulfil his wife's wishes, the last of which claims that the potential benefactors of the village in question would not understand him since *Maen hwy'n Saesneg ynghylch y Wig: / ny wis beth vo j'n y gaiso'* ('They are English around Wick: / it is not known what it is that I seek').<sup>25</sup> Tomas's wife dismisses this excuse by providing a crash-course in English containing the bare essentials needed for begging:

'Mi'th ddysga di, ffol, i erchi, ond kadw y'th go, vel y'th ddysgo: <u>'j prav jow, syr, ffor lov, maestyr,</u> <u>God wil giv mi, and Owr Ladi'</u> pan ddweto e, " <u>kom hom, syre</u> ": <u>'j'l kwm to yow, God redward yow'.</u> '	'I'll teach you, fool, how to beg, But remember this, so that it teaches you: <u>"I pray you, sir, for love, master,</u> <u>God's will, give me, and Our Lady";</u> When he says, " <u>Come home, sirrah</u> ": <u>"I'll come to you, God reward you".</u> ' <sup>26</sup>
---	---

The English is a formulaic script for Tomas to parrot back to noblemen. As with Tudur Penllyn's 'Ymddiddan', the English is in isolated units and thus intersentential, apart from the penultimate line where the Welsh pronoun *e* rhymes with English *syre*, the title with which social superiors addressed inferiors.

A self-conscious Tomas immediately abandons his lesson, claiming that his tongue cannot manage the foreign sounds of this foreign language: *Er peck o od ny ddaw'r tavod / 'n y modd i bü'r wraig y'm dysgi* ('For the sake of a peck of pride, my tongue will not work / in the way the wife had taught me').<sup>27</sup> Ironically, in seeking to avoid the humiliation of mispronouncing English by not saying anything at all, Tomas only invites further humiliation as his exasperated wife sends him packing in a state of undress, thus appearing before his potential donors a dishevelled and desperate exile.

Comic effect is, once again, a key consideration. The humour behind the inclusion of English is more multi-layered than in Tudur Penllyn's dialogue, however, its play with prestige is similar. At its most basic level, the mere inclusion of English is itself unexpected and a source of carnivalesque comedy; perhaps this is what Dafydd Evans had in mind when commenting that 'poets of the period knew full well [...] that including English in a poem was an effective

---

<sup>24</sup> D. Evans (1993: 94–6), ll. 19–20.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 47–8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 49–54.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 55–6. The meaning of this first phrase is unclear. I tentatively read *od* as mutated *god* with its secondary sense 'pride', see *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (hereafter *GPC*) s.v. *god*. It could also mean 'surplus' (s.v. *od*<sup>1b</sup>), 'porridge' (s.v. *uwd*; the first attestation suggests *od* could be an alternative form) or 'adulterer' (s.v. *god*). Neither seems entirely suitable as each requires bending the attested evidence or forcing an awkward meaning, in which case 'pride' is the least problematic. Nevertheless, each reading would only change the interpretation slightly since the phrasing 'for the sake of...' would still convey how nothing could convince Tomas to attempt to speak English.



way of creating humour'.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the medieval comedic trope of imbalanced gender roles plays its part as *she*, a dictatorial, young woman, is the one teaching *him*. Even in this imbalance, the English-Welsh axis is present as her ability to speak the region's prestigious language is another marker of her supremacy over her husband.

More complexly, however, an expertly bilingual audience member might notice that Tomas's wife may not in fact be as proficient in English as she might seem at first. Her English is somewhat nonsensical: though it could be a scribal error, *redward* is unattested and erroneous.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, though metrical requirements make hyperbaton common in poetry, the syntax is somewhat disrupted and *giv mi* lacks any sort of object. These issues might suggest a misremembered petitioning phrase in clumsy and broken English. Such linguistic confidence in spite of low proficiency perpetuates the wife's portrayal as more self-assured than her cowardly, subservient husband. Furthermore, it presents a humorously distorted outcome for English employed on Welsh terms similar to that of the 'Ymddiddan'; humour that could only be fully enjoyed by sufficiently bilingual audience members whose sense of linguistic superiority would inevitably swell.

The question of bilingual proficiency continues in Tomas's description of the difficulty of English, which he simply cannot grasp *er peck o od*. Beyond the essential amusement of the embarrassed Tomas's refusal to even attempt to learn the strange-sounding language of upward social mobility – a situation perhaps familiar to the poet's audience – further comedy may lie in the lexicon. 'Peck' was an English loanword brought into Welsh around this time: a unit of measurement usually associated with corn, ¼ of a bushel.<sup>30</sup> Tomas was as hopeless in acquiring languages as he was in acquiring corn. Was it only the alert bilingual reader/listener who would have noticed this ironic wordplay, or might this be an English word known to monoglot (or passively bilingual) Welsh labourers? Either way, this again exposes the subtlety offered by the creative employment of two languages to poets wishing to be humorous.

The hypothesis of a monoglot, yet literate, audience might also explain an as-yet unmentioned aspect of the poem, namely that the English is partially written in so-called 'Welsh orthography'.<sup>31</sup> A more detailed assessment of writing and reading bilingual poems

---

<sup>28</sup> D. Evans (1993: 105); M. Bevis (2013: 49–51).

<sup>29</sup> No results in: *Middle English Dictionary* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary>; *Lexicon of Early Modern English* <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca>; *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www.oed.com> (hereafter *OED*).

<sup>30</sup> *GPC*, s. v. *pec*.

<sup>31</sup> E. J. Dobson (1955: 71); Dobson's alternative term 'Welsh letter-values' is more suitable since the orthography is essentially Latin, as used by most European languages including English, and it is the sounds that the Latin characters represent that differ. Nonetheless, for consistency with the scholarship, I mostly use 'Welsh orthography'.

will follow in the discussion on Ieuan ap Hywel Swrddwal, but for now we note that this poem's scribe – Llywelyn Siôn (c. 1540–c.1615) – alternates Welsh and English letter-values. He uses both <i> and <y> for /i/ in 'you', and Welsh <ff> for the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ but English <v> (not Welsh <f>) for the voiced /v/: *ffor lov*. Spelling in medieval texts is highly variable and Welsh manuscripts show that, in practice, there was no such hard and fast distinction between these spellings: both graphemes were perfectly possible Welsh spellings for their respective phonemes, apart from <v>, which is seldom, if ever, used at the end of words. However, in a bilingual poem, it seems reasonable to query the different spellings across the different languages. Dafydd Evans attributes the orthographical variety to metrical requirements.<sup>32</sup> This reasoning is only directly relevant to the case of 'mi' instead of 'me', in order to ensure a rhyme with *Ladi*, since <e> is never /i/ in Welsh. Perhaps it is slightly more plausible to suggest that the 'Welsh orthography', though inconsistently implemented, might allow Welsh-speakers to read the poem aloud and mimic the English phrases, having to understand neither written nor spoken English.

Recalling Folengo's description of macaronic poetry, it seems apt that Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys's only bilingual work to have survived is also his only comedic work.<sup>33</sup> Its bilingual comedy once again provides an insight into the perceived divergence between the standing of the Welsh language in social and literary hierarchies. It demonstrates the need to acquire English in economic life, while displaying the breakdown of that language once it trespasses the poetic territory in which it is a second-grade language. Here, it becomes nonsensical and part of the humorously imbalanced situation that inflates the Welsh-speaking audience's sense of linguistic pride, especially its bilingual members. The intersententiality, the partial implementation of Welsh orthography, and the protagonist's inability to fathom the English language, which might itself be distorted, again shows the inability of Welsh and English to synthesize in this genre.

### **Tudur Aled**

A triad of whimsical *englynion* by Tudur Aled is the first poem in this study to exclusively contain 'extralinguistic bilingualism': a poem entirely in English though composed in distinctively Welsh metres. Tudur was a nobleman associated with Iâl, north-east Wales – a powerhouse for the Welsh poetic tradition at the turn of the sixteenth century – and a poet of

---

<sup>32</sup> D. Evans, (1993: 104).

<sup>33</sup> C. W. Lewis (2004: 917).

great distinction and influence, regarded by his peers as second to none: *diobaith ei debyg* ('there is no hope of an equal').<sup>34</sup>

This poem was brought to my attention by Daniel Huws and Gruffudd Antur who recently identified the scribe of two copies of this poem as Tudur Aled himself.<sup>35</sup> Identifying this poet as the author of these *englynion* takes their significance far beyond a straightforward, 'popular' drinking song as they have thus far been misunderstood in English scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the analysis that follows is a tentative first foray into the vast reworking that needs to be done. Given the poem is short, it is fitting to reproduce the readings in full along with a modernization:

1	Is tell yw my mynd anes tayliur dame I deme we lak plesur loke here dame vn loke yor dur a lacke we haue no lykur	I tell you my mind, Annes, tell your dame: 'I deem we lack pleasure. Look here, dame, unlock your door, Alack! We have no liquor.
5	Frende ane we ar ferr yn dette for yor fyne gode wyne god watte a short gynt hase a pynt potte I dranke onys I wolde drinke yette	'Friend, Ann, we are fair in debt For your fine good wine, God knows. A short capacity has a pint pot: I drank once I would drink yet.'
10	Drinke well thy bottell bytte brother Sell thy brydyll for mawmse bring thy sadell to gradle <i>a ded horse wyllnot eatt haye</i>	Drink well thy mouthful [of the] bottle, brother, Sell thy bridle, for malmsey, Bring thy saddle to peddle: <i>a dead horse will not eat hay.</i> <sup>37</sup>

Though these *englynion* are Tudur Aled's only creative output in English to have surfaced, his bilingualism can otherwise be deduced from his intermingling with English speakers in the border-town of Oswestry.<sup>38</sup> His eulogy to the town contains a barrage of English consumer items 'barely assimilated into rudimentary Welsh phonetics and orthography', as Helen Fulton puts it: *siwgr, sarsned, ffelfed a phân* ('sugar, sarsenet, velvet and fur'), *cwmffets, pomgarents, a gwin* ('comfits, pomegranates and wine').<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog (1995: 47–8), l. 74.

<sup>35</sup> I am indebted to both for allowing me to see this material before its appearance in Huws (2021).

<sup>36</sup> The first two *englynion* appear in: R. H. Robbins (1968: 5); C. Sisam and K. Sisam (1970, 512); and M. S. Luria and R. L. Hoffman (1974: 143).

<sup>37</sup> The first two *englynion* are taken from the more correct BL Add. MS 14997 fol. 39v – the second *englyn* also occurs alone in a different hand in BL Harley MS 3725, fol. 32r – while the third is taken from its only copy, the damaged BL Add. MS 15057 fol. 29r. See Appendix A. The word read as *bytte* – a late insertion in the same hand – is read as such in part because it affords a *cynghanedd sain*, but it could also be read as *thylke*: 'drink well thy very bottle.' Further discussion below. Italicization in l. 12 represents hypothetical insertions where the manuscript has perished.

<sup>38</sup> A. C. Lake (2004).

<sup>39</sup> T. Aled (1926, vol. 1: 261–264), ll. 64, 90.; H. Fulton (2008: 208).

The *englynion* seem to be a light-hearted twist on a petition poem, a staple in any *Cywyddwr*'s output. One might read the poem's brief narrative as a first-person speaker's instructions to a drinking companion on how to request more wine from a landlady, a female patron or perhaps a wife, here named Ann, diminutive form Annes.<sup>40</sup> The script presented seeks to inspire sympathy towards the wineless men who *lak plesur* and to flatter Ann by expressing deep gratitude or, more literally, financial *dette*. Any sense of earnest sentiment is undercut by the tongue-in-cheek complaint that a pint of wine is not nearly enough. The third *englyn* abandons the petition and addresses the companion directly, telling him to make the most of what little wine is left and to seek some more by selling his bridle, his saddle and perhaps even his horse, if we can take *gradle* to be an unattested verb meaning something like 'peddle', as the context would suggest.<sup>41</sup>

Unlike the extralinguistic bilingualism of Tomas ab Ieuan and Ieuan ap Hywel Srdwal, as will be shown shortly, Tudur Aled shows no signs of employing 'Welsh orthography'. Conventional English spelling prevails, e.g., in *brother* and in the single <f> for /f/, e.g., *frende*.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, whereas Tomas ab Ieuan's English instructions were fragmented, here, the English is mostly accurate. Errors arise infrequently, and when they do so it is usually in the context of word-division, e.g., *tayliur, a lacke*. Intriguingly, however, some errors are in fact necessary for the *cynghanedd*, e.g., if taken as an erroneous variation of the first-person singular subject pronoun, the -s of the opening word is integral to the *cynghanedd* draws correspondence with the -s of *anes*.

This is not to say that the Welsh metre is flawless. After a broadly accurate *englyn unodl union*, the second *englyn* is unusual. It seems to be some variation on the *englyn proest cadwynog*, which conventionally consists of four lines of seven syllables, with a rhyming pattern of ABAB, where A and B are half-rhymes (*proest*). In this instance, however, it seems that the rhyming pattern is either ABCA, ABBA – if *watte* is pronounced /wɔt/ – or even the ABCD of a standard *englyn proest*, if the diphthong value of *yette* is perceived to be different from the singular /ɛ/ of *dette*.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the third *englyn*, which seems to be another *englyn unodl union*, may also be faulty given the inconsistent monorhyme. The rhyme seems to be

---

<sup>40</sup> 'Annis (i.e., Agnes) Taylor' in Robbins's reading, Robbins (1968: 5).

<sup>41</sup> This word is a mystery. The closest attestation is unlikely: *OED* s.v. *griddle*, *v*<sup>2</sup> 'to sing in the streets as a beggar'. The meaning provides an inexact match but, more significantly, the earliest attestations – from the nineteenth century – are far too late.

<sup>42</sup> <y> representing /ə/ in *thy* would be an unconventional, 'Welsh' spelling, if the word were the definite article, 'the'. However, context makes the possessive pronoun 'thy' more likely, and either way, <th> for voiced /ð/ could not be a 'Welsh' spelling, since, in Welsh, this digraph is reserved for the voiceless /θ/.

<sup>43</sup> R. Stephens and A. Llwyd (2008)

/ei/, however, no word in the first line's rhyming position matches this: *bytte* is unlikely to be pronounced as such.<sup>44</sup>

Nonetheless, the *englynion* are recognisably Welsh, and the aforementioned doctoring of the English to realise the *cynganedd* might suggest the prioritisation of Welsh prosody over English linguistic accuracy. This in turn might signal the nonsensical defects that occur in a more synthetic English-Welsh bilingual poem that still wishes to slight the prestige of English when it is on Welsh literary terms.

As for tone, once again, we are confronted with an (extralinguistic) English-Welsh blend that produces comedy. Yet, it would seem that the role of language on this occasion is secondary to the role of situation and character. For instance, the perplexing final lines appear to provide a punch that does not depend on its English language. Neglecting such a valuable commodity as a horse in favour of something as ephemeral as malmsey – sweet wine – provides an imbalanced exchange that would surely have been comic regardless of language.

Subversion is again at play though mostly in character. Tudur, the noble poet, dons a desperate persona to exaggerate the lengths to which he would go to quench his appetite for wine. This hyperbole might also be subversive owing to Tudur's fame as a prolific proxy petitioner of horses and not a purchaser nor vender, e.g., requesting a Gascon stallion for Edward Salesbury.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, his petitioning style may well be parodied here as he instructs someone else to carry out the wine request on his behalf. Tudur's anticipated expertise capsizes as he scrambles the style's usual structure: he suggests opening by praising the object, not the patron, and abandons the dignified appeal for a childish complaint, a feeble attempt at flattery, and a covetous request.

While the comedy does not depend on the role of language, it is at least enhanced by it. The mismatch between the reality of the likely ability of English-speakers in Wales to afford plentiful wine and the fictional situation of the poem, where this is not the case, is comic. Indeed, the incongruity of seeing this prestige language in a vulgar situation might well be seen as ironic mockery similar to that suggested in Tudur Penllyn's 'Ymddiddan'.

In the case of Tudur Aled, then, we see how bilingualism yields creativity in a novel manner. Here, even having restricted himself to his second language, the poet brings a comic dimension to the overall tone by marrying the words of one language with the poetic forms of another. His deployment of English overturns its usual prestige without overtly pitching it

---

<sup>44</sup> Given the damaged state of the copy, it is possible that the two unreadable words above *well* or a missing word could rectify these issues.

<sup>45</sup> Over half of his petitioning poems request horses, see T. Aled (1926, vol. II: 383–436).

against Welsh. The complex synthesis of the two languages is absent in the prior understanding of this once anonymous poem and this advances the discussion towards the two most integrated bilingual poems of this study.

### **Ieuan ap Rhydderch**

‘I Fair’ (‘To Mary’) by the Ceredigion poet Ieuan ap Rhydderch is the only surviving example of a macaronic Welsh-Latin poem that fits this article’s criteria and the first to deviate from the usual comedy of the genre. Prestige remains a concern, but Anglo-Welsh relations and the comic undercutting of English are replaced with the diglossia of Christian devotion, the sober elevation of Welsh and its meaningful synthesis with Latin. Indeed, the pious subject-matter plays a vital role in our understanding of this poem’s bilingualism, here conceptualized as a devotional artefact. This will become clearer as the poem’s outward isolation is placed within the tradition of aureate, macaronic Marian lyrics in English and Scots.

The key biographical aspect here is that Ieuan ap Rhydderch was a proud linguist and adroit poet, boasting elsewhere that he attended Oxford’s faculty of arts where he learnt *yr eang Ffrangeg* (‘the great French [language]’) and that *Meistr wyf, rymuster eofn, / Ar gerdd dafod* (‘I am a master, a dauntless force, / of poetry’).<sup>46</sup> This proficient, creative bilingual mind is at work in ‘I Fair’.

The lyric petitions Mary to mediate between mankind and God, focussing on the five Joys, the Immaculate Conception and her intercessionary role more broadly. The macaronic aspect of the poem is concentrated within a climaxing nineteen-line Welsh-Latin stanza. Although not always grammatically correct, the Latin is fully integrated into the strict-metre *rhupunt hir* form with regular alternation of a full Latin line followed by a half-Latin, half-Welsh line, though the first is exceptional:

Mam Grist Celi, seren heli,	[Oh] mother of Christ [of] the Lord, star of the sea,
<u>Luna celi</u> , lain y suliau.	<u>moon of Heaven</u> , gem of Sundays,
<u>Oportere nos habere</u> ,	<u>it is proper for us to have</u> –
<u>Miserere</u> , moes ar eirau.	<u>to show mercy</u> – courtesy in our words. <sup>47</sup>

Two syntactic systems are intertwined in the fragmented sentence of these four lines. After an epithet-filled invocation, the sentence begins in Latin with two verbs that seem to govern the entire first half of the stanza: an infinitive (*oportere*) – though grammatical Latin would have the 3sg form (*oportet*) – a pronoun (*nos*) and another infinitive (*habere*). We then

<sup>46</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 50–3), ll. 25, 97–8.

<sup>47</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5), ll. 65–8.

turn to Welsh and the indirect object of the sentence, *moes*. This intrasentential switching calls for a fluently bilingual composer and an equally bilingual audience that can understand and access all possible meanings.

This is not necessarily the case with the period's most common style of religious macaronic poetry, which tended to employ familiar Latin phrases and simply gloss them with vernacular translations or paraphrases. With each language independently preserving its morphology and syntax, the text could be more easily divided and understood by a monoglot audience.<sup>48</sup> This happens on occasion in 'I Fair', e.g. *sine pena, sôn heb boenau* ('without punishment, a tale without pain'), though it is not as widespread as R. Iestyn Daniel's explanatory comments would suggest.<sup>49</sup> Common too were refrains of prefabricated biblical or liturgical Latin phrases, for which a monoglot audience member might not even need a translation.<sup>50</sup> This is the method favoured by contemporary Scots poet William Dunbar. Each stanza of his 'Lament for the Makars' ends with *Timor mortis conturbat me* ('Fear of death disturbs me') from the 'Office of the Dead' prayer cycle.<sup>51</sup> In the strict sense of using exclusively liturgical Latin, Ieuan only opts for this kind of macaronic poetry in his question-and-answer *apologia* 'Yr Offeren' ('The Mass'), which features a singular snippet of the fraction of the Host prayer:

Aro, pam yr â eraill	Wait, why do others go
O'r llu i 'fengylu'r lleill	From the crowd to kiss each other
Yn ôl <u>Agnus</u> , ni rusia,	After the <u>Agnus</u> , it does not hinder us,
<u>Dei qui tollis, Deus</u> da?	<u>Dei qui tollis</u> , good <u>Deus</u> ?
Arwydd tangnefedd eirian,	It is a beautiful sign of peace,
A maddau mwygl eiriau mân.	and a way to forgive futile words of trifling importance. <sup>52</sup>

The employment of the *Agnus Dei* is still inspired since, much like the bread with which it is associated, it is broken by the interrupting Welsh *sangiad* (parenthesis) that comforts the curious interrogator: *ni rusia*.

The Latin of 'I Fair' also adapts the liturgy in a way that doesn't simply transport its phrases as wholesale units. Recognisable liturgical vocabulary such as *gratia plena* from the *Ave Maria*, *te laudamus* from the *Te Deum laudamus* hymn, and *miserere*, is scattered throughout the bilingual passage, evoking, even to monoglots, a familiarly solemn religious atmosphere. Indeed, along with the commonplace imagery in the Welsh – [g]lain y suliau

---

<sup>48</sup> S. Wenzel (1994: 6).

<sup>49</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5, 182), l. 70.

<sup>50</sup> H. Schendl (2000: 89); 'Type 1' in E. Archibald, (1992: 126–49).

<sup>51</sup> W. Dunbar (1998, vol 1: 94–7).

<sup>52</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 82–4), ll. 86–92.

(‘gem of Sundays’), *seren heli* (‘star of the ocean’) – one might consider this passage to be a simple list of epithets in praise of the Virgin.<sup>53</sup>

This reading is accurate on one level. However, much like Tomas ab Ieuan’s projected audience, the alert bilingual member who is able to unlock bilingual syntactical units can access a second meaning beyond a merely Latinate aura. This second meaning sees the poet plead Mary for eloquence, e.g., *stella maris, talm o eirau* (‘star of the sea, [it is proper that we have] a portion of [your] words’) and *Imperatrix, consolatrix, / Miseratrix, moes arotriau* (‘[Oh] Empress, Comforter, / Compassionate One, give [us] eloquence’).<sup>54</sup>

This last couplet contains an instance of Ieuan’s playful engagement with language, which epitomizes the highly sophisticated bilingual synthesis that pervades this poem. Here, *moes* is used for a second time in the poem and with a second meaning – nominal at first (‘courtesy’), now an imperative – and *arotriau*, I argue, means both ‘eloquence’ and ‘prayers’; such punning is lost in Daniel’s modernization.<sup>55</sup> However, the wordplay is not confined to the Welsh sections; it is even more complex between the Latin and the Welsh. The programmatic opening line contains one of many *figurae etymologicae* used throughout, here exploiting the semantic difference between Latin *celi* (‘of heaven’) and its homonymous loanword in Welsh, *Celi* (‘God, Lord’ < Lat. *celi*). Similar etymological wordplay occurs in *sine tristi, sôn nid tristau* (‘without sorrow, a story without sadness’) (< Lat. *trīstis*, ‘sad’) – though note that grammatical Latin would have the noun not the adjective, *sine tristitiā* – and in the aforementioned *pena* and *[p]oenau* (< Lat. *p[ro]ena*, ‘punishment’) alluding to the typology of Mary reversing Eve’s penalty of painful childbirth.<sup>56</sup>

Turning to query what prompted such tight linguistic synthesis, a close reading of the bilingual stanza and the preceding Welsh section hints at Ieuan’s preoccupation with poetic language as a learned art and at a metalinguistic concern for how he praises the Virgin. These point to two connected factors: linguistic exuberance in Marian lyrics as a devotional exercise and the elevation of Western vernaculars by association with Latin.

Firstly, on several occasions, Ieuan expresses his desire to craft a refined eulogy. He seeks to pursue *Dysg deg awdl, pefr dasg di-gabl, / Dwysglaergerdd Duw disgleirgwbl* (‘the beautiful discipline of an *awdl*, a fine, unsullied undertaking, / the wholly bright God’s passionate, pleasant poem’).<sup>57</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee proposes certain connections between the

---

<sup>53</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5), ll. 69, 84, 68, 66, 65; R. T. Davies (1966: Appendix).

<sup>54</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5), ll. 72–4.

<sup>55</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 114–116).

<sup>56</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5), l. 78. *GPC*, s.v. *trist<sup>1</sup>*, *poen*.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 17–8.



Incarnation and poetic inspiration, and between the ‘immaculate’ birth of Christ and ‘unsullied’, overtly literary creation.<sup>58</sup> This network seems applicable to Ieuan’s ‘I Fair’ and to the sentiment of these Welsh verses. This couplet prepares us for the vigorous bilingual request for eloquence, which perpetuates the concern for, and indeed embodies, praising the Virgin in the best and most fitting diction possible. This is entirely appropriate in the genre of the Marian lyric, which Douglas Gray describes as ‘a world of elegant, carefully wrought verbal artefacts, flamboyant decoration and an enthusiasm for a variety of metrical forms’.<sup>59</sup> In this sense, it is unsurprising that religious, particularly Marian, poetry is by far the largest category of macaronic English poems, of which ‘I Fair’ is a Welsh reflex.<sup>60</sup>

A second insight into this Welsh-Latin fusion arises from the connection Meyer-Lee draws between Mary’s intermediary role and that of the Marian poet who also mediates the divine and the human.<sup>61</sup> By extending this concept to ‘I Fair’, the notion of linguistic prestige resurfaces as this bilingual synthesis seems to endow the earthly prestige of the Welsh vernacular with the virtuous, heavenly prestige of Latin. Despite the puzzling, incessant interplay, the poet’s plea should be clear to the proficient bilingual reader/listener: a plea for dignified diction, perhaps the opposite of the [g]eiriau mân mentioned in ‘Yr Offeren’. The specifics of this plea are exposed in the crucial pre-emptive words that preface the bilingual stanza: *Euraf wawd tafawd tewfydr / I’r lân wryr ar lun arodr* (‘I will gild a eulogy with a tongue, mighty in verse, / to the Holy Virgin in the form of a prayer’).<sup>62</sup> The choice of *euraf*, a verb derived from *aur* (‘gold’) and ultimately from Latin *aurum* (‘gold’), is indicative of Ieuan’s acute awareness that he is not simply crafting a poem in the usual Welsh manner – although the verb is sometimes used figuratively in this way – he is gilding it with Latin.<sup>63</sup> This, I argue, gestures towards the literary notion of ‘auration’.

‘Auration’ encompasses the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century expansion of vernacular languages through employment of Latin loanwords and neologisms and it is often associated with the aforementioned Scots poet, William Dunbar. We are told that writers of his period valued poems suffused with *fresch anamalit terms celicall* (‘freshly enamelled, celestial terms’).<sup>64</sup> The ‘quintessentially aureate’ line is the opening line of Dunbar’s ‘Ballad of Our

---

<sup>58</sup> R. Meyer-Lee (2010: 322–348).

<sup>59</sup> D. Gray (2001: 202).

<sup>60</sup> S. Wenzel (1994: 2).

<sup>61</sup> R. Meyer-Lee (2010: 329–30).

<sup>62</sup> Ieuan ap Rhydderch (2003: 103–5), ll. 31–2.

<sup>63</sup> *GPC*, s. v. *euraf*.

<sup>64</sup> W. Dunbar (1998, vol 1: 184–92) l. 257.

Lady’: *Hale, sterne superne! Hale, in eterne* (‘Hail, heavenly star! Hail eternally!’).<sup>65</sup> It contains a native Scots noun followed by two classicisms and is a seemingly conscious attempt to increase the ‘semantic density’ of the low-status vernacular by surrounding and injecting it with the high-status Latin so that it may co-opt its prestige.<sup>66</sup>

While there is no strictly aureate language in ‘I Fair’ (i.e., Latinate word-borrowings or coinages), the coincidence of the verb *euraf* in a Welsh poem deeply imbued with Latin and composed by a well-read Welshman studying at Oxford increases the likelihood that it is an allusion to this literary concept. Therefore, it could be argued that Ieuan is likewise seeking to raise the prestige of Welsh by infusing it with a Latinate flavour. Indeed, in this regard, Ieuan would be foreshadowing the tendency within Welsh humanist writing to tackle the perceived uncultivated state of Welsh by similar stylistic emulation of Classical Latin, e.g., Sir John Prise’s use of *pan* (‘when’) with the subjunctive to mean ‘since’, like Latin *cum*, or his variations on *yr hwnn* to compensate the lack of a fully inflectional connecting relative pronoun, producing a more periodic, Ciceronian style.<sup>67</sup>

The creative interaction and intrasentential synthesis found in ‘I Fair’ prefigures this aspirational engagement with linguistic prestige; a synthesis hinted at in Tudur Aled’s *englynion*, distant from Tudur Penllyn and Tomas ab Ieuan’s poems, and prevalent in Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal’s, which will be our final consideration.

### **Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal**

The ‘Hymn to the Virgin’, written around 1470 by Oxford resident, Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal, draws together many of this study’s themes: bilingualism as a literary impetus, engagement with the shifting prestige of Welsh and English, and devotional, Marian language-play. Through the convergence of these three factors, it would seem that this poem finally synthesises English and Welsh in a meaningful manner.

In the English-Welsh poems discussed above, there was no doubt as to which languages appeared when. They were explicitly labelled and/or were spelt according to their respective spelling conventions. This is not the case for our final poem. Like Tudur Aled, Ieuan ap Hywel composed a poem in Welsh metres but entirely in English. However, here, the visual clarity of the language is distorted as the poet makes extensive employment of the so-called ‘Welsh orthography’ hinted at in Tomas ab Ieuan’s *cywydd*. Here is the first stanza:

---

<sup>65</sup> J. Corbett (2001: 186); W. Dunbar (1998, vol I: 83–5), l. 1.

<sup>66</sup> B. Ellenberger (1977).

<sup>67</sup> E.g., J. Prys, (1951: 3–4).

O michti ladi, owr leding – tw haf  
at hefn owr abeiding:  
yntw ddy ffest efrlesting  
i set a braents ws tw bring.

O mighty lady, our leading – to have  
at heaven our abiding:  
into the feast everlasting  
set a branch us to bring.<sup>68</sup>

Behind its unique appearance lies a typical Marian lyric; six *englynion unodl union*, structured on the *Ave Maria*, followed by six verses of *tawddgyrch cadwynog*. Thematically, the poem is similar to Ieuan ap Rhydderch's in that it treats Mary as the mediatrix between God and Christians, repeatedly beseeching her to *help ws, prae ffor ws* [...] / *Asoel ws at owr ending*, though it also narrates how Christ took the *sowls off hel tw soels off hicht*, before drawing to an eschatological close: *ddy truwth ys kyt ddat iyrth ys kast*.<sup>69</sup> The content, then, is fairly standard for its age, resembling most Middle English and Scots Marian lyrics, for example, Chaucer's 'ABC'.<sup>70</sup>

Its more unique attributes introduce the extralinguistic bilingualism: the strict-metre, e.g. the *cynganedd groes* in *Wi aes wyth bwk, wi wys wyth bel*, and the distinctive 'Welsh orthography'. Though variable, the distinctive Welsh letter-values include the aforementioned <ff> and <f>, <th> and <dd> for the dental fricatives and <ei> for the diphthong represented by English <i, y>, incidentally showing that the early stages of the so-called Great Vowel Shift had already occurred by the time of writing.<sup>71</sup>

Briefly consulting Middle English, one notes that determining standard English spelling conventions is problematic despite some degree of internal consistency in fifteenth-century Wycliffite or Chancery writing. Whether or not there is any logic to anything that might deviate from such conventions other than scribal preference, local style or orthographical error is often hard to prove.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to assume that unattested spellings that consistently use graphemes that can only represent the relevant phonemes if they are read with their Welsh letter-values can be regarded as 'unconventional' and 'Welsh'.<sup>73</sup>

Before investigating the role of this poem's orthography and the insights it offers into creative bilingualism, arguments surrounding intentionality and purposes require critical evaluation. Max Förster deemed the orthography unintentional. While he did establish that the poem was original and not simply an unconventional transcript of the anglicised spellings that

---

<sup>68</sup> Ieuan ap Hywel Srdwal (2000: 124–6), ll. 1–4. Translation based on Garlick (1985).

<sup>69</sup> Ieuan ap Hywel Srdwal (2000: 124–6), ll. 21, 30, 45; T. Conran (1995: 10).

<sup>70</sup> G. Chaucer (2008).

<sup>71</sup> Ieuan ap Hywel Srdwal (2000: 124–6), l. 31; See all quotations for examples, esp. lines 3–4 and the 1<sup>st</sup> sg subject pronoun *ei* ('I').

<sup>72</sup> J. D. Burnley (1989).

<sup>73</sup> See note 29 for consulted databases.

appear in some manuscript copies, he also argued unconvincingly that Ieuan used Welsh letter-values simply because that was how he wrote English.<sup>74</sup> One would assume that an Oxford student of noble Breconshire stock, near the English-speaking Marches, had mastered the English language and its spelling-system, thus making his unorthodox spelling a deliberate deviation. That Tudur Aled and Penllyn wrote English in a more standard fashion – English <th> not Welsh <dd> for /ð/ – strengthens this case.

E. J. Dobson argued in favour of intentionality, and yet accounted for the poem's orthography as owing to the fact that 'it is written in accordance with Welsh rules of metre'.<sup>75</sup> Garlick agrees, writing that its function is 'to make possible a whole series of sound effects'.<sup>76</sup> Even today, students of *cynghanedd* are taught early on that strict-metre prioritizes sound over sight, aural over visual. Therefore, Dobson's argument that the orthography is a necessary accompaniment seems to violate the very essence of *cynghanedd*. Tudur Aled and Penllyn's examples show that, in order for *cynghanedd* to function in English, there has never been an inherent need to 'Cambricize' the orthography. Were the 'Hymn' written in a more conventional English spelling, the sounds of *cynghanedd* would remain untouched: *O mighti ladie oure ledinge* still produces the required internal rhyme and alliteration of *cynghanedd sain*, and *ye sette a braunch us to bring* the consonantal correspondence of *cynghanedd groes*.<sup>77</sup> The choice of orthography was motivated by some other concern.

A piece of evidence key to some of these potential concerns is the shorter of the two prologues that preface the poem in six of the fifteen surviving copies. It describes how the poem was composed during a poetry contest at Oxford in response to the taunts of some scornful Englishmen who were challenging the existence, let alone superiority, of any Welsh poetic tradition that had 'metre or alliteration'.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, Ieuan set out to address this ever-present issue of relative linguistic prestige by proving that he could write a poem in English on a theme that dominated the English literary landscape and in a Welsh metrical form that no English-speaker could master: 'a defiant demonstration of his competence in English' and of the competence of the Welsh language.<sup>79</sup>

Two factors concerning fifteenth-century Anglo-Welsh relations arise from this: competition and display. For the former, considering Welsh students at Oxford had been at

---

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix B; M. Förster (1926).

<sup>75</sup> Dobson (1955: 71).

<sup>76</sup> Garlick (1985: 5).

<sup>77</sup> Hypothetical spellings using the highest-attested forms in aforementioned databases (n. 20).

<sup>78</sup> *na mesur na chynghanedd*, Dobson (1955: 100).

<sup>79</sup> M. W. Thomas, (2006: 61).

loggerheads with their English peers since the days of Glyndŵr, the poem seems to be addressing the tense linguistic and cultural imbalance of everyday interaction where Welsh was the inferior vernacular.<sup>80</sup> Beyond evoking pleasurable surprise among the bilingual Welsh-speaking audience who confronted an initially familiar-looking language that transpired to be their second language, Ieuan created a poem that would be accessible for English-speakers when read aloud but that would flummox them on paper if they were not literate in Welsh. The poem frustrates the dominance of English and gives literate Welshmen a satisfying sense of superiority.

The second factor presents the poem's idiosyncratic appearance as an illustrative primer for English-speakers on the intricacies of strict-metre. As well as a display of its cultural identity, the poem provides a comprehensive display of *cynganeddion* – *sain*, *croes*, and *llusg*, three of the four principal types, appear in the opening *englyn* – which arrests readers, signposting that this intricate and allegedly superior metre, like the orthography, is not English at all.

Indeed, although the peculiar orthography is not some unintentional by-product of strict-metre, it might be a purposeful aid to clarify the *cynganedd* for the prologue's projected audience of sceptics. This clarification comes in the form of an aid to the 'aural *cynganedd*', ensuring that the required pronunciation is realised, and to the 'visual *cynganedd*', ensuring that the alliteration is as clear to the eye as it is to the ear.

The different graphic representations of 'would', for example, aids the 'aural *cynganedd*'. The poet seems to manipulate the two possible pronunciations of its unstressed form – with or without /l/ – as per the requirements of a line's *cynganedd*; how it is spelt often depends on the strict-metre. For example, the *cynganedd groes* of *ild a gwd mae wld God ei nicht* contains the form <wld> (/uld/), wherein the pronunciation of the /l/ is necessary to mirror the consonants of *ild*.<sup>81</sup> But when the same word appears in *as God wod ddys gwd weding*, the /l/ is absent since it would obstruct the pattern of consonantal correspondence in the *cynganedd draws*.<sup>82</sup> To avoid the potential issue of 'would' being pronounced in a way that would not have been 'in *cynganedd*', Ieuan seems to have doctored the spelling to ensure that the required pronunciation is realised.

The 'visual *cynganedd*' is aided by attempts to record the pronunciation of certain words as accurately as possible, resulting in peculiar spelling. In these cases, a more

---

<sup>80</sup> G. Usher (1956).

<sup>81</sup> Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal (2000: 124–6), l. 52.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 20.

conventional English spelling would have correctly yielded the required alliterating and/or rhyming sounds but could have looked vastly different from the phonemes it represented, thereby giving the illusion that there was no alliteration at all; the very accusation levelled against Welsh poetry to begin with. One example is the graphic recording of devoicing – the naturally occurring devoicing of voiced consonants by adjacent voiceless consonants – when the alliteration requires a particular dental to be unvoiced.<sup>83</sup> This is the case in the ‘and’ of *ant hi ws ffing yntw hys ffest*, and in the unstressed definite article <te> when preceded by voiceless dental fricatives, e.g., *at te rwt tri*. In the latter, the sounded /ð/ of ‘the’ naturally assimilates to the preceding phoneme, /t/, thus becoming /t/.<sup>84</sup> This devoicing is required by the line’s *cynghanedd groes*; the /t r/ of *at te rw(t)* answered in the /t r/ of *tri*. Recording this phonological phenomenon is superfluous to the sound yet is illustrative in this context lest the usual <dd>, or even <th>, mislead the reader into perceiving no alliteration.

This overall concern with demonstration might be why three copies present the text alongside anglicised versions, e.g., Sir John Prise’s unfinished attempt to have a parallel anglicised text run alongside the original.<sup>85</sup> However, even if Ieuan’s aim was to demonstrate Welsh metres to English audiences, the manuscript record suggests that this was not how it was treated in the early-modern period. With the exception of Prise, all manuscripts are Welsh poetry compilations in which the poem is the only English-language text.<sup>86</sup>

Either way, these considerations of competition and display reintroduce the role of Anglo-Welsh relations as the Welsh language is enmeshed in a struggle with English for high status. Yet, this is a more synthetic approach to English-Welsh creative bilingualism. The ‘Hymn’ strikes a balance between yielding to the taunting Englishmen, by crafting an English poem, and depriving them from accessing it, by making literate Welsh-speakers the sole decoders. Moreover, although the orthographical impediments become explanatory aids regarding Welsh poetic forms, the very fact that this poem can be read as explanatory makes Welsh the prescriptive language of superior poetics.

This meaningful synthesis brings to mind the linguistic harmony of Ieuan ap Rhyddech’s ‘I Fair’. Indeed, lyrical Marian devotion transcends any ethnic or linguistic concerns. It can easily be forgotten that the curious hybridity of the ‘Hymn’ still contains pious praise of the Virgin. This fact might further enlighten the role of bilingualism in this poem; no

---

<sup>83</sup> D. S. Evans (1970: 13–4).

<sup>84</sup> Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal (2000: 124–6), ll. 55, 65.

<sup>85</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>86</sup> M. Thuillier (2018: 32).

doubt that the attempts to exceed and escape language that Steven Rozenski finds in all multilingual Marian lyrics are also at play in Ieuan ap Hywel Swrwal's 'poetic exuberance'.<sup>87</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The twentieth-century poet, Waldo Williams, described his '*englyn* writ in English' thus: 'Yes, Idwal, it is oddish; – it is strange; / It is true outlandish.'<sup>88</sup> Academic discourse surrounding bilingual poetry from medieval Wales has tended to agree with Williams's remark and see no need for further enquiry. This essay has begun to expand such commentary by treating the creative bilingual products examined as both efforts to maintain the literary prestige of Welsh by comically undercutting English and by piously aspiring towards Latin, and as attempts to exceed and escape language altogether.

LLEWELYN HOPWOOD

Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford

---

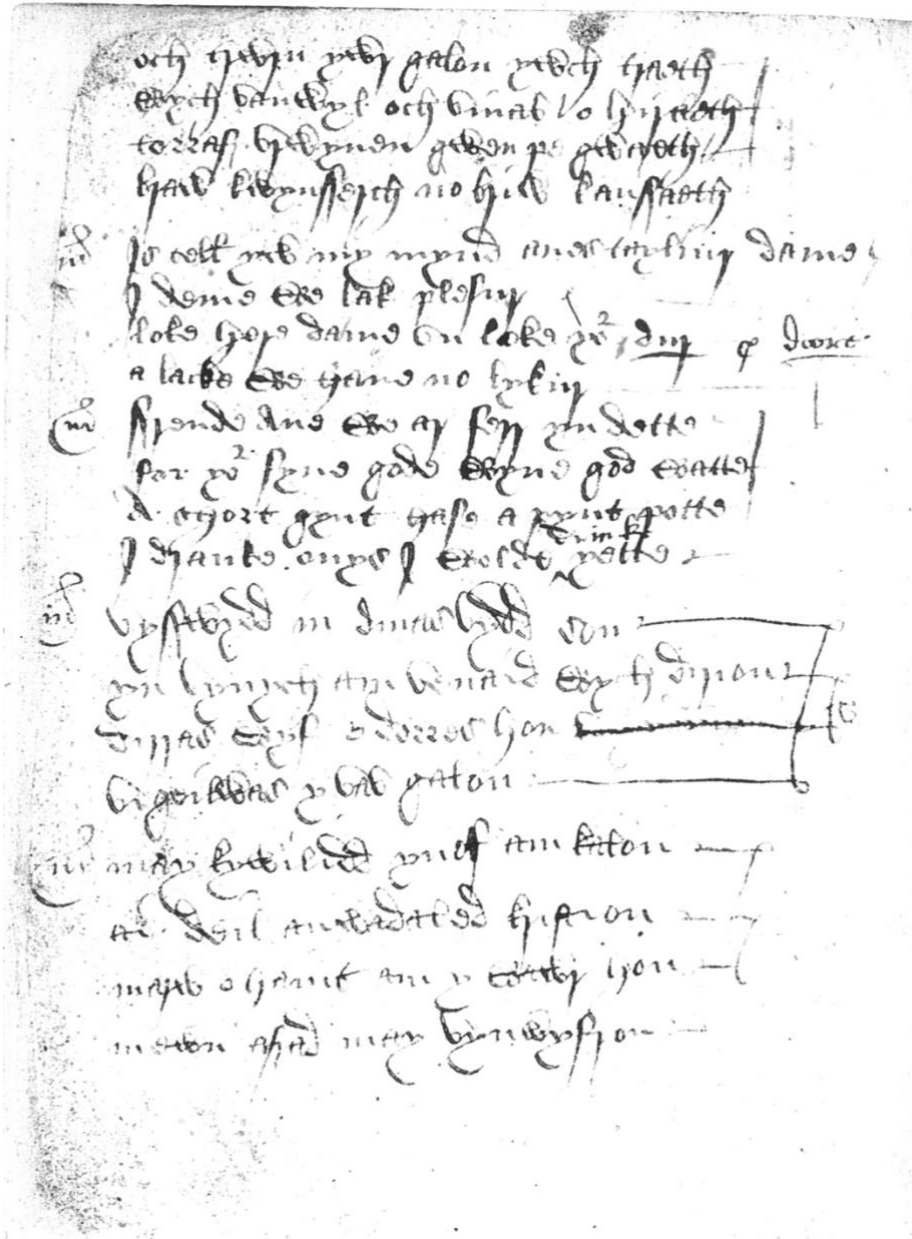
<sup>87</sup> S. Rozenski (2020).

<sup>88</sup> W. Williams (2014: 405), ll. 4, 1–2.

Appendices

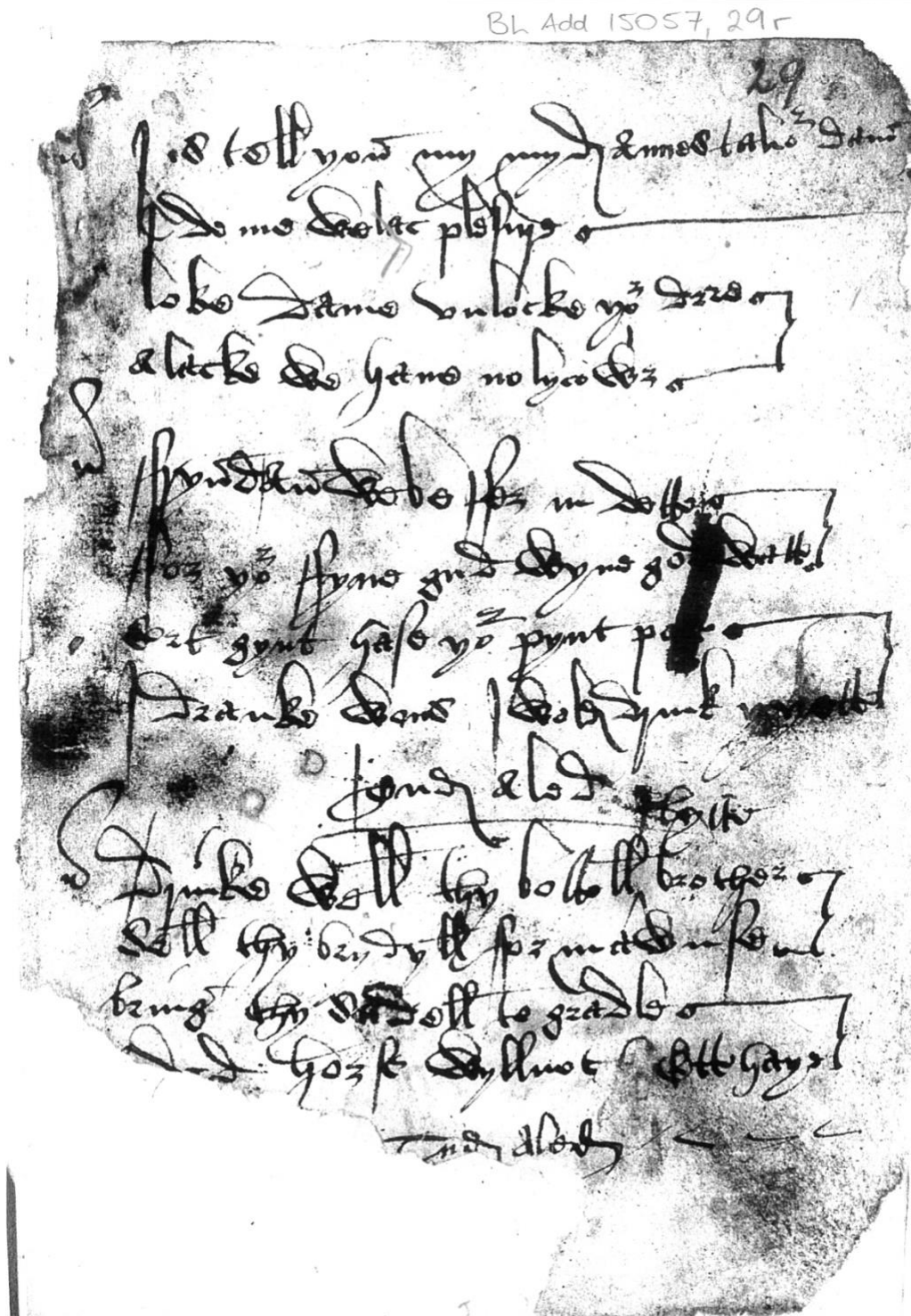
A Copies of Tudur Aled's *englynion* in the poet's hand

i) BL Additional MS 14997, fol. 39v (c. 1500): the first two *englynion*





ii) BL Additional MS 15057, fol. 29r (c. 1526): all three *englynion*,



B Earliest surviving copies of 'Hymn to the Virgin'. Both appear – alongside anglicised spellings – in:  
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 353 ('Sir John Prise's Commonplace Book', c. 1540).

i) fol. 63r: alternating anglicized and Welsh spellings (ll. 1–10, 19–20)

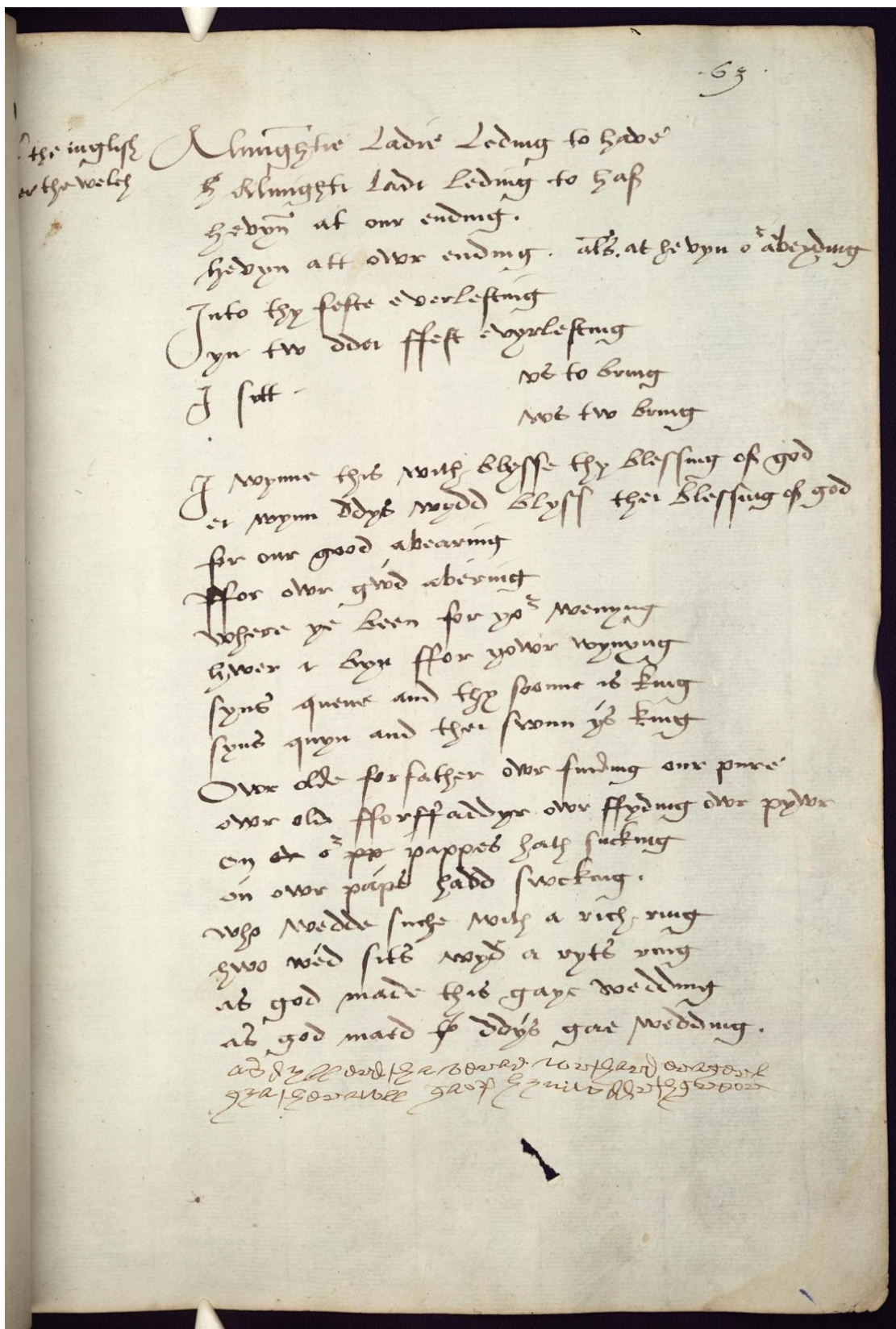


Image reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Balliol College

- ii) fols. 1r–1v (originally fol. 87r–87v, rebound): examples of the unfinished attempt to have a parallel anglicised version on the facing right-hand page.

fol. 1r: anglicized spelling (ll. 1–4)

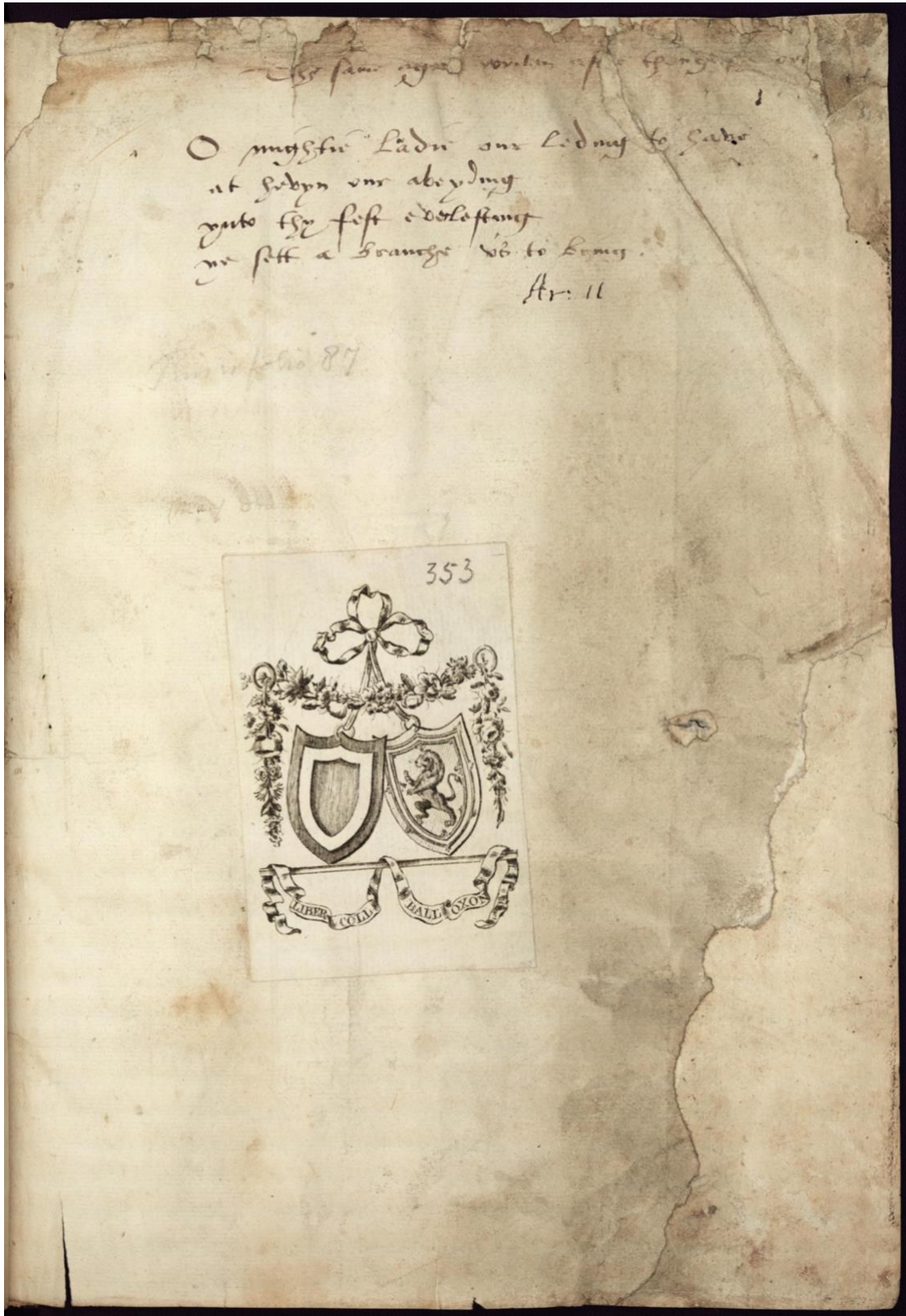


Image reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Balliol College

fol. 1v: Welsh spelling (ll. 41–68)

Si fel tu iolw, nō swm du swm  
a nōw i trolo noi a ywōt not rīggt  
a boi nōw bōlo sōb lōwē so lōw  
gōlo mac i tūch fro sūm a lūygt  
Dy troytōg yō boi tyt tō dāt yrd yō rāft  
Dōi indō by lāft tō dōi gāudō by līgt  
o gōd set yt gūd ab yt wāb  
Dōi rōwōl dōtōg pāt dōy wōwōd hād pīgt  
i pōtōtī tūmī wō pōwō tu tōgt  
dāt gūd bygōft dāt gōd bygōgt  
and gō nōt fīng yntu gūb fīft  
tāt dōy sōal lōft mūd dōibōrb līgt  
Dōi iōwōd tō wōwō yō dōwō ab dōe  
yt yō nō nōw yt yt nōi mīgt  
a sōlōl i sōwō i wōst yō ffāc  
iōd tō a gūd mac wōwōd gōd i mīgt  
wōwō nōi wōd dōy ffōmōyō ffōll  
Dōy by nōt gōld wōwōd a bānd tīgt  
Dōy wōwōt and old wōwō sūm dōy gōld  
Dōy Jōwōb gād sōld put Jōsūb sīgt  
nōi tōygt dōi tōwōst dāt wōwōst a wōwōm  
iō nōi dōi dōwōn tō dōy rōdō dīgt  
tu tōwōk tōi at tō dōi wōd tōi  
Dān wōwōt al nōi tō dōy nōbōn tu līgt  
tu gōwōwōt agōi tō mōwō nōwōd mō  
tō dāt iō mac sō dōi tu mōi sīgt.

Image reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Balliol College

## Works Cited

### Manuscript Sources

- London, British Library  
-- Additional MS 14997, fol. 39v  
-- Additional MS 15057, fol. 29r  
-- Harley MS 3725, fol. 32r
- Oxford, Balliol College  
-- MS 353 fols. 1r–1v, 63r, 88v

### Printed Sources

- Aled, Tudur, 1926. *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, ed. T. Gwynn Jones, 2 vols (Cardiff)
- Archibald, E. 1992. Tradition and Innovation in the Macaronic Poetry of Dunbar and Skelton, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 53, 126–49
- Bede. 1999. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford)
- Bevis, M. 2013. *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford)
- Bhabha, H. 1994. *Locations of Culture* (London)
- Bildhauer, B. 2006. *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff)
- Blake, N. (ed.) 1990. *The Phoenix*, rev. ed. (Exeter)
- Burnley, J. D. 1989. Sources of Standardisation in Later Middle English, in Joseph B Trahern (ed.), *Standardizing English: Essays in the History of Language Change in Honor of John Hurt Fisher* (Knoxville), 23–41
- Chaucer, G. 2008. An ABC, in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford), 637–640
- Conran, T. 1995. Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's 'The Hymn to the Virgin', *Welsh Writing in English*, 1, 5–22
- Corbett, J. 2001. Aureation Revisited, in Sally Mapstone (ed.), *William Dunbar: 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt* (East Linton), 183–197
- Davies, J. 2007. *A History of Wales*, rev. ed. (London)
- Davies, R. R. 1978. *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales: 1282–1400* (Oxford)
- Davies, R. R. 1984. Law and National Identity in Thirteenth-Century Wales, in R. R. Davies et al (eds.), *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical Essays Presented to Glanmor Williams* (Cardiff), 51–69
- Davies, R. T. 1966. *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology* (London)
- Dobson, E. J. 1955. The Hymn to the Virgin, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1954, 70–124
- Drexler, R. D. 1955–6. Dunbar's Aureate Language, *Scottish Language*, 14/15, 204–17
- Dunbar, W. 1998. *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, 2 vols (Glasgow)
- Ellenberger, B. 1977. *The Latin Element in the Vocabulary of the Earlier Makars Henryson and Dunbar* (Lund)
- Evans, D. 1993. Tomas ab Ieuan a'i 'Ysgowld o Wraig', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, 19, 86–106
- Evans, D. F. 2011. On the lips of Strangers: The Welsh Language, the Middle Ages, and Ethnic Diversity, in Morgan Thomas Davies (ed.), *Proceedings of the Celtic Studies Association of North America Annual Meeting 2008* (New York), 16–38
- Evans, D. S. 1970. *Grammar of Middle Welsh* (Dublin)
- Evans, G. 2019. Tudor London and the Origins of Welsh Writing in English, in Geraint Evans and Helen Fulton (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature* (Cambridge), 213–5
- Folengo, T. 2007–8. *Baldo*, ed. and trans. Ann E. Mullaney, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.)
- Förster, M. 1926. Datierung und Character des kymrisch-englishcen Marien-Hymnus, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 150, 187–202
- Fulton, H. 2008. Class and Nation: Defining the English in Late-Medieval Welsh Poetry, in R. Kennedy and S. Meecham-Jones (eds.), *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales* (Basingstoke), 191–212
- Fulton, H. 2011. Negotiating Welshness: Multilingualism in Wales Before and After 1066, in Elizabeth M. Tyler (ed.), *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in Medieval England, c.800–c.1250* (Turnhout), 145–170
- Fulton, H. 2013. The Status of the Welsh Language in Medieval Wales, in Pamela O'Neill (ed.), *The Land Beneath the Sea: Essays in Honour of Anders Ahlqvist's Contribution to Celtic Studies in Australia* (Sydney), 59–74
- Garlick, R. 1972. *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff)
- Garlick, R. 1985. *The Hymn to the Virgin: Attributed to Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal* (Newtown)
- Ghosh, K. 2002. *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Oxford)
- Gray, D. 2001. 'Hale, Sterne Superne' and its Literary Background, in Sally Mapstone (ed.), *William Dunbar: 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt* (East Linton), 198–210

- Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog. 1995. *Gwaith Huw ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn ap Madog*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth)
- Huws, D. 2021. *Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes*, 3 vols (Aberystwyth)
- Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal et al. 2000. *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i Deulu*, ed. Dylan Foster Evans (Aberystwyth)
- Ieuan ap Rhydderch. 2003. *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth)
- James, B. Ll. 1972. The Welsh Language in the Vale of Glamorgan, *Morgannwg: Transactions of the Glamorgan Local History Society*, 16, 16–36
- Johnston, D. (ed.) 1998. *Canu Maswedd yr Oesoedd Canol: Medieval Welsh Erotic Poetry*, rev. ed. (Bridgend)
- Lake, A. C. 2004. Tudur Aled (c. 1465–1525x7), in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols, LV (Oxford), 517–8
- Lewis, C. W. 2004. Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys (c. 1510–c. 1560), in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols, LIV (Oxford), 917
- Llwyd, A. and R. Stephens. 2008. *Yr Odliadur*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Llandysul)
- Luria, M. S. and R. L. Hoffman (eds.) 1974. *Middle English Lyrics* (New York)
- Malone, P. 2012. ‘What saist mon?’ Dialogism and disdain in Tudur Penllyn’s ‘Conversation between a Welshman and an Englishwoman’, *Studia Celtica*, 46, 123–36
- McKee, H. 2000. *The Cambridge Juvenis Manuscript glossed in Latin, Old Welsh, and Old Irish* (Aberystwyth)
- Meyer-Lee, R. J. 2010. The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109.3, 322–348
- Owen, D. H. 1975. The Englishry of Denbigh: an English colony in medieval Wales, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1974–5, 57–76
- Penllyn, T. et al. 1958. *Gwaith Tudur Penllyn ac Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn*, ed. Thomas Roberts (Cardiff)
- Prise, J. 1951. Yny llyvyr hwnn..., in Garfield H. Hughes (ed.), *Rhagymadroddion: 1547–1659* (Cardiff), 3–4
- Putter A. and K. Busby. 2010. Introduction: Medieval Francophonia, in Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz (eds.), *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and its Neighbours* (Turnhout)
- Robbins, R. H., ed. 1968. *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford)
- Romaine, S. 1989. *Bilingualism* (Oxford)
- Rozenki, S. 2020. Ave ave ave [ave]: The Multilingual Poetics of Exuberance in Bruder Hans, *New Medieval Literatures*, 20, 107–42
- Schendl, H. 2000. Linguistic Aspects of Code-Switching in Medieval English Texts, in D. A. Trotter (ed.), *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain* (Cambridge), 77–92
- Schendl, H. 2012. Literacy, Multilingualism and Code-switching in Early English Written Texts, in Carla Jonsson, Shahrzad Mahootian and Mark Sebba (eds.), *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse* (London), 27–43
- Sisam, C. and K. Sisam (ed.) 1970. *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse* (Oxford)
- Smith, Ll. B. 1997. The Welsh Language before 1536, in Geraint H. Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution* (Cardiff), 15–44
- Smith, Ll. B. 2000. The Welsh and English Languages in Late-Medieval Wales, in D. A. Trotter (ed.), *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain* (Cambridge), 7–21
- Thomas, M. W. 2006. Anglo-Welsh Literature, in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols, I (Santa Barbara), 61–67
- Thompson, S. 1955. *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols (Copenhagen)
- Thuillier, M. 2018. The Welsh Hymn to the Virgin: Transmission and Cultural Identity from the Late Middle Ages to the Present Day, *eSharp*, 26, 29–42
- Tyler, E. M. 2011. Introduction. England and Multilingualism: Medieval and Modern, in Elizabeth M. Tyler (ed.), *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c.800–c.1250* (Turnhout)
- Usher, G. 1954–6. Welsh Students at Oxford in the Middle Ages, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 26, 193–8
- Wenzel, S. 1994. *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England* (Ann Arbor)
- Williams, W. 2014. *Waldo Williams: Cerddi 1922–1970*, ed. Alan Llwyd and Robert Rhys (Llandysul)

#### Online sources

- Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru, <http://welsh-dictionary.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html>
- Guto'r Glyn, 2013. Poem 21: Moliant i Wiliam Herbert o Raglan, *Guto'r Glyn.net*, [www.gutorglyn.net](http://www.gutorglyn.net)
- Lexicon of Early Modern English*, <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca>
- Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary>
- Oxford English Dictionary*, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)